

ON LOCATION/S:
**Seeking fieldwork sites for the study of society and
environment within teacher education—an analysis of
social constructs of place and space**

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Declaration

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ABSTRACT

On Location/s: Seeking fieldwork sites for the study of society and environment within teacher education— an analysis of social constructs of place and space

As an ethnographic study situated within teacher education practice, this thesis is structured around “three pedagogical moments” in the studies of society and environment units within a Bachelor of Education degree. This study links classroom teaching and observation illuminated through naturalistic enquiry with student surveys and interviews and locational analysis using a multi-method approach to research. The hidden and explicit curriculum and pedagogies of fieldwork are investigated as these are implemented in early childhood and primary education—and more particularly, in the teaching of Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), as a specific site of knowledge construction in teacher education. Accordingly, the study is located within recent debates surrounding the nature of geographic knowledge and understandings of place and space as partial and socially constructed. It also draws on recent critiques of fieldwork in early childhood and primary education and more specifically, in geography. Integral to this discussion are understandings of place and space as triggers to childhood learning and emerging identity. Reference to paintings by Jeffrey Smart—as an illustrative and visual device—helps to locate the study’s central themes, and the visual and emotional as well as rational and cultural dimensions of student teacher choices.

Key themes identified through a constructivist approach to grounded theory are used as the basis of analysis of interview responses and the generation of theory. By beginning a critical pedagogy of space with the “mattering maps” and “cartographies of taste” of teacher education students, the study articulates the many discourses brought to the selection of sites for Studies of Society and Environment and contributes to the dialogic process of learning to teach.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction to the research problem

This fieldwork study originated in personal experience of teaching Social Education 1, a compulsory curriculum studies unit within the first year of a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree course at the University of Tasmania in 1997. The curriculum studies unit was primarily concerned with preparing students of teaching as early childhood and primary educators of Studies of Society and Environment, more commonly designated by its acronym, SOSE—a learning area linked with Australian, nationally produced curriculum documents and state-based interpretations of them. This study occurred at a time of policy transition; the terms *Social Education* and *SOSE* tended to be used synonymously within the teacher education context. Within this thesis, the term *social studies* is also used interchangeably with these terms; as is explained in more detail later in this chapter, all terms tend to be used in relation to teaching about societies and their environments in early childhood and primary schooling.

The impetus for the research emerged from reflection (Johnston, 1996) on the kinds of sites that B.Ed. students selected as the basis of an assignment in which they were required to plan hypothetical field-based learning experiences for early childhood or primary children. Students responded to the following Social Education assignment topic (University of Tasmania, 1997):

Consider a site which is both significant to you and suitable for Social Education fieldwork. It may be (for example), a street, a place in the city, a beach, town, village, a particular house, building, suburb, a stream or mountain.... Based on the site you select, develop a plan for teaching and learning that incorporates field experiences designed to encourage a class of children to thoroughly investigate the site.

Students' propensity to choose particular kinds of sites that may amount to a hidden curriculum within fieldwork was considered worthy of further enquiry. As an educator, I could not help but reflect on the reality that tended to be before my eyes when marking the assignment work. My observation led me to enquire whether students of teaching tended to select field sites from a restricted repertoire. Geography educators have asked similar questions about what they note as the tendency for geography educators to select certain kinds of locations for fieldwork (Gold, Jenkins, Lee, Monk, Riley, Shepherd & Unwin, 1991) and have suggested that such a trend may amount to curriculum bias within the fieldwork tradition in geography—a tradition that they argue is largely taken for granted as an effective mode of encouraging learning in geography. Given the long tradition of fieldwork and excursions within early childhood and primary education and in the teaching of SOSE, it seemed that taken-for-granted fieldwork practices may present a challenge for teacher educators who aim to foster

insightful teaching that takes account of diversity, contextual specificities and contemporary debates. Similar issues about taken-for-granted practices are debated within museology (Moore, 1997) and art education (Duncum, 2000); through a critical curriculum stance, they recommend approaches that engage with contemporary everyday cultures.

On reflection, it seemed that the locations students selected for the assignment and the ways in which these places tended to be represented might amount to possible curricular bias. Yet, the assignment description implied that the parameters for the choice of sites remained fairly open. The task took students to the broader and social contexts of schooling and teacher education and incorporated the choice of sites on the basis of personal and professional considerations. The assignment topic encouraged students to focus on familiar sites. Therefore, I reflected on “the significance of the local and the everyday” (Pain, Barke, Fuller, Gough, McFarlane & Mowl, 2001, p. 3) to social geography, one of the components encapsulated within SOSE. Further scrutiny of the choice of sites suggested that these kinds of places could perhaps be out-of-step with the societal and environmental realities of children’s contemporary lives, particularly when one considers the highly diverse ways in which places are experienced. Much has been written on the various ways in which place and space are experienced and understood (Buttimer, 1980; Jacobs, 1996; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998; McDowell, 1999; Stratford, 1999). On the significance of the local and everyday to social geography, Pain et al. (2001, p. 3) state that the

focus of social geography is on people’s everyday daily living spaces. Events and process at different social scales cannot be discussed in isolation from each other; for example, global processes shape local places and processes. However, the starting point for social geography is everyday experience, and therefore analysis is usually of events and phenomena at a *local* scale—the neighbourhood, the home, the local park, the workplace, and the body. Different meanings of place, and their relation to power have a central interest.

This viewpoint suggests that the meanings of place and space are multidimensional and complex. Places may be unbounded in the sense that they are to varying degrees interconnected (Anderson, 1999; Massey, 1993) but also they may be bounded through relations to power and access. In a study of Redfern, an area known in Australia as an inner city zone of profound disadvantage, Anderson (p. 84) concludes that places considered to be discrete entities may be both bounded in various ways but may also exist within “networks of sociability.” As Massey (p. 148) argues, “places are best thought of as nets of social relations.” In the contemporary context, place tends to be recognised as encompassing many realities (Rose, 1995, as cited in Pain et al., 2001, p. 4).

A place has locational properties—it may occupy a particular portion of space or occupy an imaginary location conjured by listening to music or reading a novel. A place also has subjective meaning to people—a “sense of place.” Notions of place are not fixed or universally shared, and social geographers have shown how dominant forms of power and social identities affect what places mean to different individuals and groups. These relationships to power, and access to place, define the boundaries which include and exclude certain people.

This understanding of place underpins my enquiry about the choices students seemed to be making for particular kinds of locations for children's fieldwork and is integral to this research. This multi-dimensional view of place also has raised awareness of the highly variable ways in which children experience places and the possibilities for children's place experience to be unbounded, particularly in the contemporary global context through access to media, travel experience and family relocations (Robertson, 2000a). It is argued that the impact of such overwhelming and pervasive global interconnections may lead to a sense of retreat such as seeking refuge in the celebration of place through narrow interpretations of heritage (Duncum, 2000). Through memory, however, places are created in the mind, which adds to "complex and multi-faceted" meanings of place and space (Stratford, 1997, p. 217). The two terms, place and space, are interconnected rather than separate entities. These understandings of place and place experience underpinned the impetus for my research.

The literature suggested that the propensity to select particular kinds of places for fieldwork was raised by early childhood and primary educators of geography (Bale, 1987) as well as geography educators in higher education (Gold et al., 1991). Added to suggestions of potential bias through the narrow choice of sites were reports that SOSE has little appeal for children (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Reynolds & Moroz, 1998); likewise, civics—a closely related area of the curriculum—is described as having little attraction for students (Williamson & Thrush, 2001). In combination, these findings suggested that enquiry into the education of B.Ed. students, as teachers of SOSE, was a matter of some urgency. Although I did not wish to presume that children could appreciate only the familiar, I wanted to find out whether such a limited palette of places selected for learning through fieldwork might lead to unwitting and unacknowledged curriculum bias.

Initially I developed two research questions through which I aimed to test my presuppositions about unacknowledged curriculum bias. As the study progressed, it incorporated broader concerns and more probing research questions to take account of issues emanating from data analysis. In all, five key research questions, listed below, framed the research.

- i. What artefacts (that is, self-selected or nominated sites) did students of teaching choose for field-based curriculum planning?
- ii. What factors contributed to the choice of sites for SOSE?
- iii. What interpretations of teaching and learning were involved?
- iv. Do certain discourses provide a hegemonic curriculum framework?
- v. How do these discourses relate to ideals of inclusivity?

Following sections of this chapter discuss the context and research orientation as well as the learning area with which this study is concerned and the structure of this thesis.

Context and research orientation

The four-year degree course at the University of Tasmania is designed primarily for undergraduates, but in accord with changing and more flexible entry conditions, the cohort of students is characterised by diversity. This is particularly the case in terms of mode of entry as well as age and gender. A study of students at the University of Tasmania (Abbott-Chapman, 1998, pp. 71–72) found, for instance, that mature-age and female students tend to spend less time on campus due to family and work responsibilities; factors that also impact on young students but not usually to the same degree. In drawing upon the findings from a number of studies including that from the University of Tasmania, Abbott-Chapman argues that, in their first-year of university life, students face challenges acclimatising to academic life and its many, at times unexpected, cultural requirements. Abbott-Chapman also suggests that in-context support is preferable to assistance offered to students through add-on programs. In conjunction with other changes to expectations in tertiary teaching, the “broad spectrum of student ability and background” (Ramsden, 1992, p. 2) is thought to add to the demands faced by teachers in tertiary institutions. At the University of Tasmania, this situation of widely differing student backgrounds and experiences is exacerbated by a broader socio-economic context of relative disadvantage, a situation that has led to recent enabling programs designed to boost participation in tertiary education through “the improved recruitment and retention of students from rural and isolated areas and from low SES [socio-economic status] backgrounds” (Abbott-Chapman, 1998, p. 10).

Along with its characteristic status of socio-economic disadvantage, Tasmania is known through promotion as a tourist destination, with historic precincts and wilderness areas being the prime attractions, *all* within easy reach compared with the comparatively vast distances to be travelled on mainland Australia. Tasmania, an island state with a population of approximately 470 000, had its colonial origins at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a penal colony of some repute and in the early 1980s attracted the attention of environmental campaigners, from the mainland of Australia as well as internationally, who lobbied to prevent the damming of the Franklin River (Niall, 2002, p. 364; Robson, 1985, p. 177). In the following description, Webster (1991, pp. 65–66) locates Tasmania geographically and historically.

The Island of Tasmania occupies 26, 215 square miles, lying between 40° and 43.5° south of the equator in the same latitudes as north-western Spain and the extreme north of California, with which area it has much in common climatically. It is a mountainous Island with marked micro-climatic variations from north to south and south and east to west. The British Government’s decision to establish permanent settlements in Tasmania, was primarily to thwart the threat of a French presence and influence in Australasia.

Tasmania’s past was far from uncontested (Breen, 2001; Hay, 2002b; Kelly, 1994), and its present tends to be less harmonious and idealised than promotional imagery conveys.

It is not only historians and geographers who have drawn attention to Tasmania's darker past. As Robson (1985, p. 180) indicates, a number of Tasmanian writers have conveyed varying perceptions of Tasmania. I refer to examples of Tasmanian prose and poetry to more evocatively convey something of the multi-layered Tasmanian realities. The poet, Margaret Scott, evokes the tensions and juxtapositions that may be read in the landscape of "Flinders Island" (Scott, 1988, p. 34).

It's said the air on the island smells of death,
that the soil's flushed with blood,
but where the road's unmade it's pale sand,
slipping away into soft glittering drifts.

Flinders Island was chosen for the incarceration of Aboriginal survivors of protracted territorial conflict referred to as the black war (Breen, 2001, p. 32). European sealers established settlements there with Aboriginal women kidnapped from mainland Tasmania, and ocean-going ships foundered on the shores, contributing to the island's cultural diversity.

Other reminders point to the complex reality of contemporary Tasmanian life. Photographers such as Ricky Maynard (2003, p. 37) document Aboriginal representations of Aboriginal survival: "My work has created and continues to create photographic representations of Aboriginal people that affirm Aboriginal memories, self-knowledge and presence." Poets also refer to everyday urban reality. Again, I draw on images in poetry to convey an impression of the urban environment evocative of societal divisions. In a poem titled "Launceston", Tim Thorne (1985, p. 125–126) alludes to a spatial urban organisation characteristic of Tasmania's larger cities and towns in which public housing estates tend to be isolated from suburbs dominated by resident owners).

Walk up the hills, running your finger along
The fences. Get to know the quainter gables,
See how sandstone and fibro belong.
Roam suburbs like the divisions of your mind.

These divisions continue to be quite evident in the Tasmanian landscape. Differentiated identities tend to be perpetuated through media reporting, particularly through reporting the incidence of crime and violence in association with place names. Tasmania is not only characterised by its dark past and obvious social divisions: it is a place interconnected with other places and influences that add to its characteristic diversity. Webster (1991, p. 69) suggests that while Tasmania is an island, close observation of the material, built environment indicates that the state has not been isolated from broader influences and fashions in architecture—or indeed, it could be said, any other part of life.

In terms of formal styles Tasmania does not seem to have lacked from its isolation, as at least one of every example of the fashionable types is to be found. This wide representation of styles coupled with the scale tends to give parts of the major towns an appearance of an “architectural zoo”, displaying one of every kind. Judging by the variety of housing forms, Tasmania has, and still is, attracting people who are willing to experiment with building types.

Contemporary Tasmanian literature has conveyed evocatively the multiple realities of the Tasmanian landscape at other levels of consciousness. In exploring the subterranean layers that exist in seemingly uninhabited wilderness environments and idealised heritage landscapes through works such as *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) and *Gould’s Book of Fish* (2001), the Tasmanian novelist Richard Flanagan, has pointed to the multi-layered nature of Tasmanian life and the multiple ways in which the Tasmanian landscape may be read. In *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997, p. 4), Flanagan’s narrator describes a village created in the years following the Second World War to house refugees and migrants working on the construction of a hydro-electric power scheme.

In this land of infinite space, the huts were all built cheek by jowl, as if the buildings too covered in shivering huddles before the force and weight and silence of the unknowable, that might possibly be benign, might possibly even not care about people, but which their terrible histories—chronicles of centuries of recurring inhumanities and horrors which they carried along with a few lace doilies and curling photographs and odd habits and peculiar ways of eating—could only allow them to fear.

Yet, Tasmania is marketed for its largely nostalgic, British colonial, historic authenticity, and its pristine wilderness.

However, even well publicised attractions, such as the weekly market on Hobart’s waterfront, embody multiple realities and identities. Salamanca Place is described as a complex site of cross-cultural and historical significance (Janaczewska, 1994, p. 21).

I walk down Kelly’s Steps to Salamanca Market. To stalls clustered under spreading plane tress on a warm December morning in Hobart. Stalls selling wool and wood and wildflowers tied in bundles with satin ribbons. But it’s the fruit and vegetable stalls that I’ve come for, and that I like most. Bunches of young spinach, snow peas, carrots, choy sum, spring onions and fragrant herbs piled on trestles. Grown by the Hmong people, originally seminomadic agriculturalists from the high mountains of Laos, North Vietnam and Thailand, now market gardeners from the outskirts of Hobart. Women and children work the stalls; adult men are conspicuously absent.

On weekdays, the inherent diversity of this area is particularly evident; people from many walks of life—for example, business people, recent immigrants, students, artists and craftspeople, tourists, alternative life-stylers, the unemployed, produce merchants, farmers and politicians—contribute to the vitality of the area. This one site of iconic status as a tourist attraction is multidimensional.

From my initial reading of student work submitted for assessment, the highly promoted, largely idealised realities were the ones that students’ assignments appeared to convey. Such apparent choices seemed to stand in stark contrast to the multi-layered realities that may be read in the Tasmanian

landscape. Leary (1999), for example, describes the re-imagining of the Hobart Rivulet, a stormwater drain in the city of Hobart, as a site of adventure and largely male youth identity. As part of the built environment constructed over time, this is indeed a multi-layered site as is evident in its construction.

It's layered. You've got the old convict bricks, and then there are walls where you can see the old English masonry, and then it goes to Australian red brick, and then there's sandstone at the bottom, and then it moves right into grey besser, so you can see the time layered there. And it's quite fascinating—you wonder what is buried in the really old layers. Whose stories? Whose voices are buried under there? (p. 155)

Port Arthur, a former penal station and one of Tasmania's iconic tourist attractions, may also be read as a multi-layered site at which a fairly recent massacre of a number of Sunday visitors revived, in a most chilling way, awareness of an earlier dark and violent past. As Davison (2000) said of the 1996 event known as the Port Arthur massacre (Scott, 2003, p. 11)—a “tradition of violence, muffled by the processes of decay and preservation, has been terrifyingly revived” (p. 132).

As well as being out-of-step with complex realities embodied within Tasmania, an idealised interpretation of SOSE—or social studies as it was previously known in Australia—would seem to offer little opportunity for developing the breadth of understanding to which the learning area aspires (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 4).

It can be expected from studies of society and environment that students understand the pasts of both Australia and of other societies; that they can explain features of places and environments and the ways in which people interact with them; that they understand the nature of cultures, including those of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and of immigrants to Australia; and that they can describe and analyse the use of resources and the nature of natural and social systems.

This statement does not do justice to the recognised complexities of the learning area—or to the potential difficulties experienced in educating students of teaching to teach about an area of which they are a part, as am I, and as are the children they may one day teach.

As the brief description of the context for this study suggests, seeking a resolution to the problem involved much more systemic enquiry; much more detailed evidence was required in order to answer my questions. Assignments may not reveal the full intentions of students. The conditions for their assignment completion may not always be ideal; students tend to meet their expectations for assessment in conjunction with the balancing of multiple commitments within busy lives. As I continue to elaborate throughout this thesis, exploring the dilemma with which I was concerned demanded a multi-layered approach to research concerned with fieldwork at many levels. Wolcott (1995, p. 247), for example, says fieldwork is “on-site research conducted over a sustained period of time and requiring some degree of involvement.”

Teacher education is explored through the lens of fieldwork pedagogies, particularly with an emphasis on the places selected as field sites. Through key research questions which specifically ask students to

reflect on the sites they select for study, as students, as well as in planning fieldwork for children in early childhood and primary education, this thesis explores the socio-cultural constructs and perceived significance of fieldwork locales chosen by B.Ed. students, as compared with my pedagogic intentions and the values embedded within the curriculum framework. Through my pedagogy, I highlighted the issue of site selection through differing lenses, first from the student perspective, then with a view to B.Ed. students selecting a site for children's enquiry through fieldwork. In addition, students considered as a symbolic environment a site traditionally chosen for children's fieldwork and reflected on this site as a place of exclusion and inclusion. Further, students reflected on the kinds of sites selected from these differing perspectives—albeit within an institutional setting; a modernist space of enclosure (Lankshear, Peters & Knobel, 1996, p. 154).

Thus, this thesis is structured around “three pedagogical moments” in which Bachelor of Education students experience fieldwork in a number of ways and in a number of contexts, all with a view to developing an understanding of fieldwork pedagogy and place and space, specifically with the goal of teaching Studies of Society and Environment in early childhood or primary schools.

This thesis explores decision-making which occurs at two of these sites, notably, from the first and second pedagogical moments: “Practical fieldwork on campus” and scrutiny of the “Bulletin board display.” Following the third pedagogical moment, “Fieldwork in a symbolic environment”, as participants of this study, students reflect in retrospect on the kinds of sites selected in the first and second pedagogical moments. As the teacher educator with pedagogical responsibility, I developed my own practice of fieldwork pedagogy—albeit within certain constraints. Through an ethnographic study of this practice in one specific context, I draw lessons to enhance my understanding of teacher education—specifically, in relation to fieldwork pedagogy and teaching about place and space through fieldwork. In this respect, the study is at once an ethnography and an autoethnography.

Primarily, the course outline set the parameters for my decision-making. As indicated in the Literature Review, however, I was challenged with blending theory and practice—or theories and practices—in my own teaching, while at the same time encouraging B.Ed. students to blend theory and practice. In this role, I felt attuned to the dissonance experienced by teacher educators in teaching students of teaching *about teaching*. This context is described by Danielewicz (2001, p. 70) as a “middle ground” that also poses problems for teacher education students; it is bound with constraints for effectively preparing students for practice: “Thus, the middle ground of teacher education, consisting mainly of self-contained academic courses is fairly sterile territory unable to provide for students necessary information about the nature of schools or a sense of themselves as teachers in those schools.” As well as considering issues of teacher education, I was also drawn to questions about the teaching of Studies of Society and Environment and to preparing students of teaching to work in this area.

The initial phases of the inquiry involved exploration of relevant literature, firstly in relation to the nature of SOSE as well as to issues raised in relation to teacher education more generally. Following

these exploratory phases, the study progressed according to increased levels of understanding and findings emanating from different phases of interpretation.

Studies of society and environment: What's in a name?

The field of learning known in some contexts as Studies of Society and Environment and in others as social studies is fraught with complexity—a view conveyed and acknowledged by recent Australian texts attempting to clarify the nature of the learning area (Gilbert, 2001d; Hill, 1994; Johnston, 1989; Marsh, 2001). The complexity of the learning area reflects the shifts in social policy that have occurred in time and place, particularly in Western, English-speaking countries during the twentieth century. Similar shifts in official educational policy have occurred in countries such as the United Kingdom, where single subject alliances have continued to hold sway; Walford (2001) and Rawling (2001) suggest that the learning area of geography has also felt the impact of heated and highly politicised policy debates. As Johnston (1989) indicates, approaches to the study of social studies have shifted according to debates about the purposes of education according to aspirations for specific groups within societal hierarchies.

Given the contested nature of the social sciences and humanities from which the field is derived, it is not surprising that the learning area is value-laden and has been beset by a range of pedagogical problems, some related to contests of differing sectional interests and others to concerns about the provision of teaching for children. According to Johnston (1989, p. 1) the learning area has been the subject of controversy, conflict and uncertainty about aims, teaching approaches and the underpinning scholarly framework:

The old and new scholarly fields have made rival claims to representation in the school curriculum, as have the different schools of thought—positivist, relativist, functionalist and others—*within* the various humanities and social science fields.

What is less evident in the conflicting representations of the learning area are the different schools of thought described by Johnston (p. 1). Kennedy (2001, pp. 2–3) argues that in Australia, a direction statement for the goals of education, the *Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999), makes pronouncements that include support at a political level for the inclusion of SOSE within the school curriculum but tends to take for granted the highly contested nature of this learning area.

The value-laden nature of studying the social world presents problems that are thought to be different from those in other curriculum areas. Armento's statement (1986, p. 949) that "Social studies problems are not identical to the problems of mathematics and the natural sciences," is further elaborated and supported by Preissle-Goetz and LeCompte (1991, p. 64):

Most educators are, of course, concerned with society and culture and the people who create them. Social studies educators and researchers, however, have a special interest in society and culture because they are charged with teaching the young about the human world.

Given the lack of consensus about the nature of the human world, it stands to reason that social studies, as it is conceptualised and taught in schools, is a pedagogical construction and is inherently value-laden.

The nature of the social studies is also dynamic and, according to Gilbert and Vick (1996, p. 43), “is to some extent always being negotiated.” Evidence of the shifting matrix that makes up the learning area that students associate with learning about human life or society and environment is most readily apparent in the names used: Social Studies; the social studies or Social Education; Human Society and Environment; Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE). Furthermore, in contexts favouring a discipline-based approach to fostering social comprehension, the “subjects” of history, geography and economics may be studied in lieu of integrated subjects such as those already mentioned.

Moreover, the learning area suggested here by the name SOSE is represented, globally, by a number of terms, with each one tending to be specific to place and/or context. For example in the United States the “subject” is most commonly known as Social Studies; in the United Kingdom the area is generally described by discipline—for example, geography and history. In most states of Australia the “subject” is currently known as “Studies of Society and Environment” (Australian Education Council, 1994b). Previously in Australia it was known as Social Studies at the Early Childhood and Primary level in most sectors of education, including Tasmanian government and independent schools.

Terms such as SOSE, Social Education, Social Science, and Social Studies have tended to indicate differing conceptualisations of the nature of the learning area—each one, in addition, contested by advocates of learning through discrete disciplines. To add to the complexity, SOSE is the term used at the policy level in all Australian states with the exception of New South Wales where it is known as Human Society and its Environments. Furthermore, the area continues to be known by all labels, all of which, to some extent, remain in use. Since the context for this thesis is Tasmania, an Australian state in which SOSE is currently the term used within formal government documents and discourse and in most schools, this will be the name used where appropriate throughout this work. It should be noted, however, that the term is not commonly in use outside Australia; nor is it available as a descriptor in a recent edition of the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary* (Macquarie University, 1998), a dictionary published in Australia. Moreover, the meaning of social studies cited therein gives *one* interpretation only, of the term social studies and hence does not imply the problematic nature of the learning area. In Tasmania, the hybrid forms of the learning area—as described in various policy documents—have evolved differently from those in other states. As with all curriculum, social studies or SOSE is a construction (Brady & Kennedy, 1999; Gilbert, 1996b, p. 9) evolving from the choices that are made (Kliebard, 1977, p. 260; Lovat & Smith, 1995, p. 24; and Walker, 1992, p. 109) within historical,

social, cultural and political milieux. However, in the teaching of social studies or SOSE, teachers who are agents within such milieux are also charged with the responsibility for teaching and learning in an area of which they are a part.

It is in the practical teaching and learning context that the learning area is further conceptualised, interpreted and negotiated, resulting in myriad computations and permutations, including both continuity and change. For example, in attempting to answer the question, “How did Social Studies teachers teach?” in social studies classrooms in the United States, Cuban (1991, p. 199), concluded that over the last 100 years both stability and change existed simultaneously: “Even in the midst of strenuous efforts to market reforms in curriculum, instruction, and classroom organization, social studies teachers blended continuity and change into their dominant ways of instruction.” Similar fluctuations have existed in the Australian context. The teaching of social studies has been shaped to some degree by policy changes and changes to the official curriculum documents that are used as blueprints for teaching practice (Johnston, 1989). Despite a surfeit of recommendations, however, SOSE as well as the closely related curriculum area of civics is reported to have little appeal for children (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Reynolds & Moroz, 1998, Williamson & Thrush, 2001); this tendency is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Not surprisingly, there have been suggestions about how to redress such dislike for a learning area that would appear to be crucial if students are to understand the worlds in which they live.

Findings from one major study (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994, p. 10) exploring student outcomes and attitudes as well as activities in SOSE classrooms pointed to a connection between increasing student alienation from the learning area as students progressed through schooling. Another finding pointed to a possible reason for such alienation: it appeared that as students progressed through schooling they experienced more passive strategies in SOSE and there was also a decline in the frequency of opportunity for student fieldwork or excursions. Accordingly, this study suggested addressing the alienation of students by introducing more active strategies—the study recommended “less use of ‘passive’ strategies such as completing worksheets and more use of ‘active’ strategies such as inquiry-based learning using a variety of resources” (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994, p. 10). Such suggestions for inquiry-based learning are encouraged for their potential to provide students with “opportunities to perceive connections and relationships in their studies and apply their understandings to their everyday lives” (p. 10). At the most overt level, this is the approach suggested also by the SOSE guidelines in Tasmania (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b).

Thesis structure

This chapter has outlined the significance of the study and the research orientation as well as the various contexts within which the research is situated. The next chapter examines teacher education literature as a prelude to arriving at the pedagogical rationale that underpins the approach taken in

preparing students of teaching as teachers of SOSE in early childhood and primary contexts. In Chapter 3, I outline this rationale in some detail with reference to two paintings by Jeffrey Smart (Capon, 1999; reproduced by permission in Appendix A), to elucidate the themes that informed my pedagogical approach.

Chapter 4 outlines the research approach for this multi-layered, multi-phase study in more detail. It describes the methods of data collection and the multi-mode approach to data analysis and interpretation. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of data emanating from the first pedagogical moment with particular reference to data emanating from the naturalistic teaching context as well as with reference to survey data. Chapter 6 focuses on data emanating from the second pedagogical moment. In that chapter, I am particularly concerned with the fieldwork locations students selected for their assignment. Chapter 7 discusses key findings from analysis of survey data emanating from Question 6 of the survey (see Appendix C, Table C.1) and discusses the discourses encapsulated within interview data and select survey data, comparing and contrasting these discourses with six key discourses mobilised by participants in their justification of their choice of sites for SOSE. In Chapter 8, I elaborate on the third pedagogical moment and analyse interview data in light of the discourses already discussed in previous chapters. In Chapter 9, I conclude this naturalistic study with a summation of the research journey and discussion of the findings and research conclusions.

Chapter 2

Blending theory and practice in teacher education

Introduction

This chapter reviews teacher education literature with a view to formulating the pedagogical rationale for the specific teacher education context of this study. The literature review briefly discusses the political climate within which teacher education exists and focuses on debates surrounding the blending of theory and practice, an issue which is inter-related with a number of broader contemporary issues and debates in teacher education, as well as other disciplines and fields of enquiry. The chapter discusses the influence of constructivist perspectives to teacher education pedagogies and reviews a number of approaches suggested for facilitating the blending of theory and practice. These range from recommendations for school-based teacher education and a refocusing on the importance of a knowledge base for teaching to recommendations for the use of cases, case methods and critical incidents, action research, reflection and reflective practice. In conclusion, the realistic approach to teacher education proposed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) is outlined and discussed in some detail with a view to what it may contribute to the research approach of this study.

Teacher education and the theory/practice nexus

In any one time or place, public discourse tends to value certain beliefs about what, how, and where students of teaching should learn (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998). In Australia, teacher education currently exists within what Sachs and Groundwater-Smith (1999, p. 226) describe as a “changing landscape of teacher education.” Tripp (1993, p. 151) and Elliott (1998) note pressures for change in teacher education more broadly; in Australia, the Commonwealth-funded report, *Preparing a Profession: Report of the National Standards and Guidelines for Initial Teacher Education Project* (Adey, 1998) suggests that teacher education providers and their teacher educators should meet formal government expectations in producing particular kinds of graduates. Recent expectations to produce a particular kind of product are set against earlier policies based upon constructivist notions of learning and knowledge creation; the *Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science* (DEET, 1989, cited in Klein, 2000, p. 347), is one such example. In turn, constructivist approaches followed on from earlier behaviourist orientations. Such varying points of view all contribute to the debate surrounding teacher education.

Within this debate, there is some accord regarding the overwhelming complexity and uncertainty of teacher education (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, cited in Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 12; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 8; Feimen-Nemser & Floden, 1986, p. 523). It is widely considered that teacher education is far from unproblematic (Adler, 1991b, p. 218; Brookfield, 1995, p. xi; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Christensen, Massey, Isaacs, & Synott, 1995; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 162; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Lanier & Little, 1986, p. 527). Integral to such uncertainty is another dominant debate in the teacher education literature—the theory/practice divide (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998, p. 14; Halliday, 1996).

A disjunction between theory and practice is offered as an explanation for the commonly held concern that students of teaching do not exhibit the kinds of teaching practices for which their teacher educators hope. It would appear that the trend for students of teaching to uphold the status quo has contributed to concerns about the blending of theory and practice and that in teacher education this issue has been long lasting.

Effective communication between theory and practice has been the primary concern of teacher educators for over two decades. It continues to challenge those whose task it is to develop preservice teacher education programs which integrate professional knowledge and classroom teaching practice. (Waghorn & Stevens, 1996, p. 48)

Thornton (1993) found that students of teaching do not display the kinds of teaching practices that they learned in their teacher education institution. This phenomenon has been described as the “wash out effect” (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981, cited in Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 11). Thus it is argued that the problem is one of transferring theory to practice. According to Lake and Williamson (2000, p. 26), the theory/practice debate is also related to “tensions (that) exist between teacher educators and the profession over the nature and duration of the practical experience that teacher education programs provide for pre-service teachers.” It is thought that students of teaching tend to be concerned with practice rather than the theoretical ideas that may underpin practice.

There are also debates about the meanings of the terms theory and practice. Within common usage, the terms “theory” and “practice” have fairly well agreed upon meanings. Yet, within academic discourse the meanings are less transparent; they have been debated in relation to differing views of knowledge and recently have become much contested, not only in teacher education but also across disciplines. Are the concepts, for example, divided or integrated; dynamic or static; or multiple? Do they alter according to time and place? Understandings of what it means to blend theory and practice depend to some extent on the ways the terms themselves are understood. As I will demonstrate in the next section, the terms theory and practice are contested and lead to varying contemporary approaches for the blending of theory and practice.

Theory/practice: Multiple interpretations and shades between

In education, the term *theory* is most commonly taken as meaning the reasons given to explain a particular event. More specifically, theory is defined as either “a coherent set of propositions” (*Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Education*, 1989, p. 326) or an “integrated statement of principles” (Biggs & Moore, 1993, p. 532) used to explain a viewpoint, behaviour, event, or action. Theory is an explanation of *practice*, a term usually taken to mean the kind of action and behaviours evident in the classroom. Likewise, in teacher education, the concepts theory and practice are frequently seen as a dichotomy (Lake & Williamson, 2000). Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 195) describe the theory/practice divide as “a long-standing dilemma” involving “a tension between the need for teachers to *understand* teaching and the need to be able to *perform teaching*.”

From this viewpoint, the terms *theory* and *practice* relate to those of *passivity* and *activity*: “the theoretical knower is a passive contemplator, a recipient of food for thought; the practical agent is a practical doer” (Mautner, 1999, p. 563). According to the *Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Education* (1989, p. 288), practice is what “normally ... takes place in a school.” This explanation tends to suggest that theory may be associated with what is learned in a teacher education course in an institution of higher learning. However, one definition of the practicum, sometimes also known as a school experience placement, suggests that this mode of teacher education offers access to both theory and practice; the practicum is described as a “course of instruction which closely relates theory and practice, both usually being carried out at about the same time” (p. 250). Thus, it would seem that the school is the site for learning about theory and practice, the university for learning theory. In simplistic terms, the divide between theory and practice suggests that the two sites of teacher education—the institution of higher learning and the school as the site of practical, vocational learning (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 195; Halliday, 1996, p. 54)—have different roles.

However, according to contemporary debates, the allocation of the concepts according to a division of labour is an oversimplification. In teaching and teacher education, the term theory also refers to the body of knowledge that informs action; in this instance, classroom practice. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 196) describe the body of knowledge as “a very lengthy and diverse knowledge base which teachers ideally ought to have.” Theory contributes to the formal content of courses for students of teaching; content seen as useful for informing practice. Students of teaching are expected to transfer the knowledge base of teaching, itself a shifting scene, into appropriate action in the uncertain human world of teaching. Therefore, students of teaching tend to be confronted with complexity.

Handbooks reviewing teacher education literature (Anderson, 1995a; Murray, 1996b; Sikula, 1996) convey the complex and evolving nature of the knowledge base of education, a vast array of theoretical ideas and conceptual frameworks that are interdisciplinary in nature. In the Preface to the *International Encyclopedia of Teaching and Teacher Education*, Anderson (1995c) notes how the

predominantly linear process/product model of teacher education has changed to an interdisciplinary model:

Several significant changes have taken place since the entries for the first edition were written. Some of these changes are conceptual and theoretical; others are philosophical; still others are methodological. Consequently, a fairly exclusionary psychological emphasis on teaching and learning has given way to a multidisciplinary point of view (which includes sociological and anthropological perspectives). Philosophically, the search for universal laws and truths has been replaced with a search for “conditional knowledge” (that is, the need to understand both the knowledge and the conditions within which this knowledge holds). (p. xvi)

The varied perspectives on teacher education indicated by Anderson (1995c), Biggs and Moore (1993), Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren and Peters (1996), Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins (1998), Hatton (1994) and Weber and Mitchell (1995) exemplify the overwhelming potential complexity in understanding both education and teacher education. Inherent within this complexity is the great diversity of theoretical ideas. Consequently, it may be more appropriate to speak of *theories or theoretical ideas* rather than theory. From this perspective, transferring theory to practice would seem to be no easy matter, particularly since it would appear that teacher education takes place not only in the formal institutions of tertiary education and/or schooling but also through folk theories and practices, media images in popular culture, literature and in the residues of historical shifts in dominant theories and practice. Hence, teacher education exists within wider frames of reference—psychological, political, historical, spatial, cultural and social. According to Weber and Mitchell (p. 5),

There is growing recognition that becoming a teacher begins long before people ever enter a Faculty of Education (for example, Britzman, 1986; Bullough, Knowles and Crow, 1991; Cole and Knowles, 1994; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Day, 1990; Goodson and Walker, 1991; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Raymond, Butt and Townsend, 1992; Zeichner and Tabachnik, 1981). However, the images of schooling in everyday life outside of school are often neglected, and treated as if they were on the other side of the line that divides school from “non-school.”

For students of teaching, it seems likely that the effort involved in transferring theory to practice, or blending theories and practices, may be difficult; there is likely to be a dissonance between what they already know about teaching and learning and what they are expected to know. This dissonance tends to be exacerbated by different expectations and their differentiated roles as students and as teachers, in mind and in the making (Danielewicz, 2001).

Halliday (1996, p. 29) points out that even within the one discipline, there are a number of theories that attempt to offer explanations about education. Theoretical ideas in favour at any one time alter in some contexts; in others they may endure. For example, in many contexts, cognitive psychology and particularly constructivism are currently seen to offer more useful insights than behaviourism. However, some contexts such as special education and vocational education and training continue to favour behaviourist models of teaching and learning. In teacher education, behaviourist orientations exist alongside other theoretical ideas: as Howey (1996, p. 155) notes, in teacher education, “the

competency or performance-based teacher education movement” has its origins in process–product studies which were underpinned by behaviourist psychology. A similar trend, standards-setting in teacher education (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998; Howey, 1996; Lake & Williamson, 2000, pp. 27–30), exists alongside and competes with calls for constructivist teacher education (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Carlson, 1999, p. 203; Richardson, 1997, p. 3) and counter-criticisms of such pleas. Thus, there exist at the one time a number of theoretical viewpoints.

An additional complication occurs when, no matter what the discipline of origin, theory (or theories) are viewed as synonymous with codified and static bodies of knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin (1995, pp. 7–8), argue that popular usage of the terms tends to conflate the meanings of theory and theoretical knowledge in such a way that the terms become associated with knowledge as certainty rather than knowledge arising from processes of enquiry which are human enterprises arising from particular understandings of topics being explored. In drawing on the work of Schwab (1962), Connelly and Clandinin (p. 8) suggest that the term “theory” tends to become a “rhetoric of conclusions” since the theoretical knowledge that contributed to theory remains hidden: “the codified outcomes of inquiry” are emphasised to the exclusion of “an understanding of the phenomena represented, the inquiry methodologies at work, the inquiry context, and the role of human agency in the inquiry” (p. 8). When theory is viewed as the “codified outcomes of enquiry” there is a danger that theory may be seen as static.

Both theory and practice are potentially dynamic constructs and subject to re-evaluation and reconstruction. Hence, theory and practice—or theories and practices—are always potentially in the process of revision. Theories are not only produced through formal enquiry; they are also derived from practice: “Some theories and frameworks are formulated by educational theorists and researchers. Others are derived by the teachers themselves as they engage in the practice of teaching” (Anderson, 1995b, p. 89). A similar view is that theories are synonymous with stories that inform practice. Such stories, according to Marland (as cited in Anderson, p. 90), are “deeply rooted in personal experiences, especially in-school ones, [which] are based on interpretations of those experiences and act as frames of reference.” Such stories comprise a theoretical basis upon which practice proceeds: “a theory which shapes action in the classroom and is constructed from interpretation of past actions” (p. 90). According to this view, theory is grounded in earlier experience and the interpretation of past actions. Potentially there are a number of informal theories which inform action.

In an attempt to understand what may underpin informal theoretical ideas that shape practice, more recent research has therefore focused on such understandings: prior beliefs of students of teaching (Joram & Gabrielle, 1998, p. 175), images (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, pp. 180–185), conceptions (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, pp. 165–167; Elbaz, 1983, and Calderhead & Robson, 1991, both cited in Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 161), metaphors (Munby, 1986, cited in Russell & Munby,

1991, p. 165) and personal theories (Beattie, 1995, p. 7; Carter, 1990, cited in Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 161). It is argued that as alternative frameworks to formal theories, these ways of knowing may be strongly held and largely taken-for-granted points of view and, therefore, resistant to change (Biggs & Moore, 1993)—a viewpoint also supported by Marland, (1993, p. 54) with reference to other studies. Interesting as it may be to understand more about students' preconceptions, it is argued that the usefulness of such knowledge is not clear (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, p. 515, cited in Marland, 1993).

The notion of transferring theory to practice is not only difficult: understandings of expert knowledge—what expert teachers know—indicate that understanding of teaching and learning is *situated in practice*. This is the point of view suggested by the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Shulman, 1986, cited in Gimmestad & Hall, 1995, p. 551). According to Gold (1996, p. 586), PCK comprises “a special blend of content and pedagogy [which] includes useful ways to conceptualize and represent commonly taught topics in a given subject.” Understanding the complexity involved in building pedagogical content knowledge adds some clarity to the difficulties involved in transferring theory to practice. There would appear to be many facets that contribute to such understanding—observation, interpretation, considering alternatives, the building of elaborate schemata and consideration of the learner. Gold (p. 586) believes PCK requires teachers to “build elaborate schemata to connect the theoretical and practical knowledge into their teaching.” Howey (1996, p. 161) adds to this list another component, knowledge of the learner—a dimension that adds immeasurably to the complexities teachers face in pedagogical decision-making.

Through theorising and teaching, theory and practice—or theories and practices—are always in the process of construction. Since both schools and institutions are sites of teaching, both are also sites of theorising. In both sites, theory is constructed through practice as well as through more formal processes of theory construction and research. Moreover, there is no division of labour as is often taken for granted when practice is taken to mean the kind of action and behaviours evident in the classroom. Teacher education institutions are not only sites of consumption of knowledge. They are also sites of production of knowledge through theorising, research, and teaching, just as are schools. As sites of theorising, it is also likely that teachers in both settings will draw upon espoused theories and theories in use. The notion of transferring theory to practice would appear to be flawed (Marland, 1993, p. 53).

The doctrine about the separateness of theory and practice is now seen as seriously flawed (Smyth, 1988), as is the view that theorising and production of knowledge on the one hand, and practical activities on the other, are best undertaken by researchers and teachers, respectively. For these positions to be valid says Carr (1984), “teaching would have to be some kind of mechanical behaviour performed by robot-like characters in a completely unthinking way” (p. 1), a position which teacher thinking research rejects utterly.

Consequently, many scholars question the theory/practice divide as the dominant dilemma of teacher education (Anderson, 1995b, p. 90; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 195; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998, p. 14; Schön, 1983; Russell, 1998). Yet the problem remains. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the theory/practice divide continues to be cited in the literature as one of the problems central to blending theory and practice in teacher education. In many respects, however, the theory/practice divide is an oversimplification of the problem. There are, after all, *many* theories and practices.

Clearly, students of teaching are not blank slates or automatons awaiting inculcation into the world of schooling, whether as teacher or teacher/learner. Students of teaching are people situated within a particular frame that prioritises education—itsself an institution with a long history even if that history has been shaped during the twentieth century by psychology, or *psychologies*, the discipline which many consider to be the dominant discourse (Halliday, 1996). The rise of mass education and comprehensive schooling fostered an interest in teaching and learning; in teacher education it led to an interest in ensuring that students of teaching understood the science of teaching and learning. However, traces and residues of past theories and practices exist alongside dominant and emerging views and understandings of teacher education—itsself a dynamic and changing field of understanding not immune from wider frames of reference and philosophical perspectives.

Formal expectations to produce particular kinds of graduates sit alongside and within historical, cultural, social and political landscapes. For teacher educators who understand their roles in this way, such complexity presents challenges: the expectations are many; the terrain contested. Teacher educators work within “blustery” landscapes which offer no certain path to follow. For teacher educators, the theory/practice debate presents particular dilemmas. On the one hand, teacher educators working in academic settings have dual roles (Lake & Williamson, 2000, p. 27). They tend to be both theoreticians and researchers. Additionally, they are *teachers* who face dilemmas in attempting to incorporate many different types of study and practice into a coherent and effective course (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 195).

Several issues pertinent to the blending of theory and practice have emerged from this discussion of the theory/practice nexus. In one respect, theory and practice are not exclusively separate entities. Theories may be enacted in practice as well as espoused. Likewise, according to one view (Marland, cited in Anderson, 1995b, p. 90), theories, in the form of stories, are frames of reference based on experience and shaping behaviour. In a narrower sense, drawing on a definition of theory cited earlier in this chapter (*Penguin Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Education*, 1989, p. 326), theories are “coherent sets of propositions,” a notion of theory which tends to delimit potential spheres of influence. In turn such theoretical influences may, or may not, be acknowledged; yet, they are likely to be evident in action and may also be reflected through stories about action, in this instance of classroom events.

According to such understandings, the terms are not dichotomous; rather they may merge in action or may be contradictory. Espoused theory is not necessarily the same as enacted theory. Further, espoused theory may not encapsulate all influences evident in enacted theory. It is argued that any such statement (Spivak, 1990, pp. 18, 19, cited in Klein, 1993, p. 378) tends to be limiting: it is likely that “when a narrative is constructed, something is left out. When an end is defined, other ends are rejected, and one might not know what those ends are.” To speak from one theoretical standpoint may be fraught with problems, particularly given the likely limitations of any one theory in explaining what really occurs, particularly within situated action.

Further, theories and practices are in the process of construction, at once situatedly constrained and full of creative potential. Thus, to speak of the transfer of theory to practice is an oversimplification. Current understandings of the mind as “embodied, situated and social” (New London Group, 2000) tend to problematise the transfer from theory to practice; it is more appropriate to speak of a theory/practice nexus that includes the teacher educator and the teacher education context as integral to learning and knowing (Putnam & Borko, 2000, p. 13), alongside and within other “complex relationships.”

The next section discusses contemporary approaches of teacher education that have emerged in response to the theory/practice dilemma. In various ways, these contemporary approaches are also related to perspectives of knowing and learning as well as a range of intellectual viewpoints contributing to contemporary approaches. There is, however, particular emphasis on constructivist perspectives.

The influence of constructivism

Most contemporary approaches to teacher education are differing pedagogical and curriculum interpretations based on a premise that knowledge construction by students of teaching and expert teachers is problematic. As may be expected, a number of hotly contested and at times contradictory practices exist in the contemporary scene. However, many of these contemporary approaches are based on a constructivist perspective of learning and knowledge creation. Constructivism is described as the active construction of new knowledge by individuals; and according to some versions of constructivism, the active construction of new knowledge on the part of the individual within socio-cultural contexts—“knowledge is not something we acquire but something we produce; ... the objects in an area of inquiry are not there to be discovered, but are invented or constructed” (Mautner, 1999, p. 111). Given the influence of constructivist perspectives in teacher education, I briefly discuss the perspective and associated trends in more detail before presenting a discussion of each contemporary approach in turn.

Constructivist perspectives are a relatively recent influence in teacher education (Howey, 1996, p. 152; Richardson, 1997, p. 3). It is argued that constructivist debates are concerned with whether

common understandings are shaped through human biological features which “lead people to search for particular patterns of information” (Gelman, Massey & McManus, 1991, cited in Resnick, 1991, p. 12); whether they are socially constructed through interaction, for example, direct social experience such as formal and informal modes of learning; or whether understanding is historically and socially situated, even determined. In addition, there are a number of versions of constructivism (Dagher & D’Ambrosio, 1996, p. 248; McInerney & McInerney, 1998), with discussions primarily concerned with interrelations between the social and the cognitive (Ernest, 1994, cited in Klein, 2000, p. 350; Resnick, 1991, p. 2; Richardson, 1997, p. 8; Samaras & Gismondi, 1998, pp. 716–717). According to Howey (1996, p. 152) a “major tenet of a constructivist conception of learning” is that knowledge is not only individually constructed: “understanding is situated and context bound, and social interactions are deeply intertwined with the development of tools for understanding.” Taking a social constructivist approach, Vadeboncoeur (1997, pp. 29–35) argues the case for “emancipatory constructivism,” a version which aims to unsettle the status quo through acknowledging power relationships and inequality in society. From several of the viewpoints I have just indicated, it is thought that understanding is socially rather than individually constructed.

Klein notes (1999, p. 84) that through public policy, constructivist perspectives have influenced the pedagogical role-relationships between teacher educator and student of teaching. Speaking as a teacher educator—albeit as an educator in mathematics curriculum—Klein (p. 84) comments on the place and influence of constructivism on teacher education in Australia:

Constructivism officially found its way into teacher education in Australia via the *Discipline Review of Teacher Education in Mathematics and Science* (1989). The pedagogical implications drawn out in this document were that teacher educators should allow preservice teachers to construct their own knowledge through problem solving, exploration, conjecture and invention, through working in groups and learning to communicate mathematically so that they would replicate this approach in schools. The role of the teacher educator was that of a “partner in the construction of knowledge”, rather than that of a “giver of knowledge” (*Discipline Review*, 1989, p. 29).

Concomitantly, there has been a shift from teaching to learning with the understanding that information is not necessarily transmitted from teacher to learner (Collins, Greeno & Resnick, 1995). Accordingly, Collins, Greeno and Resnick speak of “learning environments rather than teaching methods” (p. 340) and suggest that constructivist understandings of learning and knowledge creation have influenced a further “shift in perspective” which “involves recognizing that learning and work are not separate activities.”

From the viewpoints of all variations of constructivism, there are arguments against the transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner—what Biggs and Moore (1993, p. 24) refer to as a quantitative conception of teaching which “focuses on increasing, memorising and reproducing and applying knowledge.” A constructivist perspective does not preclude the place of direct instruction, however. Rather than a denial of quantitative conceptions of knowledge creation, Biggs and Moore argue that the quantitative conception of learning is not all there is—if learning stops there, learning is restricted.

Such a conception does not include the potential for qualitative change; for learning for understanding, for changing one's way of seeing and ultimately, one's identity. Intervening between the two conceptions of learning already described is a third conception—the institutional conception of learning (p. 25), which may subvert learning for meaning, particularly if students think that the responsibility for learning resides with the teacher. As Biggs and Moore (p. 25) continue to explain, from this viewpoint, learning is dominated by institutional values and comprises what is “taught and evaluated” in the institutional context; teachers are charged with the role of managing resources and students—“Teaching is the orchestration of teaching skills” (p. 25). Hence, students make meaning which is influenced by contextual factors—including inherent institutional attributes of authority, control and institutional power relationships (Klein, 2000; Richardson, 1997, p. 7; Zevenbergen, 1996).

Contemporary approaches to teacher education

Contemporary approaches to teacher education reflect the influence of constructivist perspectives to learning and teaching and more recently, socio-cultural cognition (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Such perspectives have led to the identification of the school or hypothetical representations of it, through case studies, for example, as the favoured site for learning about teaching. However, other contemporary approaches also emphasise the importance of experience for learning about teaching. In prioritising *reflection* as the concept integral for facilitating learning to teach, several approaches draw upon a concept that has become something of a mantra in teacher education. For this reason it tends to be difficult to isolate a raft of recommendations for cases and case methods, critical incidents, action research, teacher research, practitioner research and reflective practice, one from another.

Differing interpretations of these approaches draw upon differing values or traditions—what Gore (1993, p. 152), drawing upon Foucault, refers to as “regimes of truth.” *Reflection* does not always mean the same thing; nor do the labels applied to various approaches drawing upon reflection as a means for blending theory and practice in teacher education. For this reason, it is difficult to isolate one approach from another. There tend to be degrees of overlap between, for example, critical incidents and action research, action research and reflective practice, cases and case methods and action research.

Following sub-sections of this chapter elaborate on the contemporary approaches mentioned above in addition to other contemporary approaches discussed in the literature. The approaches discussed are school-based teacher education; re-emphasising educational scholarship; cases, case methods and critical incidents; action research; reflection and the reflective practitioner model; and a realistic approach to teacher education. Two of these approaches—school-based teacher education and re-emphasising educational scholarship—are largely based on differing views of theory and practice.

The first approach has many similarities to vocational education; the second prioritises a knowledge base. Both of these approaches, as well as several other approaches discussed in this section, are similar in their inclusion of reflection as an operational concept, whether implied or stated. However, each has defining characteristics and is, therefore, discussed individually.

School-based teacher education

Within teacher education literature, school-based teacher education is one approach widely discussed (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 4; Darling-Hammond, 1992, cited in Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996; Elliott, 1993a; Halliday, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; McIntyre, Byrd & Foxx, 1996; Tripp, 1993). Such programs of teacher education occur either in whole or in part in the context of schooling. Schools are favoured as sites of teacher education, and school personnel are valued as being particularly worthy of educating students of teaching; it is thought that they have practical understanding of what it is to teach in school. Therefore, it is argued, students of teaching will learn the real task of teaching through a form of vocational education. In this way, it is considered that the theory/practice dilemma may be side-stepped; students of teaching will not be faced with taking responsibility for blending academic theory and classroom practice.

The notion of training teachers in schools is nothing new. The apprenticeship model of preparing teachers was an early model of teacher education with the preparation of monitors in the dame schools of the nineteenth century. Among the factors influencing the recent revival of such an approach is the view that teacher knowledge is constructed in the situated context of the classroom. Also influential were early studies indicating widespread student dissatisfaction with the nature of initial teacher education—particularly courses offered in tertiary institutions rather than in schools (Barone, Berliner, Blanchard, Casanova, & McGowan, 1996, pp. 1108–1109; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 9; Ashton, 1996, cited in Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 4; Lanier & Little, 1986, pp. 542–543). Another impetus to school-based teacher education emerged from school-based teacher professional development with its emphasis on life-long learning and the view that teachers learn through experiential learning by reflecting on their teaching experience.

However, school-based teacher education has received considerable criticism (McIntyre, Byrd & Foxx, 1996) for the limitations posed by the context of learning as well as uncertainties about how to structure contextual learning for students of teaching—and when. This approach is seen to be difficult for students of teaching, particularly due to the tensions students experience in meeting differing expectations. On the one hand there are expectations for them to be teachers and scholars; on the other hand, they tend to be socialised into institutional structures (p. 175). There may be little impetus for students to seek broader understandings, particularly if such ways of thinking and acting are threatening to taken-for-granted school practices. There are also potential limitations in learning how to teach in differing socio-cultural contexts. It has been shown that conversations between cooperating

teachers and students of teaching deal with routines and learners rather than issues of curriculum and pedagogy. McIntyre, Byrd and Foxx (pp. 173–174) sum up many of the concerns:

... research often depicts the influence of the cooperating teacher on the student teacher in negative terms (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). For example, Winitzky, Stoddart, and O’Keefe (1992) found that when student teachers introduced a constructivist approach to teaching, the cooperating teacher quickly intervened and made the student teacher quickly conform to the cooperating teacher’s didactic expectations. Applegate (1986) discovered that the interpersonal relationship between the cooperating teacher and student teacher focused primarily on pupils in the classroom. Virtually nothing is said about curriculum. What is taught is either not noticed or is taken for granted in the given situation. Little is said between cooperating teacher and student teacher about instructional strategies. As a result, research challenges the assumption that any teacher who is effective with children in the classroom has the capacity to be a successful teacher trainer (Koerner, 1992).

Given such criticisms it is surprising that school-based teacher education has attained dominance, within some national systems, particularly given the emphasis on blending theory and practice as a central dilemma of teacher education. The reasons are many and varied and have as much to do with educational justifications as conditions within which teacher education exists. According to Elliott (1993a), school-based teacher education tends to be politically and economically expedient. On the one hand, the knowledge of teacher educators and their roles has become devalued—a phenomenon that exists alongside a revaluing of vocational education in many fields. On the other hand, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 4) suggest that the popularity of the approach has “as much to do with political, economic and ideological factors as it has with any genuine concern for, and understanding of, quality in teacher education.” Understanding such factors would seem imperative for understanding what happens in school and vice versa.

Zeichner and Liston (1996, p. xi) argue that current social, economic and political conditions make all the more urgent the need for students of teaching to understand the school as a site within broader contextual influences and interdependent with them.

Public attitudes about competition and excellence, race and ethnicity, gender roles and homosexuality, and the environment affect students inside and outside of schools. One can be certain that the issues that affect all of our lives outside of school will certainly influence students inside their schools.

In drawing on the work of Armiline and Hoover (1989), Feiman-Nemser (1983) and Griffin et al. (1983), McIntyre, Byrd and Foxx (1996, p. 171) also highlight potential limitations: “practice alone does not always lead to analysis, reflection, and growth on the part of the novice teacher.” Zeichner and Liston (1996, p. x) argue that if learning about teaching occurs only within the confines of the school, understanding about education, schooling and teaching and learning may be severely limited.

What goes on inside schools is greatly influenced by what occurs outside of schools. The students who attend and the teachers and administrators who work within those walls bring into the school building all sorts of cultural assumptions, social influences, and contextual dynamics. Unless some concerted attention is given to those assumptions, influences, and dynamics, to the reality of school lives and to the conditions of schooling, our future teachers will be ill prepared.

Given such substantial weight of argument regarding the limitations of school-based teacher education and their associated implications, it is little wonder that many other alternative approaches are recommended for blending theory and practice.

Re-emphasising educational scholarship

One of the alternative approaches to school-based teacher education—re-emphasising educational scholarship—emerged as a reaction to many of the limitations discussed in the previous section. Notably, it is argued that the potential lack of academic and scholarly rigour of school-based teacher education called for more emphasis on students of teaching to become familiar with the knowledge-base of teaching. Hence, there is a renewed focus on the knowledge-base integral to understanding teaching (Murray, 1996a), albeit a shifting scene with evolving conceptual frameworks. Teacher education is considered an intellectual endeavour and one which cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the institution of schooling from disciplinary perspectives. Yet, as has been noted already, there is little agreement about which theoretical ideas to prioritise. Likewise, there is lack of agreement about curriculum orientations and pedagogies appropriate for blending theory and practice.

Two recent texts for students of teaching highlight such issues. Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins (1998) recommend that students of teaching should aspire to be teacher/scholars skilled at textual analysis—reading the institution of schooling as a text. In their text, *Teaching: Challenges and Dilemmas*, they provide signposts helpful for students of teaching to deconstruct the text of schooling. Hatton (1994) invites students of teaching to engage in critical inquiry into the debate surrounding multiple contexts of schooling set within the “wider institution of the school and the broader society of which teachers are a part” (p. 15). The text by Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins is historically situated; Hatton’s socially and culturally situated. Hatton, for example, includes differing historical perspectives of the development of mass schooling that are not grounded in a particular Australian story. Despite different ideological orientations and pedagogical approaches, both texts are attempts to integrate the *understanding of teaching and schooling* with practice. However, as textbooks, both works imply a body of knowledge required for understanding teaching, which *yet* has to be transferred to classroom practice.

Accordingly, there are varied pedagogical approaches that attempt to facilitate the integration of theory and practice. Apart from concerted efforts by teacher educators who encourage their students to link vocational learning during school experience with theoretical ideas learned in the institution of higher education (and vice versa), other alternatives exist. The use of cases, case methods, action

research and reflective practice, including reflection, are approaches that I discuss in following sub-sections.

Cases, case methods and critical incidents

Cases and case-based methods are widely cited as a contemporary approach of teacher education (Ben Peretz, 1995, p. 545; Carter & Anders, 1996; Huyvaert, 1995; McAninch, 1995; Merseth, 1996; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Tripp, 1993). Through cases representing practical events, students learn through vicarious rather than actual experience. According to Merseth (1996, p. 722) “cases and case methods offer a particularly promising opportunity for teacher educators, teacher education programs, and those who wish to understand more deeply the human endeavour called teaching.” Putnam and Borko (2000, p. 8) indicate that case-based approaches in teacher education now exploit interactive multimedia and hypermedia which have the advantage of non-linearity lacking in written cases. No matter what technology is used to represent reality, cases and case-based methods have similar aims.

Case-based teaching provides another approach for creating meaningful settings for teacher learning (Doyle, 1990; Leinhardt, 1990; Merseth, 1996; Sykes & Bird, 1992). Rather than putting teachers *in* particular classroom settings, cases provide vicarious encounters with those settings. This experience *of* the setting may afford reflection and critical analysis that is not possible when acting in the setting.

Cases may variously be illustrative of practice and/or provide opportunities for practising decision-making, problem-solving and promoting teacher thinking through reflection as well as expanding opportunities for access to multiple contexts and ethical dilemmas (Merseth, 1996). According to McAninch (1995), the approach may also be used according to different curriculum orientations. For Tripp (1993, p. 151) cases, or “critical incidents,” are also useful for learning how to teach in differing contexts.

One compelling reason for using critical incidents is that the conditions under which teachers work and are educated and certified are rapidly changing. What many teacher-educators see as two major threats to the quality of their work have recently appeared. One is the general move towards specifying professional teaching behaviour in terms of the competencies required; and the other is the particularly British and Australian move to teacher education students from tertiary education institutions, requiring them to spend up to 80 per cent of their preparation time working in schools. Under present structures this is likely to lead to a cycle of reproduction in which purely practical competencies would dominate, further deprofessionalising teaching.

In this sense, critical incidents are cases grounded in practice: teachers or students of teaching select an event from the classroom to analyse critically. Critical incidents as described by Tripp (1993) and Brookfield (1995) are cases written by teachers or students of teaching rather than by experts. Most desirably, cases of specific personal and professional relevance may act as catalysts for learning that extends beyond the immediacy of the actual event being examined. Learning through cases, case methods and critical incidents most desirably involves the integration of many kinds of knowing.

Accordingly, it is argued that teaching through cases and case methods or critical incidents has the potential to facilitate the blending of theory and practice.

One major disadvantage of using cases and case methods in teacher education is the financial, time and resource commitment required for generating suitable cases and for implementing the strategy (McAninch, 1995; Merseeth, 1996). It is also argued that “students’ prior content knowledge” significantly influences what is learned from the case (Kleinfeld, 1992a, cited in Merseeth, 1996, p. 731). Shulman (1992, p. 27, cited in McAninch, 1995, p. 587) also casts doubt on case methods as effective for integrating theory and practice; as do Merseeth & Lacey (1993, p. 287 cited in Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996, p. 1040). So although cases are an alternative to more traditional approaches, case studies present difficulties pragmatically and pedagogically. In many contemporary contexts the approach is likely to be impractical given increased class sizes. Further, Ducharme and Ducharme (p. 1040) suggest that “little [evidence] exists to support the use of case studies to enhance teacher education.”

Closely related to the use of cases and case methods is another approach much favoured in professional teacher education—action research (Henson, 1996; Marsh & Willis, 2003, pp. 249–252; Tripp, 1993). As an approach grounded in practice, action research is frequently considered conducive to blending theory and practice, but as Marsh and Willis (p. 252) explain, it is beset with its own difficulties. The approach is one which is interpreted in varying ways; and about which there are many views, not only in professional education but also in initial teacher education. As an approach recommended for blending theory and practice, action research is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Action research

Typically, action research is seen as democratic and emancipating (Elliott, 1998; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999); the primary aim for teachers is to resolve curriculum and pedagogical problems that they identify. In this respect action research is similar to other progressive approaches to education that emphasise a problem-based approach to learning (Marsh & Willis, 2003). Action research acknowledges the situated nature of cognition, as do the two approaches previously mentioned—cases and case methods, and school-based teacher education.

Through participating in action research, teachers are encouraged to engage in cycles of learning of which classroom action is one component. It is this cyclical nature of learning which McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996, p. 22) argue is the defining feature of action research, no matter what the variation. Empirical data generated from the teaching and learning context becomes the object for analysis, future planning and curriculum and pedagogical action. Hence, action research is recommended as a way of engaging teachers in their own problem-solving, rather than seeking

solutions from expert-researchers. As Zeichner (1999, p. 12) suggests, in teacher education, action research has the potential for addressing “the disconnection between research, policy and practice.”

The irony is that action research, an approach suggested for its empowering and democratic potential, becomes embroiled in doctrinaire debates. There tends to be disagreement about the usefulness of action research or teacher research in initial teacher education. Some see a place for action research in initial teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Freire, 1972, cited in Kincheloe, 1993, p. 177; Kincheloe, 1993, p. 180; Kosnik & Beck, 2000; McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996, p. 10; Russell, 1998; Tripp, 1993); others disagree (Noffke & Brennan, 1988, p. 5, cited in Kincheloe, 1993). McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) see that action research offers students of teaching a way out of becoming trapped within narrow cycles of enquiry. In the following paragraphs, I briefly discuss the varying views on action research as a tool for blending theory and practice.

For Tripp (1993) the approach is useful for school-based teacher education: for Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) and Kosnik and Beck (2000), the approach is incorporated into a more traditional mode of teacher education; the intention is that action research may forge a bond between learning across the sites of learning, higher education and schooling. Likewise, Kosnik and Beck (2000, p. 127) report that, through action research in initial education, students were able to link theory and practice:

Through action research the student teachers came to view their role as involving reflection on and improvement of practice; they saw the necessity to be researchers and scholars. This included seeing the link between theory and practice and being able to bridge the two.

Kincheloe (1993, p. 180), however, cites the way that such potentially democratising research which promotes the idea of knowledge production may be altered according to the prior assumptions held of research. Action research may have serious limitations as a catalyst for blending theory and practice. Kincheloe argues that the generative potential of action research is limited; teacher education students tend to conduct action research on the basis of their understanding of research, which is very often a traditional understanding of processes of research. Kincheloe (p. 181) suggests that, to think about research differently, students require background knowledge: “Before such students are immersed in such research activity, they must be conversant with the cognitive, political, and epistemological issues that surround critical teacher research.” McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996, p. 22) make similar pleas for action research as a cycle of cycles or spiral of spirals rather than a restricted cycle of learning:

By transforming action research cycles into spirals of action, the dynamic of the research and its capacity to adapt to new influences can be shown. By employing a variation of the spiral which allows for other issues to be investigated as side spirals, the complex and creative business of real life can be accommodated (McNiff, 1988, p. 45).

Accordingly, McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996, p. 23) argue for an action research cycle as a practical way to organise research: through a series of spirals, action research “has the potential to

continue indefinitely.” Action research is underpinned by a developmental conception of learning where students of teaching and teachers “move developmentally from less complex cognitive stages to more cognitively complex stages ... associated with the ability to perform in more adaptive and complex ways in the classroom” (Howey, 1996, p. 154).

Likewise, Russell (1998) argues that an action research cycle, although grounded in practice, also involves finding out more about what others say and involves talking with the students one may teach as well as consulting with colleagues and research literature. From this perspective, action research involves finding out more about practice; it also involves knowledge production—and provides an opportunity for blending theory and practice. However, while the approach has much to recommend it as a way of encouraging students of teaching to blend theory and practice, there is lack of agreement about the effectiveness of action research and how best to implement it in teacher education. When students are closely focused on narrow interpretations of what teaching entails, it stands to reason that no amount of action research focusing on teaching techniques or admonishment to incorporate other ways of knowing will result in the blending of theory and practice. It is suggested that teacher educators should be prepared to practice the process of enquiry that they seek to encourage for others. Although teacher educators have been criticised for their reticence in practising a research approach they tend to advocate for their students and teachers in professional education programs (Zeichner, 1995, 1999), there is also recognition of studies in which “teacher educators have courageously exposed and then confronted the shortcomings in their work and the gaps between their rhetoric and the reality of their practice (e.g., Macgillivray, 1997; Moje, Remillard, Southerland & Wade, 1999)” (Zeichner, 1999, p. 12). For Scott and Usher (1999, p. 40), one of the most significant characteristics of action research is its flexibility as a mode of enquiry,

particularly if one sees action research in a more postmodern way as a hybrid, as a “boundary-dweller” and border crosser. To see action research in this way does, in our view, do greater justice to its rich diversity. It allows working with postmodern notions of multiple selves and economies of difference whilst allowing participants to free themselves from the oppressive certainties of positivist theory and the tyranny of technical-rationality.

Difficulties similar to those noted in relation to action research seem to exist in relation to reflection and reflective practice, two approaches with much in common with action research. According to Bryant (1996), central to many models of action research is the notion of *reflection*; in this sense, action research tends to be synonymous with *reflective practice*. In the next section reflective practice—another of the contemporary approaches for blending theory and practice—is discussed. The discussion of reflective practice includes reference to reflection, so closely are the two entwined.

Reflection as a means of integrating theory and practice

Reflection and reflective practice tend to be dominant in teacher education literature and, in their various guises, are recommended as approaches useful for blending theory and practice (Beattie,

1995; Brookfield, 1995; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998; McInerney & McInerney, 1998; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). After all, reflection is one of the key phases within experiential learning cycles (Boud, 1985; Dewey, 1938; Lewin; Kolb, 1984; and Schön, 1983; all cited in Boud, 1989, p. 39). Hence, discourses of reflection and reflective practice tend to be dominant in teacher education where learning through practice or vicarious experience is a defining feature, whether it is located within the school, the institution of higher education or a combination of both.

Over the last decade, given the resurgence of the authority of experience—in this case teaching practice—as a site of knowledge production, both concepts have gained in status; many courses of teacher education, as well as other professional programs, have incorporated reflection as a favoured process for teaching and learning. It is argued that “many teacher education courses, both preservice and inservice, claim to be based upon a reflective practitioner model” (Furlong, Whitty, Barrett, Barton & Miles, 1994, cited in Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 16). For this reason, reflection and reflective practice as a means of blending theory and practice are discussed in more depth. Initially, I discuss meanings of reflection and reflective practice, then introduce and discuss approaches for blending theory and practice through reflection. In the sections that describe and discuss other contemporary approaches, I have already introduced some of the key debates, notably discussions of the ideological nature of schooling and the issues which arise from concerns about the limitations of taken-for-granted practices. However, in this section such discussions come to the fore.

Terms such as reflection, reflective practitioner and reflexivity are complex (Elliott, 1993b, pp. 196–206) and according to some writers (Smyth, 1992 and Zeichner, 1994, both cited in Brookfield, 1995, pp. 7–8; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998, p. 21; Calderhead, 1988 and Fosnot, 1996, cited in Joram & Gabrielle, 1998, p. 177; Parker, 1997) are fraught with difficulties. For example, it is suggested that given its popularity and the proclivity of interpretations, there is a danger that reflection may “become meaningless if people use it to describe anything they like” (Smyth, 1992 & Zeichner, 1994, both cited in Brookfield, 1995, p. 7). Joram and Gabrielle (1998, p. 177) express similar concerns:

As interest in reflective practice has widened, so have the interpretations given to it.... In Zeichner’s words: “It has come to the point now where the whole range of beliefs about teaching, learning, schooling, and the social order have become incorporated into the discourse about reflective practice. Everyone, no matter what his or her ideological orientation, has jumped on the bandwagon at this point, and has committed his or her energies to furthering some version of reflective teaching practice” (1994, p. 9).

Further, Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins (1998, p. 21) argue that reflection is fraught with its own problems: “There is a danger that reflection can become introspection with the practitioner caught in his or her taken-for-granted world view.” Once again, it is implied that through this approach, students of teaching may become constrained by their own perspectives. It is for this reason that some scholars foster reflective practice inclusive of several ways of knowing. Groundwater-

Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins (p. 21) suggest that students of teaching aspire to the role of teacher-scholar:

We need to become teacher-scholars deeply and profoundly connected to our professional work as intellectual work. We live in schools which are post-modern texts; we are not actors in romantic novels and we need to transcend those constructions which oversimplify and trivialise the roles and responsibilities of the educator.

Likewise, Singh (1996a) recommends reflective practice that includes reflection that involves the integration of several ways of knowing: experiential, empirical and theoretical. Singh takes the view that “reflective practice is a strategy used by educators, in cooperation with others, to question their taken-for-granted assumptions so as to improve their teaching and their students’ learning” (p. 349). In teacher education, through reflection, students are encouraged to think about the many decisions of teaching, education and schooling in an effort to engage in deep processes of learning, all with the intention of blending theory with practice. In this respect, reflective practice involves integrating the objective and subjective, personal knowledge with other understandings, and the interaction of multiple sources of knowledge and multiple ways of knowing; all with the intention of shaping action (p. 349).

Singh’s interpretation of what is involved in reflective practice suggests that the approach is useful for blending of theory and practice in generic teacher education. Through reflection, as opposed to routine or technical utilitarian thinking, students of teaching are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning; to see learning as an active process rather than knowledge transmission. Singh’s view of reflective practice would seem to be based on reflection as a holistic process involving “intuition, emotion, and passion” rather than following a “set of techniques” (Greene, 1986, cited in Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 9). Although there is lack of agreement about how to achieve such an aim, almost all attempts prioritise the use of language as a means of reflecting.

A common procedure for promoting reflection is the use of journals (Beattie, 1997; Brookfield, 1995; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Wilson & Wing Jan, 1993). Another approach is reflection through conversation with others. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 177) note that “reflection is promoted by talking about one’s own experiences and knowledge with others, or by clarifying them in writing.” On the one hand, reflection would seem to be an individual endeavour; on the other hand, it seems to be a social experience.

Beattie (1997, p. 161) argues that through conversations and questioning of assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, students are encouraged to “build the observational, reflective, communicative and performative capacities necessary for a career of reflective and inquiry practice.” Accordingly, she argues that collaborative narrative enquiry in initial teacher education can be used to facilitate reflection on the technical aspects of practice as well as on the complex dilemmas that confront the teacher (Beattie, 1995, p. 161). Both *educator* and *educated* engage in a participatory

process of enquiry, recognising that educational problems are complex and, in the words of King and Kitchener (1994, p. 14), “ill-structured.”

Others (Brookfield, 1995; Freire, 1972; Tripp, 1993) argue that the ill-structured problems of teaching are inherently ideological. Several approaches of reflection follow on from the critical theorists of “‘The Frankfurt School’, whose prominent members included Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and more recently, Jurgen Habermas” (Tripp, 1993, p. 113). An elaborate discussion of critical theory is outside the parameters of this study; briefly, the approach is one in which power structures are prioritised as a basis of analysis. Hegemony and power constraints are issues of overriding importance. Taking a critical theorist approach, Brookfield (1995) points to potential limitations of reflection and/or reflective practice that fail to challenge notions of hegemony and power relations.

To put it briefly, reflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes. The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own best long-term interests (p. 8).

Such issues are understood as inherent in systems of education (Brookfield, 1995; Giroux, 1992; Hatton, 1994). It is argued that when such issues are taken for granted, analysis of the problems in teacher education may be circuitous and reproductive in nature, skimming the surface rather than seeking more subtle factors that contribute to social disadvantage and marginalisation. Schooling runs the risk of becoming separated from broader social and cultural practices and, hence, redundant as an institution of education. Accordingly, it is argued that analysis or reflection of educational problems, from predominantly technical and practical perspectives, tends not to interrogate the values underpinning practical decisions.

Hence, some approaches to reflection and reflective practice (Brookfield, 1995; Freire, 1972; Tripp, 1993) emphasise the importance of critical reflection and seek ways of facilitating this kind of reflection. In each instance, written reflections and dialogue are integral to reflective practice. For example, Freire emphasises dialogue or praxis (1972); Tripp, critical reflection on critical incidents (1993); and Brookfield, journals and critical conversations (1995).

Likewise, as mentioned earlier, Beattie (1997) emphasises conversations and questioning as conducive to reflection and hence reflective practice. Beattie also aspires to reflection on the complexities of schooling. In this sense her approach has some similarities with overtly critical approaches to reflection and reflective practice. However, like Brookfield (1995) and Zeichner and Liston (1996), she values many levels of reflection; as do Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) in their realist model of teacher education. Beattie (1995, 1997) also prioritises the place of students in the teaching and learning process, particularly in the way that she guides students of teaching towards reflective practice through narrative enquiry—and collaborative conversations between students of teaching and their teacher educators. Accordingly, her approach is less doctrinaire than many

approaches used in teacher education, particularly those that take a hardline critical perspective. Likewise, reflection is also incorporated in the realistic approach to teacher education proposed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999).

Yet, as this brief discussion of reflection as a means of blending theory and practice in teacher education illustrates, there are many conflicting views. Reflection receives favourable mention (Beattie, 1997; Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1983; Tripp, 1993; Dewey, 1933, cited in Zeichner & Liston, 1996); yet, also is seen as beset by limitations, dangers and contradictions (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Gore, 1993; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998; Halliday, 1998; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Parker, 1997; Sprinthall, Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1996; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Notably, there is evidence that students of teaching (and most likely, their teacher educators) face difficulties in reflecting; and by implication, drawing upon reflection as a means for blending theory and practice (Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 136).

The use of language and journals as the medium of reflection is identified as affecting students' ability to reflect (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, pp. 169–170; Ducharme & Ducharme, 1996, p. 1039). Likewise, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, pp. 176–181) suggest several difficulties in using language to reflect. Firstly, experts and novices have difficulties in establishing mutual understanding through communication; secondly, students of teaching are encouraged to seek logical explanations before developing schemas sufficiently elaborated for explanation. In addition, when language is prioritised as the mode of reflection, there is little recognition of knowledge difficult to express in words. Accordingly, some students may be marginalised by an approach frequently recommended for its capacity to value student voice and hence, promote a more democratic approach to teacher education.

Both teacher educators and students of teaching cite time constraints as one of the complicating factors in reflecting to blend theory with practice (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 169; Carter & Doyle, 1996, p. 136). From a very pragmatic perspective, time constraints exist particularly in contexts where teacher educators have responsibility for teaching large numbers of students. Ultimately such pressures for teachers tend to become difficulties for students also. For example, very practical issues such as time constraints may preclude relational teaching and learning as described by Beattie (1997). Some teacher educators have explored the community of inquiry as an alternative to more time-consuming use of dialogic journals (Wilson, Hine, Dobbins, Bransgrove & Elterman, 1995, p. 170). It is suggested that students may benefit from mutual support. Such an alternative may overcome some of the time constraints for teacher educators, but it is not clear whether all students benefit. Wilson et al. (p. 171) report that the approach is “most successful with mature age students who draw on the learning experiences of their own children and are generally more perceptive and critical of teaching practices and learning outcomes.”

Tensions—and associated ethical dilemmas—are also raised by the use of reflection as a pedagogical approach (Beattie, 1995, p. 145; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 169; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998; Halliday, 1998 ; Korthagen and Lagerwerf, 1996). Beattie (1995, p. 145) acknowledges that students may find that “the process [of narrative] can be a difficult and painful one requiring introspection and self-exposure.” Halliday (1998) emphasises the responsibilities of teacher educator or mentor in offering support through the sometimes painful process of growth and the difficulty of balancing the requirements of support and challenge; he also emphasises the difficulties that must be confronted if teacher educators are not to resort to technical support which is at once acceptable to the learner and counterproductive to learning to teach. Another constraint influencing reflection as a means of blending theory and practice in teacher education is sensitivity about recording what students “would rather not be reminded of”—what Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 169) report as “the cringe factor.” Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) note that reflection may be of greater interest and purpose for teacher educators than for students in teacher education. The latter point highlights one of the ethical dilemmas in using journals or other confessional approaches to promote reflection and reflective practice.

In my reading of the literature I have not found evidence that clearly indicates the benefits of reflection—or collaborative narrative enquiry—for blending theory and practice. This is not to say that reflection has no value in encouraging students of teaching and their teacher educators. By encouraging reflection through collaborative narrative enquiry, Beattie (1997) offers a semi-structured way of looking at problems, which assists students of teaching to think through issues of theory and practice. In reporting on an extensive multi-campus study of the use of reflective journals in undergraduate teacher-education courses, Wilson et al. (1995) report that such approaches provide opportunities for students of teaching to develop deeper understanding and think through the issues; they also report that reflective journals are useful in “encouraging students to link theory and practice.” There is, however, no indication that reflection results in behaviour change—in this case, blending theory with practice. Although reflection is useful for challenging students, encouraging deep processes of thinking, and for enhancing links between theory and practice (Wilson et al., p. 173), it may not be the key for blending theory and practice. A revised approach referred to as the realistic approach (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999), may offer a useful alternative.

According to Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996), learning about teaching is not only dependent on developing more sophisticated reflective capacities, but also through *level reduction*—a phase within an experiential learning cycle which has the potential to continue as a series of cycles in much the same way as McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996, p. 23) idealise the action learning process: “Cycles transform into new cycles, and so the whole enquiry can be seen as ‘a cycle of cycles’ or ‘a spiral of spirals’, which has the potential to continue indefinitely.” Within the learning cycle/s of the realistic approach reflection remains, but as one factor among others; and as already noted,

Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) identify *level reduction* as the phase integral for blending theory and practice.

Moreover, through the process of level reduction, the realistic approach implies that students of teaching and their teacher educators are both consumers and producers of knowledge; this is a model in which potentially, all are implicated in the blending of theory and practice. The model proposed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) recognises cycles of learning that are common for both teacher educators and students of teaching. All are in the process of “Gestalt creation,” where Gestalts are holistic images upon which behaviour—or practice—is based. Further, such holistic images are the result of drawing knowledge about teaching into newly formed Gestalts, which in turn shape behaviour. So, it is argued, Gestalts exist in the background; they are intuitive and difficult to express in words—yet, they inform practice.

In the next section, I explain the terms *Gestalt*, *Schema* and *schematization*, and *Theory* and *theorization* as used by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999). The terms are common enough within education—they do, however, require some unpacking, particularly to understand the realistic approach to teacher education. The next sub-section discusses the realistic approach in more detail.

Realistic approach for blending theory and practice

The realistic approach to teacher education differs from other contemporary approaches, and yet does not preclude the use of them. As a synthesis of several theories, the approach is an attempt to offer a more satisfactory but not totally prescriptive model for blending theory and practice. Although the approach is developmental, it is iterative in nature. And although it incorporates concepts familiar to educators, these concepts are garnered in idiosyncratic ways. Due to such characteristics—the iterative nature of the approach and its synthesis of earlier theories—I describe the approach in some detail. First, I describe the defining features. Second, I discuss the concepts and their relationships in more detail. Following this, I reflect on the approach as a means of blending theory and practice in teacher education.

One of the defining features of the realistic approach to teacher education is its comprehensive nature. By drawing on a number of theories, the approach offers a way of resolving the theory/practice nexus in teacher education. Proposed is a new type of theory which Korthagen and Kessels (1999) suggest may be of interest to teachers; a theory which is different from the process–product approach which influenced earlier approaches. Primarily the revised approach of teacher education draws upon two theoretical frameworks in proposing a new framework for blending theory and practice. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) draw not only from a tradition of experiential learning but also contribute to a long-standing debate about the interconnections between personal and professional understanding and teacher behaviour. This revised model of teacher education is situated in experience but also takes

account of the non-rational and value-laden nature of thinking and behaviour. In addition, it recognises the process of constructing understanding: “knowledge about teaching is ... a subject to be created by the learner” (Freudenthal cited in Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 7). Although the approach is situated in practice; it also sees theory as integral to learning to teach. Thus, reflection is also incorporated as one element of a cycle of learning.

The realistic approach would appear to have similarities to other trends with a more comprehensive view of pedagogy. In beginning with “situated knowledge,” the realistic approach has similarities to the multiliteracies pedagogy outlined by the New London Group (2000, p. 30) who proposed a pedagogy based on an understanding of knowledge as “embodied, situated and social.”

Our view of the mind, society and learning is based on the assumption that the human mind is embodied, situated and social. That is, human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural and material contexts. Further, human knowledge is initially developed as part and parcel of collaborative interactions with others of diverse skills, backgrounds, and perspectives joined together in a particular epistemic community, that is a community of learners engaged in common practices centred on a specific (historically and socially constituted) domain of knowledge. We believe that “abstractions”, “generalities”, and “overt theories” come out of this initial ground and must always be returned to it or to a recontextualized version of it.

Likewise, Korthagen and Kessels (1999) and Marland (1993) argue that theory is not only of the formal kind; it is also generated in practice. Korthagen and Kessels (1999, pp. 7–8), argue that in the school as community of practice, it is *phronesis* or “perceptual theory” which comes to the fore rather than *episteme*. Korthagen and Kessels describe *episteme* as knowledge “based on research” or formally produced theory rather than knowledge based on “*perceiving* more in a particular situation” (p. 7).

Both the multiliteracies pedagogy and the realistic approach to teacher education see many potential starting points for learning, depending upon the needs of the learners. Korthagen and Kessels (1999), however, prioritise situated knowledge as the starting point for learning by students of teaching. Such situated knowledge is conceptualised as a Gestalt—a concept which encapsulates what Korthagen and Kessels (p. 9) describe as a “holistic and direct relationship between context, situation, person, and behaviour.” It is argued that, in teacher education, where students already have a long apprenticeship as students, it is important to begin with establishing new Gestalts.

According to Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p. 9), a Gestalt has similar characteristics to an image or metaphor; it encapsulates the complexity characteristic of professional knowledge. Since a Gestalt tends to be non-rational and is likely to encapsulate many ways of knowing including knowledge that is “non-linear, holistic, imbued with personal meaning, and largely tacit” (p. 9), it tends to be very difficult to explain. In this sense, the Gestalt is a “unity of perception, interpretation, and action [which] is certainly not of an exclusively rational nature, and is not even necessarily something that the teacher is conscious of” (Korthagen & Kessels, p. 8).

Before continuing with an elaboration of the meanings of Gestalt and its place in the framework proposed by Korthagen and Kessels (1999), I outline other identifying features. Notably, the model of teacher education proposed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) does not place prime importance on the use of language—written or oral—as the vehicle for constructing understanding, or as the basis of decision-making in teaching. Here the approach differs markedly from other approaches recommending the use of reflection as a catalyst for blending theory and practice.

According to Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 177) the prioritising of language as the medium of learning to teach is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is a disjuncture between the understanding of experts and novices. Secondly, Korthagen and Lagerwerf argue that prioritising language is a problem, particularly for students of teaching whose knowledge of teaching and learning may be extensive, but not schematised into organised frameworks or *schemas*. Further, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (p. 176) argue that it is only at the level of schematisation “that language is first used to name elements, properties and relationships”; it is at “the theory level [that] relationships of the schema become the elements of a network of logical relationships. If-this-then-that arguments are used to clarify experiences or situations.” A related problem may arise if people seek to explain a situation before they have developed schematised understanding, particularly if they “feel the need for a logical explanation before a sufficiently rich schema has been formed” (p. 177). In this case, the application of local knowledge may block theory building. For this reason, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 181) argue that students’ images, metaphors, and personal theories are integral to learning.

Only in the last couple of years have we seen an increasing interest in knowledge which is difficult to express in words. (See for an overview Berry & Dienes, 1993 and Epstein, 1994.) Concluding, we agree with Clark & Lambert (1985) when they say “... we are beginning to appreciate that strictly logical thinking is often not the most appropriate tool for solving the problems that teachers confront in classrooms.”

Through their inclusion of Gestalts, the images that students of teaching bring to their learning in teacher education are *valued* as a basis for further elaboration and restructuring:

In other words, at the Gestalt level, we have situated knowledge (Brown *et al.*, 1989), which is tied to concrete situations and their context. At this level we are dealing, by definition, with undifferentiated, unexplicated, holistic representations of situations. (As Van Hiele, 1973, p. 142, says “The image is a symbol for a great deal which is not expressed in words.”) At the schema level, experiences or situations are no longer perceived as a whole; instead, the focus is on individual elements, properties and relationships. (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 176)

Hence, the challenge for changing practices—for fostering the blending of theories and practices—exists in finding a way to shape Gestalts. In citing findings from a review on teacher beliefs by Pajares (1992), such a proposition is supported by Munby and Russell (1996, p. 11): “Belief change during adulthood is a relatively rare phenomenon, the most common cause being a conversion from one authority to another or a gestalt shift (pp. 325–326).” According to Korthagen and Kessels

(1999), it is at this point that change takes place, from Gestalt to schema and from schema to theory. Increasingly rich and coherent understandings evolve through level transitions—the creation of schemas and theories through reflection.

Although knowledge becomes more sophisticated in this way, the blending of such understandings with practice relies upon another process—level reduction. This may occur through reflection that renders the mental concepts and their interrelations more concrete through writing, drawing or explaining (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 178). Level reduction of either a schema or a theory to the level of Gestalt is the foundational relationship upon which rests behavioural inclination or practice.

Further, the practices of both students of teaching and their teacher educators are underpinned by Gestalts. So although the realistic approach to teacher education is developmental, it also consists of *many developments*—similar to the action research cycles or spirals with “the potential to continue indefinitely” (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996, p. 23). Consequently, the realistic approach is relevant as a pedagogy for students of teaching, teachers and teacher educators. The approach also has the potential for the inclusion of many theoretical ideas—whether from the one discipline or many.

Through level reduction, the process of building understanding of teaching and learning would therefore seem to be similar for students of teaching and for teacher educators. For example, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 182) argue that “Learning about teaching is a process of developing Gestalts and *not* a question of learning to apply theories from academic textbooks.” Learners at all levels of understanding, ultimately, are involved in a similar Gestalt formation process whether at the level of Gestalt formation, schematising or theorising. This notion of *levels* differs from the levels of reflection noted by Beattie (1997), Brookfield (1995), King and Kitchener (1994), and Zeichner and Liston (1996). According to Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996), learning about teaching is not dependent on developing more sophisticated reflective capacities, but through *level reduction*. The principles involved in level reduction are the same for all learners of teaching (Korthagen & Russell, 1999); this stage is a process of clarifying schemas and theories.

The next sub-section discusses the realistic approach in more detail. I elaborate on the realistic approach to teacher education as it is discussed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999), beginning with a discussion of Gestalt, followed by discussions of the processes of level transition—schematisation and theorisation—and level reduction, with its potential for transformation and blending theory and practice to the form of Gestalt, which in turn shapes behaviour. Following this discussion, in a separate section, I discuss some of the difficulties students may face in the realistic approach to teacher education.

The terms of the realistic approach, and their relationships

In an introduction to the realistic approach to teacher education, I have introduced some of the defining features and key concepts of the model, particularly the interrelationships of the terms along with a brief explanation of each. Here, I elaborate on the concepts, linking them to broader debates in education and teacher education.

The term *Gestalt* was popularised through the development of Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis. In education, Gestalt psychology was influential in encouraging a rethinking of learning. Rather than seeing learning as a behaviourist, stimulus–response process, learning was seen as a personal constructivist process that McInerney and McInerney (1998, p. 91) describe as “a purposive, exploratory, imaginative and creative enterprise.” Learning requires a “change of insight” for successful problem solving and decision-making. According to McInerney and McInerney (p. 90), the view of Gestalt psychologists is that learning is connected with “how individuals personally construct meaning.” Ornstein and Hunkins (1998, p. 125) argue that, according to Gestalt Theory,

learning is complex and abstract. When confronted with a learning situation, the learner analyzes the problem, discriminates between essential and nonessential data, and perceives relationships. The environment is continuously changing, and thus the learner is continuously reorganising his or her perceptions. In terms of teaching, learning is conceived as a selective process by the student.

Accordingly, it would seem that learning is not about an accretion of information or knowledge; nor is learning a deterministic process: “learning is a process of gaining or changing insights, expectations or thought patterns” (Halliday, 1996, p. 30).

Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) suggest that the notion of Gestalt has several characteristics. The term refers to understanding that is not separate from action. Elements such as thoughts, needs or concerns, values, feelings, role conceptions, and routines (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, pp. 8–9) tend to be combined in a unified way: “together they form a unity which is rooted in many earlier experiences in the teacher’s life” (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 163). Further, understanding and/or action which draws upon a Gestalt tends to be taken for granted: “This unity of perception, interpretation, and action is not of an exclusively rational nature, and is not even necessarily something the teacher is conscious of” (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 8). It would seem that such taken-for-grantedness may not be confined to personal constructions but may also apply to tendencies for thinking more widely. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 166) offer a succinct and somewhat more abstract explanation of Gestalt formation as a process in which language “plays a minor role”:

Gestalt formation is the process in which a situation triggers a unity of needs, thoughts, feelings, values, meanings and action tendencies. A Gestalt is connected with concrete situations in a multi-faceted way, because it is rooted in those situations. Gestalts are restricted to certain relevant characteristics of the situation, i.e. those characteristics that help to satisfy a need. They constitute the feelings which belong to the experiences in which they were formed.

Although Gestalts seem sufficient to manage most events in everyday life, certain problems which arouse curiosity or present problems prompt further structuring of information. At this point, an individual reaches a more readily articulated level of understanding referred to by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) as a schema. In many ways the term is similar to Piaget's term "accommodation" (Biggs & Telfer, 1987, p. 52), where the learner is challenged to restructure understanding or *codes* in a more complex manner.

Likewise, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) argue that, when a conscious effort is made to restructure concepts or to expand understanding by bringing new concepts to understanding, the actor/learner has reached a different level of knowing—through *reflection* the Gestalt is schematised. Further, the process continues: new Gestalts are formed from the reconceptualised understanding that is fostered by schematisation. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 168) give the following explanation for this concept.

Schematization is rooted in a need for more clarity. It is a long-term process during which the original Gestalt acquires more "interiority" (Skemp, 1970). This means that gradually more and more elements in the Gestalt are distinguished and named, together with relationships between those elements. The person's needs play a central role in focusing the attention on certain elements. Formulations are shortened and symbolized, a process requiring a considerable capacity for abstraction, as the concrete situations in which the Gestalt was formed become less important.

The result of the schematization is a schema which, when employed in a new situation, offers far more possibilities than the original rough Gestalt. This schema may comprise all kinds of detailed sub-schemata and may itself be part of one or more larger schemata. The learner can schematize by reflecting on the Gestalts formed during previous or present experiences, in the course of the search for more clarity.

Schemata offer people the possibility to justify what they are doing, to take responsibility for their actions and to check their work.

Once again, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, p. 169) suggest that understanding based on schemata and/or Gestalts is sufficient to satisfy people's needs in everyday life. However, in situations that present the opportunity or need for more logically structured understanding, people may seek the transition from "schemata to theory" (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, p. 169):

Theory building originates in a need for order in and verification of the schemata constructed. It involves the logical structuring of schemata. Essential starting points, definitions and logically-derived propositions: everything must be capable of being expressed in words, which may lead to a reassessment of the content of the concepts and relationships within the schemata.

Theory, then, is fostered by reflection on schemata; similarly to the way schemata are fostered by reflection on Gestalts. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) argue that reflection is integral for understanding to shift from one level of understanding to another. However the process, rather than being linear in nature, is cyclical. Rather than being permanent states, the levels of schema and theory eventually, through integration with previous understandings, take on the

nature of Gestalt and in this way the learner is able to focus on problems other than those which have become resolved through schematising and theorising. In this sense, the nature of learning is dynamic.

It would seem, therefore, that understanding is developed within a specific situation but is not static or bounded:

Gestalts are not static entities in the teacher's brain, but dynamic and holistic constructions of reality, triggered and recreated by the actual situation under the influence of the person's need and the whole context in which the teaching takes place. (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 175)

It is not possible to make assumptions about the contexts within which learning may be situated; they may vary widely. Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p. 9) note that in the practical teaching context, the situatedness of decision-making may range widely. For example, in addition to personal factors, political and policy contexts may also influence what a class teacher does; a class teacher may be confronted by conflicting demands:

For example, it is possible that Mrs. Wilson is strongly influenced by her need to get through the lesson quickly, which may in turn be influenced by pressures put on her by a prescribed and overloaded curriculum. This may in turn reflect a macro social-economic emphasis on productivity, and diminishing consideration for the value of care in human relationships. (p. 9)

Such issues are also likely to be components within teacher educators' Gestalts (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 197). Perhaps they may not be components within Gestalts for students of teaching who have chosen a course to prepare them for a career of their own choosing—and who may not have experiences of institutional communities of practice, at least as employees.

Added to this difficulty of the present are other difficulties in learning to teach. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 197–198) emphasise the value-laden nature of teaching and the teacher's role, as issues central to what they refer to as the "Reproduction versus Innovation" dilemma of teacher education. In order to avoid the replication of existing school practices, a break in the continuity of institutional learning is suggested; early classroom experiences for student teachers should be avoided and replaced by learning of another kind; "a clearly articulated and critical understanding of classroom processes" (Smyth, 1992, cited in Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 195) or—in line with the situated perspective of the realistic approach to teacher education—early one-to-one teaching experiences which act as Gestalts for reflection. It is argued that such reflection may be conducive to level transitions that lead to the developments of schema and theories of teaching; analysis of audiotapes of the one-to-one sessions leads to the formation of new Gestalts. Students understand the gap between themselves and the child and through further questioning the teacher educator fosters schematisation (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, pp. 12–13). What is important is that the theory offered to students should emphasise phronesis; the episteme that is offered should relate to the phronesis.

A key concept used to explain a process whereby a “theory or complex schema can function as a Gestalt” is that of *level reduction* (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 178).

Concepts and relations that have formed mentally can be concretized by writing them down, drawing them, or explaining them verbally; this makes them more tangible and more manageable. In this way a theory or a complex schema can begin to function as a Gestalt. The person can use it almost “automatically.” This is known as *level reduction* (Van Hiele, 1973, p. 101; Van Hiele, 1986, p. 53). Level reduction allows the actor to give more attention to other things. A second and even more important function of level reduction is the fact that the person can use his knowledge to guide action, *without reflecting during the action*. This principle is related to our belief that it is Gestalts which direct most of the teacher’s behaviour in the classroom (see also Korthagen, 1993a and Wubbels, 1992) ...

It would seem that, through reflection on an aspect of experience which prompts curiosity, the student then begins to restructure understanding, adding new concepts and developing new relationships between concepts: after some time the learner becomes less conscious of newly developed schema or theory. The process of becoming less overtly aware of the revised conceptualisation is called level reduction: in turn, level reduction fosters a Gestalt which is in some way different from the original. The framework is, therefore, one which begins in concrete experience that is meaningful and problematic for the learner—and which continues to be linked with it. In this sense, the tentative theory proposed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) is described as a realistic approach to teacher education. It is an approach acknowledging the affective as well as the cognitive nature of mental structures.

The realistic approach tends to differ from what Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996, pp. 180–181) describe as “mainstream cognitive psychology” that has tended to emphasise aspects of learning which can be observed.

Although Anderson’s (1980) well-known handbook on cognitive psychology included a chapter on mental imagery, in the last 10 years or so cognitive psychologists have focused more on what we would call the schema level than on less conscious aspects of learning. They have also appeared to be more interested in cognitions than in the role of affective aspects (Pintrich, 1990) , and more in products of learning (for example, the structure of a person’s schema) than in long-term learning processes (Freudenthal, 1991, p. 87). Nor has the role of Gestalts or images in the creation of meaning been discussed in any of the standard texts on semantics in the 1980s (Johnson, 1987). Only in the last couple of years have we seen increasing interest in so-called “implicit learning”, i.e. learning resulting in knowledge which is difficult to express in words. (See for an overview Berry and Dienes, 1993 and Epstein, 1994.)

Hence, according to Korthagen and Kessels (1999), the realistic approach consists of a cycle/s grounded in personal and professional experience as well as social, cultural and political contexts. It is also a model open to change: “If the need or concern changes, the theory changes” (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 178). Likewise, as abstraction occurs in the concrete image or Gestalt, so reframing of understanding occurs through level transition.

In level transitions, we are dealing with discontinuous processes, because the question being asked changes. During Gestalt formation, one (often unconsciously) wants to know how various situations can be grouped together; in schematization one is consciously striving to bring clarity to the Gestalts; and in theory-building the aim is to introduce logical order into the schemata. (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996, p. 177)

Although Korthagen and Lagerwerf identify reflection as one factor only within a model of teacher education proposed for blending theory and practice, reflection remains as one of the key concepts. However, not all reflection leads to re-creation of Gestalts. Reflection that is guided by *phronesis* and further informed by *episteme* is most likely to lead to *level reduction*—the key for blending theory and practice.

Pros and cons of the realistic approach

A great strength of the realistic approach would seem to lie in its synthesis of insights from several theories and practices—“the theory-based approach, competency-based methods, and the reflection paradigm in teacher education” (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 13). Codified knowledge and the processes of constructing understanding are both valued—and yet considered subject to change. There is recognition that individual identities are not necessarily stable; hence, there is hope for changed practices. Through a framework that recognises the re-creation of Gestalts, the approach also recognises the fluid nature of the social sciences.

Students of teaching are viewed as knowing agents. In this respect, the approach seems to be respectful of students learning to teach; as teacher educators would no doubt hope that their students of teaching would be, ultimately, in their own school classrooms. The approach not only emphasises “specific concerns, questions, and problems” of the learner (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 13) but acknowledges that what the learner may know may be tacit and difficult to describe in words. Through its inclusion of a Gestalt as a holistic image upon which behaviour—or practice—is based, the approach recognises visual and non-verbal modes of thought. Visual and spatial modes of thought and communication are prioritised within the discipline of geography (Boardman, 1983; van der Schee, 2000), one of the components of the SOSE curriculum. There is also recognition of the increasing use of the visual as a mode of communication (Kress, 2000) in the contemporary media. This viewpoint has led to the formal recognition of visual literacy in curriculum documents such as *A Statement on Studies of Society and Environment for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b). A notion of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 5) recognises the multiple forms of meaning making—“the visual, the spatial, the behavioural and so on.” Not only is meaning “made in ways that are increasingly multimodal,” it is also made within “realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness” (pp. 5–6). From this perspective, the realistic approach may be appropriate for teacher education in relation to SOSE and, more particularly, fieldwork. Through its concern with fieldwork pedagogies, and more specifically, through key questions that ask students to reflect on the kinds of places selected for fieldwork, this thesis focuses on the making of meaning through the visual and spatial. Traditionally, fieldwork in early childhood and primary schools has

involved children gathering data in a number of ways. Much emphasised are multi-sensory approaches as well as a focus on the visual modes of communication (Bale, 1987; Clare, 1988; Geographical Association, 1996; Pluckrose, 1989).

Through the notion of Gestalt, the realistic approach takes account of the “complex interplay between social, cultural, psychological, and physical factors” (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 9). The approach would seem to recognise that constituted subjectivity (Klein, 1999, p. 86) may be complex and largely taken for granted.

We have all lived, been positioned in various ways, in multiple discourses which are constitutive of, and themselves constituted by our uses of language and practices. What it means is that “truths” which we have lived and are a visceral part of us, are extremely difficult to interrupt.

As Klein (1999, p. 86) argues, “this is not solely a cognitive knowing but it comprises conscious and unconscious aspects of experiences and feelings.” Through their implication of Gestalts as instrumental in guiding practices, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) acknowledge the non-rational influences on decision-making. They argue, as does Klein (p. 86), that this decision-making may be not only non-rational, but also potentially not autonomous. In descriptions of the realistic approach it is not clear, however, how one may begin to tap in to ways of thinking that tend to be at the periphery of one’s awareness.

As an alternative to other approaches of teacher education, the realistic approach does not necessarily preclude the use of other contemporary approaches—many may be incorporated within its framework. Although there are key principles underpinning the realistic approach, there is less certainty about which experiences may be appropriate; the program evolves according to student understanding. The approach is less prescriptive than some other contemporary approaches. As indicated in earlier discussions, each of the approaches has its own particular merits and several of them are underpinned by assumptions in common. For example, if school-based teacher education, vocational education, action research, case-based methods and reflective practice all recognise the importance of situated knowledge, so does the realistic approach. If calls to re-emphasise educational scholarship recognise the importance of codified knowledge—albeit subject to change—so does the realistic approach. If reflection is conducive to helping students of teaching develop deeper understandings and think through issues, so is the realistic approach. And if other approaches recognise that understanding is socially constituted—again—in many respects, so does the realistic approach.

The realistic approach also recognises that the teacher educator is a participant within the uncertain and dynamic enterprise of learning to teach. The teacher educator is seen as a learner and faces the dilemma of learning to teach in a way which is not reproductive of the status quo. If the teacher educator is to avoid becoming constrained within pre-existing practices, s/he must also remain open to new experiences. Hence, the dilemma for the teacher educator is *also* to be able to move beyond the constraints of previously held Gestalts. If there is a problem in learning to teach, it would appear to be

not only a problem for students of teaching in undergraduate courses but also for teachers and teacher educators. The approach would appear to have much to offer teacher education, which tends to be seen as the last bastion of professional life where no specific education is required (Korthagen & Russell, 1999, p. 11). As Korthagen and Russell (p. 11) note in their discussion of the usefulness of the approach for teacher educators, implementing the approach in teacher education courses may not be easy.

The dilemma of moving outside the constraints of one's own understandings is illustrated in papers promoting the realistic approach; primarily, the difficulty of remaining open to the challenge of constructing new Gestalts from which their own understanding may develop is demonstrated in the empirical data cited in support of the realistic approach of teacher education. In arguments in support of the realistic approach, the data gained is reported unproblematically; the meanings conveyed by participants through the interview transcripts appear transparent. When the emergent meanings are not considered reflexively, there is no recognition that the responses may have been shaped by the position of the interviewer relative to the interviewee, or that the language used may reflect condescension towards the participant. In reporting evidence from the interviews unproblematically, the meanings have been conveyed as meanings uncontaminated by the positions of interviewer relative to interviewee: "uncontaminated by the miner" or "unpolluted by any leading questions" (Kvale, 1996, p. 3). In non-reflexively citing evidence in support of their approach, Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) tend to have reported interview data in a way that also essentialises and universalises identity constructs. In the light of identity theory, such a representation is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly it ignores structural influences on identity construction. The evidence cited, through the interviews, reflects what some see as characteristic of discourses of schooling. It could be argued that through identity representations, the status quo is reproduced by those who aim to disrupt it. I suggest that unproblematic reporting of the data reflects what Singh (1996b, p. 190) refers to as the "power-knowledge relations" of educational discourses.

Thus, bias may be introduced by the non-reflexive reporting of selected interview data. In two papers which propose the realistic approach as an alternative for blending theory and practice (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996), the way in which data is reported conveys a strongly gendered telling. Those participants with knowledge operating at the level of rudimentary and/or non-fruitful Gestalts are represented as female. Those who have more developed understandings that operate at the level of schema and theory are male. Further, the child disadvantaged by teaching which upholds the status quo is male. In this instance, the data cited in support of the realistic approach reproduces the male-child represented in discourses of schooling. Luke and Luke (1995, pp. 367–368) explain the pervasiveness of one of these dominant discourses:

Child development theories found in the university text, mass paperback, child care books, teacher guides, children's TV programs or weekly women's magazines all design (Piagetian) an androgynous, yet distinctly, male child. Whatever, "cognitive development" girls and boys might undergo has meaning only in so far as adults code these with reference to the master discourse.

The straightforward way that the data is cited in support of the realistic approach emphasises the value of practical knowledge—that which the *theoretical professor* also should attain through level reduction of *his* theoretical understanding. However, this meaning is not conveyed in the telling. The teacher is constructed as disadvantaging the male-child through *her* teaching. Her practice is described as lacking in recent theoretical insights in mathematics education. Such representations of data reported non-reflectively are a worry, particularly when they do not highlight the political factors that tend to characterise many bureaucracies and institutional contexts. Although Korthagen and Kessels (1999, p. 15) cite findings from qualitative and quantitative studies to support the approach, evidence that the approach is effective in enabling students to blend theory and practice is primarily in the form of student statement—from which Hermans et al. (1993, cited in Korthagen & Kessels, 1999, p. 15) concluded that "all 12 student teachers reported a seamless connection between theory and practice." Again, such a claim does not reflexively recognise that student reports may have been influenced by power relationships between student and teacher educator that are inherent in pedagogical relationships (Bernstein, 1996; Bourdieu, 1992, cited in Zevenbergen, 1996, p. 95; Klein, 2000). Thus, from a perspective which views power as a constituting factor of pedagogic discourses, it would seem prudent to question the unproblematic citing of statements which support the realistic approach as effective for the blending of theory and practice.

The unproblematic citing of data in support of the realistic approach contradicts an awareness that the teacher's and/or researcher's decisions may be influenced by many factors. There is no acknowledgement that the responses of the interviewees may have been influenced through positioning within discourse, or of the way that the language of those "positioned differently in relation to other people and schools" also differs (Gee, 2000, p. 55). Rather than reflecting understandings which function at different levels, the kind of responses given may, for example, differ according to material circumstances of discourse communities within which identity is constructed.

In everyday educational contexts, pedagogic discourse constitutes a social division of labor for knowledge production and acquisition, setting the limits and possibilities for social identities and relations within classroom and curriculum settings. To return full circle to a focus on contemporary issues of difference, Bernstein's work here provides an account of how the recognition and realization of difference occurs in institutional contexts—an account of how cultures, cultural knowledges and identities are officially constructed and sanctioned. (Singh & Luke, 1996, p. xiii)

To illustrate, I cite an analysis of interview transcripts (Gee, 2000, pp. 54–58). From transcripts of interview with two female students, Gee (p. 56) concludes that, due to practices related to social class, the narratives of the students differ in quality and quantity: "What they make knowing-and-claiming statements about is totally different." Although these students are not being interviewed about their

understandings of teacher education, the example may be useful as a cautionary note. To what extent have the “knowing-and-claiming statements” made been shaped by positionality? Would other participants have answered differently? Likewise, it seems pertinent to ask whether the language of the interviewer may have been modified by the positioning of interviewer relative to interviewee and whether this may have shaped the kinds of responses that are reported as evidence of understanding at the levels of Gestalt, schema and theory.

Korthagen and Russell (1999, p. 11) suggest that the principles of the realistic approach “put high demands on teacher educators.” They suggest that teacher educators should serve as role models even while they provide the conditions for their students to experience the uncertainties inherent in enquiry. It is argued that teacher educators would also need to “connect several educational, pedagogical and psychological perspectives, and academic disciplines” (p. 11). It would seem important for teacher educators who may seek to draw upon the principles of the realistic approach to not only take a stance as teacher educator and researcher but to also include their students in the enquiry. In this way it may be possible to explore the third space of teacher education that acknowledges the voices of all who are implicated in practice. It may be more fruitful to begin the enquiry, not with new experiences that are designed to ignore previous experiences, but with experiences that *highlight* broader influences of learning, particularly if this is to be a shared journey of learning for both students of teaching and the teacher educator. Admittedly, such a journey will be situated in an institutional practice. It is not possible to leave the pedagogic site. Such an approach may more satisfactorily recognise the situatedness of learning to teach for teacher educators and their students. In this way it may be possible to take account of the multiple ways in which identities may potentially be constituted.

According to Luke and Luke (1995, p. 374), identity is constituted within a complex grid of experiences. This viewpoint would also seem aligned with the socially constructivist orientation of the realistic approach. Gestalts are formed in relation to multiple realities. Potentially, identity is also constituted in relation to the political and professional climate of the society, institutions, schools and classrooms to which students of teaching aspire. Positioning is mostly discussed in terms of power-relations rather than as constitutive of a “third space” (Homi Bhabha, cited in Luke & Luke, 1999, p. 228)—as a liminal construction between multiple discourses (de Peuter, 1998, p. 39). One exception is the re-theorising of identity constitution by Luke and Luke (1999). In their study of interracial families, Luke and Luke (1999, pp. 229–230) argue that constitution of identities is much less certain than is usually supposed.

The element of self-constitution is an inherently relational process of being marked and marking oneself; of being differentiated and differentiating one’s self; and of constructing one’s own meanings, identifications, and social relations in specific places (families, communities), and within specific fields of power relations (political, gendered, economic, religious, cultural).

These debates point to the difficulties in implementing the realistic approach but also suggest an approach that does not try to side-step these multiple realities by immersing students in one-to-one

teaching experiences, but to explore decision-making in situ. The contextual parameters of this study also indicate that this is the practical approach to take for this research—keeping in mind some of the potential difficulties that may be encountered. As a pedagogical framework, the realistic approach is strongly oriented to open enquiry and would seem to offer much as a way of exploring decision-making in teacher education. In the next chapter, I outline the themes contributing to the pedagogical rationale that also is the framework for this research.

Chapter 3

Rationale: Learning from the visual

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the rationale for my pedagogic approach as discussed within this thesis. As I have noted earlier, in citing Anderson (1995, p. xvi), “a fairly exclusionary psychological emphasis on teaching and learning has given way to a multidisciplinary point of view (which includes sociological and anthropological perspectives).” It would seem that there are many ways of knowing which potentially enhance an understanding of teaching and teacher education. In drawing on aspects of the realistic approach of teacher education as discussed in Chapter 2, I draw upon visual images that act as pedagogical Gestalts to elucidate my rationale. With reference to paintings by Jeffrey Smart as an illustrative—and visual—device, I elucidate the themes which informed my pedagogical decisions. These paintings, resonant with multiple layers of meaning, seem particularly pertinent to a study focusing on sites selected as fieldwork locales.

I discuss the paintings as visual texts, in some detail, as a teacher educator seeking to integrate theory and practice through the role of fieldwork and the selection of places as field sites. Through my deconstruction of these paintings, and very specifically, their signs and symbols, I illustrate my understanding of the relationship between place as text, place as iconography and place as process. Integral to my discussion are seemingly disparate themes related to children’s place knowledge, understandings of place and space, and fieldwork pedagogies—all within the context of teacher education in Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) for early childhood and primary children. Due to the close alignment of fieldwork pedagogies and understandings of place and space within the discipline of geography, my discussion draws on literature in this area. At the conclusion of this chapter, I locate the discussion also within the parameters of SOSE in teacher education in the Tasmanian context. Very specifically, I relate my discussion to the three pedagogical moments which serve to frame the research and which were outlined briefly in Chapter 1. Initially, my focus moves back and forth between a discussion of Jeffrey Smart’s 1976 painting, *Corrugated Gioconda*, (Capon 1999, p. 146; also see Appendix A) and issues that emerged from my viewing and deconstruction of the painting as a whole as well as its signs and symbols. In the next section, through a discussion of *Corrugated Gioconda*, I set the scene with a brief analysis. Following this brief introductory discussion, I elaborate on the themes arising from my initial and continuing deconstruction of the visual text and which are integral to my pedagogic decision-making. Before beginning this discussion, I include a table (Table 3.1) that summarises the phases of the pedagogical framework for this study. The rationale emerges from my consideration of the issues in this chapter as well as previous chapters. The actual approach arrived at in light of these discussions is outlined briefly in Table 3.1 and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1 Three pedagogical moments: Sites for learning about fieldwork

Pedagogical moment	Site for data collection	Nature of analysis
1. <i>Students as “knowers”; Fieldwork pedagogies—some consensus</i>	Practical fieldwork on campus	Data analysis—Recording and analysis of “preferred sites” self-selected by students
2. <i>Site selection: a perennial issue</i>	Bulletin-board display Critical reflection of the kinds of sites selected for basis of assignment: Consider a site which is both significant to you and suitable for Social Education fieldwork. It may be (for example), a street, a place in the city, a beach, town, village, a particular house, building, suburb, a stream or mountain.... Based on the site you select, develop a plan for teaching and learning that incorporates field experiences designed to encourage a class of children to thoroughly investigate the site. (University of Tasmania, 1997)	Data analysis—What kinds of sites were selected for planning for teaching and learning through fieldwork?
3. <i>Fieldwork in a symbolic environment</i>	Practical fieldwork—City Park (Launceston, Tasmania)	Debriefing—Discussion regarding the nature of findings

Introductory analysis of *Corrugated Gioconda* as visual text

On first seeing Jeffrey Smart paintings, I was struck with a jolt of awareness as if looking across the landscape to see, spotlighted by concentrations of light, something for the first time. Here were everyday landscapes, usually relegated to the periphery of our awareness, brought sharply into focus. On closer examination, here were images with the quality of puzzles so dense were they with iconographic and textual references. One painting that has been referred to as “a classic Smart composition” (Capon 1999, p. 20) is *Corrugated Gioconda*. This painting prompted me to reflect on the many aspects of fieldwork—aspects that I felt were a cause for further enquiry. Against this backdrop, I discuss the disparate issues that informed the rationale for my own teaching and reflection about the curriculum and pedagogy of fieldwork in SOSE in teacher education. The composition of *Corrugated Gioconda*, named for the central image of Gioconda—the Mona Lisa—is described in some detail by Capon (p. 20).

The foreground [is] dominated by the corrugated fence, rattling and dishevelled, plastered with torn and ragged posters the most prevalent of which carries an image of the Mona Lisa, that most powerful and familiar icon of Western civilisation, promoting a new publication which is in itself brought to a kind of absolute reality with the name of the publishing house, Fabbri Editori. Yet, she still manages to smile serenely and enigmatically through the debris of time that has sought to obscure it. From this foreground of grubby decay, in the distance, rises a glistening new apartment block and the stately palm trees set against a brilliant blue sky. The contrast, both compositionally and psychologically, is startling.

This painting allows me to illustrate the differing strands of thought which relate to the rationale for fieldwork and recommended fieldwork pedagogies, as well as associated debates integral to the area—notably, debates from the sub-discipline of cultural geography. I reflect on some of these issues through the motifs and symbols in addition to the composition of *Corrugated Gioconda*.

A particularly intriguing motif is the graffiti faintly inscribed on the lower left of the painting. Here is the voice of Jeffrey Smart himself, declaring publicly his relationship with, I can only surmise, his partner Ernes de Zan (Smart, 2000): the name for whom the initials ED stand. Here is the voice of Smart reminding the viewer that the world of the painting is a human, peopled world. Within the structural, architecturally planned heroic environment, Smart conveys a sense of agency at many levels. This is a socially constructed world, a world that consists of more than visual appearances: “In the air, the space, the clarity of these works, a reality beyond mere appearance exists” (Capon, 1999, p. 19). This is a world peopled, and constructed, by those of sexualities other than heterosexual males; sexuality is an issue discussed by Smart (2000) in his autobiography, *Not quite straight: A memoir*. The environment of *Corrugated Gioconda* is also a post-colonial world: juxtaposed with the modernist tower are palm trees, an emblem of the exotic, a token of rejoicing, victory and justice (*Chambers English Dictionary*, 1988, p. 1037). The world of the painting is not naturally given; it is constructed—at once, shaped and represented in images of global consumer culture, of a textual world, but with texts in which identities generally excluded from official public space find a voice.

Discussion of themes

As I have indicated, I mention my brief deconstruction of *Corrugated Gioconda* to illustrate a number of issues integral to my pedagogical decision-making. In the following sections of this chapter I consider each of these in turn. Where possible, I discuss these themes as discrete entities—at times, however, so closely entwined are the issues that I have discussed them in relation to each other. I begin with a discussion of students as active agents whether children or students of teaching. It is this view which underpins my pedagogy; it is also a view which is integral to the key questions and data gathering for this thesis.

Experience and place knowledge: Children and students of teaching as “knowers”

In this section, through consideration of pedagogical issues and research in the local context, I arrive at a point of view which underpins my pedagogy. These pedagogical issues are illustrated with reference to my deconstruction of *Corrugated Gioconda*—specifically, a discussion of people, including young people and children, as agents within their environments. As a corollary, I take it that as agents, children are “knowers” with environmental understandings formed through experience of place and space (Slater & Morgan, 2000). I do not view such experience as universal but as formed with place and in association with a range of identity constructs (Lee, 2000; Robertson & Gerber,

2000; Stratford, 2000). I return to my deconstruction of *Corrugated Gioconda* with a discussion of agency, particularly as it is viewed from the differing perspectives of environmental psychology and cultural studies.

As an educator I find the work of Jeffrey Smart a cause for celebration. What is it that has prompted such work, the ability to fascinate? Taking the view that such thinking is formed in childhood, Pearce (1999, p. 24) comments on Smart's abiding interest as a child and the place of rich experience of a complex environment—the inner city of Adelaide “at the beginning of the Depression, in the early 1930s.”

His family had been forced to move to a flat in South Terrace, one of four borders of the square-mile city which looked onto parkland. The boy was entranced not by the view of the park and the blue hills beyond but the one from the kitchen porch which looked across the roofs of the inner-city houses and a sparse sprinkling of skyscrapers. (p. 24)

Such were the kinds of places sought out by one person and his friends in one particular time and place. Perhaps more important is the active experience of exploring his environment—walking through his neighbourhood alone, walking with a friend through the city—its alleys and byways.

John knew all the little by-ways of the city. He showed me how from Angus Street he would go right across the city without walking along a street—just crossing streets. He knew every office block, and how to nick through by lavatories and light wells, past caretakers' rooms—very exciting. (Smart 1996, p. 33, cited in Pearce 1999, p. 25).

Such descriptions of the rich experience of place and space highlight views which focus on this very element as integral to memorable and sophisticated environmental understandings (Adams & Ward 1982; MacKenzie & White, 1982, cited in Biggs & Moore, 1993, p. 228; Robertson & Rikkinen 1997; Lynch, Hart, Adams & Fyson, cited in Slater & Morgan, 2000, pp. 259–263). What is emphasised in descriptions of Jeffrey Smart's youth is the sense of agency: of active exploration despite the surveillance of caretakers (and might I say, through places not usually deemed appropriate for youth to “hang out”). It is this sense of agency that is also emphasised in contemporary understandings of place and space. It would seem that children and young people have place knowledge which can be valued, acknowledged and drawn on through curriculum and pedagogy (Morgan, 2000; Slater & Morgan, 2000). Before continuing with my discussion of how I take account of such knowledge through my own pedagogical decisions, I focus on the kinds of places sought by young people, locally.

In the local context of this study, the Australian island state of Tasmania, recent studies point to a tendency for young people to seek out certain kinds of places; it seems that they have a yearning for places of “sanctuary” (Abbott-Chapman, 2000). Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001), for example, have found that young people, situated as they are, even at the local level, within complex multi-layered symbolic environments, seek fairly traditional private places for their leisure activities rather

than shops and shopping malls—the sites of negative publicity about the uncontrolled nature of young people.

Such findings contrast with critical media comment, and public fears, about the highly “visible” groups or gangs of young people congregating in urban public places like shops and shopping malls, who need to be “controlled.” (Abbott-Chapman, 2000). Findings also emphasise the symbolic significance of familiar places in the built and natural environment for youth leisure activities, social network building, and the search for identity and meaning in a fast changing world, dominated by economic and technological globalisation. The search for private places for social interaction and personal renewal in home and neighbourhood, and in the natural world, whether idealised or real, is emphasised. (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 500)

Also emphasised in findings of this study are the preferences for natural places and home as places of retreat. Moreover, such places exist “in mind” as much as in reality.

The visual, iconic, even spectacular, qualities of natural places emerge from our data, even when those spaces did not feature much during the school week (in terms of time spent) as in “holidays” and “special times”, recollected, remembered and desired. (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 502)

It would seem that visualisation is an important aspect to finding places of preference; that through memory, places retain significance. Thus, “the utilisation of visualisation of desired or idealised space, whether in the home or natural environment” are seen as “important symbolic resources valued in the construction of self” (p. 502).

Young people’s place preferences, as indicated by local studies (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001), suggest that young people locally have a sense of agency—young people have place knowledge from which they select in ways that do not always align with media images of young people in the present, or for that matter in the past. Further, Abbott-Chapman (2000) reflects on whether young people’s sense of agency, as reflected in Tasmanian studies of young people’s place and leisure preferences, suggests a search and yearning for time-out from the stresses of “our frantic, space/time compressed, often uncaring world” (p. 24). In following this line of thought, Abbott-Chapman (2000) suggests that other forms of leisure preferences, notably, what are considered to be the high-risk pursuits such as extreme sports and the use of mind-altering substances, are also a yearning for time-out—albeit a more destructive expression of this need for a sense of security and sanctuary. It is suggested, also, that a similar expression of the need for time apart from life pressures and expectations is found through time spent with friends.

Research in the local context, then, indicates the kinds of places sought by young people. However, where Abbott-Chapman (2000) and Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) focus on the places sought by young people still in schooling, I focus on the choices of B.Ed. students—both as students in the tertiary context of teacher education and in planning for fieldwork in early childhood and primary education, specifically in Studies of Society and Environment. Although such choices are made within institutional boundaries, specifically the university campus, the assignment topic also

leads students to consider familiar places—whether in a personal sense or more broadly. The topic also potentially takes students beyond the institutional context to other sites of learning. I now consider in more detail the frame of reference for decision-making and research.

Although this research is structured around three pedagogical moments, they are all closely linked with an assignment topic, part of assessment towards a curriculum methods unit—Social Education, a compulsory component of a four-year undergraduate Bachelor of Education program. Before continuing with my discussion of children and young people as “knowers,” I discuss the nature of the assignment task. As I have indicated, this is a task around which the three pedagogical moments revolve. The unit aimed, primarily, to introduce students of teaching to social studies curriculum methods. The first of these to be introduced was fieldwork. In this respect, students’ minds were directed towards a particular task and designated criteria for assessment. As indicated in Table 3.1, the assessment task required students to choose a site considered to be of personal significance and appropriate for fieldwork in Social Education.

Consider a site which is both significant to you and suitable for Social Education fieldwork. It may be (for example), a street, a place in the city, a beach, town, village, a particular house, building, suburb, a stream or a mountain ... Based on the site you select, develop a plan for teaching and learning that incorporates field experiences designed to encourage a class of children to thoroughly investigate the site. (University of Tasmania, 1997)

Although the question indicates several possibilities, these locations are generic exemplars; the parameters for decision-making remain open. The final decision about a suitable site is a matter of choice and may include places other than those indicated in the question itself. The decision-making frame extends beyond the parameters of the course within which the methods unit is nested and, potentially, includes a range of influences which extend beyond the institution of higher education and the school as bounded educational sites. In this respect, the topic may be seen to take students beyond the institutional “space of enclosure” (Lankshear, Peters & Knobel, 1996, p. 154) to broader political, historical, cultural and social parameters within which the selected field sites and teacher education institutions are situated.

Also, students were encouraged to actively engage in several kinds of enquiry: experiential and theoretical; personal and professional; and to extend their enquiry beyond the sites of teacher education most often mentioned in teacher education literature—the institution of higher education and schools. Through their own enquiry, students explored sites of knowledge other than those of formal classroom learning. Overall, these included a broad range of sites, for example, the worlds of lived experience and places of informal learning such as museums, heritage centres, community libraries rather than those in institutions of higher learning and schools, art galleries, community centres, organisations and enterprises including those of media and popular culture. In this respect, students were confronted with the curriculum of private and public space, including a number of societal and cultural institutions.

Hence, the task took students to the broader social and cultural contexts of schooling and teacher education. In making decisions within such a broad decision-making frame, students of teaching are likely to be confronted with multiple possibilities and conflicting curricula and pedagogies existing alongside the curricula and pedagogies of SOSE and teacher education. In this respect, students of teaching are confronted with the central educational questions of *what* to teach and *how* to teach. In this instance, such decisions are made within the confines of an assignment topic, albeit one which is at once a traditional mode of learning for children in early childhood and primary schooling and inclusive of personal and public experience—and as findings of Tasmanian research indicates (Abbott-Chapman 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson 2001; Stratford 2000), from their everyday experiences, children and young people *have* place knowledge. Thus, I take it that similarly, B.Ed. students have place knowledge upon which they will draw in planning fieldwork for children—particularly, since as Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) have indicated, through memory places retain significance. This thesis explores the nature and significance of such sites: both those chosen by B.Ed. students, *as students*, and in planning for children’s learning through fieldwork. As I now indicate, this is knowledge that I take seriously, particularly for my own teaching.

Although some writers express concerns about the paucity of children’s place experience (Robertson & Rikkinen, 1997), it is also considered that children’s and young people’s thinking and curiosity tends to be marginalised by schooling (Robertson, 2000b) and that their knowledge is devalued (Slater & Morgan, 2000). Such thinking is aligned with critical educational theory and the understanding of relative valuing of knowledge where “the curriculum favours certain forms of knowledge over others and affirms the dreams, desires, and values of select groups of students over other groups, often discriminatorily on the basis of race, class and gender” (McLaren, 1989, p. 40). Slater and Morgan (2000) note the potential ramifications that a revaluing of students’ knowledge has within school—or institutional—learning:

At present, the dominant model of geography teaching can be conceived as privileging the teacher’s knowledge and regarding children’s experiences and personal knowledge as lacking and in need of correction. The literatures discussed in this chapter reject this view of children’s knowledge. They point to the possibility of an alternative educational practice in which the cultural logic of young people can emerge, and a redrawing of the social relations of schooling. (p. 272)

This view of children’s knowledge is contrary to the view that the role of school is primarily to *enrich* children’s place knowledge. Slater and Morgan (2000) argue that such views have their origins in differing intellectual and philosophical traditions—one from the sub-discipline of environmental psychology; the other from the discipline of cultural studies. Very broadly, the focus of environmental psychology is on triggering learning through experience of the environment. In their brief overview, Slater and Morgan (pp. 259–263) identify the work of Lynch, Hart, Ward and Fyson who all, in similar yet subtly differing ways, sought to understand children’s experience of environment and through environmental experiences to extend children’s spatial and environmental knowledge. Learning by children or young people in the field was central to all.

Later in this chapter in the section “Fieldwork pedagogies: a degree of consensus,” I return to a discussion of associated fieldwork pedagogies. Now, I draw links between the kind of pedagogy proposed by Slater and Morgan (2000) and a similar approach for teacher education. To illustrate my discussion, I draw on another painting by Jeffrey Smart.

At this point, I introduce a later work by Jeffrey Smart—his 1989 painting, *The New School* (Capon, 1999, p. 173; also see Appendix A). Here is an image that also revolves around the idea of boundaries. In this image, students are seen situated in two worlds. On the one hand, the boundary between school and non-school is announced by the windowless building and the red doors—symbolically a barrier between the institutional life of school and the everyday non-school world. On the other hand, the images of the students are situated in both worlds. Disturbingly, however, the central figure in front of the school building and juxtaposed with it appears disoriented and perhaps constrained by the grid lines representative of the formal structures to be found within the school grounds, and, perhaps, by the built environment. For me, this painting illustrates in a tangible way the multiple contexts inhabited by students, students of teaching and teachers. I see this painting as particularly evocative of the view expressed by Slater and Morgan (2000, p. 272) that the geography curriculum may offer a way to cross the boundaries between school and non-school.

Making young people’s knowledge a central part of the geography classroom can perhaps increase the permeability of the boundaries between school identity as students and the range of social identities available to young people outside the formal contexts of schooling. Rather than seeing the classroom as a domain in which adults know and children are taught something they supposedly lack knowledge of, the geography classroom might be reorganised as a space where children are entitled to know. In this way they might be addressed less as children and more as participants in a culture they share.

This viewpoint is also taken up by Rawling (2001, p. 177), who suggests that through geography curriculum and pedagogies it may be possible and desirable to blur the boundaries experienced in schooling.

For a subject like geography, with its diverse content and roots in the wider world, it is also about learning from and building on pupils’ experience, seeing them as integral parts of geographical enquiry, and blurring the distinction between in-classroom and out-of-classroom learning.

Such views shaped my own pedagogy in teacher education. Contrary to the view expressed by Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996), who aimed to disrupt institutional understandings that students of teaching brought to their learning in teacher education, I took the view that as agents, learners were integral to increasing the “permeability of boundaries”—and that this applied to students of teaching as it did to students in school. After all, as Danielewicz (2001, p. 70) indicates, students of teaching occupy a “middle ground” where they are at once students and teachers, both “in mind” and in the making. Thus, I considered that in addition to prioritising experience as integral to fieldwork pedagogies, my own pedagogy should see students of teaching as people “entitled to know” (Slater & Morgan 2000, p. 272). I see this as particularly appropriate given that teaching and learning through

fieldwork is a central concern for this thesis, and that, in the local context, research has suggested that young people have a strong sense of place (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001). The three pedagogical moments that frame the research are all concerned with fieldwork pedagogies—albeit within the context of teacher education.

I am also extrapolating from pedagogies in geography teaching—notably those pedagogies informed by cultural studies and cultural geography—and more specifically from pedagogy for teacher education. I see this as a way of also broadening the notion of curriculum from one which excludes students and their experiences to one in which they are integral components of curriculum. Continuing my discussion of the inter-relatedness of curriculum and pedagogy, I introduce Shirley Grundy's *pedagogical view* of curriculum (Grundy, 1994, pp. 30–32). In this interpretation of curriculum, students are integral to what is learned.

So, if we take the pedagogical view of curriculum, it suggests that you cannot actually have a curriculum without the active participation of the students. Official documentation such as policy documents, according to this view, are simply texts for the teacher to interpret; they do not represent the curriculum *per se*.

Such a view of the centrality of students to enacted curriculum is at the heart of my decision-making and underpins my formulation of the three pedagogical moments within the parameters of the Social Education course structure. Although I place students at the heart of my pedagogy, there are many pedagogical components to take into account. As Grundy (1994, pp. 30–32) indicates, in addition to valuing students as active contributors, the pedagogical view of curriculum sees enacted curriculum as consisting of the dynamic interplay of several components. In addition to the students, Grundy incorporates the teacher, subject matter including policy guidelines and the “milieu” within which these are situated.

In some respects, the pedagogical view of curriculum has similarities with the notion of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) which, as I noted in Chapter 2, consists of a blend of content and pedagogy as well as the learner. The pedagogical view of curriculum does not downplay the place of subject matter or content knowledge; it incorporates it as one integral component. Moreover, it shifts the emphasis from the teacher and what the teacher needs to know to the dynamic interplay of several components. The learner or student is seen as an active participant. As I indicated in an earlier section of this chapter in my reference to Smart's painting, *The New School* (Capon, 1999), students—and teachers—exist within several milieux, including the institutional context of schooling and broader socio-cultural contexts.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the milieu for this study is teacher education in SOSE for early childhood and primary education in Tasmania, a small island state of Australia. Specifically, the milieu is framed by two units in Social Education, curriculum methods units which, at the time of this study, were components of a four-year Bachelor of Education degree course at the University of Tasmania. The

study took place at a time of curriculum change when most schools in Australia were in the process of adopting guidelines for the eight learning areas developed nationally as frameworks for their curriculum content. This study focuses specifically on SOSE, a learning area described in two nationally produced documents—*A Statement on Studies of Society and Environment in Australian Schools* [SOSE Statement] and *Studies of Society and Environment: A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools* [SOSE Profile] (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c).

In the Tasmanian context, the learning area statement and profile were further interpreted for use in schools. Early in 1996, local policy guidelines were distributed to schools. For those teachers and schools selecting SOSE as a priority area for staff development, the same national and state documents were used as the basis for workshops conducted by members of the curriculum implementation team—SOSE Key Implementation Officers appointed to each educational district within the state.

For this thesis with its focus on fieldwork pedagogies in SOSE in teacher education, the curriculum components identified by Grundy (1994) are of particular concern. This does not mean that I marginalise the place of experience or cease to see students as entitled to know. Rather, I see the students, subject matter, and the milieu within which all are situated as not only integral to the enacted curriculum, but also to my pedagogical decision-making which, furthermore, given my own subjectivity, is influenced in ways of which I may, or may not, be *entirely* aware.

Accordingly, I reflect on the complexities and challenges of teaching through fieldwork; not only in school, but even more so, in teaching students of teaching. The overwhelming challenge as I see it is how to honour the knowledge and understandings of the students I teach, at the same time engaging them in the theoretical and practical complexities to be considered. These include complex debates surrounding the understanding of place and space, as well as in relation to curriculum and fieldwork pedagogies in particular. I take the view that approaches that prioritise experience as integral to place knowledge and critical theorising about curriculum are not mutually exclusive. Additionally, I take the view that an appreciation of symbols and meanings of place and space is inherent within such approaches. I draw upon the work of Slater and Morgan (2000, p. 272) who promote “an alternative educational practice in which the cultural logic of young people can emerge, and a redrawing of the social relations of schooling.” However, I recognise also that such a view is a pedagogical inversion of the usual hierarchical relationship which exists in most schooling and consider that as a teacher educator I must recognise the warnings of Gore (1993), that all pedagogies are dangerous—and from Brookfield (1995), that seemingly democratic approaches to teaching may be threatening to learners.

In following sections of this chapter, I continue to elaborate on my pedagogical decision-making in relation to these issues. In the next section, I discuss understandings of place and space. To introduce my discussion, I once again set the scene by focusing on *Corrugated Giaconda* as visual text.

Analysis of *Corrugated Gioconda*: Its iconography

By focusing on the motifs and composition of *Corrugated Gioconda*, as well as the title of the painting itself, I am drawn to the iconography of place and space. I understand iconography as “the study of symbols ... and their meaning” (*Chambers English Dictionary*, 1988, p. 705). In my continuing deconstruction of *Corrugated Gioconda* as visual text, I very briefly here analyse the meanings I read in the symbols and motifs of the painting, as well as their place within the composition. Earlier in my discussion I indicated that in the graffiti—the peripheral discourse of *Corrugated Gioconda*—a place is found, at least at the vernacular level, to include a homosexual presence in the heterosexual hegemony of the landscape. Thus, the graffiti is a motif indicative of both the gendered (King, 1996, p. 211; Massey, 1994a) and contested nature of place and space (Cresswell, 1996; Jacobs, 1996; King, 1996). However, the pastiche of layered texts is indicative also that meanings are not immediately accessible to observation: that, as Stratford (1999, p. 5) suggests,

now, cultural landscapes are not merely viewed as uncomplicated material sites that can be accessed using observation and induction. Certainly, the particularity of landscapes is still important, but now we recognise that such terrains are interpretative sites—sites which can be read as texts.

The textual landscape of *Corrugated Gioconda* is informed by the textual overlay on the billboard. The words, meglio [c]arnevale, although partly obscured, announce that this is a *better performance*—postmodern rather than modern, perhaps. It is a performance inclusive of multiple voices representing those positioned differentially within the hegemony of the built environment. However, the publishing company perpetuates Renaissance culture through the appropriated image of the Mona Lisa in the poster announcing a *nuova opera*. In Italian, these words indicate a *new work*; in English they refer to a performance of a particular genre. The irony of the textual juxtaposition of sound against the silence of Gioconda—the passive object of the male gaze, as is the landscape beyond—emphasises the gendered nature of the landscape. As Rose (1993) argues, both the landscape and nature are gendered; in visual representations there are parallels between women and nature. Both are represented as passive objects of the spectator’s gaze. Compositionally, the play of vertical and horizontal geometric planes and lines links the image on the poster with the towering building and trunks of the palm trees. Through the juxtaposition and balancing of motifs accentuated by parallel vertical lines—the corrugations cutting across the image of the Mona Lisa and the trunks of the palm trees—nature, women and exotic cultures become integrated. I read these motifs as highlighting criticisms of fieldwork and geography as privileging the white, heterosexual, male, European view of the world (Rose, 1993; Lee, 1996), although I also acknowledge that such readings are by no means universally recognised (Walford, 2001).

At another level, the text suggests the possibility of agency. The central radiant image, juxtaposed with the image of the Mona Lisa and balancing the dominant high-rise building and surreal palm trees, announces *nuovo [su]permercato coop*—new supermarket coop. This text works like a hologram;

depending which words I focus upon, the meaning shifts. A focus on supermercato is suggestive of commodity culture and time-space compression of globalisation. By this, I mean the pervasive influence of global culture conveyed in symbols of commodity culture, including more recently, the pervasive influence of media cultures including electronic communication. However, a focus on the total phrase, nuovo supermercato coop, is suggestive of the possibility of agency within such a commodified world. This sense of agency is supported by the image of the Mona Lisa presented as a new work by a company whose name, Fabbri, translates to artisan. It appears that this publishing company are makers of a new social world. This reference seems to be also highly ironical: Fabbri Editori published a magazine, *Golden Hands: Knitting, Dressmaking & Needlecraft Guide* (1973), also published in English, that promoted domestic handcraft as a pastime for women; the magazine is described as “a book for the woman who likes to improve on present talents or discover new ones—for the beginner and experienced needlewoman alike. It’s for any woman who wants to make clothes with flair and individuality or to create good-looking decorative furnishings for her home” (p. 2). This book would seem to be written for the woman at home carrying out domestic duties reproductive of what was—or perhaps is—a highly gendered division of labour. This reference would seem to point to the world of *Corrugated Gioconda* as a highly gendered environment. In actuality, Fabbri Editori may perpetuate a gendered division of labour. Through the mention of a new work, perhaps *Corrugated Gioconda* expresses hope for change.

Moreover, as I indicated earlier, the corrugations of the poster link the image of the Mona Lisa with the palm trees—their redolence with multiple meanings. The curriculum of place and space represented in the officially designed modernist tower is one that, in my reading, communicates a sense of urban order. However, the sense of order represented in the new, scientifically and rationally designed tower is juxtaposed with two palm trees evocative of symbolism from the past—an ancient symbol, at once a token of rejoicing and victory, as well as justice. This seems suggestive of social justice and in my mind has associations with the emphases of critical curriculum theorising and cultural geography. The associations are dense. In such a brief analysis it is not possible to do justice to the debates. Most importantly, the symbols and motifs suggest that, on the one hand we exist within a complex and multiply-layered symbolic environment; on the other hand, this environment is mediated and thus, always in the process of construction, even if in uncertain ways that are also subject to structural constraints. As J. McDonald (2001, p. 5) says, “... Smart’s best paintings are as ambiguous as dreams. They are infinitely suggestive, but confirm nothing ... all readings remain speculative.” The juxtaposition of motifs and symbols invite interpretation—but not one that can be made with certainty.

Understandings of place and space: Pedagogical implications

In a previous section of this chapter I argued that children, young people and indeed people of all ages have environmental experience of some kind and that such knowledge is integral to learning. Likewise, taking a pedagogical view of curriculum, I see students as integral to enacted curriculum.

Yet, as I reflect on my deconstruction of the motifs of *Corrugated Gioconda* and their relationships to each other, I reflect also on the complex debates surrounding geography and understandings of place and space as well as landscape as a conventional form of representation. A detailed discussion of the debates is outside the parameters of this thesis. However, as I indicated earlier in my reference to the pedagogical view of curriculum, subject matter is one component that a teacher should aim to understand in all its richness and complexity.

Since this thesis investigates fieldwork practices in Studies of Society and Environment within teacher education, understandings of place and space are a primary concern. With reference to *Corrugated Gioconda*, I illustrate issues that shaped my understanding and evaluation of fieldwork pedagogies and consequently influenced the decisions I made in relation to the three pedagogical moments which frame this research.

Most particularly, the symbols and motifs juxtaposed as they are within the composition of *Corrugated Gioconda* highlight the view that it is not only within the school that people are positioned differently. The positioning of the graffiti relative to the tower helps to draw attention to relative positions of power within space. Although, place and space may be socially constructed, they may also be socially constructed in ways constitutive of inequality. Thus, as Morgan (2000, p. 281) notes, “Rather than being regarded as a neutral container for social action, space is increasingly regarded as tied up with issues of power and difference (Watson, 1999).” The faintly inscribed graffiti on the billboard of *Corrugated Gioconda* highlights such issues.

Cresswell (1996, pp. 47–48) points out that the built environment is socially constituted: “Social groups are capable of creating their own sense of place and contesting the constructs of others. Once meaning finds its geographical expression it is no longer personal; it is there—visible, material, solid and shared.” Thus, the built environment, although a shared space in which there are positions of relative power, is also contested and has similarities with space conceptualised by Soja (1996) as “Thirdspace.” According to Morgan (2000, p. 280), this term refers to a contested space of resistance that constitutes “a space of ‘radical openness’, which those marginalized by racism, patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism and other oppressions choose as a speaking position.” This highly political space is termed “Thirdspace” to define it from other views of place and space that are explained with reference to a three-way division:

For Soja, Thirdspace offers the possibility of expanding the scope of our imaginations about the spatiality of social life, a dimension as significant as historicity and sociality. This means building and going beyond a Firstspace perspective which focuses on the “real” material world, and a Secondspace perspective that interprets “reality” through representations, to reach a Thirdspace of “real-and-imagined” places. (p. 280)

I suggest that all three spaces would seem to be important in thinking about fieldwork. Yet it is argued that school geography “ignores the social and political” (Peet, 1998, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 281).

A similar oversight is also mentioned in a criticism of the broader domain of social studies. Apple (1990, p. 92) emphasises the way that social studies as it is taught in schools tends to ignore the processes of conflict and controversy which are characteristic of change: “An examination of much of the literature in social studies points to an acceptance of society as basically a cooperative system.” Likewise, Nelson (1991, p. 335) cites several authors to add to the view that social studies is guilty of imposing views on students, notably the views of “dominant groups in the community, inculcating selected governmental and economic ideologies, and restricting conflicting views from examination.” Such criticisms are worrisome, particularly given the socially constructed, contested and gendered nature of place and space revealed by cultural geographers (Duncan, 1994; Jacobs, 1996; Massey, 1994b; Rose, 1993; Stratford, 1999). Although I do not wish to impose my views on students, I am obliged to take account of policy—and, as I indicate later, *values* are integral to Studies of Society and Environment.

Although the sub-discipline of cultural geography is characterised by diversity of interests (Duncan, 1994, 1995), with reference to the view of Stratford, I accept the view that contemporary cultural geography differs in emphasis from an earlier school of cultural geography. Stratford (1999, pp. 3–5) notes the contested terrain of cultural geography, largely in terms of the old and new cultural geography—the first arising from the work of Sauer and the Berkeley School with its focus on what appear to be novelties of particular cultures, the latter on the way that such seemingly natural cultural expressions are the result of processes of construction.

Advocates of the “new” have proposed that these earlier studies reify culture. Reification is where processes are mistakenly viewed as things, and come to seem natural rather than cultural and often peculiar to particular times and places. “New” cultural geographies are promoted as being concerned with the idea of culture as process; something that is constantly being reproduced, and that is subject to change because of temporal and spatial considerations—where one “is” in time and space. Such geographies are often concerned to ask how we come to constitute ourselves, each other, and our worlds. There is an additional desire to examine these questions by interrogating both the material and the symbolic, including the real and representational effects of categories such as gender, ethnicity, class, occupation, sexuality or age.

Likewise, Morgan (2000) argues that in debates about space there has been a shift away from a conception of space as essential to a conception of space as “constructed.” This view is highlighted in the painting *Corrugated Gioconda*, not least through the dominance of constructed technological forms: the corrugated iron fence and the dominant reinforced concrete modernist tower. Space, however, is not only constructed in a material sense, but through social processes.

These concerns of new cultural geography are highlighted in the painting *Corrugated Gioconda*—which is at once a material environment redolent with symbolism. The painting also illustrates the notion of culture as dynamic and always in the process of production. These three geographical layers—the material, the symbolic and the ongoing process of production of place and

space—are closely aligned with Soja’s three-way conceptualisation of space. All are important considerations for fieldwork and ones which I seek to incorporate within three pedagogical moments.

It is suggested that the pedagogical implications of contemporary understandings of place and space require a move to a critical pedagogy of space; an acknowledgement that the construction of place and space are bound up with power (Soja, 1999b, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 281). This view is one in which critical pedagogy is “grounded in the lived experiences of students” (McLaren, 1999, p. 452, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 281) and is the approach I attempt to prioritise in my own pedagogy at a number of levels: from a recognition and valuing of students as “knowers,” to exploration of the places selected as field sites, to interrogation of the symbolism of one site as a place of inclusion and exclusion. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, such a pedagogy can begin with the valuing of students’ understandings (Slater & Morgan, 2000). Morgan (2000, p. 286) suggests that “there are important and difficult questions about the shape and form” of a critical pedagogy of space. It is argued that critical pedagogy should begin with what students understand (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, p. 286):

Most notably, the multiple and contested nature of space suggests that a critical pedagogy of space needs to be less interrogative (seeking to correct deficits and flaws in students’ existing knowledge) and more dialogic (seeking to recognise and explore existing knowledge). It suggests that teachers start with “mattering maps” or “cartographies of taste, stability, and mobility within which students are located” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18) and seek to help them explore alternative possibilities.

Although Morgan (2000) does not specifically note implications for fieldwork, I see that if fieldwork practices are to recognise contemporary debates about place and space, recommendations for a critical pedagogy of space and place are relevant also for teaching and learning through fieldwork in SOSE—particularly with its emphasis on various curriculum perspectives. I return to this issue in my discussion of fieldwork pedagogies and my interpretation of these in the three pedagogical moments.

In following sections, I focus on fieldwork pedagogies. Specifically, I argue that although there is some consensus in support of enquiry-oriented approaches to fieldwork, debate exists about the relative merits of fieldwork pedagogies. It would seem that fieldwork, particularly as a favoured mode of enquiry in geography, is laden with bias. The approach is criticised for what is considered as inherent gender bias, as well as for the tendency for certain kinds of sites to be selected. In addition, it is argued that fieldwork practices tend to marginalise insights from the humanities and that observations tend to be superficial and taken-for-granted. It is also thought that fieldwork practices in the school context do not take account of contemporary debates about place and space. My interpretation and evaluation of these issues is integral to my pedagogical decision-making; I discuss these in some detail. In addition, I situate my discussion in SOSE in teacher education. Now, I turn to the enquiry-oriented approach about which there is some degree of consensus.

Fieldwork pedagogies: A degree of consensus

In this section, I discuss literature that overwhelmingly supports an enquiry approach to fieldwork. Potentially, this view, arising from environmental psychology, is at odds with a pedagogy which sees students as “entitled to know” (Slater & Morgan, 2000); as already knowledgeable. However, as I have indicated, I do not see these two viewpoints—one from environmental psychology, the other from cultural studies—as necessarily mutually exclusive. Furthermore, I consider that it is imperative for students of teaching to appreciate the abiding level of support for enquiry-oriented approaches to fieldwork. Thus, I now discuss the approach in more detail.

From the perspective of environmental psychology, experience is considered integral to understandings of place and space, and thus much emphasised within debates about fieldwork pedagogies. Inherent in this valuing of experience is the view that enquiry-based approaches are preferable to didactic modes of learning. Although some studies suggest that everyday exploration of places may be an important factor in developing spatial understandings (Robertson & Rikkinen, 1997), it is thought also that through fieldwork that is highly experiential and memorable, learning can be enhanced. The emphasis on the relationship between experience and environmental understanding largely underpins the rationale for teaching and learning through fieldwork in early childhood and primary education.

Although fieldwork, field trips and excursions have a long history in early childhood and primary education and are highly valued within geography—its teaching and learning and enquiry—several writers indicate that it is not fieldwork per se that is effective in achieving the stated goals but the way fieldwork is organised. For example, Laws (1989) suggests that teacher-directed fieldwork with its emphasis on observation and description of aspects of the site is less effective than fieldwork where students gather primary data for geographic enquiry and problem solving. Biggs and Moore (1993, p. 228) describe the role of the teacher in the teacher-directed model of fieldwork as that of “tour guide.” According to research by MacKenzie and White (cited in Biggs & Moore, 1993, pp. 228–229), the enquiry model of fieldwork is far more effective than the didactic, teacher-directed or “tour guide” model, particularly when modes of learning are highly experiential: active rather than passive. This view of fieldwork is one about which there is some consensus. Cranby and Matthews (1996, p. 269) conclude that:

Particular attention should be paid at all times to the implementation of inquiry learning principles, the application of concepts, the use by students of skills and techniques of both data observation and collection in the field, and the subsequent synthesis, analysis and presentation of data.

The emphasis on an enquiry orientation to fieldwork is particularly dominant in geography teaching and criticisms continue to relate to the pedagogical binary (Clark, 1997; Higgitt, 1997). From a concern that fieldwork may foster surface rather than deep approaches to learning, Higgitt (1997, p. 394, Table III), proposes fieldwork based on Kolb’s cycle of experiential learning. Likewise,

concerns are expressed about the prevalence of didactic modes of fieldwork in geography in higher education (Gold and Haigh, 1992, cited in Clark, 1997, p. 387).

Educational practices varied widely but the main purpose of much traditional fieldwork was to teach students in the field. The introduction typically took the form of a “Cook’s tour” designed to provide students with a broad overview of the field area. They were then taken to and shown selected features and sites, the origins and characteristics of which were explained. Such fieldwork was staff-led rather than student-centred.... Students learned through observation and instruction rather than by personal investigation and self-discovery (Gold & Haigh, 1992).

Recommendations for fieldwork practices in early childhood and primary education focus on similar concerns. Bale (1987), for example, mentions three approaches to fieldwork, two of which are similar to the didactic and inquiry approaches which I indicated earlier in this chapter. Bale (1987, pp. 66–67) refers to these approaches as “an ‘eye-balling’ approach” and “a problem-solving or hypothesis-testing approach.” The third approach, the experiential approach that Bale suggests is a more humanistic orientation to fieldwork, aims to elicit students’ feelings about places with the intention of sensitising students to particular places as the motivational basis for written or visual expression: “Essentially, this approach attempts to get children to articulate their feelings about a place, landscape or environment with minimal impact from the teacher” (p. 70). By providing exemplars for the problem-solving and experiential approaches, Bale (pp. 67–71) implies that these approaches are preferable to the eye-balling approach. Given the strong orientation to experiential, enquiry-based approaches to fieldwork, this is one element which I prioritised in my own teaching and learning. In supporting notes provided for student reference—*Rationale for Fieldwork* (Johnston, 1997), I emphasised the importance of fieldwork.

It is considered that if all the abilities of the child are to be nurtured it is essential that formal education includes more than an education in literacy and numeracy. Margaret Robertson’s research has indicated that if children are to develop spatial awareness and related problem-solving skills, that they need experiences to foster the development of these (Robertson & Rikkinen, 1997). Comparative studies indicate that students in other places (eg other countries and local rural environments) have greater opportunity for this kind of learning. There is a concern that if students do not have the opportunity “to observe and make decisions that rely on memory of environmental data” their spatial capacities will be underdeveloped (Robertson & Rikkinen, 1997, p. 55). If the school curriculum minimises the importance of visual–spatial skills this is even more of a concern.

In the same document I highlighted a preference for an experiential approach.

Not all fieldwork is conducive to fostering the abilities described. It is experience and “free movement” in the environment that is important. Fieldwork that focuses on information boards at formal field sites or that is based on guided tours with a commentary by an expert does not maximise the opportunity for students to explore their surroundings and to develop skills of observation and spatial awareness. Written material can often be more easily examined in the classroom. Writing on clipboards in windy conditions may not be conducive to learning. It is difficult to concentrate on what a tour guide is saying when there are other distractions such as noise and the dissipation of the voice in the outdoors.

In these statements, I indicate a preference for certain kinds of fieldwork based on evidence from literature and from my own experience, as a teacher and as a student. Recommended texts such as *The Geography Teachers' Guide to the Classroom* (Fien, Gerber & Wilson, 1989) and *Geography in the Primary School* (Bale, 1987) introduced students to the pros and cons of the varied approaches to fieldwork. Students were also referred to Hart's suggestions for children's active fieldwork enquiry conducted collaboratively with residents of their school neighbourhoods (Hart, 1995).

In relation to my earlier emphasis on the centrality of the student, this decision presented some tensions. On the one hand, I wished to prioritise and value students' understandings. On the other hand, I wished to emphasise the relative merits of the inquiry-oriented approach over the didactic. As I have indicated, I saw these two approaches as not mutually exclusive. Before I discuss how I integrated these approaches in the first pedagogical moment, I consider other debates about fieldwork and fieldwork pedagogies which I took into account.

Fieldwork pedagogies: Further debates

Although there is some consensus that enquiry-oriented approaches are preferable to the teacher directed "tour guide" approach to fieldwork, more recently a number of scholars taking feminist and broader cultural perspectives have criticised fieldwork practices and the discipline of geography. In particular, charges of fieldwork as a pedagogy of inherent cultural bias (Lee, 1996; Nairn, 1997, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 282; Rose, 1993, p. 65, cited in Ploszajska, 1998) and criticisms that understandings of place and space in school curricula lag behind contemporary academic views are particularly relevant concerns for this study.

It is considered also that fieldwork—influenced as it is by traditions in geography—tends to ignore the "meaning embedded in the human landscape, tending to reduce it to an impersonal expression of demographic and economic forces" (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 120). As I have indicated in my discussion of the iconography of *Corrugated Gioconda*, understanding place and space is enhanced by an interpretation of the symbols of cultural landscapes. Taking a humanities perspective towards geography and the taken for granted everyday world, Cosgrove (1989, p. 120) argues that a textual reading of the landscape is conducive to interpreting its multiple meanings.

The idea of applying to the human landscape some of the interpretive skills we deploy in studying a novel, a poem, a film or a painting, of treating it as an intentional human expression composed of many layers of meaning, is fairly alien to us.

In addition to criticisms from cultural studies and the humanities, it would appear that fieldwork pedagogy may be biased in terms of the tendency for educators to select specific kinds of sites for fieldwork (Gold et al., 1991). Likewise, Adams and Ward (1982) pointed to a tendency for students themselves to focus on particular kinds of sites. It is argued that specific kinds of sites are selected by

educators, not only for pragmatic reasons, but with socialising intent. In the following section I discuss these issues in more detail.

Several scholars taking a feminist perspective to their analyses of fieldwork argue that the approach to enquiry and learning is, for a number of reasons, problematic. In drawing on the view of Rose (1993), Ploszajska (1998, p. 758), for example, comments on the gender bias of fieldwork as a traditional practice within geography, suggesting that it is “a tradition predicated upon a heavily gendered and power-laden distinction between (feminine) Nature and (masculine) Culture which underlies and defines much of geographical knowledge.” Such criticisms flow through to scrutiny of the way that students are positioned by geography curriculum and pedagogy in school classrooms. Morgan (2000, p. 282), in drawing upon the views of several scholars, considers that within the literature there is considerable support for such a view. Lee (1996, p. 32) argues that fieldwork has associations with “the geographical trope of discovery.” In drawing on the work of Rose (1993, p. 70), Lee suggests that fieldwork in geography, likewise, is characterised by a “heroic ethos.” Lee concludes that “the gendering of geography becomes embodied and enacted within a foundational dualism: nature/culture; geography and landscape.”

In a detailed study of the pedagogical practices of school geography at the secondary level, Lee (1996, p. 84) cites evidence from interviews with students which further suggest a gendering of the subject: “In general, in talk with boys, I identified a masculine valorising of the outdoors, with associated Australian myths about the outback.” The evidence for gendering of the subject is not as clear for younger students. In a study of gender differences in children’s memories of place, Stratford (2000, p. 165) cites evidence which indicates that, for students at one Tasmanian primary school, gender *is* implicated in “how students ... remember place,” yet it “is not the only field of meaning within which experiences and memories of place are recalled, represented and analysed.”

However, Lee (1996, pp. 83–84) suggests that for boys in secondary schooling, geography was associated with physical fitness and practical doing—an emphasis which she suggests is in contrast with girls’ preferences for writing and strategic decisions to *write* rather than *speak*. This issue of girls’ choice of silence in geography was explored by Nairn (1997, as cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 282) in her efforts to devise a pedagogy which encouraged a female voice within her teaching of geography. As Morgan (p. 282) explains,

Nairn devised her own intervention, which involved trying to get “quiet” female students to speak more in lessons. This involved developing a deliberately women-focused lesson and the creation of space for female students to develop their own thoughts before a public discussion that was devised to allow all students to participate.

The studies I have cited in relation to the gender bias of fieldwork and geography suggest that, as Ploszajska (1998, p. 758) argues, “it is now beginning to be recognised that disciplinary practices not only produce particular kinds of knowledges but also produce gendered subjects who are differently positioned in relation to those knowledges.” As Ploszajska also notes, such inquiry of fieldwork-

related issues is a relatively new area of concern. These criticisms I consider relevant in thinking about fieldwork pedagogies in early childhood and primary education. Such criticisms also caused me to reflect on my own fieldwork practices.

Consequently, such criticisms influenced my pedagogical decision-making. Following Nairn (1997, cited in Morgan 2000, p. 282), I wished to offer as inclusive a program as possible. However, I also was cognisant of the warning that teachers taking a critical or feminist stance are in a position of authority and power. In aiming for inclusion and student voice, potentially I ran the risk of paternalism, of being an oppressor as much as an empowerer.

Educators stand above their students, and guide them in their struggle for “personal empowerment” and “voice.” The only call for change is on the part of the students. The only people who get “worked over” are the students. The only call is for student voice. Critical and feminist teachers, we are to assume, have already found and articulated theirs. (Orner, 1993, p. 87)

This awareness of “traps for the unwary” posed a dilemma. Ultimately, evidence of the way students may be positioned within fieldwork practices supported my decision to value student knowledge; to quite overtly introduce fieldwork practices with a valuing of students’ understandings. There were, however, other concerns that I wished to take into account.

I reflected that in a historical analysis of fieldwork emphases in the United Kingdom, Ploszajska (1998, p. 758) argued that fieldwork had been garnered in support of particular and, at times, contested, views of citizenship—notably, in support of patriotism. Such a fieldwork emphasis would be in conflict with contemporary understandings of place and space as socially constructed in a number of ways and out of step with the primary stated goal of Studies of Society and Environment for education for citizenship in “a culturally diverse and democratic society” (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 3).

Garnering fieldwork for patriotism would seem to be out of step also with the emphasis on participatory citizenship which is so strongly advocated in the Tasmanian guidelines and conveyed through the symbol for the learning area: “Discussion, talk, conversation, and deliberation are the most basic form of participatory citizenship. The symbol representing this idea forms the background to the SOSE Planning Grid” (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 3). This symbol consists of a bird’s eye view of people at a round-table discussion. It is evocative of a strong emphasis at a formal hierarchical level on cooperative learning, for example, as indicated in a publication by Bennett, Rolheiser-Bennett and Stevahn (1991) and examining issues from a range of perspectives using de Bono’s strategies of “Six Hat” and “CoRT Thinking” cited in the *Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment Planning Grid* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b). Moreover, if a dominant socialising intention did underpin fieldwork, potentially fieldwork would seem irrelevant for a learning area which emphasised varying perspectives such as gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural, and global. Further, it would seem incompatible with an emphasis on

equity—notably, for example, the emphasis on including all groups of students (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 9). Such issues added further weight to my decision to value student knowledge and thus, to “recognise and value student diversity by building on their varied experiences and interests” (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a). This view was one of the reasons that underpinned my decision to begin with student knowledge in the first pedagogical moment. As I have already indicated, another reason to plan for fieldwork *on campus* was related to practical issues and policy guidelines. In the next section, I elaborate on another issue and continue to indicate how I responded to issues of student diversity and concerns for equity.

Field site selection: The crux of the matter

In their discussion of the places students select as subjects of study, Adams and Ward (1982), along with other writers across varying disciplines (Berleant, 1992; Boyer, 1994; Gold, et al., 1991; Lynch, 1984; Sepänmaa, 1995; Goodey, 1982, as cited in Walmsley, 1988, p. 77) note the propensity for certain kinds of places to be valued over others. It is argued that this is a particular concern if certain kinds of field sites, to the exclusion of others, are selected for study (Gold et al., 1991). This issue was foundational for my pedagogy; a focus on the kinds of sites selected for fieldwork underpins this thesis and its research questions. Both the pedagogical context and the research are designed to unsettle the possibly hegemonic tendency of fieldwork practices to favour some locations in preference to others, which—through their exclusion—may become marginalised. This pedagogy and research focus is predicated on curriculum emphases on difference, diversity, inclusion and equity (Australian Education Council, 1994b; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) and recent critiques which note the potential of fieldwork pedagogies to position subjects differently “in relation to those knowledges” (Ploszajska, 1998, p. 758).

Additionally, both the pedagogy and research focus are informed by recent work in cultural geography, a subdiscipline, which Jacobs (1999, p. 13) suggests is to some extent characterised by a “concern with meaning in everyday life.” A recent collection of cultural geographies (Stratford, 1999) points to the commitment of such studies “to political change along with the creation of emancipatory spaces and places” (Stratford, 1999, p. 6). The studies range broadly across a range of contexts—Aboriginal, inner city, domestic, urban planning and the “subterranean world of youth subcultures whose members have territorialised the Hobart Rivulet” (Leary, 1999, cited in Stratford, 1999, p. 9). Such studies exemplify the way that fieldwork practices that occur across a range of sites may be inclusive of difference and diversity.

The choice of sites would seem important, not only because of its potential to position subjects differently or because of its possible exclusion of certain sites. The issue is important also because there has been on-going recognition of the propensity for field sites to be selected according to certain criteria (Adams & Ward, 1982; Bale, 1987; Gold et al., 1991; Hall, 1989) and on the basis of criteria that act to position and exclude (Ploszajska, 1998). When certain kinds of sites are considered over

others, the effect is similar to that noted by Boyer (1994), who comments on the tendency for designers to construct environments in which some places are valorised over others with the effect of producing matrices which serve to erase: “But the matrix of places that results encourages partial, piecemeal vision pushing interstitial places out of its view. The deindustrialized and deterritorialized, displaced and disadvantaged, have no seat in this constructed array” (Boyer, 1994, p. 2).

As I have already suggested, a focus on kinds of places selected for fieldwork is not a new issue. However, given my interest in the possibility for the choice of sites to contribute to a hidden curriculum, such criticisms are pertinent—particularly given the focus of this thesis and its pedagogic frame. Thus, the concerns cited in the literature more broadly demand attention. I now turn to this literature.

According to Adams and Ward (1982), students involved in the Art and the Built Environment Project tended to select particular kinds of sites for study; Adams and Ward questioned whether the propensity for students to select particular kinds of sites may lead to limited opportunities for learning. Likewise, I had reflected on the sites students of teaching self-selected for unit planning based on teaching and learning through fieldwork in SOSE curriculum. It seemed that when B.Ed. students planned fieldwork, they tended to devalue everyday environments as places for children’s learning; yet, when they selected sites as students, they tended to choose places meaningful to them. I questioned whether the choices differed according to role.

I reflected also on recommendations that sites other than those publicly valued seemed to be chosen as places for fieldwork (Bale, 1987; Hall, 1989). Hall (1989, p. 155), for example, suggested that in studying the built environment, “there should be a willingness to study both the excellent and the prosaic in the environment. For example, we can learn both from grand and vernacular architecture, and there is no necessity to restrict attention wholly to the excellent.” Gold et al. (1991, p. 29), however, point to a preference for the “special” over the prosaic and argue that in geography in higher education, “it is very common to choose field course venues that are somehow ‘special’ at the expense of ‘everyday’ landscapes.”

To give a British example, we suspect that more courses go to seaside resorts than to heavy industrial centres. There may be practical reasons for choosing a seaside resort, not least of which is the attraction of cheap accommodation out of the tourist season, but it might be more educationally desirable that students experience the everyday environment of an industrial town. An exotic location may lift morale, give an academic intensity to the course and even help recruit students into the geography programme, but it is important to ensure that the excitement of the special location is not achieved at the expense of the academic programme.

This criticism is brought home to me in the spatial boundaries of *Corrugated Gioconda* and is illustrative of a similar concern expressed by Adams and Ward (1982)—this time of places self-selected by students rather than by teachers. My reading of the tensions faced by Adams and Ward led me to more recent work that seeks to quite overtly value students’ knowledge and viewpoints.

In case studies of field-based observations by students at two schools, Adams & Ward (1982, pp. 107–115) noted that observations tended to be “at the level of the picturesque” unless students were overtly directed towards the spatial; towards “the spaces in between” (p. 109). At the same time, these writers demonstrated sensitivity to students’ perspectives—and their resistances. Adams and Ward support the worldview of students; and aim to enhance their abilities *to see*. On the one hand, Adams and Ward step back from taking a judgemental stance to environmental education, arguing rather for the autonomy and integrity of the artist—in this case, student preference. The authors are ambivalent about how they should respond to what they see as the students’ orientation towards particular kinds of sites. Adams and Ward overtly value student experience and the validity of student observations. In addition, they recognise the need for understanding of the “meanings and ideas conveyed by particular townscapes” (p. 27):

However, perception is dependent not only on visual acuity and our ability to read this visual language, but is influenced by memory, imagination, our knowledge of science, literature or design, the ideas and feelings we project on to the environment, as much as by the messages we receive from it. It is an interdisciplinary phenomenon, an expression of culture and a reality in history.

In this latter stance, there seems a valuing of the cultural transmission of the visual language of “high culture”—for example, the symbols and meanings conveyed by iconic representations such as the Mona Lisa in *Corrugated Gioconda*, as well as recognition that such representations may also be interpreted affectively. Thus, in the approach of Adams and Ward also are the seeds of the more overtly political stance; one which Slater and Morgan (2000, p. 264) describe as “a new ‘politics of recognition’ which is more cultural in character, focusing on identity and respect for difference.” This “politics of recognition” is the focus of cultural studies and, more specifically, for my purposes in this discussion, cultural geography. It is also the stance I decided on taking as a starting point to my pedagogy—a pedagogy within which this research is situated. However, since this pedagogy is concerned with fieldwork in SOSE rather than geography or art education, my decision is further supported by my reading of literature related specifically to the teaching of SOSE and teacher education in this same area.

SOSE and teacher education

In my mind, Slater and Morgan’s focus on identity and respect for difference (2000) also raises the issue noted by Reynolds and Moroz (1998) of the disjunction between formal and informal learning; of the tendency for students to find Studies of Society and Environment alienating and of little relevance for their own lives. This issue would seem to be an indictment for a learning area which has, at its heart learning about the very worlds in which we live—whether historically, geographically, culturally or socially. Yet, according to Armento (1996, p. 486) there is much dissatisfaction with social studies in both schools and teacher education.

There is a long history of discontent with the quality and power of social studies programs in schools (Adler, 1991; Armento, 1986, 1991, 1993; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Stodolsky, Salk, & Glaessner, 1991; Thornton, 1994) and with the ability of formal social studies teacher preparation programs to influence meaningful change in teachers, schools, and the social studies curriculum (Adler, 1991; Banks & Parker, 1990).

The value-laden nature of the learning area is, in some instances, cited as a reason for its unpopularity (Adler, 1991a).

Pomson and Hoz (1998, p. 335) however, see the problem differently. They imply that the difficulty is not one of competing points of view. They see students, albeit older students of history, as *agents* arriving at their own constructed points of view.

Perhaps it would be more useful to conceive of young people not as being overwhelmed by new or alternative forms of history, but rather to think of them as cognitive agents fielding the rival attentions of different views about the past, through a continual process of assimilation and accommodation. (p. 335)

Notably, in referring to the work of Wineburg (1991, cited in Pomson & Hoz, 1998, p. 335), they call into question findings that “high school students are not capable of complex historical thought.”

Pomson and Hoz (1998) see the learner as actively constructing understanding: theirs is not a deficit view of the learner. Accordingly, they see that students take a strategic approach as learners. Likewise, Slater and Morgan (2000) see the student as actively constructing understandings of place and space—a perspective which aligns with that of Abbott-Chapman (2000) and Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) who argue that Tasmanian school students make strategic decisions about preferred places. Such a view has much in common with contemporary views of identity construction. Danielewicz (2001, p. 181), for example, suggests that “identities themselves are always unfinished and in the making: identities develop through continuous processes. There is no one process by which identity comes about.” Identity is constituted in connection to an interconnected and uncertain network of identity constructs—for example, ethnicity, gender, class, culture, sexual orientation and age, among others. Friedman (1998) for example discusses six discourses of identity. Debates about identity construction are based on a varied view of identity as bounded, unbounded, situated, hybrid, multiple, collective, individual, conflicting, contradictory and/or essential (Friedman, 1998; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998; Massey, 1994b; Stratford 2000). In teacher education, on the one hand, it is argued that identity is situated (Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999); on the other hand identity is viewed as complex and always in process (Danielewicz 2001). As I argued through my reference to Jeffrey Smart’s painting, *The New School*, I see students as situated in multiple contexts. From this viewpoint, managing differences becomes problematic; it may not be possible for a teacher to be aware of all the possible multiple contexts within which students may be situated, particularly, when one reflects on the view of Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) that, “through memory places retain significance.”

Yet, overwhelmingly, SOSE is seen as far from the popular and engaging area of learning one may hope. In Australia, the findings of recent research in Western Australia (Reynolds & Moroz, 1998; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994) suggest that social studies continues to be alienating to students and is perceived by them as lacking relevance for their own lives. Although a similar study to that conducted by Reynolds and Moroz has not been conducted in Tasmania—the context for this study—the findings of studies conducted in Western Australia mirror the marked unpopularity cited more widely. Reportedly, however, teachers in Tasmania consider that students have negative attitudes towards “civics-related material” (Williamson & Thrush, 2001, p. 188) and civics is most frequently taught through Studies of Society and Environment. In teacher education, Reynolds and Moroz argue, the situation is a vicious circle. Students do not have a theoretical background to enhance their understandings of the complexities of the area; nor are they inclined to seek this knowledge. Ironically, according to Reynolds and Moroz, teacher education students may not like SOSE but they do think it is an important area of learning. These criticisms of SOSE demand closer examination. In seeking a way forward, I now examine more closely some of the criticisms of the learning area and associated challenges.

Challenges of SOSE: From pedagogical moments to research

Alongside the theory/practice nexus of teacher education is another dilemma facing SOSE educators, particularly teacher educators of SOSE methodology courses. The learning area is reported as one that perpetuates the status quo (Armento, 1996); it is also one that school students consider to be boring and of little relevance to their own lives (Adler, 1991a; Armento, 1986, 1993 & Brophy, 1993, both cited in Armento, 1996, p. 485). In this section, I discuss these concerns in more detail. Through my discussion, I arrive at a decision to take an enquiry approach to teacher education—at the same time integrating insights from cultural studies. This approach to teacher education parallels my integrated approach to fieldwork pedagogy. Thus, this thesis includes fieldwork on several levels. I now indicate how I arrive at this point of view. I introduce my discussion with a brief overview of the nature of the learning area.

In Australia, as indicated in Chapter 1, social studies, the term previously used to describe a curriculum component of early childhood and primary education, is now most commonly known as Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE)—one of eight nationally-framed learning areas. If one of the aims of all schooling is to prepare students to be responsible citizens and to have an understanding of their social worlds, this same aim is very specifically at the heart of the learning area. SOSE involves the study of people’s interactions within diverse social, natural and cultural environments through time. Thus, knowledge and forms of enquiry of the social sciences—along with varying perspectives towards these ways of understanding society and environment—comprise the underpinning framework of the learning area.

This field of learning and enquiry is recognised for its inherent complexity and controversy. Chapter 1 demonstrates that historically a number of curricula and pedagogies have evolved, and indeed, existed within differing contexts at the one time. According to Gilbert (1996a, p. vii),

some of its practices are clear and well established; others are innovative and still taking shape. Some of its goals are commonplace and conventional; others are challenging and controversial. Professionals working in a field like this need to understand this complexity—the changes and continuities, conventions and innovations, challenges and controversies.

Lack of consensus regarding the goals of social studies is widely acknowledged (Armento, 1996; Johnston, 1989, p. 15; Kennedy 2001); not surprising given the range of disciplines incorporated as an underpinning framework of social studies or of the fluid nature of the social science disciplines themselves. The area is inherently value-laden.

Every decision about what, when and how to teach in this field involves judgments about aims, priorities, and values, and choices about which issues and questions to consider and which strategies and materials to use, all within a view of what students need, and what will serve them and their society best. (Gilbert, 1996a, p. vii)

Such an area, which is potentially always in flux, is demanding of teachers and students—and their communities. Accordingly, pedagogical decision-making is no easy matter.

Yet policy statements define the area at a formal level. In Australia, the nationally constructed guidelines for SOSE, *A Statement on Studies of Society and Environment for Australian Schools* and *Studies of Society and Environment: A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c) are interpreted idiosyncratically by the states. In Tasmania, there has been for some time a very strong focus on the socialisation of students for citizenship. Such a focus is evident in shifting concerns from multiculturalism (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1983), environmental education (Committee on Primary Education, 1988), and education for deliberative democratic decision-making (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, pp 31–40), to the socialisation agenda reaffirmed in *Essential Learnings Framework 1* (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002a)—a recently introduced policy document. As the SOSE Guidelines (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 3) state, “The primary purpose of this learning area is to help young people develop the ability to make decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

Within SOSE curriculum guidelines at both the national and state levels there is a strong emphasis on enquiry-based learning. The nationally produced curriculum documents are divided into six organising strands, five relating to substantive disciplines of the social sciences and one, “Investigation, Participation, communication” that relates to processes of enquiry. For all of the content strands—Time, Change and Continuity; Place and Space; Culture; Resources; and Natural and Social Systems—processes of enquiry are central to learning (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c). The emphasis on enquiry-oriented learning is highlighted further in state documents: *Studies*

of Society and Environment in Tasmanian Schools K–8: Guidelines and Support Materials and *Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b). Thus, there are strong linkages between the emphasis on enquiry in fieldwork and in the learning area more broadly.

Likewise, both fieldwork and SOSE reflect the influence of cultural studies and critical theory. I have already commented on this influence as it impacts on fieldwork pedagogies: strongly evident also in the discourses of SOSE are concerns about difference, diversity, equity and social justice (Australian Education Council, 1994b; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a). Not only is the learning area described as encompassing several core areas of the social sciences and humanities such as geography, history, sociology, anthropology, economics, politics and cultural studies. Such disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas of enquiry are viewed from a range of curriculum perspectives such as Gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Multicultural, Global, Technology and Post-school perspectives—and the stated values of social justice, ecological sustainability and democratic process (Australian Education Council, 1994b). It would appear that critical theory has influenced SOSE, as it has the social sciences as well as contemporary approaches to teacher education. However, as Hill (1994) notes, there is a trend for teachers and texts used in the classroom to retreat from confronting the difficulties of managing differences. According to Marsh (2001, p. 179), “the treatment of values” in the SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994c) has been criticised for its emphasis on a consensual approach to societal values and beliefs rather than their contested nature.

In my mind the issue of managing differences is particularly pertinent in the Tasmanian context. As indicated in Chapter 1, the Tasmanian environment is multilayered and characterised by multiple meanings. A number of studies show that in Tasmania, although there has been reticence in acknowledging differences, in the present political climate differences very definitely do exist. These are differences that teachers face in their SOSE classrooms; they are differences with implications for teacher educators, teachers and students. I now very briefly touch on some of the issues I see as pertinent for thinking about SOSE locally.

There is a view that, at both the formal bureaucratic level and in the community more generally, contested and difficult debates have tended to be suppressed in an attempt to forget the past of penal servitude—which in the words of Hay (2000, p. 4), amounts to a tendency for “burying the past.” Likewise, Walker (2000, p. 81) argues that in the past, “aestheticism, through landscape beautification, played a complex sociological role in Tasmania” and was one way to create a sense of respectability and beauty conducive to the development of tourism. The tendency for a collective amnesia or “a culture of denial” (Hay, 2002a, p. 35) exists alongside hotly contested debates about resource use: “In Tasmania, the cleavage between green values and the dominant productivist paradigm presents a bifurcation that is ongoing” (Hay, 2000, p. 10). Teachers who attempt to deal with such issues—particularly those teachers working in regional areas where communities are largely reliant on resources such as forestry and mining—on occasion have found themselves in the midst of

controversy and, in my experience, are often wary about finding themselves in such circumstances. Recent community consultation has attempted to draw together disparate community points of view for building a vision of the future and planning accordingly: the *Tasmania Together* process is a non-partisan initiative described as a “long-term strategic plan for Tasmania” based on people’s “shared ideas and dreams” (Community Leaders Group (Tas.), Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2001, p. 3). However, it has been reported that the process has not been as smooth as some would hope.

In my brief overview of the local context, I have sought to show that controversial issues, difficult as they may sometimes be, are integral to studying society and environment in Tasmania. Studies such as these, however, do not note the uncertain nature of identity and identity construction. As the work of Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) implies, making assumptions about identity according to taken-for-granted viewpoints is problematic; this is a view with which I concur. In addressing SOSE as a learning area with little appeal, I am wary about making assumptions about the knowledge and perspectives of my students.

As I indicated in an earlier section of this chapter, there is criticism that controversial issues tend to be excluded from school curricula. Yet, controversial issues are integral to the study of society and environment and its teaching, whether in schooling or teacher education (Cox, 2001b; Gilbert, 1996b; Hahn, 1991) and as some argue, discussion of controversial issues helps to enliven the learning area (Hahn, 1991; Taylor, 1998). However, a number of studies have indicated that social studies is guilty of imposing views on students (Nelson, 1991, p. 335). As Reynolds and Moroz (1998, p. 50) argue, the learning area “provides opportunities for teachers to peddle personal ideologies and critically unreflected political mythologies.” Thus, social studies may also be garnered for particular purposes—an approach which may not place student knowledge and interest at the heart of decision-making.

Although there is widely held agreement that social studies is alienating to students, there is much less agreement about how to resolve the problem (Adler, 1991a; Armento, 1996; Wilson & McDiarmid, 1996). School learning, it is argued, is also markedly out of step with trends and debates in academia (Davison, 2000; Lee, 1996; Morgan 2000; Ryan, 1996, p. 208). The basis of this arrhythmia is complex. Knowledge production in the social science disciplines is fluid and subject to hotly contested debates and a range of perspectives. Social studies teachers and teacher educators face challenges in keeping pace with debates as they evolve and with incorporating such newly generated knowledges into their pedagogical content knowledge. Further, the nature of knowledge is, in many instances, highly political. As Ryan (1996, p. 208) indicates, school curricula are influenced by political and community censorship and control. Consequent omissions and silences, where they exist, amount to evidence of a hidden curriculum of SOSE. There are also likely to be difficulties if teachers take a proselytising stance to their subject matter.

However, as with the teacher education debate, there are a number of recommendations for resolving the dilemmas of teaching in SOSE, both for teaching in schools and for teaching social studies methods courses in teacher education programs. Many of these mirror the recommendations from the Education Department of Western Australia report (1994, p. 10): “the need for relevance (of school learning) to everyday life and the use of more active strategies such as inquiry-based learning using a variety of resources and that students be provided with opportunities to perceive connections and relationships in their studies.” Wilson and McDiarmid (1996) argue that it is not so much a problem of what to do as what teacher educators should know. Despite recent calls for “research as praxis” (Lather, 1986 cited in Armento, 1996, p. 486), teacher research (Wilson & McDiarmid, 1996) or the use of imaginative literature to foster critical pedagogy (Adler, 1991a), in educating students of teaching as teachers of social studies, there is little agreement about what can be done. The holistic approach of Wilson and McDiarmid has much to recommend it. They suggest that, since social studies teachers need to synthesise information and ideas, assumptions should not be made that they know how to do this. However, Wilson and McDiarmid look hopefully upon the task facing teacher educators in social studies and suggest that students of teaching should be provided with opportunities for enquiry and encouraged to take a critical stance towards their teaching in this learning area.

Rather than try to convince prospective teachers that there is one “right way” to think about and teach social studies, help them develop their critical inquiry capacities around key issues and ideas in the field. Engage them in the debates about curricula and teaching. Provide them with the opportunities and resources needed for sustained inquiry. Then get out of the way. (Wilson & McDiarmid, p. 312)

From this perspective, it would seem to be important for students of teaching to be fully aware of what they are trying to do in their teaching. This view is contrary to a formulaic approach to teaching and learning. In my view, it behoves the teacher educator to offer an integrative approach that allows students the space to question what they are doing—and the decisions they make. This is the pedagogical approach I explored through the three pedagogical moments in my own practice in teacher education in SOSE.

Chapter 4

The research approach for this study

Introduction

The methodological decisions I made for this study evolved from my reflection of the kinds of places self-selected by students in planning fieldwork based learning experiences for children in early childhood and primary schooling. Data were gathered at intervals over three consecutive semesters. During two of these semesters I taught the units which frame the sites of data collection and analysis. At the time of data collection (1997 and 1998), Social Education 1 (EPC146) (University of Tasmania, 1997) and Social Education 2 (EPC246) (University of Tasmania, 1998) were two units completed by B.Ed. students in the first and second years of a four-year undergraduate degree course in Education at the Launceston campus of the University of Tasmania—specifically, the School of Early Childhood and Primary Education.

In this chapter, I describe my research approach in more detail. Initially, I outline my chosen methods of data collection and analysis, including also an indication of the temporal sequence of the research phases (see Table 4.1). Following on from my initial discussion, I describe the research phases, approaches of data analysis and the background characteristics of the research sample.

Methods of data collection and analysis

This study is situated within teacher education practice as a development of naturalistic enquiry and involves a multi-method approach to research. Thus, it is based on several data sources and involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analysis. In addition to participant observation and my own pedagogic reflections as a form of reflective practice (Schön, 1987; Singh, 1996a), I conducted an open-ended survey and semi-structured interview with students who chose to be involved. I interviewed participants several months after the completion of their study of Social Education. In seeking lessons for my own practice as a form of action research for the PhD, I gathered and analysed data generated from the teaching and learning context. In addition, I also stepped back from practice to reflect on data gathered *following* the three pedagogical moments identified in the research. The survey was analysed using a grounded theory approach (Chamarz, 2000; Dey, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to identify key themes, which were used as the basis of analysis of the interview responses and the generation of theory. Through analysis of the interviews, the key themes that I identified in the first phase of the study were explored in greater depth.

In Table 4.1, I outline the phases of the research. Initially, data was gathered at intervals during the teaching of Social Education 1—a one-semester unit being taught for the last time in its current format in second semester, 1997. The second phase of the research took place in 1998. At the end of 1998 I interviewed students who agreed to continue with this later phase of the study: 36 students chose to participate in the survey phase of data collection; 22 of this group agreed to continue with the interview phase. The second group is a subgroup of the first. These students participated fully in the interview phase of the study. They agreed to be interviewed; they also returned the transcript of the interview agreeing that the transcript was consistent with their statements and the intended meanings they wished to convey. At the time of the interview, most of the students in the second group were in their second year of the course. The groups of participants were confined to students I taught both as lecturer and tutor on the Launceston campus.

Table 4.1 Research sequence: Phases of research, data gathering and analysis

Research phase	Temporal sequence of specific research phases	Method of data gathering	Type of analysis
First phase of research: Semester 2, 1997	First pedagogical moment (Wks 7 & 8): Practical fieldwork on campus	Students gather data about preferred places on campus Students map preferred locations Reflections of teaching by teacher/researcher Survey (Section 3)	Qualitative and quantitative analysis Identification of key themes using grounded theory approaches
	Second pedagogical moment (Wk 13): Bulletin-board display—Critical reflection of the kinds of sites selected for basis of assignment	Reflections of teaching by teacher/researcher Survey (Sections 1 & 2)	Cross-tabulations, calculations of frequencies
	Second pedagogical moment: Reflection on purpose of “reflection of site selection”	Survey (Section 4)	
Second phase of research: Semesters 1 & 2, 1998	Third pedagogical moment (Mid-semester 1, 1998)	Reflections of teaching by teacher/researcher	Identification of key themes
	Student reflection on site selection (Semester 2, 1998)	Interview	Qualitative, in-depth thematic analysis

In the next section of this chapter, I outline my approaches for inviting students to participate in this study. In particular, I describe the basis upon which I planned student involvement, the protocols followed and some of the tensions that I encountered, as well as the way in which the study evolved.

Planning the research: Some fundamental issues

Through establishing an open, non-coercive and professional approach, I sought to conduct the research with a stance of mutual respect—particularly keeping in mind the multiple roles most students at the University of Tasmania now fulfil (Abbott-Chapman, 1998, p. xii). I planned this study with recognition that “the relations of fieldwork were bounded by both the context of the fieldwork and the boundaries of the setting. The fieldwork established the need to develop active and fruitful

relationships while maintaining a sense of professional distance” (Coffey, 1999, p. 52). I see that this approach is imperative for action research, particularly when students are in their first year of tertiary study as most of these students were. As Abbott-Chapman (1998, p. 241) comments, the first year of tertiary study is one in which students face particular challenges in adjusting to academic life.

As well as following the usual research protocols, I kept in mind the view that managing research relationships within an institutional context is not a simple or straightforward process (Anderson & Herr, 1999, p. 14) and that as Coffey (1999, p. 57) notes, relations in the field can be “fragile and potentially exploitative.” For students, the decision to be involved was a personal choice and understandably not all students chose to participate. At each data-gathering phase I presented students with the opportunity to review and renew their willingness to continue their involvement. I assured students that their decision to be involved in the study was voluntary and would in no way influence the grades awarded for Social Education units. The anonymity of participants was also assured and ethics approval was gained from the Social Sciences Ethics Sub-committee, Launceston, at the University of Tasmania. A copy of the approval letter as well as relevant correspondence to students is included in Appendix B.

The research evolved with a sense of reciprocity (Wolcott, 1995). Several students acknowledged the benefits presented by the opportunity to reflect in some depth on their decision-making, even if the process was at times challenging. As one participant commented about the process of reflection, “and it’s nice doing this—things keep popping back into my brain later on ... it’s good but it’s *so hard*. I feel so *tongue tied*.” This sense of apprehension and mixed feelings about being questioned was something several participants mentioned. Another participant noted a sense of unease about being interviewed by someone who was not a total stranger.

If you were a researcher, purely, I probably wouldn’t know you well, and it would probably just be a situation of, you know, these are questions, what are your responses to them, validate them. And basically I’d probably think, well, that’s the way I feel and that’s it.

For this student, my decision to conduct the interview phase of the research, when I no longer taught these students, seemed to make a difference to the sense of security and confidence in answering candidly, no matter what assurances had been given or the relationship of trust. Other participants commented on the benefits of reflecting in hindsight. As one student put it, “the ideas get a bit of distance and it’s easier to be more general and remember the bigger ideas.” Another student, one of many to offer comments indicating the positive nature of the experience, was quite outward looking.

I think it’s very interesting. I’d actually be interested to see how the study goes. Because it’s not something—it’s not as concrete as science or maths, if we look at it that way for SOSE. And so this sort of study can help put some different perspectives on it in our own life as teachers and I think that’s important.... It’s also interesting to see someone else’s interpretations of these reflections too because it helps you to deepen and broaden your own understandings of what you have to say in light of what others have said on similar things.

Such comments offered by participants towards the end of the interview process cast research that is situated in practice in a positive light and reflect the view of Wolcott (1995, p. 249) who suggests that “I cannot make so lopsided a presentation that I overlook what fieldworkers *sometimes* bring to the lives of others.” From their comments, students indicate that as participants of this study they were not only responding to the interview questions but also reflecting on the research process—notably, the first-hand experience of action research and reflective practice.

In the next two sections, I discuss the research phases in more detail. I outline the context within which data was gathered in the first phase of the research and outline my approach for surveying and interviewing the participants.

The first phase of data collection

In this section, I briefly describe the first two pedagogical moments—the frame for data collection in the first phase of the research. I also describe the way in which data was gathered, through a survey distributed to students at the beginning of Week 13 of Social Education 1. Interested students returned the forms of their own volition. A copy of the survey form is included in Appendix C. I now outline the relevant data collection contexts for Weeks 7, 8 and 13 of Social Education 1.

In Week 7 of a fourteen-week semester, students participated in practical fieldwork on campus. Students explored a range of approaches for gathering information about places according to criteria indicated on a tutorial information sheet in which I asked students to select, observe and gather data from two outdoor locations, each of which they considered to have one of the following qualities¹:

unsightly
undistinguished
pleasant
distinguished
superb
spectacular. (Fine, 1968, as cited in Walmsley, 1988, p. 76)

At each of the sites that students selected, I encouraged them to gather data by sketching, drawing, recording textures, recording location, noting sounds, mapping each of the locations and marking each of the locations on a campus map. By introducing fieldwork enquiry in a setting with which all students had some familiarity, my aim was to design fieldwork inclusive of all students and with the potential for equity, at least in the sense that all students did have experience of the environment in which their data gathering took place.

The Launceston campus of the University is one of two main campus centres located in a state with a population of approximately 470 000 distributed over three main population centres and which is

beset by economic disadvantage—“one of Australia’s most rural and economically disadvantaged States, with highest rates of unemployment, lowest rates of per capita income, and 37.4% of families whose main form of income is government payments of one sort or another” (ABS, 1999, 2000, pp. 111, 141, cited in Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 490). As indicated in Chapters 1 and 3, the state is a multi-layered site but tends to be characterised by what I see as quite profound social and political divisiveness. Hay (2000, p. 5) succinctly sums up the complexity contributing to the divisiveness that is characteristic of contemporary Tasmanian life.

An economy devoid of dynamism, a persistent cargo-cult mindset that yearns for a single whopper industry that will turn a sleepy hollow into a thrumming engine of industry, an elite based upon old pastoral money, an imaginative, intellectual conformity that has remained constant since the totalitarianism of convictism, a robust and in-your-face indigenous movement, an electoral system that conduces to minority representation, and a magnificent temperate wilderness—these are the contrary ingredients that fashioned, against the odds, Tasmania’s extraordinary, volatile politics.

This is an instability which Hay values over what he describes as a previous era of “chronically stable politics” that he argues has contributed to a decay of civic skills. However, this context is described by Abbott-Chapman & Robertson (2001, p. 490) as a place characterised by valuable niche export industries promoted through “the State’s environmentally clean/green image,” “engagement in international research and scholarship,” a “rich artistic and cultural life” and high level exposure to “global ideas, values and popular culture” particularly through the development and promotion of IT technologies for school children.

At one level, the Launceston campus is a constructed environment of fairly austere Modernist buildings not unlike those of *Corrugated Gioconda*, even if comparatively horizontal with buildings lower in scale than the high-rise towers depicted by Smart. The Faculty of Education is located in a building constructed originally as a teachers’ college. Like most other buildings this is a masonry structure. Rather than being set alongside palm trees or other culturally introduced plant species, the buildings are set within gardens designed in the 1960s and 1970s when plants endemic to Australia were increasingly used in public garden plantings. On its eastern boundary, the campus includes a cluster of timber buildings that were originally built for Brooks Community School. This school was established on the one-time estate of Newnham Hall and was designed to promote education based on the notion of an ideal community. The school buildings were designed to recreate a village atmosphere as described by the ideals of the school’s first principal (Whitford, 1954, p. 4).

Altogether, a staff of 51 is employed to carry out the realistic and complex educational programme provided on our 180-acre estate. Five families live on the property and 46 country high school girls are in residence at Newnham Hall. Starting with three unfinished classrooms, we now have 27 rooms available for instruction. These rooms are contained in 12 permanent buildings and two temporary improvised buildings. The grounds have been considerably developed with lawns, gardens and pathways; and the school is now taking on the appearance of an orderly and beautiful little village.

This description evokes the atmosphere of the area. The cluster of low-scale, small, timber buildings is very different in character from the more formal institutional design of most Tasmanian high schools.

The original site of the school buildings is now within the bounds of the university campus. Classes for Education students are held in a cluster comprising some of these buildings; at the time of this study, another cluster housed the Faculty of Fine Arts. Ironically, considering the community ideals upon which the school was created, the rooms used by Education students consist of spaces organised in a highly structured way with fixed seating arranged as in a lecture theatre—albeit on the one level. However, this area is very much peripheral to the main section of the University campus.

Adjacent to the northern boundary of the campus is the Australian Maritime College (AMC); to the casual visitor the two campuses are seemingly continuous. Indeed, the areas were all within the 180-acre site occupied by the Brooks Community School and including Newnham Hall. Currently, signage and everyday flows of movement, as well as the very obvious design and layout of the buildings, are the most notable markers that these are separate institutions. Additionally, the AMC is characterised by a differing gender and racial balance; it is a predominantly male and quite obviously multi-racial environment. Both campuses are located on the periphery of Launceston on a rise alongside the Tamar River and with views to the urban–rural fringe of suburbs petering out into bushland and wooded hills.

On the ground floor of the three-story building, in which the Faculty of Education is housed is a cafeteria for the use of all staff and students. On the eastern side, this facility opens to an amphitheatre which slopes to the building in which students from most faculties attend lectures; the western windows and doorways of the cafeteria have views towards the river and suburbs located on its western side above a flood plain. Together, the cafeteria and adjacent amphitheatre comprise one of two centres of social life for University students; the other is the Uni Bar and Bistro café located in the Student Association building which is at the other end of a walkway—a boomerang-shaped foot-traffic corridor. Centrally located along this corridor are the bookshop, computing shop, banking facilities and, at the time of this study, a computing lab which was available for use by Education students. Located further along the walkway are the buildings of Kerslake Hall. At the time of data collection, this building was one of two residences for student accommodation. The other student residence, Leprena, is located on the south-eastern periphery of the campus alongside sporting fields.

At another level, the campus is a human world; during the semester the area is alive with the buzz of students—a fairly diverse group of mature-age and younger people. As Abbott-Chapman (1998, p. 229) notes, compared with its mainland counterparts, the student population of the University of Tasmania is relatively homogeneous in a cultural and ethnic sense. However, compared with the wider Tasmanian community, it is “far more culturally and ethnically diverse.” This is the environment in which data collection took place.

During the Week 8 tutorial, in small groups, students contributed collectively to data recording and analysis. In small groups, students shared their information and more specifically, discussed ways of recording and analysing the combined data. They also considered the purposes for which such data may be gathered and what questions it may answer. In a number of ways, students recorded the data they had gathered during fieldwork conducted during Week 7. On a large map of the Launceston campus, they mapped the sites selected as preferred locations and explored other ways of recording the same data, for example, in other graphic formats such as tables and graphs.

The locations students had mapped were added to sites mapped by students in a previous year-group. Thus, the record consists of longitudinal mapping of sites over two years of the course. As students in their tutorial groups added coloured stickers to the map to build a profile of the sites they had identified, there was a sense of dynamic enquiry and discussion; the spatial distribution and layout took place before their very eyes. Students had already shared the information in their paired groups—a process that also provided a sense of in-built validity to the mapping exercise. This was an important consideration as students mapped locations on a map that had been similarly constructed by a previous year-group—albeit with stickers of a different colour. The layers of sites identified by other year-groups and by different tutorial groups added a comparative dimension to prompt lively discussion around a number of themes. Once students had mapped the locations and discussed their observations, alternative ways of recording the information were discussed; students were guided to consider graphic formats appropriate to the social sciences and likewise, to SOSE. Such recording of the data provided the basis for interpretive discussion—again this discussion took place, in the first instance, in small groups.

Students and lecturer then discussed ways in which the sketches and drawings that had been gathered could be used for further enquiry. My aim in such discussion was to encourage students to consider ways that children could, *likewise*, reflect on such data and thus, engage in processes of data interpretation themselves. In this way, I envisaged that children could analyse the data that *they* may gather during fieldwork and from their analyses build conceptual understandings of terms such as spatial distribution, location, and resource use—as well as other concepts and issues identified in the SOSE curriculum guidelines (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 29). In this way, I sought to promote the *investigative aims* of SOSE rather than the use of sketches and drawings for display—for the decoration of school corridors and wall boards. I encouraged students to consider such material *purposefully* as data, rather than *art work*. In practice, through pedagogy and interrelated research, I sought to model the processes and content of SOSE. Through the fieldwork approach I have described, I fore-grounded the three processes emphasised within SOSE—“Investigation, Participation, Communication” (Australian Education Council, 1994b).

Given the primary orientation to teaching, other records—apart from the map and survey data—consist of my reflections rather than detailed observations and records of findings and discussions. In Chapter 5, I include these reflections as data emanating from naturalistic research.

In Week 13, students mounted a bulletin-board display of posters submitted as a component of compulsory assessment. The display indicated the places selected for children's fieldwork in addition to a brief indication of curricula and pedagogic decisions, along with any other information which students considered appropriate. The posters were displayed in a small gallery space situated alongside offices on campus. From this display, it was a requirement of the course for all students to gather information about the kinds of places that had been selected for children's fieldwork. The display served dual roles: it provided information about the sites students had researched for their assignment and was a data source of the kinds of sites students had selected.

As indicated earlier in this thesis, the parameters within which students had been able to select a site for the assignment were fairly broad. Exemplars were provided but no particular site was recommended; students were required to self-select a site on the basis of its multiple significance—personal, curriculum and pedagogical.

Consider a site which is both significant to you and suitable for Social Education fieldwork. It may be (for example), a street, a place in the city, a beach, town, village, a particular house, building, suburb, a stream or mountain,... Based on the site you select, develop a plan for teaching and learning that incorporates field experiences designed to encourage a class of children to thoroughly investigate the site (University of Tasmania, 1997).²

Overall, the display consisted of posters from students enrolled in all Social Education 1 tutorial groups—over one hundred students. During the ensuing week, at a time of their own volition, students had access to the gallery space for the purpose of data gathering as well as recording information such as contact details for sites in which they were interested. The course outline offered the following guidelines for the construction and presentation of information in poster format.

Design and construct a bulletin-board which could be used to present information about the selected field site and your plan for teaching and learning. You may include elements such as photographs, sketches, maps, graphs, diagrams, tables, timelines, and copies of significant primary and/or secondary sources. Specification: A3 photocopier paper or light card cut neatly to A3 size.

Consider and select materials appropriate for the theme and atmosphere of the chosen site. Include information that would enable one of your peers to evaluate the educational significance of the site and to plan and organise their own fieldwork.

Indicate also how others may locate resources, contact personnel and other relevant organizations if planning a similar program of work.

NB. Do not use commercially produced material e.g. brochures, cuttings, postcards. (University of Tasmania, 1997)

Students were guided in their observations and analysis of the posters by questions from Sections 1 and 2 of the survey distributed to students in Week 13. In addition, the survey included a section for reflection on the preferred locations students had identified during practical fieldwork on campus earlier in the semester. As well as being a component of Social Education 1, the survey form (see

Appendix C) comprised the questionnaire I collected from students who chose to participate in the study. These students responded to the survey questions at a time of their own convenience, as did all students of the course. The data students gathered from the bulletin-board display formed the basis of discussion at the next week's tutorial.

In the tutorial of Week 14, as in the tutorial of Week 8, students considered their findings. They briefly discussed the kinds of sites they thought had most frequently been selected by them as a year cohort. Very informally students shared their points of view. I include my reflections of the tenor of these discussions as data emanating from naturalistic research.

Given the timing of the Week 14 tutorial—the last week of semester—discussions tended to be brief. This is well recognised as a time fraught with pressures for students as they meet multiple deadlines for assignments and prepare for their end of year exams. The willingness and openness with which students were prepared to discuss the work was influenced also by the nature of the work under scrutiny; this was work they had submitted for *assessment*. Ultimately, their success in the unit hinged on their success in the assignment, a component of which contributed to the bulletin-board display as a data source.

However, such reticence did not flow through to the vigour with which students attended to the displayed work. The display of posters generated great interest. According to staff working in offices alongside the gallery space many students visited the display with friends and family (Callahan & Wood, Pers. comm., November 1997). The same staff members also reported that some students took photographs of the display and that many students spent time taking notes about which sites had been selected, as well as contact details and ideas for teaching and learning. The sense of energy invested in their observations of the display was a pattern that I also observed on my visits to the display for the purposes of evaluating the poster component of the assignment. Students were more interested in the display and the inventive, highly creative nature of the bulletin-boards than they were in my assessments. Such enthusiasm was not surprising. One of the reasons for the poster display was that students had expressed interest in learning from each other—to benefit from collective information.

Students valued this assignment for what they saw as its relevance for teaching practice, a concern *so central* to the interest of students at this stage in their teacher education. They valued the details available for *so many sites* as a potential resource to draw upon in their future teaching—and more immediately, their future school experience placements. Thus, most students spent time perusing the collected work, even if they were less open in their public discussions. In Chapter 6, I discuss data emanating from this naturalistic context as a prelude to my interpretation of participants' survey responses.

On the survey form, participants were also asked to identify background characteristics according to gender, age, place of residence during their early schooling, and preferred teaching specialisation.

Given contemporary views of identity construction, such one-dimensional constructs of identity are problematic (Anderson, 1999). The particular background characteristics were selected on the basis of other studies seeking understandings of place (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001) and as they related to curriculum perspectives noted in the national and state curriculum guidelines for SOSE. Both documents—*A Statement on Studies of Society and Environment for Australian Schools* (Australian Education Council, 1994b) and *Studies of Society and Environment in Tasmanian Schools K–8: Guidelines and Support Materials* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a)—emphasise the goal of citizenship based on students’ developing understanding of cultural diversity. A number of perspectives are identified as the basis of a curriculum inclusive for all students. As Gilbert (2001a, p. 112) argues, “There is, of course, always a problem in deciding which perspectives should be included.” For this study, I have drawn on the key concept of identity, and the specific influences on individual behaviour and identity which are identified in the SOSE Statement for the study of identity by children in primary schooling—“gender, culture, peers, family, location” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 30). I also referred to the meaning of identity provided in the same document as,

the distinctive sense of self that changes over time. Individuals have various identities as members of groups such as families, neighbourhoods, cultures, nations and global community. Identity is constructed, expressed and maintained through the use of language, symbols and media, and it is influenced by family, gender, ethnic background, occupation, race, class, and by other people and groups (Australian Education Council, 1994b, pp. 15–16).

From the identity constructs indicated above, I drew upon *four* pertaining to the focus of this study on the places selected for planning children’s fieldwork in teacher education in the Tasmanian context. Arguably, these four—age, intended teaching specialisation, gender and place of early childhood/primary schooling—are by no means the only identity constructs I could have selected. For example, participants mentioned other markers of identity through the course of the interviews. I discuss the background characteristics of participants in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

The second phase of data collection

Following the second semester of Social Education, participants of the study were involved in a final phase of reflection through reflective interviews. This meant that most students had completed Social Education 2; there was one exception where a student was enrolled in the B.Ed. course on the basis of accreditation from another degree and therefore was required to complete the first unit only. Towards the end of September 1998, prior to contact for interview, I contacted all participants of the study by mail to let them know that I would be phoning to invite their continued participation in the interview phase of the research and—if they agreed to continue their involvement—to arrange a mutually convenient interview time. At this point, 27 students agreed to continue with the interview phase of the study and due to a range of reasons the sample size was reduced to 22.

For a number of reasons, the group of participants in the second phase of the study is smaller than the group who participated in the survey. Despite my best efforts, not all participants could be contacted for interview. In addition, some students chose not to continue as participants. Students who opted not to participate in the interview phase of the study cited reasons such as other commitments, a mix of family, study, and paid work responsibilities. Such multiple pressures faced by students in the current economic and social climate are well documented (Abbott-Chapman, 1998). Due to these commitments, four students declined to be interviewed, five students could not be contacted, and two who initially agreed to be interviewed ultimately chose not to continue as study participants. This latter decision occurred when I requested a participant check of the transcript as consistent with their intended meanings. In both instances, the students cited changed life circumstances and multiple commitments as reasons to no longer continue their involvement. A further three students failed to return their interview transcripts. So, in summary, of approximately ninety students who were invited to participate, 36 students participated in phase one and 22 in phase two.

Over the space of several weeks towards the end of 1998, I interviewed each of 27 participants through a semi-structured telephone interview in which I asked each student to reflect on the place self-selected as a field site for completion of the final assignment in Social Education 1. I sought approval to tape the interviews and informed students that I would also take notes while they were speaking. All of the participants agreed with my request to tape the interview. Before beginning the interview questions, I also asked students if they had any questions about the study and addressed any such queries. The interviews varied in duration; the average length of each was approximately half an hour, some extended to approximately 45 minutes, two were considerably shorter in duration. One of these was with a student who completed the first unit only; the other was with a student whose interview quite poignantly conveyed the difficulty posed in selecting a site as a newcomer to Tasmania. It was not expected that students choose a local site; but in many instances, this is the expedient thing to do. As I explain in more detail later in this thesis, such a choice may create considerable dissonance.

The interview schedule was designed as a matrix with core questions that all participants were asked. In addition, the matrix included questions designed as prompts; that is, questions for seeking clarification or extended information depending on the level of detail that students provided. However, the way in which questions were asked was not *totally* prescriptive. On the one hand, I acknowledge that the interview is a negotiated human interaction (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Kvale, 1996) in which a conversational pattern evolves. On the other hand, I aimed to maintain some consistency to the questioning. Understandably, as a result of teaching interactions, I was no stranger to the students being interviewed. Quite overtly, I encouraged students to express their own viewpoints in response to the questions, rather than to seek to please by second guessing what they thought I may wish to hear. Accordingly, I aimed to value responses unconditionally. I also reassured students that I wished to hear what they had to say and that accordingly, I may not offer the kind of

conversational feedback that they may expect in less structured contexts. A copy of the interview schedule—the broad, guiding framework of questions—is included in Appendix C.

In all instances, I began the interviews by inviting students to seek clarification about the study. Students varied in their responses: most had no questions; one student, in particular, wished to discuss the purpose and nature of the study in some detail. As well as recording each interview, I took detailed notes, which proved invaluable for filling in the gaps where the quality of tapes was unclear. In one instance, I neglected to switch on the tape but decided to include the interview in this study on the basis of my detailed notes.

The interview consisted of four sections. The beginning of the interview was descriptive. I began by asking students to describe the site and to indicate what they saw as its qualities. In other sections, I asked students to reflect on the decision-making process, educational relevance and what decisions they may consider if doing the assignment again. Through both tone and words, I tried to ask questions in as impartial a manner as possible. I did not wish to foreclose the options. To facilitate extended reflection of the issues, most questions were designed to encourage open, broad-ranging responses rather than closed ones. However, in an attempt to elucidate the nature of the chosen site, I asked students to reflect on potential field locations that they had considered negatively. Students were asked what places they may have *considered* but then excluded in making the final choice, as well as to comment on sites that would definitely not be considered.

I aimed for a balance between maintaining a stance of sensitive, active listening and attending to the nuances of the interview context and questioning to seek clarification—keeping in mind the “Qualification Criteria for the Interview” as suggested by Kvale (1996, pp. 148–149). I aimed, however, for a non-interrogative interview style—hence, I veered away from questioning in a manner which aimed “critically to test the reliability and validity of what the interviewees had to tell” (Kvale, p. 149). Since the interviews covered ground similar to that covered by many of the survey questions, I did however, seek to clarify aspects mentioned on the survey form, where such aspects were not mentioned through the interview. Maintaining the balance was an exacting task requiring listening on many levels and responding accordingly. In the very few cases where students seemed reticent in their responses, I steered away from persistence. Thus, I chose to sacrifice richness of data for sensitivity to what I read as hesitancy on the part of the interviewee. These decisions all have implications for the data analysis and for the discussion that follows in later chapters.

As I was transcribing the interviews, my attention was drawn to issues of confidentiality and anonymity. As I explain in a later section, the background characteristics of the participant sample are in many cases idiosyncratic and vary quite considerably. In reporting the research, I draw on several strategies to protect the identity of participants. No names are included, nor are pseudonyms used. In addition, names of family members and other students as well as any other people mentioned in the course of the interview are not indicated. Place names used in the course of the interviews are not

indicated where these refer to personal details about life experiences; generic labels are used instead. This means that at times, reporting of the data loses the sense of immediacy conveyed by participants in the course of the interviews.

The actual sites selected by participants are named. This information is integral to the study. Where it is the case that a participant may have been the only student to select a particular site in this year-group, protecting anonymity was more of a concern. The time that has elapsed since data collection provides further assurance that anonymity is protected, as does the way in which data is cited.

Prior to conducting the interviews with participants in the research sample, I conducted pilot interviews with four students from a previous year-group. Through the pilot interviews I explored small group and individual face-to-face interview approaches. I interviewed three students as a group and the fourth student individually. This process helped to draw my attention to issues of interviewing and transcribing; a process that is recommended by Kvale (1996, p. 169) as a way of sensitising the interviewer to practicalities of interviewing as well as ethical issues pertaining to the whole interview process for specific research purposes. On reflection, I decided to conduct individual telephone interviews. I considered that individual interviews offered a better opportunity to evoke reasons that were less likely to be influenced by the reference points provided by the conversational context and group interaction. Telephone interviews offered convenience for the interviewees; even if in some instances the interviews were not made strictly in private as recommended by Wolcott (1995, p. 114). Although I negotiated a mutually convenient time with participants, in a few instances, participants were interviewed, for example, in the presence of young children. Although this was a potential distraction, the natural setting as opposed to an institutional setting offered the advantage of convenience for both parties. I considered that telephone interviews also offered a sense of distance from the teaching context and were conducive to interviews, which were professional yet without such strong “evaluative overtones” (Wolcott, 1995, p. 107).

Although it was a time consuming process, I chose to transcribe the interviews myself. This process allowed me to stay in touch with the lived context of the interview, to hear again the tone, which lent meaning to what was said. Thus, I became attuned to the “contextuality of meaning” (Kvale, 1996, p. 168) and sensitised to the complex decisions to be made in translating from oral language to written modes of representation. Transcribing the interviews involved a cycle of typing and replaying to check the accuracy of each transcription. I found that it was all too easy to interpret *on the go* by translating the text into my turn of phrase. I chose to transcribe the interviews “verbatim” (p. 171)—to include all repetitions and verbalisations such as “um” and “ah.” I considered that such searches for expression and clarity were integral to the interview and whether made by me or by the interviewee, should be included. I also noted “pauses, emphasis in intonation and emotional expressions like laughter and sighing” (p. 170), but chose not to indicate the time that elapsed during pauses.

Since the interviews were conducted by phone, I needed to be alert to filling in the gaps that would normally be quite obvious through observation. For example, if I needed time to finish writing, I let the interviewee know this. Likewise, I reassured students that I considered moments of silence as integral to the process of reflection, as well as indicative of active listening. I explained that frequent affirmations by me as listener would impede the clarity of the tape but in no way reflected my lack of interest in what they were saying.

Each interviewee was mailed a transcript of the corresponding transcript as a participant check. At this stage, students were offered a choice of agreeing with the tenor of the interview, of amending the transcript so that it was in keeping with what they wished to convey, or of opting out of the study by indicating if they preferred that the transcript not be included in data collection for the study. As I have indicated, two students chose not to continue their involvement and three could not be contacted. Transcripts were mailed in several batches between February 22 and March 11, 1999. Each of 22 participants returned a transcript along with a signed Statement of Approval form indicating that the interview transcript may be used for the purposes of this study. In four instances, participants chose to make amendments to the interview text of the transcript.

Analysing the data

In keeping with the sequential, multi-method approach that I chose for this study, I analysed survey and interview data in different ways. Notably, the questions used in the survey and interview arose from earlier analysis from naturalistic enquiry—that is, participant observation and reflection of the natural teaching context. For analysis of survey data, I selected a grounded theory approach to identify key themes, which I then explored in greater depth using an in-depth thematic analysis of interview data. The key themes I identified in relation to the survey data were used as the framework for analysis of the interviews. I saw the thematic analysis of both survey and interview data as involving more than a technical process. I conducted the thematic analysis with the view that the interpretive process was, as van Manen (1997, p. 79) says, “a free act of ‘seeing’” involving “a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure.” The thematic analysis was conducted using a combination of approaches. Initially, I attended to the text using “a wholistic reading approach” (van Manen, 1997, p. 93) in which I sought broad meanings from the transcripts. I also followed the suggestions of van Manen (p. 93) in paying closer attention to the transcripts through “selective” and “detailed reading” approaches. As van Manen says, a selective reading approach involves asking “What statement (s) and or phrase (s) seem particularly essential or revealing about a phenomenon or experience being described?” (p. 93). In conducting a detailed reading, I sought to identify statements that encapsulated discourses mobilised by participants in justifying their chosen locations in terms of SOSE. In identifying these key discourses, I sought mutually exclusive categories that embodied the essence of what participants were saying about their choice of sites for SOSE.

In addition, as a form of focused and detailed reading of responses to the survey and interview questions, I chose a grounded theory approach following the constructivist grounded theory suggested by Charmaz (2000, p. 525).

A constructivist grounded theory lies between postmodernist (Denzin, 1991; Krieger, 1991; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Tyler, 1986) and postpositivist approaches to qualitative research (Rennie, Phillips, & Quartavo, 1986; Turner, 1981). Researchers no longer provide a solitary voice rendering the dialogue only from their standpoints. Constructivists aim to include multiple voices, views, and visions in their rendering of lived experience.... In short, constructing constructivism means seeking meanings—both respondents' meanings and researchers' meanings.

In examining the survey responses, I followed the process of “focused coding” described by Charmaz (2000, p. 516) as involving the use of “initial codes that reappear frequently to sort large amounts of data.” Although the survey responses did not result in extremely large amounts of data, the responses were varied and thus were characterised by some complexity.

I chose to code most of the questions one at a time, treating each as a separate entity. In this way, I coded questions across the whole sample, one question at a time. By choosing also to attend to questions, which had some relationship to each other, I dealt with small groups of questions before moving onto another group. For example, I focused on questions relating to site selection, thus, *chunking* the survey into manageable sections for coding and categorising and recording my analyses.

To code responses, I followed a process of recording responses and mapping likely codes onto large sheets of butcher's paper. To illustrate, initially I re-wrote each response on a separate file card. I found that this process really *focused my attention* on the actual content of the response and limited my propensity for making an interpretation of it. Once I had written out all responses to one question in this manner, I then re-read the responses and on large sheets of paper wrote out key words and phrases to arrive at numbered codes which could then be applied to the responses. Accordingly, I coded the responses on the file cards and recorded my findings.

Given the complexity of responses, I coded some of the responses in two ways. First, I coded according to actual content; then, I coded according to *mentions*. In both of these strategies, I used the coding process I have already described—writing the responses onto file cards, then mapping out possible codes onto large sheets of paper until I arrived at codes that were reflected across the responses.

In my analysis of the data, I remained cognisant of criticisms of grounded theory and its limitations as a mode of analysis: notably, debates about the objectivist stance of the grounded theorist and the formulaic procedures to be followed (Charmaz, 2000, p. 513; Dey, 1999). I also took account of criticisms that, from the processes of coding and categorising, data became “fractured” with a resultant loss of meaning (Charmaz, p. 521). However, I saw a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz) as valuable for my purposes in seeking to elucidate my understanding of the

decisions which students made and the way that these decisions may reflect interactions between “structure and lifeworld” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000, p. 600), as well as to enhance my understanding of that reality according to the perspectives of the participants. In this research context, I saw that constructivist grounded theory was most appropriate in such situated research involving the voices of many actors with the potential to shape practice. It is argued that constructivism values the mutual creation of knowledge—a view I see as relevant in this study with its interest in practice in one specific context: “Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 & Schwandt, 1994, both cited in Charmaz, 2000, p. 510).

A constructivist grounded theory as it is described by Charmaz (2000) aims to sensitise the researcher to multiple realities rather than a single truth. The researcher as a viewer of social reality is also implicated in the reality described and in this sense the research is also a *construction* of reality: “Through sharing the worlds of our subjects, we come to conjure an image of their constructions and of our own” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 529). As van Manen (1997, p. 79) says, this process of interpretation is “inventive.”

In order to keep alive the dynamic nature of decision-making, I chose to analyse responses using “active codes” as suggested by Charmaz (2000, p. 517)—rather than using static codes. According to Charmaz (p. 517):

Action codes spur the writing of useful memos because they help us to see interrelated processes rather than isolated topics. As we detail the properties of our action codes in memos, we connect categories and see how they fit into larger processes. By discussing these connections and defining processes in memos early in our research, we reduce the likelihood that we will get lost in mountains of data—memo writing keeps us focussed on our analysis and involved in our research.

To reduce the data further, again using the process of “action coding,” I combined codes into categories. I interrogated the data seeking commonalities between codes. In this way, I combined codes into broader groupings—or categories—according to properties that I considered to have some commonality.

In generating action codes I relied on the “constant comparative method” (Charmaz, 1983, 1995c & Glaser, 1978, 1992, both cited in Charmaz, 2000, p. 515) as involving an iterative process which includes “comparing data with category” and “category with category.” I drew on this approach for the initial coding of data as well as combining codes into categories at a later phase of analysis. In this way, I remained focused on the data. As Charmaz (p. 515) notes, this process facilitates “refining and specifying any borrowed extant concepts.” The constant comparative method was particularly useful in coding responses characterised by their complexity and diversity. Through cross-referencing I was able to maintain the internal validity of the analysis by aligning my interpretations with the data

overall. Because earlier tutorial discussions tended to shape my interpretation of the data, I found that I required a way of focusing my mind quite specifically on student responses. For this purpose, the constant comparative method proved useful.

In addition, I found that my use of the constant comparative method alerted me to the need for combining responses for some questions. For example due to the similarity of survey Questions 7 and 8 and their wording, as well as the overlap of answers, I chose to consider data arising from both questions, together: Question 7 asked students, “What place/s on the Launceston campus were preferred environments identified by you?”; Question 8 asked, “Describe this place and its location on the Launceston campus.” The wording of these questions is not definitive—Question 8, for example, is double-barrelled asking students to describe and to locate the sites. Not surprisingly, students have tended to focus on different elements of the question; student responses vary in their nature. To make sense of the data, I treated both questions as *one* survey item which seeks an understanding of the way participants value the selected sites.

Likewise, in my rearticulation of the data from codes to categories, I was cognisant of Charmaz’ (2000, p. 526) warning about the challenges of combining analytic groupings: Charmaz asks, “At what point does collapsing categories result in conceptual muddiness and oversimplification?” (Charmaz p. 526). Thus, in instances where I considered that a code could not be integrated logically with others, I chose to convert such a code into a category in its own right. This decision depended on the meaning implied by the code rather than the frequency with which it was selected.

In interrogating the data further to identify trends across the group, I conducted frequency counts for codes and categories as well as for complexity of response. In this way, I aimed to validate, clarify and strengthen my earlier data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 41) by matching the frequency and/or intensity of response with the categorisation of response. I also correlated categories with others and with responses indicating background characteristics of the participants. By tabulating the results of these correlations, I sought to measure the prevalence or absence of themes across the range of responses and thus, isolate key themes.

In interpreting the interviews, I sought enhanced understanding and greater depth of insight. In my scrutiny of the interview texts, I explored the themes identified from earlier phases of analysis in greater depth. Accordingly, I drew on my earlier analyses in the search for richer data: notably, I drew on the themes I had identified within the naturalistic context of teaching as well as from the survey responses. I sought to examine the interviews using this earlier thematic framework and to seek inconsistencies with this. Where my analysis of the surveys was both qualitative and quantitative in identifying and validating themes, in interpreting the interviews, I relied largely on qualitative in-depth thematic analysis.

The process of interpretation was iterative. In considering themes which I identified *newly* in relation to the interviews, I drew on approaches similar to those used in interpretation of the survey responses; for example, cross-tabulations and frequency counts. In this way, drawing on a number of approaches for data gathering and interpretation, I built a more complex image of the socio-cultural constructs—and their prevalence—influencing pedagogical and curriculum decision-making. In my consideration of the key themes I identified from other sources of data—participant observation and naturalistic data—I drew comparisons between my pedagogical intentions and the socio-cultural constructs of the student sample, especially in discussing my conclusions.

Background characteristics of the research sample

Participants of the research sample as well as the sub-sample of interviewees were disparate in terms of their life experiences. In this respect the group of participants reflected the diversity of the student population across the university; a phenomenon which Abbott-Chapman (1998, p. 7) argues is common to regional universities in Australia. Such diversity is, I suggest, a source of experiential richness for the mutual creation of knowledge that is the central concern of this study. I see such diversity as conducive to learning through engagement in dialogue—a view which I see as having much in common with Bullough and Gitlin’s view of teacher education as “an ongoing community affair” (2001, p. 17). Within teacher education, such diversity offers the opportunity to model participatory and inclusive approaches to education, which are given such emphasis in curriculum documents (Australian Education Council, 1994b; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a). Many participants referred to such diversity during the interview. I also gained information about several background characteristics from survey responses. I refer to this data later in this section. First, I describe the background characteristics of the participants more broadly.

Many of the participants were parents of children who ranged in age from babies to adolescents. During the interview, eight students referred to their children. Some participants were single, some married or living with partners, some divorced. Some had always lived in Tasmania. Some were well-travelled while others had less diverse experience. Some worked in part-time employment. Several of the students had moved from interstate or overseas. Two students referred to their previous residence in England and four to previous residence in mainland states of Australia. Two students indicated that they had lived in Victoria, one referred to South Australia as a previous residential location and one to Western Australia. Three of these students had lived in mainland cities: urban centres considerably larger than any urban location in Tasmania.

The group also varied according to previous and/or current place of residence in Tasmania. Some students came from families who had stayed long in one regional area. According to Tasmanian discourse, these students came from clearly defined locations such as “the South,” “the North,” or “North West Coast.” Along with residents of other small regional localities, residents of such areas in

Tasmania have notoriously strong local affiliations that are, at the one time, a source of community strength and attitudes which tend towards suspicions of those from other areas. The latter view is, for example, expressed most commonly in good-natured banter.

Two students referred to residence in one of the regional cities on Tasmania's north west coast—a region recognised as a place of disadvantage in terms of life opportunities such as access to higher education. One student had lived on one of the Bass Strait islands for several years, another had spent considerable time on another of these island groups. One had lived for three years within the boundaries of a well-known Tasmanian national park. Thus, in many instances, rural locations were indeed places of considerable rurality and in some cases, could be considered as isolated locations. However, for some students rural residence was less remote. As one such student put it, "I'm from out of town."

At the time of this study, some students divided their time between different addresses—living in Launceston within easy reach of the university for a few days of the week and returning home on the weekends. Thus during the time of the study, for some students, residence in an urban location involved regular travel between urban centres at some distance—home and university. This is a pattern for many students at the University of Tasmania for whom the week is divided between multiple and conflicting demands of paid work, study and other commitments (Abbott-Chapman, 1998, pp. 59–60).

The groups were also disparate in terms of prior education—both formal and informal. From rich and diverse background experiences, many students were socially aware. Such awareness is reflected in the complexity of responses. For example, the nine interview transcripts of longer than ten pages were, *in every instance except one*, the result of interviews with students who were mature-age and who had diverse work and life experience, but not necessarily tertiary education.

In addition, the study occurred during an interim phase where a small group of graduate students participated in the course through an accelerated degree structure, completing their Bachelor of Education within two years rather than four, as is the case for undergraduate students. Thus, students entered the course with widely differing academic backgrounds. Students also differed in their progress through the Bachelor of Education. For example, the two participants who were enrolled in the accelerated mode of study did not continue with Social Education 2. The two participants who did not successfully complete Social Education 1 in 1997 were required to repeat Social Education 1 in 1998 and were completing both Social Education 1 and 2 concurrently in the same semester.

In Table 4.2, with reference to participant responses to the final section of the survey, I indicate the background characteristics of the survey participants. Through three cross-tabulations, I correlate the background characteristics for participants according to age—mature-age or school leaver. Usually students are formally designated as mature-age when they begin their tertiary study at least three years

after their last year of formal schooling. However, I did not provide students with category definitions for mature-age and school leaver: students were at liberty to arrive at their own meanings of the characteristics. Some students within the group who identified themselves as mature-age, could be categorised within the same generational category as students who had entered the course on leaving school—Generation X. Yet none of the mature-age students in this group could be classified as “‘leading edge’ Boomers born in 1946–1955” (Mackay, 1997, p. 4). As Table 4.2 indicates, almost all of the males participating in this study were mature-age students.

Table 4.2 Cross tabulation: Background characteristics of survey participants ($N = 36$)

Categories		Mature age	School leaver
Preferred teaching specialisation	Early childhood	7	4
	Primary	11	10
	As yet undecided	3	1
Place of residence during early childhood or primary schooling	Both rural & urban	7	3
	Rural	4	4
	Urban	10	8
Gender	Female	13	14
	Male	8	1

Table 4.3 indicates the background characteristics for both survey and interview participants—listing both the numbers of participants and the breakdown for each of the category divisions expressed as a percentage of each corresponding broad category.

Table 4.3 Background characteristics of survey and interview participants

Background characteristics		Research phase			
Broad category	Category divisions	Survey ($N = 36$)		Interview ($N = 22$)	
Age	Mature age	21	58%	13	59%
	School leaver	15	42%	9	41%
Preferred teaching specialisation	Early childhood	11	31%	8	36%
	Primary	21	58%	10	45%
	As yet undecided	4	11%	4	18%
Place of residence during early childhood or primary schooling	Both rural & urban	10	28%	6	27%
	Rural	8	22%	3	14%
	Urban	18	50%	13	59%
Gender	Female	27	75%	16	72%
	Male	9	25%	6	27%

According to the categories indicated in Table 4.3, the survey and interview samples are very close in background characteristics. Hence, the number of students who opted to drop out of the interview phase of the study has not biased the sample unduly. The distributions for both groups are reasonably similar, particularly so for age and gender. The majority of students are intending to be primary teachers and as children lived, at least for some of the time, in urban locations. Both groups consist of

much higher percentages of women than men—a pattern consistent with enrolment patterns within the course (Abbott-Chapman, 2001).

Participants in both phases of the research varied according to age. Consistent with enrolment patterns in the Faculty of Education, students were categorised as both mature-age and school leavers. The ratio of mature-age students to school leavers is proportionally greater than the ratio for the whole year cohort (Abbott-Chapman, 2001). The reasons for this are unclear. One could speculate that the greater interest of mature-age students arises from their interest in the topic, itself a result of their rich and diverse background experience that also lends a degree of confidence in talking about social issues. It may also be that they feel more comfortable communicating with a mature-age lecturer than do younger students or that as a fairly recent mature-age graduate myself, quite unwittingly, I tend to communicate more empathically with older students.

In summary, my brief analysis of the background characteristics for the survey sample and the interview sub-sample illustrates the diversity of participants. Further, it would seem that participant groups for both the sample and sub-sample are so similar that the responses for each can be compared with some confidence.

Notes

1. The data collection approach was adapted from the work of Fine (1968, cited in Walmsley, 1988, p. 76) who attempted to assess landscape quality using photographs from which a “small panel of specialist observers ... viewed and assessed a carefully chosen set of colour photographs of selected landscapes.” Walmsley (p. 76) reports that from this assessment of photographs, six descriptive qualities were arrived at. These categories—“unsightly, undistinguished, pleasant, distinguished, superb, spectacular”—were then used as a “quantitative basis for field assessments.” This work, cited by Walmsley, was drawn on for the basis of students’ fieldwork on campus. The research approach used by Fine has been criticised for its use of evaluation by specialists, its subjective nature and its “focus exclusively on the visual landscape” (Punter, 1982, cited in Walmsley, p. 76). However, I considered that, for my purposes, the approach may be useful in facilitating fieldwork through which students could draw on their affective understanding of a place with which they were familiar. Although the descriptive categories suggested by Fine draw attention to the visual, I considered that this did not necessarily limit data collection through other sensory modes. On the information sheet that students used for guidance in gathering data, I suggested that they attend to sound and texture in the environment and record their findings. I did not, however, draw attention to the olfactory sense which may also be an important facet of landscape assessments (Porteous, 1985, cited in Walmsley, 1988, p. 77). In my research, I am not interested in pursuing landscape quality—rather, my purpose is to draw on these categories to facilitate discussion of places selected by students for fieldwork. Through the reference provided for *Urban Living: The Individual in the City* (Walmsley, 1988, p. 76) students were able to further explore related literature if they so desired. In this way I hoped to introduce and alert students to geography literature.
2. According to convention, the course outline for this unit is an evolutionary document subject to editing and re-authoring by teacher educators with responsibility as coordinators of the course. This document, originally designed by Dr Margaret Robertson, has been subject to a number of revisions according to changing circumstances such as changes to school curriculum policy at the national and state level, as well as changes within the academic institution. Of particular note are radical adjustments to staff/student ratios within the Faculty of Education. The assignment topic cited here has remained unchanged. Course criteria and inclusion of bulletin board format as one mode of assignment presentation are amendments of my making.

Chapter 5

The first pedagogical moment: Fieldwork on campus

Introduction

I have structured this study around three pedagogical moments through which I aspire to record the multiple voices of students as expressed through their choices in their roles both as students and as “teachers” of SOSE. Following my consideration of wide-ranging debates, I settled on a constructivist approach as the basis of my pedagogy and associated research methodology. Earlier in this thesis, with reference to two paintings by Jeffrey Smart, I elucidated my pedagogical decisions for teacher education, specifically in relation to fieldwork pedagogies. Through practical fieldwork experiences and this research I sought to encourage teacher education students to engage in debates surrounding the use of fieldwork in SOSE for early childhood and primary children.

Through my interpretation of data based on a constructivist approach to grounded theory, I seek to elucidate my understandings of student decisions. I take the view that such pedagogical and curricula decisions may reflect interactions between “structure and lifeworld” (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000, p. 600). This interaction is one that I see illustrated through the structure of the painting *Corrugated Gioconda*, with its juxtaposition of the formally constructed world of the segregated, partly obscured modernist towers and the vernacular world illustrated by the billboard pastiche. Although the two worlds are separated by the corrugated billboard, the play of vertical and horizontal lines link these seemingly different worlds represented in the painting. These worlds are also connected through the industrial technologies of construction as motifs representing structure—even if they are technologies emanating from differing times in recent Western history.

My rationale for a critical pedagogy is grounded in what are referred to as “mattering maps” and “cartographies of taste” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 286) reflected by students’ fieldwork choices. Data analysis is described according to the timeline of teaching and related research. In this chapter, I discuss findings from the first pedagogical moment in which students conducted fieldwork on campus. Where earlier I noted the kinds of place preferences made by Jeffrey Smart in Adelaide in the 1930s and the places which Abbott-Chapman (2000) and Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) suggest are preferred by young people locally, I now consider the place preferences noted by teacher education students in the course of fieldwork on campus.

To begin with, I discuss data emanating from participant observation. I then consider student responses from the *third* section of the survey—the section in which students are asked to reflect on the locations they had identified as preferred places from the fieldwork conducted in Week 7 of Social

Education 1. The survey form was structured so that students reflected on the sites selected for the assignment and then cast their minds back to the kinds of places that they selected as students in identifying preferred locations on campus. In reporting findings, I follow the chronological sequence of the research and for this reason, begin with a discussion of data emanating from the third section of the survey form before discussing data related to the choice of sites for the assignment.

Mapping preferred locations on campus: Collaborative interpretation

In this section, I turn to findings that emerged from the naturalistic context in which students recorded and analysed data to reach collaboratively drawn conclusions that students in their student roles preferred certain kinds of places to others. I report the collaborative findings as I remember them as well as with reference to the longitudinally produced map constructed by students as a record of preferred sites.

With reference to the longitudinally produced map of preferred sites, students noted that the places selected were mostly from a restricted area of the university campus. From observation of the mapped locations students observed that their knowledge and preferences were, to some extent, related to their everyday spatial movements. The map indicated very few places located at the periphery of the campus. This finding is not surprising, particularly given the multiple commitments and corresponding time pressures experienced by students (Abbott-Chapman, 1998).

However, such observations drew students to consider whether their peers enrolled in faculties other than Education may know the campus differently. For Education students, it seemed that the university campus was in a sense a cultural artefact—socially constructed by students as a result of their movements and campus involvement. Students questioned whether they were in a sense, a cultural group within a broader multicultural setting where faculty groupings comprised fairly well-defined cultural groups. They considered what kinds of places students in other faculties may identify: would they be the same, similar or different? The link between experience and place knowledge was considered. Interestingly, in many respects the kinds of places students identified were similar to preferences indicated by other findings (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001). Students observed that social places and those with natural features seemed to be frequently selected as “preferred locations.” Two locations indicated on the map by clusters of coloured stickers were areas in the vicinity of the cafeteria and the Uni Bar—social centres of campus-life that function as meeting places. The need for places to spend time with friends is consistent with findings from research conducted locally (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 499): “Social activities with friends emerge as the most important and valued. Findings on favourite places, and the best features of where students live confirm this.” It would also seem significant that the places students identified as being socially valued locations were *central* areas of the campus. These places are within the bounds of everyday campus life for Education students—again, a pattern which emerges in studies of young people in Tasmania who seek *local* places bounded by community of residence for their social activities (p. 499).

In addition, students noted that the places they selected could be characterised by what they described as natural features: grass, trees, shrubs, sunshine, and open spaces visible from the campus such as the river and surrounding countryside. Such preferences are consistent with those noted by Lefebvre (1991a, pp. 75–76, cited in Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 502) as well as those identified by school students in the local context (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, p. 502). However, in thinking about the characteristics of their selected sites in this institutional context, many students used taken-for-granted terms such as *natural*. I encouraged students to reflect on such everyday language use—to interrogate their use of terms such as *nature* and *natural* and to consider whether the notion of nature was socially constructed (Evernden, 1992; Hay, 2002a). In response to questioning, students considered whether the sites could in fact be described as natural, or whether they were cultural environments with natural features. Such discussions took place within a broader context in which “green” politics exist as a contested and polarising discourse—a facet of Tasmanian life that I have commented on in other sections of this thesis. The very strong focus on the natural environment also reflects awareness of community projects such as those conducted by Landcare groups in Tasmania to regenerate environments that are considered to have become degraded through land clearing and the introduction of exotic species. School children also take part in Landcare activities with the support of specially appointed curriculum consultants who have implemented innovative programs and introduced resources—for example, *My Patch* (Smit, n.d.)—to heighten awareness of environmental issues.

Further, students identified places of retreat—either for solitude or for being with friends. Two such places were a sunken seating area located near facilities such as the bookshop, bank and computing shop and in the vicinity the forecourt of the School of Architecture; and a courtyard within the grounds of Kerslake Hall, at the time of this study, a residence for student accommodation. I remember the seating area being described as a place which offered both seclusion from the passing parade and the opportunity to observe without being conspicuous—the opportunity “to watch without *being watched*.” Such a description brings to mind Appleton’s prospect/refuge theory which attempts to explain what Appleton (1990) considers as human need for protection—both through a sense of enclosure and through the ability to survey surroundings for impending threat or advantage. Appleton (1975, p. 103, cited in Bunn, 1994, p. 158). Such a universal and natural view of landscape aesthetics is also considered limiting in scope; predatory and imperial in emphasis (Mitchell, 1994, p. 16) and overly simplistic (Bunn, 1994, p. 158). Interestingly, as I have indicated, places of retreat were valued also as meeting places—places for talking with friends. Students observed that the locations of such places could be either central or peripheral.

One of the peripheral sites—Newnham Hall—was originally constructed early in the nineteenth century as a Georgian pastoral residence and, for some years now, has been utilised as offices and accommodation by the Australian Maritime College (AMC). As I indicated earlier, this building has rich associations with education in northern Tasmania. Over many years, it has been a site for field studies by students of Education, in varying curriculum areas—most recently for Visual Art

Curriculum students who visit the site to sketch the buildings and surrounds. This site is outside the bounds of the Launceston university campus and some distance from the Faculty of Education. Students who selected this site commented not only on the actual location, but were keen to talk about the landmarks they noted on their way there. Students had to walk some distance to this location. That it has been sought out, even if only by a few students, is interesting. It is the only location far removed from students' everyday patterns of movement. Both other peripheral locations—a student residence and football field—are within students' informal maps of familiarity. Newnham Hall is known formally because of its inclusion as a field site in the teacher education curriculum. I wondered whether it had been selected due to its intrinsic appeal, or because it was considered an *appropriate place* for fieldwork, particularly given its traditional usage.

It is a location similar to the picturesque sites which students selected as the subject for art in the built environment (Adams & Ward, 1982)—a very quiet, peaceful and secluded location in a garden with gnarled deciduous trees set in mown surroundings that slope away towards the East Tamar Highway which runs alongside the Tamar River. Indeed this site has many of the natural attributes that I mentioned earlier. An informal sign located on an original entrance driveway designates the area as *Lover's Lane*—an observation that students were keen to mention. It is indeed a secluded location: what was once a private gravel driveway, now rarely used for this purpose, is lined with box hedges, trees and shrubs. In tutorials, students mentioned that they knew of Newnham Hall for a variety of reasons, all of which relate to organised prior experience and local knowledge rather than as a result of their own explorations. Previous field sketching for the Visual Arts curriculum unit as well as earlier fieldwork at Newnham Hall during their own primary schooling or during school experience placements are cited as reasons. More rarely, students have indicated that they know of the site as formerly a hostel for senior secondary students. In addition, at various times, the site has been used for teaching Social Education students the possibilities for field-based learning in social studies and Social Science curriculum—a fact which no one mentioned.

Other mapped sites on the periphery of campus included Leprena, one of two student residences, and a location near the football field. Both peripheral sites were described as places of social life and sanctuary. This strong preference for places of seclusion is reminiscent of the preferences for places of sanctuary, which recent studies (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001) suggest as the kinds of places sought by young people in Tasmania.

Students also described sites in terms of features they considered visually interesting. It seemed that they *noticed and appreciated* their environment. Some students for example, identified the forecourt of the Architecture Faculty for its small-scale structures designed by Architecture students: Education students commented that the unusual, experimental design of these structures was what drew them to the area. Likewise, Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001) comment on what they see as the significance of the visual as a dominant sense in shaping young people's preferences for particular places and spaces. Students also noted the proximity of the forecourt of the School of Architecture to

locations that they frequented; the area is adjacent to the circular courtyard located near facilities such as the bookshop, computing shop and banking facilities.

For gathering data during fieldwork on campus, students had in most cases selected central places in which they spent their leisure time—places that were also social locations with natural features. In some cases, they were places selected for their visual novelty and interest. Overwhelmingly, however, they were places of retreat, both for solitude as well as for being with friends. This emphasis is interesting when set against the sense of agency implied by the graffiti of *Corrugated Gioconda*—a motif that conveys a desire for engagement with the world rather than retreat from it.

The dynamism and engagement of students in tutorials suggested that the students were *really interested* in mapping their selected locations and discussing the attributes of the places they had selected as preferred locations—as well as their reasons for selecting such sites. The spirit with which students entered into mapping of sites, analysis of data and tutorial discussion would suggest a sense of reflective enquiry. Students volunteered that the campus-based fieldwork had drawn their attention to their everyday world and sharpened their observations more keenly. Through group discussion, students commented that they were made aware of places of which previously they had been unfamiliar—as well as the diverse reasons for their peers' preferences. In this sense it appeared that, for students, the fieldwork had served a purpose similar to the one I noted in my consideration of *Corrugated Gioconda*; everyday landscapes, usually relegated to the periphery of awareness, were brought sharply into focus.

The findings I have just outlined tend to indicate that students selected places according to narrowly defined criteria—something which students also observed. The spatial distribution of sites was fairly limited. In this sense, the sites did not so much form a matrix as indicated by Boyer (1994)—but a campus corridor. In this sense certain places tended to be excluded from “this constructed array” (Boyer, p. 2). Few sites were located away from this place of everyday spatial patterns of movement. The places selected tended to be limited in kind—social, natural, and places of sanctuary. Fieldwork pedagogies became the object of reflection. Students noted the potential limitations for children's learning if sites were selected narrowly. As I noted in Chapter 3, the narrow selection of field sites for geography is a criticism levelled at fieldwork pedagogies (Gold et al., 1993). The students also wondered about children's interests and noted the potential for fieldwork as a catalyst for mutual learning and further enquiry—if fieldwork was structured in the way they had experienced it.

In the next section, I present findings, which draw very specifically on participant responses to the third section of the survey—Questions 7, 8 and 9. In these survey questions, I asked participants to record the data they had gathered: the site selected as a preferred location, the category of the site and their reason for selecting the particular place. Through these questions, participants *reflected back* to the fieldwork conducted mid-semester in Week 7.

Mapping preferred locations on campus: Participants' responses

In this section, I focus on participants survey responses for Questions 7 and 8, then for Question 9. The number of respondents for this section of the survey, which refers to fieldwork on campus, is 34; two of the total number of participants chose not to respond. One participant cited absence from class as the reason.

As I indicated earlier, for a number of reasons I have combined the responses for Questions 7 and 8 and treated both questions as “*one* survey item,” which seeks an understanding of the way participants value the selected sites. Question 7 asked students, “What place/s on the Launceston campus were preferred environments identified by you?” Question 8 asked, “Describe this place and its location on the Launceston campus.” In analysing responses to Questions 7 and 8, I drew a list of 38 places from the 34 respondents; several students listed two locations. One student chose not to identify a specific location, referring instead, to “grass areas, places that we frequently see.” The spatial distribution of locations marked on a campus map follows a similar pattern to the one identified during tutorials. Overwhelmingly, students gathered data from places within easy access of the campus corridor I mentioned earlier. Least popular are the peripheral locations; three of these are the same ones I mentioned earlier. Table 5.1 lists the specific sites, along with the corresponding frequencies with which they were selected. The sites selected also correspond closely to those students mentioned in tutorials. The sites fall within two broad groupings: sites that are part of everyday spatial movements for students and those which are peripheral. Many of the sites are located near the home ground for Education students. The social hubs of the campus figure largely in the places students identified—the most popular being the grassed slope of the amphitheatre. This is a site which students valued for its central location, natural attributes—sunshine, grass, shady Eucalypts—and as a relaxing place for being with friends. As indicated below, this area was described in a number of ways.

a meeting place for students outside the lecture theatres, aesthetically pleasing, convenient, central location, outside Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, between it and A block

the grass area outside of the café, located near the library and is central to all my study areas, the grass areas which get lots of sun and are relaxing

central to my study area on the Launceston campus, at the base of a sloped amphitheatre, surrounded on 2 sides by buildings and the slope leads to the Sir Raymond Ferrall Centre, the entrance to the cafeteria looking down from the path in the amphitheatre facing A block

in front of the campus, between the library and arts/music sections, the grassed area

it is a grassy hill area in the middle of the uni between the education buildings and the library, outside the uni café

a sunny wide open space—central to the education department, the grass area outside the cafeteria

green lawn with several gum trees and flowers, a central park at the main entrance of uni, the lawn in front of the café—the top right hand under the gum trees

outside the café—seating area, trees and shrubby area, the area outside the cafeteria

These responses indicate that although the site itself may be central and purpose-specific, it is appreciated for a variety of reasons. It is a central location, seemingly a centre of social life, as well as a place with natural features. In a sense it would appear to be a student retreat—albeit highly visible and quite public.

Table 5.1 Frequency of sites selected as preferred places on campus ($N = 34$)

Site clusters	Frequency	Sites	Frequency
Centrally located sites	34 (89%)	amphitheatre	11
		café	2
		courtyards near F block	1
		outside the café on the river side	4
		foot traffic area near Student Association building	1
		Kerslake Courtyard	1
		Kerslake Hall	1
		lawn in front of uni bar	1
		new computing building	1
		Uni bar	3
		behind M block	2
		circular seating area near architecture block and bookshop	2
		grass area north J block and E block alongside	1
		vicinity of architecture block	3
Peripheral sites	4 (11%)	area near football oval	1
		Leprena	1
		Newnham Hall	1
		outside SEALE Room	1

In examining the responses holistically, it became clear that several students focused quite broadly on their everyday world—as did Jeffrey Smart in *Corrugated Gioconda*. In a sense, within their view was more than one bounded site. In their choices, students tended to reflect the multiple realities encountered in everyday life—also conveyed by Smart in a particular way in *Corrugated Gioconda*. In some cases students chose more than one site; in other cases students mentioned one site but emphasised its relation to its surroundings. Some students sought out sites to meet differing needs; others sought places beyond the campus boundaries; some sought sanctuary *visually*, thus *in mind* being transported beyond the campus boundaries.

For example, one student described the Uni Bar in terms of its connections with other parts of campus—“located behind the SA (Student Association) building and having entry/exits to two different area (car parks), it is away from all academic buildings but still central.” Similarly, two students selected the crossroads of the campus corridor which I mentioned earlier—identifying the site for its diversity and connections with a number of locations:

semi quite nicely kept, bricked, inviting—outside Birchalls [bookshop] and the computer shop, near M block, interesting new art at back of M block, the area outside Birchalls, bricked area in a circle, the area near the architecture building;

outside nursing building, seating, trees, birds etc, natural peaceful environments—i.e. the courtyard outside Birchalls with seating and area outside the architecture building.

On the other hand, two students chose two actual meeting places, mentioning both the “amphitheatre, café, Tamar Lane” area and the Uni Bar. Yet others, in mentioning a central meeting place and a place of respite, identified places which would seem simultaneously to meet differing needs—“a meeting place for students outside lecture theatres, aesthetically pleasing, convenient, central location; an ugly exterior leading to a place of safety and secluded belonging, located out of the way, almost hidden at an extremity of campus.” For others, the river view from the café or the outdoor area adjacent to it was mentioned as a permeable boundary.

on steps outside the café looking over the highway through the trees to the “vista” of the river, outside the café looking to the river, “the vista”;

café—central to everything, busy, relaxed atmosphere, library, café, grass, overlooking the river

By interpreting the responses according to mentions, I sought the specific aspects students chose to identify as the objects of their attention. From 34 responses I drew a total of 99 mentions, which I allocated according to 9 codes. Table 5.2 lists the codes with their corresponding frequencies, and clearly indicates that the kinds of preferred places noted from observation and more superficial analysis of data in the tutorials—the gathering places for students and those with natural features—are indeed the same places most frequently mentioned by students participating in this study. According to my interpretation, 22% of the mentions were allocated to the code *mentioning natural features* and 20% to *mentioning the café/amphitheatre or the Uni Bar*. The high rate with which such responses have been selected suggests that, as noted during tutorial discussion, students selected places according to certain criteria. However, according to this interpretation of the data, *focusing on social attributes* does not loom large as it did in tutorial discussion. Speculating about the reasons for this difference produced several possible interpretations. I questioned whether students may have been more inclined to mention social attributes when in the company of their peers and whether they may have been reticent about being seen as loners or as fritterers of time during course oriented fieldwork—perhaps they gave the answers that they thought I may expect and were hesitant to give a candid response. Areas that did feature as social according to mentions within responses were Kerslake Hall, the Uni Bar, café and amphitheatre. For example, the lawn in front of the Uni Bar was described as “central, busy, social, friendly, close to gym area and the café”; Kerslake Hall was described as “a central location, friendly atmosphere, man made with natural setting/surroundings.” The café was described similarly as, “A block—a place to eat; and meet people.” Such responses, although few in number, point to the functions of these places as meeting places and centres of social life as well as their primary function in providing facilities on campus.

Table 5.2 Code frequencies, Questions 7 and 8

No.	Codes	Frequency	% Frequency
1	Mentioning natural features	22	22
2	Focusing on social attributes	7	7
3	Commenting on architecture and the built environment	10	10
4	Indicating centrality or access	13	13
5	Indicating the peripheral	4	4
6	Highlighting a sense of enclosure	10	10
7	Focusing on the arts and aesthetics	5	5
8	Highlighting tranquillity and relaxation	8	8
9	Mentioning the café/amphitheatre or the Uni bar	20	20
Totals		99	99

With reference to both the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515) and the process of axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) that I described in Chapter 4, I rearticulated and refined codes into categories on the basis of their properties. From a comparison of the properties for the 9 codes, I refined my interpretation—choosing to convert two of the codes into categories in their own right. The remaining 7 codes were then collapsed into 3 categories. Table 5.3 indicates the articulation between codes and categories.

Table 5.3 Summary: Articulation of codes and categories, Questions 7 and 8

Code	Category
Mentioning natural features	Mentioning natural features
Focusing on social attributes Mentioning the café/amphitheatre or the Uni bar	Highlighting student meeting places
Commenting on architecture and the built environment Highlighting a sense of enclosure Focusing on the arts and aesthetics	Focusing on the built, structurally interesting or aesthetic
Indicating centrality or access Indicating the peripheral	Emphasising location
Highlighting tranquillity and relaxation	Highlighting tranquillity and relaxation

When students mentioned the café, its adjacent amphitheatre and the Uni Bar, it seemed they did so for the inherent value of these places as meeting places—places to catch up with friends. Thus, the codes *focusing on social attributes* and *mentioning the café/amphitheatre or the Uni Bar* are rearticulated into an overarching category which I have termed *highlighting student meeting places*—altering the wording to more precisely capture the meaning suggested by the data.

Likewise, the three codes, *commenting on architecture and the built environment*, *highlighting a sense of enclosure* and *focusing on the arts and aesthetics*—are combined into an overarching category that I reformulated as *focusing on the built, structurally interesting or aesthetic*. Given the place of natural features in the aesthetic of the picturesque and sublime, I also considered incorporating *mentioning natural features* within this category. However, as a result of returning to the data, I chose not to

integrate this code. This decision was fraught with difficulty. Webber (2002, p. 42) for example, suggests that “reflection on beauty” including the beauty of nature is one of the ways that young people seek meaning in their lives through aesthetic appreciation as a form of spirituality. Although I chose not to combine the categories *focusing on the built, structurally interesting or aesthetic* and *mentioning natural features*, it seems important to speculate that when the two categories are combined, the data point to a desire for quiet reflection, particularly when one also considers that the category *highlighting tranquillity and relaxation* adds weight to such a view. Several of the categories listed in Table 5.4 point to a strong desire for quiet reflection. In a later phase of analysis, in examining the students’ reasons for seeking particular kinds of places as preferred locations on campus, the possible relationship between these three categories may be clarified. At this stage, however, I consider the categories as separate entities.

I have also combined two codes relating to a focus on location—*indicating centrality or access* and *indicating the peripheral*—into one category. Although the meaning in each code is different, I have chosen to focus here on the importance of location within the mentions when combining these codes.

Table 5.4 Category frequencies, Questions 7 and 8

No.	Categories	Frequency	% Frequency
1	Mentioning natural features	22	26
2	Highlighting student meeting places	22	26
3	Focusing on the built environment, arts or aesthetics	18	21
4	Emphasising location	14	17
5	Highlighting tranquillity and relaxation	8	10
Totals		84	100

According to my interpretation of data as indicated in Table 5.4, “Category frequencies, Questions 7 and 8,” students have focused on natural features and the social more than other categories. As Table 5.4 indicates, 44% of the responses accord mentions to these two codes. This finding clarifies the discrepancy between collaborative data analysis and the code frequencies. The emphasis on these kinds of places—the natural and social—reflects the preferences of school students in Tasmania (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001).

Sites are less frequently described according to their location, whether central or peripheral. Although location is not a dominant feature in the students’ site descriptions, the fact remains that the sites selected are overwhelmingly within the bounds of everyday movements for students. Most are somewhere along the corridor linking the café and the Uni Bar—including these two magnets of student life.

The category *focusing on the built environment, arts or aesthetics* is mentioned in almost 20% of cases—a finding which indicates that the urban material fabric does not figure as the dominant object of attention as it does in *Corrugated Gioconda*. It is interesting that several of the places included

within this category are off the main thoroughfare—although as I have already indicated, only one of these, Newnham Hall, takes students out of their everyday bounds. In gathering data some students sought out locations they considered worthy of notice: such sites tended to be out of the way. They were described variously, as follows.

behind M block—a wooden sculpture on a patch of grass, somewhere I had not been before

it is a large structure, architecturally interesting ... forecourt outside architecture block, a series of interesting benches

there are old buildings restored and used by the Maritime College, the gatehouse and house incorporated in the Maritime College campus

new computing building opposite student accommodation and situated on old Brooks [campus road], nice looking sites

a landscaped area behind the café

On the other hand, not all students prioritised visual appeal. A sense of belonging was a more important criterion for one student who identified “an ugly exterior leading to a place of safety and secluded belonging, located out of the way, almost hidden at an extremity of campus” as a preferred location. Another student highlighted the tranquil nature of an enclosed courtyard: “outside nursing building, seating, trees, birds etc, natural peaceful environments—i.e. the courtyard outside Birchalls with seating and area outside architecture building.” Likewise, other students mentioned attributes of tranquillity.

quiet peaceful BBQ area with grass and many bird noises

anywhere with grass and trees is environmentally inviting, soothing, relaxing and socially encouraging

outside the café on the river side, places we felt comfortable going to and being in, familiar places we have explored and feel safe in

Tamar Lane is a quiet landscaped area behind the café

trees, calm, natural, grass areas behind the cafeteria

enclosed courtyards, heavily planted, sunshine, shelter, near F block, courtyards near F block

café—central to everything, busy, relaxed atmosphere, library, café, grass, overlooking the river

Cross-correlations indicated that there were some notable differences in the preferences and emphases of students according to the background characteristics discussed in Chapter 4. Students intending to specialise in early childhood teaching mention the category *highlighting meeting places* more than their peers who intend to teach at the primary level of schooling—35 % of students oriented to early childhood teaching select such places, whereas 25% of students oriented to primary teaching do so. One wonders to what extent this emphasis is related to the strong orientation towards socialising young children within the early childhood curriculum.

Male students, on the other hand, emphasise the built aspects of the campus environment more than do female students. Of all the background characteristics, the one of most significance is gender—an indicator of identity that would also seem to be highlighted by Smart through the motifs of *Corrugated Gioconda*. A considerably greater percentage of male students focused on the built environment as suggested by the frequencies for *focusing on the built environment, art and aesthetics*: as many as 35% of male students mentioned this category, whereas only 17% of female students did so. Overall, there tends to be little evidence of the male “valorising of the outdoors” which Lee (1996, p. 13) saw as indicative of gender bias. On the other hand, there would seem to be some accord with findings from local studies that note the trend for boys in Tasmania to mention the “physical environment” rather than the “social and community aspects of home or neighbourhood” favoured by girls (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 497). Nearly all of the male participants, however, were mature-age. When I examined the cross-correlation for age, the gender bias became less clear.

Spatial factors were more a concern for school leavers; attributes of place—specifically, the built environment, art and aesthetics—were more of a concern for mature-age students as well as for those students who had said that their own schooling had occurred at least for some of the time in an urban location. Overall, the data suggests that students who are male, mature-age and whose schooling occurred in urban locations have mentioned Category 3, *focusing on the built environment and aesthetics*, more than have other groups.

I question whether this finding casts light on *my own choice* of *Corrugated Gioconda*—to what extent is this choice influenced by my combination of many years experience in a wide range of both urban and rural environments? This includes living in city and regional urban locations in addition to rural life as a farmer, as well as many years exploring areas on the rural–urban fringe of a mainland city on horseback as a young person. Such diverse experience also included everyday life as a student in Brisbane at the time of urban renewal in the city centre with planning decisions that resulted in the demolition of significant city landmarks and the establishment of construction sites bounded with billboards—a landscape so similar to that in *Corrugated Gioconda*—as well as travel by various modes from outer suburbs as a daily routine.

These everyday experiences of place and space were supplemented by visits to relatives living in cosmopolitan centres such as Sydney and Melbourne as well as life on small mixed farms of the Atherton Tableland and the isolation of station life in Far North Queensland. I question whether such rich experience of place and space may have been a factor in my own choice of *Corrugated Gioconda* as illustrative of themes with pedagogical and curriculum relevance—or is it a factor of frequent informal family visits to art galleries of many different kinds? As a teacher, do I have hopes for what my own students will know and understand—hopes that I am loathe to admit may be tinged with a touch of arrogance that students should know the world as I do?

However, despite such varied experience, even at a young age as a student in a school setting, I also sought out places with natural features—places that were also simultaneously meeting places and places of respite. Leisure time spaces differed from those experienced in daily life. As a school student attending a large urban school with largely asphalt playground surfaces, at lunch times with a group of friends, I exercised agency in ways not always approved by authorities. With a group of friends I slipped out of the school gate to walk to a tranquil leafy setting—to eat lunch and sit and talk with friends in peace on the grass under trees in a nearby residential street. Interestingly, I remember that such behaviour, while clearly not being condoned—and once found out, being forbidden—also was met with empathy and more than a grain of understanding by a teacher who may likewise have wished for such an environment for *grounds duty*. Likewise, at another school I sought out areas akin to parkland—sitting and talking with friends under the deep shade of trees in summer and in the sun in winter. Choosing such spaces did not imply limited experience of place and space.

An examination of the cross-correlations according to complexity of response—that is, the number of categories indicated by each participant—suggests that appreciation of place and space may not be restricted to the group of students identifying places according to their built features. My analysis of the data suggests that school leavers and female students have tended to view sites with greater complexity than have mature-age or male students. Once again the strong relationship between the number of male students who are mature-age, complicates this finding. However, 20% of school leavers described sites according to 4 categories, whereas only 5% of mature-age students did so. Also, 15% of female students described sites with this level of complexity, whereas no male students did so. However, it is only at the higher level of complexity of response that the differences are notable.

When levels of complexity are examined in relation to those students mentioning three or more categories, the differences are not as great; in fact for gender, the percentage of male students exceeds that of female students. The findings are however interesting, in terms of the deficit views of women and girls and young people in relation to the spatial disciplines—and criticisms of fieldwork for its inherent male bias. These findings may suggest a link between experience and appreciation of place—particularly the finding that more young people and female participants have described their chosen sites at the greatest level of complexity than have mature-age and male participants. Moreover, a recent study of students across all faculties at the University of Tasmania has suggested that young people spend more time on campus than do mature-age students (Abbott-Chapman, 1998). This may suggest that young students have richer environmental experience of their campus location than do older students who tend to juggle their time between multiple responsibilities.

In analysing Question 9, I used the same process of interpretation as for Questions 7 and 8 combined. From 33 responses I drew a total of 73 mentions allocated according to 7 codes, which I have indicated with their corresponding frequencies in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Code frequencies, Question 9

Codes	Frequency	% Frequency
Finding a place of respite	22	30.0
Seeking facilities and convenience	7	9.5
Valuing a sense of place	15	21.0
Seeking friendship and belonging	8	11.0
Finding a social hub	7	9.5
Emphasising a place of personal meaning	7	9.5
Seeking natural features	7	9.5
Totals	73	100.0

In responding to the question, “Why did you select this preferred site?”, participants cited fewer reasons for their choices than they had when asked to *describe* the sites and indicate their locations. They seemed more *focused* in their answers. In responding to Questions 7 and 8, more than 50% of participants described the sites in terms of three or more categories. However, *in explaining why* they had selected such sites, only 14% of students gave three or more reasons for selecting these same places.

Using the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2000) and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I again refined codes into categories. In rearticulating the data for Question 9, I followed the two-step analytic processes of axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the first iteration, I integrated the 7 codes produced through open coding into 4 categories. In some cases codes were combined; however, where I considered that in combination a code would lose something of its essence, I chose instead, to convert a code to a category in its own right. I have listed the articulation from code to category in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Summary: Articulation of codes and categories, Question 9

Code	Category
Finding a place of respite	Finding a place of respite
Seeking facilities and convenience	Seeking facilities and convenience
Valuing a sense of place Emphasising place of personal meaning Seeking natural features	Valuing a sense of place
Finding a social hub Seeking friendship and belonging	Seeking friendship and belonging

In the second iteration, by attending to the data through a process of selective coding (Charmaz, 1983, 1995c & Glaser, 1978, both cited in Charmaz, 2000, p. 516; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I rearticulated the categories I have indicated in Table 5.6 above to the two categories listed with their corresponding frequencies, in Table 5.7. In articulating the *reasons* for their choices, students mention location less often than in their descriptions. Moreover, the data for Question 9 suggest overwhelmingly that students do not *identify* location as a significant factor of choice—even if they tend to select places within certain bounds.

Table 5.7 Category frequencies, Question 9

Category	Frequency	% Frequency
Seeking facilities and convenience	7	11
Yearning for sanctuary and belonging	57	89
Totals	64	100

Just as the graffiti of *Corrugated Gioconda* is a marker of the lifeworld, so would seem to be the places selected for fieldwork. Although the data suggest that students do not choose to mention this factor to any great degree, the data do, however, justify the existence of the code *seeking facilities and convenience* as a separate stand alone-category.

ease of access

because it is close also to other facilities

sunny open space—central to Education department

located near most of my classes

refreshments close

to get away from uni while still being there

The data suggest that some students consider propinquity as a factor worthy of note; responses are matter-of-fact in tone—very different in emphasis from the more affective responses for other codes rearticulated to the category *yearning for sanctuary and belonging*. According to my interpretation of the data all of the remaining categories are subsumed into one overarching “core category” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The three codes, *valuing a sense of place*, *emphasising place of personal meaning* and *seeking natural features*, all encompass the notion of a sense of place—a concept which I understand as implying identity with place whether because of familiarity or form (Lynch, 1984, p. 132). According to Lynch (p. 132), a sense of place involves “abiding pleasure (and occasional irritation, but at least heightened sensibility) of daily life in a distinctive environment.” As I indicate in the responses cited below, the data for all three codes suggest a heightened sensibility to a particular location. They also, however, have elements that suggest a yearning for seclusion and sanctuary.

they are aesthetically pleasing to the eye, surrounded by old trees, which offer a feeling of peace and tranquillity

has a relaxed atmosphere, aesthetically pleasing, refreshments close, good place to meet friends (not confined or restricted too much), comfortable choice—inside or out

I selected these sites because of the atmosphere they create, both are social venues

because of the atmosphere and its meaning to me

because I love the power of the river, it's beyond the humdrum of daily stuff and it leads to the ocean which I like

because it is different, very quiet and private, an unusual wooden frame in the middle of nowhere

it reminds me of home, also the location has a sense of peace and relaxation about it

The data suggest commonality between the code *finding a place of respite* and the three which I have just discussed; responses for all four codes encapsulate a heightened sensibility as described by Lynch (1984, p. 132). I have therefore integrated these four codes into the category *seeking sanctuary*.

Similarly, the data suggest commonality for two other codes—*finding a social hub* and *seeking friendship and belonging*, even if the shades of meaning differ slightly. Some responses, for example, emphasise a sense of belonging, others social interaction and activity; some responses mention both.

sense of friendship; sense of belonging

because of the associations I have with this location—lunch, coffee, planning meetings, a place “to let off steam”, lunch time concerts, I usually come into the buildings through this entrance and always have a feeling of being welcomed as I walk down the path, the little gnome which sits on top of one of the columns outside the entrance adds to this effect (a whimsical touch)

because it is a relaxing environment and is one I associate with fun, friends and a good clean environment located near most of my classes

main hub of student meeting ground, SA also for me the first building I was introduced to and the starting ground for my academic studies, mature workshop three days

for relaxation and social gathering, a necessity after work

I consider that responses for both codes imply a yearning for belonging—similar also to the search for sanctuary I noted in relation to the three codes rearticulated into the overarching category *seeking sanctuary*. The desire for a sense of belonging is another of the ways that young people make “sense of the world” (Webber, 2002, p. 42) as a form of spirituality. An impetus towards “social bonding” is also considered to be a response to globalisation and the sense of displacement and homelessness that it may provoke (Duncum, 2000, p. 172).

With reference to the data, I rearticulated all of the codes mentioned above into an overarching category that I renamed *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* to encapsulate most precisely the empirical reality suggested by the data. Abbott-Chapman (2000) has noted what she sees as the desire of students, locally, for “time-out” from the hurried and pressured pace of their lives. The data suggest that the participants of this study also seek space within the institutional context. Like the message of the graffiti in *Corrugated Gioconda*, it would seem that participants of this study seek to be at one—with each other and in place. In varying ways they seek to take time-out for moments of harmony, whether this is in the company of others or in solitude.

I view participant responses as conveying overtones of the poetic. For this reason, I have chosen to represent the words of the responses in a way that resonates with the meaning I consider is conveyed by the responses overall. My representation is drawn comprehensively and faithfully from student

responses. In most instances, I have used the actual words of the responses but have arranged the words so that the meaning that I consider to be dominant is conveyed. In drawing on the work of Brady (2000) and Richardson (2000), I represent the data in a format that seems conducive to communicating the depth of meaning that the data suggest. From my interpretation of data as indicated in Table 5.7, it would appear that students have justified their choices on the basis of the meaning imbued in places rather than for reasons of expedience. This finding is reflected in my “poetic” representation of student responses, which follows.

Yearning for sanctuary and belonging

This place with a relaxed atmosphere,
a comfortable choice, familiar and beyond the hum drum of daily
life,
with solitude even though filled with students,
very quiet and private—a place I see every day,
is a place to relax,
to get away from uni while still being there.

So many associations I have with this place.
A place where you can sit and talk to friends,
a place for social gathering,
it's peaceful, uncrowded,
it's somewhere to relax,
a nice quiet area with many seats,
an oasis in the urban jungle,
a relaxed meeting place with natural features contrasting
with all the grey buildings—
aesthetically pleasing to the eye,
surrounded by old trees which offer a feeling of peace and
tranquillity.
It reminds me of home.
I feel comfortable there.

Refreshments are close; it's located near my classes,
a place to relax in—lunch, coffee, a sunny open space,
central to the Education department and close to other facilities,
ease of access, a place to relax in, to get away from uni
while still being there.

Why did I choose this place?
Because I'm interested in the structure of buildings,
the architecture interested me,
it stood out because of its newness in an old area,
it was interesting, because of the atmosphere and its meaning to
me,

because it is different, it is aesthetically pleasing to the eye,
I selected these sites because of the atmosphere they create,
they are both social venues.
I chose two places—one warm and sunny and nice to be in;
another nearby but the opposite, selected for contrast—one
place I liked,
one I didn't!

There's a sense of friendship, a sense of belonging,
the SA was the first building I was introduced to,
the starting ground for my academic studies,
it's a relaxing environment,
one I associate with fun, friends,
I usually come into the buildings through this entrance
and always have a feeling of being welcomed as I walk down the
path,
it's a common meeting ground for our group,
a place for relaxation and social gathering,
a necessity after work,
the Uni bar is a social hub for a lot of uni life (away from class).
A great social meeting place.

I often like to sit and think,
to watch people without feeling that I'm being watched.

Because of the associations I have with this place, the river—it
leads to the ocean which I like,
because I'm interested in the structure of buildings,
it's a relaxing environment,
it reminds me of home.
Because I love the power of the river, the fresh smell in the cool
wet air,
birds singing, surrounded by old trees, a sunny wide open
space,
an oasis in the urban jungle, a relaxed meeting place with
natural features,
contrasting with all the grey buildings.
It's sunny. It reminds me of home.

Interestingly, although the data for Questions 7 & 8 and Questions 9 differ in both their focus and emphasis, cross-correlations of data pointed to some interesting linkages. Background characteristics pointed to similar concerns as indicated by the frequencies for categories and complexity of response.

Again, gender and age would appear to be factors influencing the complexity with which participants responded to the survey items. In citing reasons for their choice of site, 21% of female participants cited 3 or more categories. No male students answered with this level of complexity. Of school leavers, 30% cited three or more reasons, compared with only 5% of mature-age students—who all cited four categories. As I noted in my discussion of the participants according to background characteristics, most of the school leavers are female. There is therefore a strong correlation between these two groups. It is difficult to say which characteristic is influential. Once again, however, the distributions for both groups are more even across the range of complexity. A number of questions come to mind. Are the differences related to diversity of experience? For example, do students living in rural areas have greater opportunity to explore their environments than do urban students? Although I do not have the data to answer this question for participants in this study, findings from other studies suggest that this may be the case (Robertson, 1995; Rikkinen 2000). Or is it a need (or perceived need) for women and girls as well as young people, to understand place in relation to issues of personal safety, as well as other factors (McDowell, 1999, p. 25). In cross-referencing to the categories mentioned by female participants, facilities and convenience as well as sense of place were cited, rather than place of respite, which was the category cited more frequently by male students.

School leavers also cited *seeking facilities and convenience* more frequently than did mature-age participants. I speculated whether places of respite also tend to be places of isolation, even if centrally located on campus, and hence not sought out by female students or younger people. Given the strong correlation between the groups of students according to gender and age, it is not possible to be definitive. Interestingly, the category *seeking friendship and belonging*, is sought almost *equally* across groups according to age and gender.

This same category *seeking friendship and belonging*, however, is mentioned more by participants who cite schooling in a rural locality than by participants whose schooling occurred in either urban or rural and urban locations. This is the same group to mention location more often in answering Questions 7 and 8. It would seem that for rural participants, *where they are* and *who they know* is more important than for participants with urban backgrounds; whereas those with urban backgrounds mentioned material aspects of their environments—the built environment and sense of place—more than did those people who identified that their early childhood and primary schooling had occurred in rural areas.

The question remains: do students' strongly-expressed preferences for places of retreat and sanctuary as well as a sense of belonging flow through to their selection of sites in planning fieldwork for children? In the next chapter, I consider data emanating from the second pedagogical moment—the phase in which students planned fieldwork for children.

Chapter 6

The second pedagogical moment: Student reflection

Introduction

This chapter focuses on data emanating from the second pedagogic moment. It considers the field sites that students said they had most frequently chosen for planning children's fieldwork, as well as their perceived reasons for such choices. Initially, I discuss data emanating from participant observation, in this case from the tutorials of Week 14. Findings are elaborated with reference to survey and interview data. I then turn to student responses from the sections of the survey form that relate to the second pedagogical moment. Since the survey form was designed, primarily, to prompt reflection on the kinds of field sites selected for the assignment, the relevant questions are from the first and second sections of the survey. Where appropriate, findings are elaborated with reference to interview data.

Findings from the second pedagogical moment are also considered in relation to earlier findings: as students, participants sought places on the basis of a yearning for sanctuary and belonging when self-selecting field sites for the first pedagogical moment. I comment on how the sites they select as teachers compare with those that they selected as students; and how these sites compare with those identified in the literature as sites favoured for fieldwork. I also consider how the kinds of places selected compare with the locations favoured by students locally (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001), as well as in wider contexts. More specifically, I am concerned with the ramifications for the teaching of SOSE and teacher education in this curriculum area. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of discourses drawn upon and mobilised by participants in their justification of sites for SOSE.

Reflecting on the bulletin board display: A sense of dissonance

Tutorial discussions: Talking about fieldwork locations

This section discusses data emanating from tutorial discussions in which students reflected on the bulletin board display to which they contributed a poster as required for the compulsory assignment for Social Education 1. Students completed the survey form with a view to discussing their findings in a follow-up tutorial.

As noted in Chapter 4, tutorial discussions were brief. This was the last week of semester. For most of the students, it was almost the end of their first year as tertiary students. Students faced multiple pressures and deadlines for assessment, including this unit. I consider that a confluence of circumstances contributed to their reticence to contribute fully and openly to the discussions—not least their positioning as students awaiting evaluation of their work. As I noted in Chapter 4, however, students' reticence in tutorial discussion was not evident in their enthusiasm for the assignment or for their interest in the bulletin board display.

Students commented that Cataract Gorge in Launceston was a much-favoured site. They also commented that historical sites seemed to be a popular choice; and that many sites were places characterised by their natural features—as they had been for their own fieldwork on campus. However, they also commented that *many* different places had been selected, that the selection was broad and that in almost all cases, the places selected could be justified with reference to SOSE curriculum guidelines such as the SOSE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c). This was a strongly expressed view, perhaps not surprising given the emphasis on such guidelines within the course—a focus conveyed also in the criteria for assessment of the assignment. As indicated below, assessment was based on three criteria.

Evidence of breadth and depth of research and level of understanding, including relevance to current curriculum guidelines and policy documents. References **must** be cited in text and in a reference list. Refer to *A Guide to the Presentation of Assignments*, 1994;

Visually engaging bulletin board with clear, logical and appropriate presentation of fieldsite and its relevance for fieldwork based teaching and learning;

Clear links of focus question and contributing questions with aim, rationale, objectives, learning experiences and evaluation. (University of Tasmania, 1997)

In the last week of semester, it seemed difficult for students to gain the necessary distance required to subject their own choices of sites to scrutiny. However, as is clearly indicated by the criteria for assessment, by asking students to consider the kinds of sites selected I was introducing an additional criterion. Although students had frequently asked for guidance about appropriate sites for the assignment and the issue had been addressed within the course, primarily through the first pedagogical moment, site selection did not feature as one of the criteria for assessment. By asking about site selection at this stage of the semester, it is likely that the issue was not now uppermost in students' minds as were the criteria for assessment. It is possible, and indeed understandable, that students may have seen site selection as a criterion uppermost *in my mind* but not, perhaps, in theirs. They had, after all, already made their choices for locations on which to base their assignments. There was no going back now. Given the reticence I have described, I turned to interview data to elucidate the findings from tutorial discussions.

Reflecting on sites selected: Elaborating on initial findings

In this section, I refer to interview data holistically; attending also to the beginning of the interview in which students were asked to tell me about the site selected for the assignment. The intention is to elucidate the findings emanating from tutorial discussions in which students seemed reticent in commenting on the kinds of sites selected; they tended to speak defensively about their choices.

A year had elapsed between the tutorial in which students had reflected on the kinds of sites they had selected for the assignment and their participation in interviews for this research; it seemed that, even with the sense of distance students had gained after the space of a year, a sense of dissonance still existed. Some students commented on the need to think about the criteria for assessment. As one participant succinctly and directly put it:

Well I was trying to work within the criteria of the assignment and I didn't feel that I had enough understanding of the sort of places and their background to be able to work within—or in depth—or to work around the criteria and so I thought if I did Glenorchy it fitted into the idea, I believed, would work better for me.

In reflecting on the hidden curriculum revealed by the disparity between a valuing of student knowledge on the one hand, and curriculum guidelines and institutional documentation on the other, I am reminded of the link between learning and assessment.

Whatever we may say about our ambitions to develop understanding and critical thinking in our disciplines, it is in our assessment practices and the amount of content we cover that we demonstrate to undergraduate students what competence in a subject really means. There, starkly displayed for students to see, are the values academic staff attach to different forms of knowledge and ways of thinking. (Ramsden, 1992, p. 72)

The separation between teaching and assessment appeared to create a sense of dissonance. The first pedagogic moment focused on participants' own practical fieldwork on campus and asked students to take a critical stance towards site selection; the criteria for the assessment task stipulated certain requirements. The separation between these two seemed to create a tension similar to that represented by Smart in *Corrugated Gioconda*. On the one hand, students were encouraged to talk about site selection and to think critically about the choice of sites for SOSE; on the other hand, the assessment criteria suggested constraints.

The first pedagogical moment had employed a stance consistent with the “pedagogical view of curriculum” (Grundy, 1994, 30–32) and pedagogy grounded in the “mattering maps” and “cartographies of taste” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 286) mentioned in Chapter 3. However, the criteria for assessment prioritised formal documents and curriculum policy as well as institutional expectations. On the one hand, I had placed students' knowledge as central in an attempt to increase the “permeability of the boundaries” between multiple identities (Slater & Morgan, 2000, p. 272); on the other hand, through the criteria for assessment, I had prioritised institutional expectations rather than a dynamic view of curriculum, in which “official documentation” was a

component rather than the “curriculum *per se*” (Grundy, 1994, p. 30–32). I questioned whether I had introduced a tension between teaching practice and my expectations for students’ hypothetical practice as conveyed by the criteria for assessment.

I reflected on the potential for such dissonance to effect a pedagogical positioning of students. I alluded to this view in my discussion of Jeffrey Smart’s painting, *The New School*: I saw the students situated on the boundaries as depicting the multiple realities experienced by students. Likewise, in this same painting, I see the student juxtaposed with the school building and located within the bounds of a playground grid, as disoriented—perhaps by institutional constraints. To what extent had my stance to student involvement placed students at one moment as “central” and at another moment, placed the formal curriculum as central? Although I see students as agents within such dissonance, I also must acknowledge this dissonance as an artefact of this study. Potentially, I saw that this point of tension—in addition to a possible and already existing private/public tension—may serve to influence students’ choices of sites and the decisions they describe in their survey responses, and ultimately in their interviews.

The kinds of dissonance I have described are those I sensed from the tenor of tutorial discussion. Similar tensions continued to be evident during other data-gathering phases—particularly in the interview phase where participants had the opportunity for more extended reflection. When I turned to what participants had said at the beginning of their interviews, I found evidence that dissonance may arise not only from the pedagogical contradiction I have described, but also from tensions operating more broadly. For example, when I asked participants to tell me about the site self-selected for planning fieldwork, several participants asked for clarification: what exactly did I want to know? In response to my *initial* request in interview to tell me about the field site selected, 7 of the 22 participants asked such questions.

As in what it means to me?

Why I selected it?

What would you like to know?

The one that I chose when I did City Park? ... What do you want to know?

Um—as far as anything I’ve found out since then?

What basically it means to me?

In terms of what?

Did participants still respond as students aware of relative power positioning within the institutional context? Were they dealing with other tensions inherent in the original requirement to select a site of personal significance and appropriate for children’s learning? Or were other tensions operating more broadly?

Even when interview participants did not ask directly for clarification, there were indications that they needed to consider a number of potential ways of answering. One of the participants who began with a kind of self-questioning that also indicated the need for clarification, started the interview by asking, “The site being that you mean it’s a park?” Another began with a qualification: “About the wharves themselves, it was very interesting.” As is exemplified in the following quote, others began by indicating hesitancy in recalling much about the site.

Well it's a very old industrial site, part of Tasmanian industry and basically it was vacant and an eyesore. It's been part of a project and has been re-vamped to be a community place.... I don't know what else to say.

Yet others moved very quickly to talking about how they knew of the site or their reason for choosing it; from there they moved quickly to talking about their intentions for teaching. In fact one student very directly *began* in this vein.

OK. My intention was for children to get to know the place they live in and why it was named. So Railton's very much a country area that seems to be dying because families are moving away because there are no job prospects. So children don't—aren't getting to know their history of the place.

Others began similarly; teaching was the topic chosen as the lead-in for these participants.

Um well I selected it because I thought—well for starters it used to be an old schoolhouse and I thought if I was taking a class there they could see how their school and home life had changed over the last century I think it was.

I did a walk I think without having it in front of me and we went from the school and we went up to the bakery from memory and then we went down to visit the technical and trades college, yes—and then we went back to the supermarket and then back to the school.

Um yes well I thought I would take them there because of costs and things like that. I was sort of hoping to take them on something that would be of low cost but also it took in a whole load of things you could do to take them around to the beginning and then bring them around to the present day.

Others focused on learning; in commenting on how they knew about the site, participants reflected on childhood knowledge. This tendency applied to children’s knowledge in more general terms as well as reflections on their own childhoods.

I remember going there as a child—I had a different view of it as an adult than I had as a child and I chose it because I knew it would be a bit familiar but I wanted to pull in some of my other perspectives. I think I wanted to look at it from the point of view that it was a man-made structure and the importance that was attached to it.

Well the police station—I got the idea for that because I knew a teacher at the local school that had taken children to the police station and then on to the fire station. And she said that the children really enjoyed that—so that's where I got the idea to this one from.

Right. Burnie City Council actually have quite an impressive building in the heart of Burnie. And the reason I guess I looked at it in particular, is because after reflecting on my own childhood—I didn't know a lot about what exactly the council did.

These first sentences are interesting in that they are the first mentions in response to my initial lead-in to the interview: “Could you please tell me about the site you selected?” Most notably, where I did provide a more definite request to *describe* the site, participants began by focusing on attributes of place. Two students began in this way. However, in one case, the response was one of uncertainty about how to proceed; in the other case, *very quickly* talk moved to thinking as a teacher.

Well to start with water fascinated me. And it's been pre-historically a major usage of settlement near water, so I thought that would be of interest to the children, that water flows through and by a city and is needed by the people living in the city.

Of the 22 students who were participants in the interview phase, only one chose to begin with a direct description of the site itself—and then discussion turned to reflecting on one's own childhood, children and intentions for teaching. As I noted in Chapter 3, findings from local studies of students' place preferences suggest that *through memory places retain significance* (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001). Such responses indicate that although there were tensions for some students in knowing how to begin, for others the site was very much central to thinking about teaching and/or learning—so much so that it seemed to some a frustrating question, a point that was conveyed through a good-natured appeal to the interviewer as listener.

Well it's at Low Head. And it's—I picked it—oh no. I knew I wanted to go up to that George Town area and at first I thought I would do like lots of places up there but then I realised that it was all too big. So I had to sort of select one and I just thought that the Pilot Station was really—I don't know—just a good spot. It's got—I mean it's really, really interesting because it's a Pilot Station now plus it's got the museum and all this sort of historical stuff that 's there as well. And I think—I don't know—that just made it really obvious to me. As a good place to—to use. And ... (sigh). Robbie you know—you've been there haven't you?

When I turned to responses to Question 2 of the survey, “How would you categorise the site/s?”, to find how participants had categorised their self-selected sites, I found that most participants categorised sites in non-descriptive ways and in many instances students categorised sites by using terms consistent with SOSE curriculum. Students overwhelmingly indicated that curriculum relevance was a priority. I speculated whether participants' orientation towards the SOSE curriculum had contributed towards the sense of frustration expressed. As teachers in mind and in the making, it appeared that students were drawn to the curriculum guidelines first and foremost; it also appeared that as students, they might have focused strongly on the criteria for assessment.

Categorising field sites: Survey questions 2 and 5

In some cases participants categorised the selected site by naming a social science discipline or area of focus: for example, history, geography, sociology, politics, economics. In other cases, concepts consistent with the learning area were used: for example, social, culture, industry, environment, resource. However, history/historical was cited as a category more often than any other. Of 36 survey participants, 16 listed history/historical as a category compared with 6 for geography, 7 for sociology/social, 8 for economics or commerce, and *one only* for politics and culture. Both politics

and culture are terms used by one student. In this sense, politics and culture have received little prominence in categorisation of site, at least in the sense of being mentioned quite overtly by these terms.

Overall, the categories highlight the curriculum area for which field sites were selected. Moreover, in 21 cases more than one social science discipline or concept is included in response to the question “How would you categorise the site?” This would suggest that students are aware of the interdisciplinary nature of Studies of Society and Environment, particularly in early childhood and primary schooling.

In three instances, students categorised sites in ways that seemed to indicate a limited emphasis on SOSE curriculum. One student categorised the site by “recreational reserve”; another by “reserve area” and yet another by “wildlife centre.” In each case, the site was also categorised descriptively. In this sense, also, there is little indication of curriculum relevance. One student did not indicate a category for the field site selected.

Industrial/industry were categories identified by only three students. However, where industry/industrial have been listed as categories, they are associated with industry *of a particular kind*. In one case, the site is categorised as historical and industrial. In the other two cases, the industries selected are small food production sites. One of these is a high profile small scale “post-industrial, boutique” niche industry—a farm-based cheese maker.

Several sites were categorised by terms which tend to indicate the importance of the outdoor environment. Twelve responses included terms such as environmental, natural, reserve, wildlife, outdoor, open space, recreational reserve, wilderness area. There seems to be an implication that such places are valued for their non-built characteristics. Although participants tend to categorise sites in terms of their *curriculum relevance*, one of the substantive social science disciplines receives disproportionate emphasis—history. In contrast, politics is indicated only once, as is culture. A cluster of terms would tend to suggest an interest in the natural environment—or at least a valuing of nature in the social/cultural environment.

It would seem that when sites are selected for the assignment, the strong preference for natural sites fades. In the first pedagogic moment, sites were described according to the category *mentioning natural features* with the frequency of 26%—equal highest frequency along with *highlighting student meeting places*. This finding seems to be at odds with the high rate with which participants categorise their chosen sites as *historic*. Interestingly, in my interpretation of data for Question 5, when I asked participants, “What kinds of field sites have been most frequently selected for the fieldwork planning assignment?”, I found that most participants made mention of aspects I coded as *identifying the natural*; the following mentions were coded in this way.

natural sites
 the Gorge, beaches
 natural and historic places like parks, nature reserves, ...
 environmental—the Gorge
 natural settings/environments
 those based in the natural environment
 ecological/environmental
 outdoor
 natural and man-made parks, wildlife centres

This category—with a frequency of 42%—was mentioned considerably more often than the other two categories: *identifying the historic* and *identifying the civic and cultural*. Table 6.1 lists the codes with their corresponding frequencies.

Table 6.1 Codes and corresponding frequencies, Question 5

Codes	Frequency	% Frequency
<i>Identifying the natural</i>	30	42
<i>Identifying the historic</i>	23	32
<i>Identifying the civic and cultural</i>	19	26
Totals	72	100

The kinds of responses accorded to the code *identifying the historic* were clearly indicated as such. All included some specific reference to the historic—for example, “historically significant in terms of a colonialist perspective”; “historic houses”; “Zeehan Museum—historic”; “historic sites; historically interesting.” Responses accorded the code *identifying the civic and cultural* were less clearly defined and included mention of civic facilities, the community, or terms such as “tourist,” “cultural” and “social”; the following statements are examples of mentions coded in this way.

various mining locations
 Devonport Mall—community
 workplaces, environment, commercial
 commercial sites, Myer
 those based at well known Launceston landmarks (e.g. Myer, Post Office)
 everyday sites, services—post office, shops, tip
 places of interest to many, public places

Several responses suggest that well known sites have been selected—a finding that also emerges from my interpretation of the kinds of sites actually selected by participants, as well as those considered as

possibilities. It would seem that, when participants comment on the sites selected overall, natural sites continue to be favoured places. This may mean, of course, that the participant group chose differently from the group of students in total; or that participants are more concerned to be seen as adhering to curriculum content when mentioning their own preferences.

One has to wonder whether there is any commonality between the kinds of sites selected for the assignment and those identified as part of fieldwork on campus. In the next section, I discuss the sites which survey participants say they selected for children's fieldwork and turn to interview responses for participants' descriptions of the attributes of the actual sites self-selected.

Mapping fieldwork locations: Sites selected, considered and excluded

In this section, I primarily focus on participant responses for Question 1 of the survey: "What site/s did you select for fieldwork planning for Assignment 2?" To elucidate the findings, I refer also to interview data indicating which sites participants initially considered as possibilities before finally deciding on a site to use as the basis for the assignment—as well as sites they said they would not consider. In addition, by turning to interview data I compare and contrast the attributes of the sites selected in the second pedagogic moment with those of the first pedagogic moment and which I identified and described in the last chapter.

Analysis of Question 1 responses indicated that 36 participants had selected 31 different places. Some sites were selected by more than one student: 4 participants selected Cataract Gorge in Launceston; City Park in Launceston and Cradle Mountain were each selected by 2 students. In two other cases, two students each identified two places—Low Head Pilot Station and Trevallyn Dam. However, the students identified different components of these sites. Therefore, I have listed the four sites as discrete places according to the names used. See Table 6.2 for a complete list of the sites with their corresponding frequencies.

The sites participants selected as the basis for the assignment tend to be *centrally* located, as were the places they identified as field locations for campus-based fieldwork. Most of the sites are located within the vicinities of the three main population centres of Tasmania—Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. In combination, the frequency for these three regional centres is 89%. Most of these central locations are indeed central in that they are located on major traffic routes or are located in urban centres. Only one location, the local suburban creek, is not identified as a *named* location of some public status. Just as the graffiti in *Corrugated Gioconda* marks the private relational world within the public realm, so does this one site—a local suburban creek—stand for the everyday world within the public sphere of named sites. Four locations are peripheral sites, isolated by some distance from the population centres. In the case of King Island and Wybalenna on Flinders Island, these are *indeed* peripheral locations.

Table 6.2 Sites selected for fieldwork planning

Site cluster	Frequency	Site	Frequency
Hobart Region	5 (14%)	Bonorong Wildlife Centre (Brighton)	1
		Glenorchy	1
		Richmond, Richmond Gaol	1
		Rosny Historic Centre	1
		The Shot Tower	1
Launceston Region	23 (64%)	Cataract Gorge	4
		City Park, Launceston	2
		Clarendon House	1
		Franklin House	1
		Inveresk Railway Development Site	1
		Launceston CBD	1
		Launceston Civic Square	1
		Launceston Planetarium	1
		Launceston's Esk Wharves	1
		local suburban creek (Kings Meadows)	1
		Low Head Lighthouse	1
		Low Head Pilot Station/Museum	1
		Mayfield, Newnham, Rocherlea community	1
		Police Station & Fire Station, Launceston	1
		Southern Cross [TV] Network	1
		Supply River Mill	1
		Tamar Island	1
		Trevallyn Dam	1
		Trevallyn Dam, Duck Reach Power Station, Cataract Dam	1
North West Region	4 (11%)	Ashgrove Farmhouse Cheese (Elizabeth Town)	1
		Burnie City Council	1
		Railton Railway Park & Station	1
		Romaine Reserve	1
Peripheral site—the outliers	4 (11%)	Cradle Mountain	2
		King Island	1
		Wybalenna, Flinders Island	1

Despite the great diversity of places, the sites selected in effect form a grid which serves to overlay everyday environments—and which is similar to the matrix mentioned by Boyer (1994). Publicly valued and well-defined sites are selected in preference to everyday places of less public visibility and significance. Cataract Gorge, for example, features as a site repeatedly mentioned as a frequently selected site. This site is one accorded iconic status not only in the promotion of tourism and as a venue for entertainment, but also by young people. A recent analysis of the relationship of young people and public spaces in Launceston, for example, suggests that Cataract Gorge is much appreciated and valued by young people (Brockdorff & Walker, 1997, p. 44). According to Question 1

survey responses, it is the most commonly selected site. It also features prominently in other sections of the survey. In response to Question 5, “What kinds of field sites have most frequently been selected?”, some participants cited *named sites* as exemplars. Of the 15 participants who mentioned places *by name*, 11 named Cataract Gorge as an example of a frequently selected site. This *one site* accounts for one-third of places mentioned by name. This finding would tend to indicate that Cataract Gorge figured as a place chosen by several students and may have been a frequently selected site overall.

It is significant that a site such as Cataract Gorge attracted such attention. Abbott-Chapman and Robertson (2001, p. 502) cite findings to suggest that students locally tend to focus on natural sites for their “visual, iconic, even spectacular qualities.” It would seem that in their viewing of the bulletin board display, participants of this study have focused very largely on a site with similar qualities. This site is highly promoted as a tourist attraction and a valued facility for the local community. It is the site of numerous public events such as concerts. It is a site that also features as a popular location in other studies (Brockdorff & Walker, 1997).

Many other places are clearly defined sites of natural or cultural significance, marketed and promoted as tourist attractions. These sites are known through many representations—brochures, posters, advertisements, news reports and political references in the media. Table 6.3 lists these publicly valued sites and provides some indication of how the sites could be categorised—however, several sites could have been categorised in varying ways. Several of the sites may be characterised by their iconic status, two particularly so: Cradle Mountain and Cataract Gorge are sites with privileged status in tourism marketing.

Table 6.3 Publicly valued sites

Tourism attractions/civic properties	National Trust/historic properties	Picturesque locations	Niche industries
Cataract Gorge City Park, Launceston Cradle Mountain Duck Reach Power Station Inveresk Railyard Development Site Launceston Civic Square Tamar Island	Clarendon House Franklin House Low Head Pilot Station and Museum Richmond/Richmond Gaol The Shot Tower Wybalenna, Flinders Island	Supply River Mill	Ashgrove Farm Cheese

Of the sites listed above, nine are museums of some kind—properties with some informative display areas, for example, Cataract Gorge, Duck Reach Power Station and The Shot Tower. Included in this category are two National Trust properties—Clarendon House and Franklin House. The character of many other publicly valued locations evolved during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Cataract Gorge, for example, is an example of high Victorian development as a place for leisure. Another of the sites, Supply River Mill, is a ruin with attributes consistent with the Picturesque aesthetic. Such features include craggy rock faces, a water-course, natural attributes such as overhanging trees and

other vegetation and a building in a state of ruin. Several places are marketed as sites of historic interest for tourists—Richmond and Richmond Gaol, Wybalenna on Flinders Island, Low Head Pilot Station, and Inveresk Railway Development Site.

Two places are of particular interest in terms of their heightened prominence more recently. Launceston Esk Wharves is currently a site of urban re-development; as I write, this redeveloped precinct with boardwalk and marina, cafés and restaurants has been opened to the public. The redevelopment of the Inveresk Development Site has very recently been completed and is the location of the Art Gallery and Railway Workshops of the Queen Victoria Museum and the “Academy of the Arts, a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and TAFE Tasmania.” (Launceston City Council, n.d., p. 1).

The Museum is located on two sites, the original purpose-built building in Royal Park and the Inveresk site, once the Launceston Railway Workshops. The development of the Launceston Railway Workshops is a story of transformation. Stage one was the development of the Tasmanian Conservation Centre, which provided the State with national standard conservation laboratories and workshops. Stage two saw Tasmanian architectural firm Artas, team with internationally renowned Australian architect Andrew Andersons, to develop a new Art Gallery and associated facilities. One third of the impressive and dominating Stone Building named after the engineer Edward Stone, is now The Art Gallery.... The other two-thirds house the Academy of the Arts, a joint venture between the University of Tasmania and TAFE Tasmania. (p. 1)

Two students selected civic institutions: one focused on Burnie City Council; another on both a Police Station and a Fire Station. In two cases, suburbs have been selected; and in one case a local creek. The fact remains that of the 31 sites selected by 36 participants, only one is a non-named, generic site. Where students seemed to select students’ meeting places for data gathering on campus, they tend to select highly visible locations as sites for children’s fieldwork.

In interview, when I asked participants to indicate the places they had *considered* for the assignment, 37 named sites were mentioned. Mostly, these were well defined, bounded sites as had been locations finally decided upon. Of the places named, two were city parks, 10 recreational reserves, 5 historic houses or properties and 4 historic precincts which in a sense, feature as “jewels in the crown” as tourist attractions—Port Arthur, Evandale and Richmond. Again most of the locations (65%) were in the Launceston region. It would seem that even when participants considered a range of possibilities from which to choose, they tended to choose bounded sites that also tend to be places of high culture—as exemplified by the Mona Lisa of *Corrugated Gioconda*. The places *considered* are bounded as is the area surrounding the tower depicted by Smart in the same painting. Where a walk is mentioned as a site considered but not finally decided upon, it includes mention of a flour mill. Given the vicinity of the walk I take it that this is Supply River Mill—another well-defined location marketed for its historic interest and, as I indicated earlier, a site characterised by many elements of the Picturesque.

Some participants mentioned generic sites as possibilities. One mentioned “older houses outside Launceston” but gave Clarendon House and Woolmers Estate as examples. Two participants suggested that they had considered the natural environment but decided against it. In one case, nature reserves, Fern Glade and Guide Falls, were cited as examples. Railways were mentioned twice. A wildlife park and dairy farm also received mention; as did “places along the Tamar.” In making their decisions, it also appeared that tensions were encountered. One participant, for example, mentioned that an Aboriginal midden had been considered. It is significant that this same participant indicated that places usually considered of high status would not be considered—“not a historical house,” particularly not from a “colonial perspective.”

Originally I thought of an Aboriginal midden—I remember Dad telling me about it but there were ethical problems. I think it's up to me to bring Aboriginal people but I didn't know they were not really happy to publicise the sites. And they are mainly ones on the North West coast and—there was a cost.... The places were not in the children's immediate environment and so I got back to the local environment. I was in a bit of conflict.... I think not a historical house—I wouldn't want to look at colonial history or to glorify that. I remember that on a prac we went to a (historical house) and it was a fairly uncritical view. But at the same time I would want to make sure it was not glorified—or looking from one point of view.

Another participant mentioned tensions surrounding a “church” as a possibility. Again there was recognition of varying points of view. In weighing up the pros and cons, it appeared that various reasons were considered along with a strong focus on what was deemed appropriate for children. Natural sites were considered as a “soft option” for children's learning but the church, an institution working for social justice, was seen to be problematic:

that's probably a similar reason I didn't take up the option of doing the church. And their involvement in the community. And that was because I wasn't sure of whether or not the children could appreciate the aspects of social justice that particular institution was involved in.

Despite the fact that 5 participants thought that *any* site had potential for fieldwork, tensions about the kinds of sites *appropriate for children* is a theme which emerges even more strongly when participants responded to my question about which sites they would *not* consider.

Only 13 of the 22 participants mentioned places that would not be considered, whether these were actual or generic sites. In two cases, sites were excluded due to the perceived trivial nature of previous fieldwork experience. One participant reflected on previous experience as a primary student; another participant reflected on previous experience as a volunteer assistant. In both cases, fieldwork was criticised as time-wasting. As one participant put it, “Because basically it was a day out—like a picnic and we didn't do anything.” All of the sites mentioned by these two participants as unsatisfactory places for fieldwork tend to be common field sites for primary students, particularly in northern Tasmania: Cataract Gorge, Hagley Farm School, Hollybank Forest Reserve and Punchbowl Recreational Reserve. The other two places similarly mentioned are Bicheno and Camp Clayton—seaside locations. Where some participants had concerns that fieldwork could be trivial, another participant countered the view of fieldwork as boring.

But just from my own experience I can't think of any school excursions that I went on that I didn't enjoy or thought "Oh this is boring." I think I've always enjoyed any place that I've gone to with a school group.

Port Arthur was excluded as too remote in terms of travelling time. Ben Lomond, a local ski field, was excluded as being prohibitive in terms of access during "the snow season." City Park was excluded because, as one participant put it, "it's been done to death constantly." Other very practical reasons for excluding sites included safety, the willingness and availability of adult assistants, linkages with teaching objectives as well as the actual cohort of students for whom one was planning—a range of views that are illustrated in the following participant responses.

I think you have to be careful what time of the year you go to certain places and you always have to look at the sort of children that you have in your class—how much help you get to go places.

Well firstly when you pick a field site you really need to have objectives related to the Profile and all of that. To prove to other people that it has significance.... I guess accessibility as well. I guess you can't have it too far away.

I really can't think—I mean they're probably are but I mean there's so much in Tasmania. The only thing—the only thing I would have to consider I think really would just be safety aspects because there's so much anywhere—like I said a trip to the tip or whatever that kids can get a lot out of.... And that would be my main concern. I mean (laughs) when I went from prac I had to take a bus load of kids up to the pool and I got in the bus and I thought, "Ahh—I'm responsible for these kids!"

Something that is obviously—oh not dangerous for the students but they can walk around safely and sort of not get lost and obviously you'd have other parent-help with you.

For many participants selecting a site *all depended* on a complex web—a range of considerations which all had to be taken into account. Factors to be considered included those already mentioned as well as the availability of advisory staff and the actual cohort of children; many participants mentioned this latter reason as their first concern.

I don't know it really depends on your class. On the children. Well if you were studying local history, you might want to go to the cemetery to see how far back it dates but you wouldn't take children who were terrified of death to the cemetery.

I can't actually think of particular sites but I suppose it would depend on a few factors—not going to places. Like well for starters your class—I suppose you'd know the class you have—being the teacher ... if the staff wasn't as friendly or willing to accommodate the class I suppose you wouldn't take them there. I guess you'd look at the economical side of it—you know the cost and also getting there. If it was too far away or the bus trip was going to be too expensive ... yeah factors like that would depend on whether you would or wouldn't take a class there

I think it depends where the school was. If it was in the city then I wouldn't take the kids around town but would go to the country. If it was a country school then I would go to the city.

You see a lot of it depends on the children you're taking there and how well you know them and how well behaved they are ... and also how many parents are willing to go with you. So what is your ratio—adult to children ratio. All those have to be taken into consideration of where you go.

As one participant put it, however, any site could be considered. Although this may have been the case, it appeared that the choice was influenced by the fact that this was, in the first instance, an assignment task.

I can't think of—I suppose for me I just think there's a myriad of sites that you could choose. And I find it hard—I mean it depends why you're looking for a site really doesn't it? If you're looking because there's some particular thing that you want them to look at, then you'd look for a site that you think conveys that well or you know has good potential for making those understandings that you want them to make. Um and then on the other hand if like in our situation in the assignment, if you're looking for a good site (laughs) I don't know. If someone said to me, "Look you have to go to this site"—then there's always—every site has relevance and things you can learn about it, doesn't it?

Two participants mentioned a cemetery as inappropriate for children. Another site was excluded as being too "touristy." One participant mentioned "community institutions like a mental hospital" as inappropriate for children to visit—and as I indicated earlier, the church was excluded for its strong social justice platform with its potential to raise issues too complex for children to appreciate.

This tension is one as a teacher I understand. However, in reflecting on my own childhood, I am drawn to the memory of family visits—through church involvement—to many institutions that perhaps would not be considered appropriate for children. Homes for crippled children—victims (*or* survivors) of polio; and indeed going along with my father to join in a discussion group with inmates of an institution for the mentally ill. The weekly discussions were arranged through a support group facilitated by the church. My family also supported refugees who had escaped during the 1956 Hungarian revolution. There was little attempt, as far as I am aware, to protect me from unpleasant goings-on in the world. However, these were family decisions. Yet, I am drawn to think of the access children have through the media to a whole gamut of world tensions, a much broader reality than that conveyed through the sanitised images with which—in their perceived innocence—they tend to be presented. These reflections point to the social construction of childhood (Jenks, 1996; Luke & Luke, 1995; Roberts, 1998, p. 4; Thompson, 1997; Woodrow, 1999) and ramifications for decision-making in SOSE more broadly and for fieldwork in particular. Jenks (1996, p. 29) reminds us of childhood as a relatively recent social construct:

The idea of childhood is not a natural but a social construct and as such its status is constituted in particular socially located forms of discourse. Whether the child is being considered in the common-sense world or in the disciplined world of specialisms, the meaningfulness of the child as a social being derives from its place and its purpose in theory ... That is, the child is assembled intentionally to serve the purposes of supporting and perpetuating the fundamental grounds of and versions of human-kind, action, order, language and rationality within particular theories. We are thus presented with different "theoretical" children who serve the different theoretical models of social life from which they spring.

Debates surround the construction of childhood—a construct characterised spatially by great diversity. As Roberts (1998, p. 4) explains, children are a group distinct from adults but this does not mean that childhood is a notion about which there is universal agreement.

This does not mean that human beings do not start out small and young and get bigger and older, but the way human life is divided into phases—each with its own “proper” characteristics is uniform neither historically nor geographically nor socially (across classes or genders, for example).

As Roberts (1998) also suggests, the notion of childhood varies according to the age at which a young person begins work. Valentine, Skelton and Chambers (1998, p. 3) argue that childhood as “a time of innocence and freedom from the responsibilities of adulthood” is, in many respects, a myth. As these authors say, “this is not necessarily the reality for many children”—a point also conveyed by Roberts (1998) in her discussion of child labour and the attitudes taken towards it. The phenomenon of children at work is one which resonates with me as I reflect on the daily lives of many rural children in the Western world. Although in Western societies many children’s lives may not be totally dominated by the need to work, their participation in work may be essential to the wellbeing and survival of their families. Yet, as Luke and Luke (1995) point out, taken-for-granted notions of the child originating during the Enlightenment are perpetuated in the discourses of schooling.

Progressivism marked a return to sign-images of the authentic, of experience, of the real, an epistemic legacy that remains to this day in the discourses and practices of contemporary schooling. At the heart of various progressive approaches and strategies—including “process writing” and “reader response” in literature study, Deweyian project and enterprise approaches to social studies, constructivist approaches to maths and science curriculum—is the assumption of authentic, real knowledge and experience, sourced and located within the individual student subject. (Luke & Luke, 1995, p. 366)

As Luke and Luke (pp. 367–368) also explain, the “individual student subject” is a child of a certain kind perpetuated through texts of many kinds.

Child development theories found in the university text, mass paperback child care books, teacher guides, children’s TV programs, or weekly women’s magazines all design the same (Piagetian) androgynous, yet distinctly, male child. Whatever “cognitive development” girls and boys might undergo has meaning only insofar as adults code these with reference to the master discourse. Today that master is still “a” Piaget or “an” Ausabel, or “a” Bruner. These first order normative knowledges are represented and diffracted in the curricular package, the child care video, or the Kenner or Mattel toy empires that, in their pedagogical wisdom, responsibly authorize their toys with age and competence labels, if not with the overt signatures of scientific and celebrity expertise.

Given the dominance of the discourse of cognitive developmental theories in schooling and discourses of childhood operating more broadly, it seems little wonder that participants consider what is appropriate for children to learn. Negotiating such varying perceptions of what is appropriate for *children* is a practical concern, and one fraught with difficulty given the propensity for it to be considered as a natural construct. It is something of an irony that, I too, refer to my own experience as shaping my view of what is appropriate for children; I tend to adhere to the master discourse which sees experience as authentic. This dilemma is difficult to sidestep.

As teachers of children, the issue of what is appropriate for children amounts to a dilemma *impossible* to sidestep—yet, this is an issue that receives no acknowledgement in curriculum guidelines. What is presented as appropriate for children is presented as a given—as it tends to be in the discourses of schooling. The issue is further complicated by legalities such as the duty of care that underpins one’s work as a teacher. Safety is an inescapable issue and one about which teachers must remain ever vigilant. This point is illustrated by the recently published *Guidelines on the Legal Liability of Teachers* (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002b, p. 1): “Teachers arranging excursions would be expected to make reasonable enquiries about the environment in which excursions are to take place and to take account of any risks such enquiries would reveal by taking reasonable precautions to avoid them.” Although this document states that “Teachers and School Authorities are under the same duty of care towards their students on school excursions as they are at school during school hours” (p. 1), there are *additional concerns* to be taken into account when planning fieldwork or excursions—the safety of the site, transport facilities and adequate supervision. This same document refers teachers to further guidelines in the *Outdoor Education Management Handbook: A Management Guide and Instructions for Schools and Colleges* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1997).

Likewise, managing controversial issues was a concern mentioned by several. It would seem that participants wish to avoid controversy whether related to people’s beliefs, perceived social class differences or hotly contested community debates. In considering Fossil Bluff as a possible field location, one participant had decided that discussion of fossils would throw up a whole range of issues it would be easier to avoid. As one participant put it,

but the only thing I was worried about there was—because we were sort of still tippy-toeing on ground as far as creation and those sorts of things ... I don't know how we'd stand as far as bringing fossils and things into the classroom and how you'd sort of get around talking about those sorts of things yet.

Another participant decided against a visit to North Forest Products because of its potential for controversy related to logging and forest resource use; similarly, others mentioned sensitive issues they wished to avoid. These concerns are exemplified by the following quotes.

I guess the North Forest thing maybe seemed a little bit more daunting because of the issues that would come up are more current and maybe a little bit more—maybe more confronting in a classroom which maybe I sort of felt a bit more scared about being able to manage. That you know the disagreements that might come up in the classroom. You know different children’s family backgrounds ... I mean I guess the greater emphasis on Low Head is on the history. And maybe that seemed much less likely to be contentious.

... the central business district. I wouldn't have chosen that. As for the economy part of it. You'd find it hard, well for me I think I'd have found it hard to get information on it and also could have been a lot of local family—not problems—just relationships with the business district. And because someone would have said you know my dad works here and somebody could have said “Oh my dad works for your dad!” And found that out in the process and I just didn't want—and if I had a class I didn't want that to start occurring within the class. Domination type of thing already starting within the kids.

This last comment is interesting in its mention of the male worker. This statement conveys a gendered notion of work as a facet of male life. Yet, as McDowell (1999, p. 135) notes, formal societal structures are laden with assumptions about gender.

Formal organisational structures and informal workplace practices are not gender neutral as in the traditional view of the bureaucratic organization but are in fact saturated with gendered meanings and practices that construct both gendered subjectivities at work and different categories of work as congruent with particular gender identities.

Such responses indicate the difficulty in recognising that taken-for-granted roles are constructed socially, spatially and culturally.

Sites were also excluded on quite pragmatic grounds. Access to information was very much a factor. As one participant explained, “the people who had most of the information, ... who had volumes of written material, photographs, memorabilia, were on holidays.” Despite such difficulties and various points of dissonance, field sites *were* decided upon: how did participants describe the sites they selected? I now turn to interview data to represent the sites selected for the assignment, as students chose to describe them.

Field sites as described: Participant representations

In this section, I turn to the attributes of the sites themselves as conveyed through the words of the participants in interview. In my interpretation, I first used a process of open and axial coding through which I drew upon the descriptive words and phrases as well as more extended descriptions participants had used. I kept in mind the earlier categories identified in relation to descriptions of sites on campus and to which I referred in the previous chapter. However, in seeking the specific attributes of the sites as students chose to identify them, I also remained alert to additional categories. Again I sought the objects of their attention in relation to the actual sites, as I had for the places selected for campus-based fieldwork.

Through this process, I identified several very broad categories indicated in Table 6.4. Places are described in terms of the categories—*mentioning natural features*, *focusing on the built environment*, *arts and aesthetics* and *emphasising location*. These three are categories identified from descriptions of sites selected in both the first and second pedagogic moments. There are, however, some notable differences in the ways that participants describe the sites selected as the basis of the assignment compared with those selected for fieldwork on campus. Overwhelmingly, the sites selected for the assignment are identified as places of some intrinsic worth.

I now turn to participants' descriptions of the sites. In my discussion, I refer first to the three categories which exist in common. I also discuss the choices in terms of the category *seeking places of worth*—a category which I discuss in terms of various properties I identify from the data.

Table 6.4 Articulation of categories and core categories identified from interview data

No.	Categories	Core categories
1	Mentioning natural features	Focusing on the material
2	Focusing on the built environment, arts or aesthetics	
3	Emphasising location	
5	Highlighting status	Seeking places of worth
6	Focusing on human aspects of place and space	

Not surprisingly, several descriptions of sites align with the category, *emphasising location*, one of the categories I identified for site descriptions in the first pedagogic moment. Places were identified as local; they were described for their proximity to the city or for school students considered in a hypothetical sense for the assignment. Participants appear to reflect recommendations to conduct field visits within the school vicinity (Department of Education and the Arts, (Tasmania), 1991, p. 21; Australian Education Council, 1994b), as well as for their own convenience in carrying out their own field research for the assignment.

and it's near the centre of the city. It's only a short walk from the Central Business District ...

well the part that I was focusing on was just down the road from my home—there's a shopping complex with lots of stores ...

it's sort of—it's visitor friendly ... it's quite accessible to all people ...

It was also a convenient place and thinking in terms of bringing a class, specialising as I am in early childhood, bringing a class not too far away from their regular area—being around Launceston.

Understandably, availability of information, safety and cost were other factors of expedience mentioned—sometimes mentioned within the description of the site itself and sometimes mentioned as a quality of the site. As one participant commented when asked what other places had been considered as possibilities for the assignment:

I was looking for features where you could take children and show them an area in a safe manner. So safety was probably my upper thought ... also keeping costs down, for a lot of schools they could walk to areas in town. I'd been working at Ravenswood—my main theme was thinking about keeping the costs down. Whereas if you start taking groups to some (places) to research—like Clarendon House and those places—you're paying an entry fee of \$2.00 a head, which doesn't sound a lot, but to the people in the community living in those areas, it could add up to say a \$5.00 day for those children. And parents may not be able to afford it—so not all the children might be able to go and so the main theme or main idea was to take them somewhere where all the children could participate without a cost barrier.

These are, of course, concerns of less relevance for the university as home ground but factors that emerged as important for finding places for the assignment; they are factors contributing to the *accessibility* of a site.

As with sites selected for fieldwork on campus, places selected for fieldwork planning are described in terms of their natural features. However, when participants described sites in this way, they tended to mention natural attributes *in integration* with mention of other factors. It seemed that sites were described in terms of their complexity. Time, status, and beauty are all mentioned in integration with the mention of sites as places noted for their natural attributes.

Well the thing that I really liked about the Cataract Gorge was just having—I guess it's a natural amphitheatre, I guess that's been around for, you know, millions of years and I guess as a person who goes there with my family—it's very nice—to just go along and, you know, just sit back and see, I guess, what kinds of things have occurred at the Cataract Gorge over all that time. Like there could have been, I guess the Tasmanian Aborigines and even a time before they were there.

Oh well Cradle Mountain, it's just a you know, one of the most popular, I guess, places in Tasmania, mainly a natural environment, and I've been there a fair few times that I can remember with my family ... And yes so it's obviously a natural environment and it's a very beautiful and spectacular place

I mean the Gorge is one of the prettiest places in the area and is a natural feature in itself, which is doubly exciting.

In mentions of places in terms of their natural features, there is also mention of them as places of sanctuary, of peace and tranquillity, of quiet reflection. However, such mention is not made *in isolation*. Such places are recognised as human environments—in one case, privacy and conviviality are both mentioned in integration with many of the aspects I have outlined.

The scenery is beautiful, there are walks and also there is peacefulness. It's very thick bush, it's not tropical rainforest—it's not thick because of the weather conditions—a bit like the tundra but not really like that. There are waterfalls, creeks and buttongrass plains with lots of varieties of plants. Well it's peaceful—it's in the middle of nowhere (laughs) except in summer when there are lots of tourists.

It's a spectacular place and quite a treasure for Launceston ... Well it is certainly a monument, in a sense of Launceston, and like I said about it being a treasure, it's a place you could not easily forget and a place to be proud of as a Launcestonian. It's always a nice day out when you go there. There's a lot of history in the making of it from an environmental perspective as there is in the people who have visited it over the years ... And many of the pathways were laid down earlier this century and there have been—there are a number of trees that have been taken from Europe much earlier this century and planted and we see them today and it makes for a spectacular place to go to actually feel that atmosphere of history and it's also a beautiful natural phenomenon which takes—when you go there it's like going into a world where you leave all your stresses behind and you can relax and enjoy the plant life, there's also animal life there ... If you're a couple it's a nice place to go to enjoy some private time in the vicinity. It's just generally a good general person place.

In site descriptions that align with the category *focusing on the built environment, arts or aesthetics*, participants also tend to integrate other factors with their descriptions. Status would seem an important factor, sometimes integrated with a focus on time and the past as well as contemporary interest. In another case, novelty was mentioned.

All the house ... all the rooms were decorated in the older style. I think it was in the 1800s actually ... old paintings, old pictures. The garden was as the original. It was very beautiful ... It was majestic, old. Sort of represented power and standing in the community compared with farm houses. Everything about it was luxurious—the furniture and so forth. Very good quality.

It's been part of a project and has been re-vamped to be a community place... a community place for the University, the Launceston Show—it presents shows; there are art galleries and it's a working museum.

I picked those as being three or four of the major local things that children, even though they live in this area, they wouldn't normally go to see unless they were taken by a teacher.

In other descriptions of places in terms of *focusing on the built environment, art or aesthetics*, mention is made of both the built and natural.

But it's an unusual building; and it's sort of in the middle of nowhere. It was very windy the day we were there.

And then onto the Gorge area which is such a beautiful site in itself, and it has features there that can be looked at ... there are certain features there like the chairlift coming over the top which is a man-made feature so you can compare man-made features as against natural features ... and also the swing bridge is quite structurally interesting—how it's used certain shapes to improve and strengthen the structure of the bridge so that could be discussed and talked about.

Places are described as much more than material environments. They are “inhabited” sites of community importance.

Yeah and try to give the kids an understanding that it's more than just a big flash building. Because that's all they see—the outside façade. And they don't actually learn—normally they wouldn't know too much about who the people are that are involved in council, what they do, maybe even what their visions are for the community ...

... well they're both community based services that are there for the public and I think it's important for children to see how they work—what the behind-the-scenes kind of things are—that they don't get the sometimes glorified image that we see on television. That they can go and *meet* the real people that are there behind the services that—well we all rely on and expect them to be there for us

In some instances, descriptions of places as human environments include mention of their cross-cultural nature.

I think there were Polish people. And the children could look for the stories. Tasmania is not a very multi-cultural place and so I wanted to look at that history.

Yet briefly it's a country town that seems to be, at the moment, in the death throes of people feeling like it's going to close but developing attitudes that are more city-like, maybe with the emergence of the global village mentality through the Internet etcetera. It's starting to feel part of that and yet no separate identity.

I think it was also a fundamental—it was one of the fundamental instruments in allowing Launceston to grow, these wharves. From the old Russian wharf which was from about the 1800s to the later King's Wharf and Queen's Wharf which brought all the commerce and trade into Launceston, directly to the heart of the city. Whereas nowadays it's bypassed the heart of the city and gone out to the head of the Tamar River. Which has taken a lot of—I think in the past it have given the city of Launceston a closer interaction with overseas visitors. Because there are a lot of sailors who would have gone directly from the ships into the heart of the city whereas nowadays that link is missing from Launceston—that direct interaction.

The focus on places as human environments seems in accord with Jeffrey Smart's representations of peopled places. As one participant so succinctly put it, "So there needs to be a way of providing them with a sense that the place is important but it's the *people* who make the place not the place that makes the people." There is also a tendency for the sites to be identified as places of some *worth*. No matter with which of the three categories sites align—*mentioning natural features*, *focusing on the built environment*, *arts or aesthetics* or *emphasising location*—the places tend to be identified in terms of their intrinsic worth, whether due to status, continuity with the past, authenticity, aesthetics or importance as human habitats of community value. Sites selected in the second pedagogic moment all seem selected on this basis. Sites selected for the assignment and thus, as the basis for teaching, have attributes partly in accord with sites on campus; there is some commonality between descriptive categories for both. However, they also seem to have much in common with the kinds of places Gold et al. (1991) suggest are most commonly selected for fieldwork in geography teaching. Places of public status seem to be selected in preference to nondescript sites. Significantly, in a few cases, places were selected on the basis of *inverse* status.

Although sites are obviously not likely to be student meeting places as they were when students selected sites on campus, in many cases sites are described as meeting sites *of a kind*, whether in terms of the meeting between childhood and adulthood and other kinds of intercultural interaction—or whether they are quite literally places *on the edge*. One site was described as a "junction," not just in the physical material sense but as an actual transport junction: "a junction between attitudes and lifestyles as well. It wasn't just a junction for being on rail and transport.... Rather—my initial interest was the *change*—the differences that I had noticed between communities."

In addition, sites are not always mentioned in terms of their peace and tranquillity but for the sense of wildness. Rather than being places of sanctuary, it would seem that they are places selected for their potential to unsettle—they are liminal sites, meeting places of the mind (Denning, 1998).

Where minds meet is a beach of sorts. It is a place inbetween, a limen, a middle ground, where to share that space one has to give a little, where everything is new by being somehow shared, where everything is in translation, where we see ourselves reflected in somebody else's otherness. (Denning, 1998, p. 87)

In their choices of places on the edge—junctions and places that are *literally* on the edge—it would appear that participants focus on places as multi-layered and, in this respect, have much in common with the worlds depicted by Jeffrey Smart in *Corrugated Gioconda* and *The New School*. The peeled-back poster corners and the direction of the palm fronds depicted in *Corrugated Gioconda* convey a sense of physical movement that is also conveyed in participants' descriptions. In both there is also a sense of the passage of time.

It's—the first thing I think of is the wind actually ... and just the site, yeah, where you are. Sort of on the edge of the land. And its qualities and ... so it feels exposed because you're sort of on the edge there. And it's got that sort of old-fashioned, going back in time

sort of feel about it as well. There's old buildings and old things around. And in the place where they were used—all along.

Oh right. It's absolutely beautiful. I actually spend quite a lot of time there. And it's really windswept and dry and it's just got a real magic feel to it. Um in the film "Black Man's Houses" they talked about how Aboriginals have this feeling for it. But I'm not Aboriginal, and I have this feeling for it too. It's just lovely. It's—it has a nice feeling to it and there's lots of ruins and things there. Not that you can see very much because they've buried them all again I think after excavating but there's a church there that's been restored and a graveyard which is just lovely. There's some quite old graves there. And the old superintendent's house is still there which they are gradually restoring and I think there's some Aboriginal people living there at the moment. And lots of irises and lots of little piles of rubble and stuff here and there—yes. It's just a special place.

There is also a sense that the sites selected should not be *too unsettling*. As I indicated earlier, this feature appears much more frequently when participants mention sites they would not consider as well as those considered, but not chosen in the end. There is also a view that places should be *sufficiently* challenging—in one case, natural sites were excluded as “a bit of a soft option in terms of what I wanted kids to learn.”

In the responses I have so far cited, there is also a glimmer of the *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* that emerged so strongly in the reasons given for selecting field sites on campus. From descriptions of the field sites chosen for the assignment, it would seem that this very strong impetus for site selection has not faded entirely from view. Although the sites selected are overwhelmingly places of worth, their sense of worth is not just connected to their public status but also to the sense of personal attachment to these places. These locations would appear to be places of belonging as well as places of status, sanctuary and wildness. In many instances, participants indicate that these are places visited as part of their daily lives as well as known from experience in the past, particularly in childhood. Such an attachment is reflected in the following comments.

I remember going there as a child.

I remember my first time I arrived in Launceston and seeing the Gorge and thinking you know this is *tremendous*—and being so close to the city I guess.

Basically because it's a farming/fishing community everyone's very community minded so they're very interested in passing on history and as far as the actual environment in that area—in preserving it. But there's a lot of modern day kind of beliefs that are brought over like because of the wind they believe they can't grow certain things without having to sort of buy a lot of personal time and that I guess. And we sort of proved that wrong. By showing them how you can grow things and grow them naturally and also look after them naturally ...

And that's the other thing too, Robbie, I've just subconsciously thought about why I chose the wharves. Where I grew up had a wharf. I was born [there]. That was a wharf with a lot of historical value. Where the “World War 1” ships left from. With all the troops to go to Gallipoli and [it] had quite a dynamic and strong social attachment to the wharves. That's where they had the strikes of the 1940s a wharfie was shot and killed by the police and that had quite a big social value and I think it's part of the history of the place and the people, even still have a strong attachment to the wharf and know that the wharf has brought a lot of things into the harbour. Still a fairly large part. And yeah and just going back on it, I think that could have been one of the reasons I chose it.

Basically [I chose the site] because my grandparents live in the... area and my mother grew up there. My grandfather was like an oral historian and would give me lots of old stories and information first hand. There was a family link there.

In the next chapter, I draw on interview data to elucidate whether the sense of belonging emerges more strongly as a factor, particularly when participants are asked how they found out about the place.

In summary, the data suggest that participants chose field sites with particular attributes. In almost all cases the sites were well-known, named and bounded sites. If certain kinds of sites were selected for fieldwork, what were the reasons? In the next section, I interpret survey data indicating the reasons that certain field sites were selected.

Reasons for choosing: Interpretation of survey responses

In this section, I focus on participants' reasons for their own choice of sites as well as the reasons given by participants for the kinds of sites selected by the student group, overall. Primarily, I draw on participant responses for Questions 3 and 4 in my interpretation of the rationale for site selection. All participants responded to Question 3 but not all chose to answer Questions 4 and 6. Question 3 of the survey asked, "Why did you select this field site for fieldwork planning?" In Question 4, in focusing more specifically on perceived curriculum relevance, I asked, "Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE?"

In analysing responses to these questions, I again drew upon the "constant comparative method" (Charmaz, 2000) and processes of open, axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) described in Chapter 4. For each question in turn, I first analysed responses on the basis of mentions. Through a number of iterations, I derived action codes and ultimately categories and core categories. I then analysed responses for each question in terms of complexity of response. In a second cut of the data for Question 4, I also sought the thematic framework that participants construct as a rationale. In the second iteration, I identify key discourses that frame the choice of sites for SOSE.

Reasons for choosing field work locations: Interpretation of Question 3

In my interpretation of the 36 responses to Question 3, I drew a list of 87 mentions from which I derived eight codes. These codes are listed with their corresponding frequencies in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Code frequencies, Question 3

Codes	Frequency	% Frequency
1. Seeking familiarity	8	9
2. Highlighting the local	14	16
3. Focusing on novelty	11	13
4. Linking to curriculum content	27	31
5. Considering enquiry/thinking	19	22
6. Noting aesthetics	3	3
7. Mentioning interest	5	6
Totals	87	100

The resultant findings are particularly interesting—in two respects. The codes with the highest two frequencies, *linking to curriculum content* and *considering enquiry/thinking*, are both curriculum related, a result that tends to confirm the view so strongly expressed by students during the Week 14 tutorial. I see the code *considering enquiry/thinking* as closely aligned with the curriculum processes of SOSE as represented in the curriculum strand, “Investigation, Participation, Communication” of the SOSE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c) as well as in the strong emphases on enquiry and cooperative learning encapsulated in the planning grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b). Significantly, these two codes are very different from those identified as shaping participant preferences for sites on campus.

The data caused me to speculate on the possible reasons for the differences. I questioned whether as students, participants tend to have different motivations for selecting field sites than they do as teachers—or whether, as students being assessed, they focused strongly on criteria of assessment. No matter what the predominant influence, it would seem that curriculum relevance is very much a priority for students in selecting a field site for the assignment. I am mindful that such a strong emphasis may be in response to the criteria for assessment rather than a personal or professional preference for particular kinds of places. And yet, as suggested in the previous section of this chapter, the sites participants selected, as we may expect, have been chosen at least partly on a similar basis to the places selected on campus.

If curriculum relevance is indeed a strong motivation, it remains to be seen what aspects receive greatest emphasis. Data for this question suggest that curriculum content is more of a concern than is curriculum process. Given the emphasis on curriculum enquiry in formal policy documents, this significant finding prompts further speculation. Does the difference reflect what *may* appear to be the comparative weighting of the SOSE content strands, of which there are five, compared with *one* process strand, “Investigation, Communication, Participation”? Or is this very strong focus on content related to the emphasis placed on learning about the structure of several substantive social science disciplines in the first few weeks of Social Education 1?

Table 6.6 Summary: Articulation of codes and categories, Question 3

Code	Category
Seeking familiarity	Seeking the familiar and local
Highlighting the local	
Linking to curriculum content	Relating to curriculum content and process
Considering enquiry/thinking	
Noting aesthetics	Highlighting the affective
Mentioning interest	
Focusing on novelty	

Through my rearticulation of 7 codes into 3 categories of broader intent, I sought greater explanatory power of interpretation. See Table 6.6 for the articulation between codes and categories.

Given my view that the codes *linking to curriculum content* and *considering enquiry/thinking* are connected to thinking about curriculum, I have combined both into one overarching category named *relating to curriculum content and process*. Participants indicated that concerns such as the following shaped site selection for the assignment. As is evident in the list below, I have included participants' mention of their *own enquiry* in this overarching category. I consider that whether enquiry is mentioned in relation to students' learning or their own, there is recognition of this facet of curriculum and pedagogy.

- directly relates to SOSE curriculum—history
- easy to relate to assignment question
- historical significance to Launceston
- many options for covering SOSE
- relates to most SOSE strands
- connected to thinking about resources
- valuable experience for children to gain insight and information about the local community
- demonstrates effect of settlement on a natural area
- site I was interested in finding out more about
- important for children to be aware of the local community—local people, a community walk is a good way to develop that awareness
- offers wide scope of activities and interests which can study in different ways

The data suggest that this category with its frequency of 42% attracts more mentions than other categories and indicates a strong inclination for participants to consider the requirements of the unit in which they were enrolled.

The category next in line as far as the number of mentions it attracts is *seeking the familiar and local*. Again, this finding is not a great surprise. This category has much in common with the tendency for students and participants of this study to choose central locations on campus as data collection sites. Also, through lectures, tutorials and course material, I drew students' attention to recommendations suggesting that, in the first instance, teachers should select fieldwork locations within the school vicinity as potential sites for fieldwork (Department of Education and the Arts, (Tasmania), 1991). I speculated whether participants selected sites on the basis of their familiarity or whether the phenomenon was connected to propinquity. A comment made by one participant during the interview when asked what sites may *now* be considered, suggest that propinquity as well as recent publicity may be factors influencing choice:

And I just thought of the Tamar River really because there's been quite a focus on it lately—about rejuvenating it and there's lots of history about the river in the past and which I know personally. And I'm just sitting here looking out the window at the Tamar River! (hearty laugh).

I also questioned whether the mention of the local and familiar was a result of course emphasis. The fact that participants have mentioned such factors with greater frequency than they did when giving reasons for selecting certain sites on campus, perhaps, suggests that they have taken account of corresponding policy guidelines—an assumption which I hope is not taking an overly deterministic approach to my interpretation. In this respect, the category *seeking the familiar and local* could be considered to align with the category *relating to curriculum content and process*. However, the focus on the familiar and local is also very much related to identity as indicated by some student statements. This category has elements of both these analytic groupings; a view that I illustrate in relation to mentions made by students.

because it's close, it's part of the primary children's environment

important to ... [have] knowledge about change in history and geography relevant to their community

place children usually end up visiting during schooling

local, non-stereotypical view

important for children to be aware of local community—local people

close by

familiar to me

I live near Cradle Mountain and know the area well

beautiful natural reserve within a suburban environment which we can go to and interact

close to home

The third category, and the “least popular” according to my interpretation, is one termed *highlighting the affective*—an amalgamation of the codes *focusing on novelty*, *noting aesthetics* and *mentioning interest*. I consider that participants’ mentions for these three codes all align with affective motivations that were so very dominant in selecting sites on campus, but not so dominant in seeking field sites for the assignment. In 89% of cases participants mentioned *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* as the motivation for seeking a preferred location for data gathering on campus; as I discussed in Chapter 5, data from the first pedagogic moment suggested an overwhelming preference for certain places on the basis of their sanctuary and belonging as perceived by participants. Yet, when it came to selecting a site for the assignment, this category would seem considerably less important. The disjuncture between the reasons for selecting site in the first and second pedagogic moments is particularly interesting and perhaps illuminating. As I noted earlier, SOSE is decidedly unpopular as a learning area. Is it that teachers tend to lose sight of students? Or that they attend differently as teachers, thereby losing sight of *their own* interests that, in many respects, are in accord with those of young people locally. Participants’ *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* is in accord with similar findings that young people locally seek places for similar reasons (Abbott-Chapman, 2000) Table 6.7 lists the three categories I have indicated in my discussion to this point, with their corresponding

frequencies. Through the rearticulation of codes to categories, mentions were amalgamated. Thus, it *may appear* that the number of mentions for codes and categories does not tally.

Table 6.7 Category frequencies, Question 3

Category	Frequency	% Frequency
Seeking the familiar and local	21	32
Relating to curriculum content and process	27	42
Highlighting the affective	17	26
Totals	65	100

The list below illustrates the category *highlighting the affective* with reference to the mentions made by participants in their responses.

discovered (it was) a meeting place between other distant communities, this fascinated me

shows side of society rarely seen

something different, most children not aware of it

offers a wide scope of activities which can study in different ways

interesting visually

physically appealing, surrounded in mystery

site was interested in finding out more about

interested in history

In seeking greater explanatory power in the data through the process of selective coding, it is tempting to re-allocate the mentions originally interpreted as *seeking familiarity and the local* to the two categories mentioned above—*relating to curriculum content and process* and *highlighting the affective*. Scrutiny of the actual mentions suggests that there is insufficient information to indicate the impetus for mentioning the local and familiar. I am wary of making the assumptions entailed in re-allocating the mentions into two categories. The three-way categorisation is illuminating. Analysis of responses in this way suggests that, in some respects, field sites on campus and field sites for the assignment are selected for similar reasons but that, over-riding the tendency to be influenced by access and affective considerations, there is a focus on curriculum and pedagogy. Either as teachers or as students being assessed, participants have tended to choose sites accordingly. Significantly, the very strong emphasis on *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* that was so evident in choosing sites on campus has faded into the background.

Significantly, cross-correlations tend to suggest that the reasons participants identify for choosing sites differ according to gender. Male participants are evenly distributed across the three categories identified, whereas 45% of female participants cite *relating to curriculum content and process* and 23% to *highlighting the affective*. It would appear that female participants have focused less on the

affective than males. This is particularly interesting given the very common and largely taken-for-granted assumption of women as nurturers; the gender of *sensitivity*. It is also an interesting finding in relation to cross-correlations with gender for Question 9, in which participants gave reasons for selecting sites on campus. In relation to that finding, female participants mentioned *seeking facilities and convenience* more than did male participants who focused instead on *finding a place of respite*. Although for Question 9, both male and female participants focused on *seeking friendship and belonging* almost equally, it would seem that the female emphasis on the pragmatic has continued to shape their choice of sites.

These findings are interesting when compared with the way sites on campus are described. In their descriptions of sites selected on campus, male participants described sites in terms of the category *focusing on the built environment, art and aesthetics*, a focus which I noted as being in accord with findings from local studies where, it is argued, boys in Tasmania tend to mention the “physical environment” rather than “social and community aspects of home or neighbourhood” favoured by girls (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001, p. 497). When they cite reasons for selecting sites on campus, males in this study most frequently mention *finding a place of respite*. Their emphasis on this reason seems to have some accord with their reason for selecting sites for the assignment—male participants mention *highlighting the affective* more than female participants. Male participants focus on the material in their descriptions of sites on campus and cite as reasons of choice for *both scenarios*, aspects related to the affective. When female participants describe the sites they select on campus, they mention *highlighting the social* with considerably greater frequency than do male participants. Do these findings imply that male participants have greater accord with material aspects of the built environment and also with an assignment based on fieldwork? Does this finding point to the gender bias in fieldwork noted by Lee (1996)?

As a reason for choosing a site for the assignment, female participants more frequently mention the category *relating to curriculum content and process*. In so choosing, are females revealing a tendency consistent with the derogatory, “girly—swat” stereotype of female students who tend to be maligned for their perceived propensity to be conscientious students? Are female participants more conscientious than males and therefore more focused on the assignment task? Or is it, that since they have less *affective attachment* for an assignment based on fieldwork and that refers to specific material aspects of the environment in the actual wording of the assignment topic, they turn to the requirements of *the curriculum* in choosing a field site? I speculated whether female participants’ perception of formal, course requirements, rather than the affective reasons, influenced their field site choices. I also questioned whether the greater emphasis of female participants on *relating to curriculum content and process* points to an inherent gender bias in fieldwork. Cross-correlations also indicate that participants intending to specialise in early childhood teaching, or who are undecided about their area of interest, focus more strongly on the category *relating to curriculum content and process* than do those participants intending to specialise in teaching at the primary level. The primary group focus more commonly on the category, *seeking the familiar and local*. I questioned whether

participants focused on early childhood teaching tend to take such a motivation for granted, particularly given the expanding horizons view of curriculum, which suggests that very young children should begin with what is most familiar and close at hand. Likewise, do those intending to teach in the primary area see that mention of the familiar and local is worthy of mention by dint of its novelty as a consideration relative to early childhood pedagogy and curriculum?

Intending teaching specialisation also seems to be a factor shaping the complexity with which participants cite reasons for their choice of sites. In 82% of cases, those intending to teach in early childhood schooling mention two reasons compared with 57% of those intending to teach primary children. However, 14% of those intending to teach in primary schooling mention 3 categories. Overall, the primary group are more evenly distributed than the early childhood group. Although the early childhood group mention the category *relating to curriculum content and process*, more than the primary group, for most of the early childhood group it is not the *only* category mentioned. I questioned whether this finding implies that most participants choosing to teach in early childhood schools may be influenced by what they see as constraints in teaching children of a young age. In Chapter 5, I noted the tendency for the early childhood group to describe places in terms of the category *highlighting meeting places* more often than their primary counterparts. This is a finding that I noted as interesting in light of the strong orientation towards socialising young children within the early childhood curriculum. In both scenarios, the early childhood group appears to choose differently from their primary counterparts. It is interesting, however, that some of the primary group provide a rationale of greater complexity than do their early childhood peers. Does the finding point to more sophisticated appreciation of curriculum and pedagogy on the part of some of the primary group? Again, teaching specialisation emerges as a “point of difference.” However, it is not possible to point to the reason for this difference.

In summary, my interpretation of the data suggests that the reasons of choice cited by participants of this study relate to three main categories. The category cited with greatest frequency is *relating to curriculum and process*. Of the remaining categories, *seeking the familiar and local* is mentioned with slightly greater frequency than *highlighting the affective*. As noted earlier, when students state their reasons of choice for sites in the second pedagogic moment, the affective tends to fade from view. Although cross-correlations with gender point to some consistency between reasons of choice on campus and for the assignment, overall there seems to be a shift in emphasis when reasons are given for the choice of site on campus and for the assignment. I speculated whether the differences suggested that according to the task there might be a shift in emphasis and whether the focus of attention shifted in relation to the stance taken. As Crang (1998, p. 110) citing Relph (1976) and Seamon (1980) suggests, “Thus, our knowledge of the world is always em-placed, it is always starting from and based around places as centres of our ‘care’ about the world.” It would seem that when participants’ “centres of ... ‘care’ about the world” change, so do their reasons of choice. By adjusting the lens to focus-in more closely on SOSE curriculum and pedagogy, I hope to elucidate the underlying reasons of choice. After all, it is not really a great surprise that participants focus on the

category *relating to curriculum content and process*; it is surely what one would expect of students enrolled in such a unit. I now turn to responses for Question 4, “Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE?” In my interpretation of this question, I initially followed the same procedure as I described for analysing Question 3. In a second iteration, I again interrogated the data to identify key discourses framing the choice of sites for SOSE.

Choosing field work locations for SOSE: Interpretation of Question 4

In the first iteration for Question 4, from 33 responses I drew a total of 84 mentions allocated according to 8 interpretative codes. Table 6.8 lists the codes with their corresponding frequencies.

Table 6.8 Code frequencies, Question 4

Code	Frequency	% Frequency
Focusing on identity/prior knowledge	6	7
Capturing social values	10	12
Focusing on the familiar	5	6
Linking with curriculum	19	23
Promoting critical thinking	5	6
Identifying high status knowledge/events	12	14
Expanding horizons	11	13
Promoting child centred enquiry and skill development	16	19
Totals	84	100

Not surprisingly, several of these codes are closely aligned with curriculum content and process. Accordingly, codes with properties in common are combined into categories. As Table 6.9 indicates, through the process of re-articulation, the number of interpretative groupings is reduced to 4.

Table 6.9 Summary: Articulation of codes and categories, Question 4.

Code	Category
Focusing on identity/prior knowledge	Focusing on identity issues
Focusing on the familiar	
Identifying high status knowledge/events	Identifying high status knowledge and social values
Capturing social values	
Promoting critical thinking	Highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons
Expanding horizons	
Promoting child centred enquiry and skill development	
Linking with curriculum	Linking with SOSE curriculum content

Three codes emphasising the place of learning in SOSE have been combined to form a category termed *highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons*. As exemplified in the following responses, these three codes all focus very specifically on processes leading to learning.

to develop critical thinking about people's effect on community
so children ... can examine changes and make comparisons
allows children to find out why people value natural and built environments
important to weigh up interaction with natural environment
see through different viewpoints
extending children's outlook beyond themselves to local and further communities
to gain deeper understanding of life earlier this century
building on understanding of what is known
gives students an opportunity to explore many different possibilities
diverse in potential—one or all areas could be selected
fieldtrip involves locating places, map reading ...
examine changes and make comparisons
opportunities for research in classroom and at site
encourages children to look at things from different perspectives
inspiring place to go, encourage learning opportunities

Many of these responses convey a sense of activity and engagement. It would seem that some participants have steered away from the “eye-balling” approach to fieldwork that Bale (1987, p. 66) warned against as well as the “tour guide” (MacKenzie & White, 1982, cited in Biggs & Moore, 1993, p. 228) or “Cook’s Tour” (Clark, 1997, p. 387) approaches to fieldwork that are generally thought to be less desirable than enquiry oriented approaches. Mentions emphasising multiple viewpoints also suggest that participants may not aspire to promoting patriotism as discussed by Ploszajska (1998). The mentions cited above suggest that fieldwork orientations are more likely to be experiential and, thus, in accord with strong fieldwork recommendations (Cranby & Matthews, 1996, p. 269). However, such emphasis on activity and engagement contradicts the personal *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* and the preference for quiet places of seclusion that was so strong an emphasis in relation to the reasons for choosing sites on campus. There is *no mention* that students should be engaged in *quiet reflection*. Curriculum guidelines emphasise “Investigation, Communication and Participation” as processes of enquiry (Australian Education Council, 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b). The very strong emphasis on skill development overrides any mention of quiet reflection as an integral component of critical inquiry. This lack of recognition of quiet reflection points to a tension inherent within the curriculum: on the one hand, students are encouraged to engage in critical thinking; on the other hand, there is no overt recognition of the place of moments of reverie and quiet reflection for such thinking to occur.

My own experience tells me that insights tend to elude effort—a view supported by stories of scientific insights. We are told that Newton arrived at an understanding of gravity sitting under an

apple tree, not sweating over a laboratory bench! Overwhelmingly, the documents focus on group work; the logo for the state documents consists of an image depicting people at a round-table deliberation (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b). There is however, mention that SOSE should “meet the educational needs of all students”; “recognise and value student diversity by building on their varied experiences and interests”; and “engage students in a range of learning styles” (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 4). The combination of recommendations for active enquiry on the one hand, and considering students’ needs and interests on the other hand, amounts to a contradiction in terms—most notably, in considering findings that young people in Tasmania seek time-out from active engagement with the world in order to make meaning of it (Abbott-Chapman, 2000). Likewise, Webber (2002, p. 40) argues that there is a trend for young people to engage “in a personal quest for meaning that is outside the social and cultural confines of late modernity.” In addition, findings from this study tend to suggest that teacher education students who participated in this study sought places of sanctuary and belonging as field sites in the first pedagogic moment. In many respects, it would seem that there is a tendency to be inward looking rather than outward focused but not when thinking about the learning of others. It would seem that participants’ recognition for the place of quiet reflection as integral to understanding is recognised in terms of their own learning but not that of their hypothetical students. These discordant views point to a sense of dissonance, between appreciating one’s own learning needs and those of others. As well as focusing on curriculum processes, participant responses also made mention of curriculum content.

In my re-articulation of codes to categories, responses that focus so strongly on SOSE curriculum content continue to stand alone as a defined analytic grouping—*linking with SOSE curriculum content*. As the following examples illustrate, mentions categorised in this way relate quite specifically to the SOSE curriculum, or to some aspect of it. Such mentions include reference to one or more of the substantive social science disciplines, key concepts or curriculum content strands. Such mentions are not surprising; SOSE is after all the learning area with which this unit is most strongly concerned. The mentions do, however, indicate that participants mention several of the strands and are aware of the cross-disciplinary nature of the learning area.

looks at issues to do with place and space
 because it's living history
 at level 2, SOSE focuses on local community
 part of what SOSE is has to do with society
 good example of people and how they affect their environment
 applies to place and space strand ... looks at aspects of history and change
 so children can learn about industry—past and present
 good application of SOSE in the daily lives of children
 because it integrates history, sociology, geography

The two categories I have so far discussed are mentioned with similar frequency. Table 6.10 lists the four categories with their corresponding frequencies. When combined, the categories *highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons* and *linking with curriculum* account for almost 60% of mentions. Both categories, when combined, indicate that participants most frequently mention aspects of curriculum relevance and pedagogy. This finding confirms the corresponding finding for Question 3—that participants focused on *relating to curriculum content and process* more than other categories.

Table 6.10 Category frequencies, Question 4

Category	Frequency	% Frequency
Focusing on identity issues	10	15
Highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons	21	31
Identifying high status knowledge and social values	17	26
Linking with curriculum	19	28
Totals	67	100

The remaining categories—*focusing on identity issues* and *identifying ‘high status’ knowledge and social values*—are particularly interesting. Here are two categories that tend to relate to the private/public dichotomy represented in *Corrugated Gioconda*. Both are mentioned less often than the two categories relating to curriculum and pedagogy. According to the category frequencies indicated above, participants have mentioned *focusing on identity issues* less often than on *identifying high status knowledge and social values*. In selecting a site for SOSE, it would seem that the perceived public importance of a site as well as curriculum and pedagogical concerns are more influential than the more specific connection that students may have with a site—although this is not to say that students would not identify with public sites. As my interpretation of data for the first pedagogic moment suggests, students *do* form attachments with public sites and, through the meaning they attach to them, transform such sites into places of personal significance—places in which they seek *sanctuary and belonging*. The frequency with which participants cited this category as a reason for selecting a site on campus, an overwhelming 89% overall, suggests that these were indeed places of personal significance.

As I write this, I cannot help but reflect on the very recent tragedy and consequent suffering, loss of life and potential loss of income resulting from the bomb blasts in Bali (October 12, 2002). How much more tragic is it, that the site of the bombing was not only a site frequented by the young but sought by the young as a sanctuary—a place in which young people sought a sense of belonging and inclusion. Although the nightclubs which were the targets of destruction were places where young people “partied hard,” as Abbott-Chapman (2000) suggests, such behaviour is perhaps also a manifestation of seeking time-out.

The irony is that the destruction of such places and the ruin of young lives may be an attempt at reclamation of belonging in an increasingly globalised world that, it is argued, leads to a sense of

displacement and homelessness. It is argued, for example, that “a jihad mentality” is an extreme manifestation of seeking certainty and belonging (Barber, cited in Duncum, 2000 p. 173).

Compared with the almost spiritual longing conveyed in the reasons for site selection cited in the first pedagogic moment, those cited in the second pedagogic moment are much more materially oriented. The preference in the second pedagogic moment for high status sites as well as concerns with curriculum and pedagogy is particularly interesting and perhaps illuminating in light of the strongly expressed view that SOSE tends to be one of the least popular curriculum areas and becomes increasingly alienating to students as they progress through their schooling (Reynolds & Moroz, 1998). Many of the mentions allocated to the category *identifying high status knowledge and social values* reflect a proselytising intent. Could this be a phenomenon operating quite widely in relation to SOSE and the reason for its lack of popularity? As participants’ responses indicate, mentions categorised in this way tend to be much more didactic in tone with an emphasis on “showing” rather than the active enquiry which was suggested more strongly by the category *highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons*. In responses categorised as *identifying high status knowledge and social values*, there is an emphasis on the *importance* of particular kinds of knowledge. In almost all cases, it could be considered high status knowledge in terms of perceived importance or publicity—as exemplified in the following quotes.

important for children to see beautiful wilderness area first hand

because it was a major historical event to Tasmania and local areas

to show importance of water to the community, the history of the site—early development with first settlers

looks at aspects of history and change—Georgian and Victorian architecture

historic and social interpretation of major economic impact on Tasmania

important to evenly weigh up interaction with nature first hand—what lived here in the past and what will in the future

importance to history and sociology of the Tasmanian Aborigines

part of what SOSE is has to do with society—as you mature and begin to take an active part in the environment, councils dominate what and how we perceive major parts of society

important for children to learn about the past, important for children to learn about social and historic factors in use of space

Although children are mentioned in some of the responses cited above, mention of them is secondary to the importance of the site. However, when focusing on identity issues, participants mention children, children’s knowledge and experience as central to their choice of site.

looks at aspects of place and space related to identity

this is a site visited by most students

builds on prior knowledge in the early years, building an understanding of what is known

because our island status affects our lives
 they have an understanding of choices that were made to alter environment
 gets children to appreciate things close by
 to gain deeper understanding into life earlier this century—both at home and at school
 because it was a major historical event to Tasmania and local areas
 because it's part of the children's environment

In the categories indicated for Question 4, I see a three-way division. Two of the categories mentioned above relate very closely to the category identified for Question 3—*relating to curriculum content and process*. Once the corresponding categories are combined, this leaves two categories to explain the underlying influences—*focusing on identity issues* and *identifying high status knowledge and social values*. Thus, there are three discrete categories suggested by my interpretation of the data, indicating that sites were selected on the basis of a reasoning triad—albeit one in which the three-way rationale for selecting sites is disproportionate. The interest in places of identity, which was so strong a reason for selecting sites on campus, fades into the background—a feature also noted in my discussion of data for Question 3. Analysis of the data for Question 4 seems to suggest that when field sites are considered in relation to SOSE, the place of identity fades further from view. The data suggest that identity issues are cited as a reason for a field site's importance for SOSE in only 15% of cases. This contrasts starkly with the 89% frequency accorded to the category *yearning for sanctuary and belonging*—so dominant a reason for participants to select field sites on campus.

It would seem that, as we may expect, participants choose field sites for SOSE on the basis of their evaluation of worth in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and status rather than for the connections that their hypothetical students may have with such places. The reasons for selecting sites for the assignment seem *an inversion* of the reasons for selecting sites on campus. It would appear that the impetus for choosing sites for the teaching of SOSE is overwhelmingly culturally hegemonic in terms of status and perceived significance. In 85% of cases, concerns about curriculum and its recommendations for pedagogy, in addition to status, dominated the perceived importance of the chosen field sites with SOSE. Accordingly, I see that these concerns combine to form a core category I have termed *focusing on the culturally hegemonic*—a core category dominating concerns with identity. See Table 6.11 for the re-articulation from categories to core categories.

The emphasis on the culturally hegemonic is a particularly interesting finding in light of the lack of popularity of SOSE as a learning area among secondary students (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Reynolds & Moroz, 1998). It would appear to be particularly significant that one of the recommendations for overcoming the alienation students express for SOSE is to emphasise experiential, active rather than passive modes of learning (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994). It would seem, that such recommendations based on a taken-for-granted desire of students for active modes of learning may actually fly in the face of the *yearning sanctuary and*

belonging so strongly expressed by students as reasons for selecting sites on campus, and suggests a need to re-interrogate curriculum frameworks.

Table 6.11 Summary: Articulation between categories and core categories

Category	Core category
Focusing on identity issues	Linking with identity issues
Highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons	Focusing on the culturally hegemonic
Identifying high status knowledge and social values	
Linking with curriculum	

The data suggest that participants' emphasis on curriculum, pedagogy, social values and sites of some status aligns with the constructed formally designed world of *Corrugated Gioconda*. This world is one conveyed through the modernist towers, the reference to high culture and formal aesthetics represented by the appropriated image of the Mona Lisa as well as posters with their references to consumer culture. It is a world that dominates the faint, marginal motif suggestive of human presence and identity. The relative importance of the categories, *focusing on the culturally hegemonic* and *linking with identity*, is more clearly conveyed when associated responses are cited together. In this mode, the relative emphasis of the categories stands in stark comparison with the overwhelming and poetic, almost romantic reasoning behind the choice of sites on campus. When the data is viewed again in this way, it is clear that several other categories emerge as elements of what is overwhelmingly a culturally hegemonic curriculum. Such an interpretation of the data suggests that contradictions are set up between pedagogical approaches—several participants mention critical thinking and enquiry, but more often terms such as “shows,” “gives,” “allows,” “looks at,” and “important for children to see” suggest a didactic approach based on a view of children as lacking in background knowledge and reluctant to engage with the task of learning. Even the way intentions are worded implies that teachers are the agents of the learning enterprise—that the receivers of it need to be *developed, shown, given, allowed to learn*. Each teacher should ask whether they, also, might be guilty of such a stance.

At secondary school, when many students tend to become disengaged with schooling, it is not so much the didactic approach that alienates students but the use of language implying that teaching is a one-sided enterprise and that as adults we know what children *need* to know and how they need to learn it. Until I conducted this research, I did not appreciate the extent to which participants yearned for sanctuary and belonging. I question whether I had continued to perpetuate a simplistic view of the learner similar to the one that Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth and Dobbins (1998) describe as one based on named attributes within the reading of schooling as a romantic text. These authors argue that the blame for alienation tends to be directed towards students:

(the) reading of school as a romantic text positions the individual students, each of whose social determination results from their perceived given and named attributes such as “talented”, “lazy”, “careless” or “hard-working.” The consequences of reading schools and schooling as romantic texts are most significant when we relate them to the least advantaged and least powerful in our society for they are silenced and marginalised by such a settled and linear narrative. (p. 11)

Student teacher responses reveal that their orientation to curriculum and pedagogy is overwhelmingly hegemonic in terms of the stance taken to children as learners, as well as in terms of their assumptions about children’s prior experience and what is thought to be important for children to learn. Yet, many of the statements made by students are rich in meaning. In a further iteration, I return to the *actual statements* made by the participants to identify the prevailing issues which frame the choice of sites.

Six key discourses: Justifying field site choices for SOSE

To identify mutually exclusive categories that embody the essence of what participants were saying about their choice of sites for SOSE, I conducted a thematic analysis of the data to produce an interpretive framework inclusive of all of the statements. In this framework, I seek to identify the range of possibilities that encompass how participants choose to justify their sites in terms of the implementation of SOSE. In this iteration, I switch from my earlier concern with the *frequency* with which the various themes are mentioned, to prioritise the thematic framework participants *construct* as a rationale. I am interested in the ramifications of this framework for implementing fieldwork in SOSE—participants’ pedagogic choices and the interconnections or possible disjuncture with their own preferences in the first pedagogical moment.

In arriving at a descriptor to encapsulate the meaning of each key theme, I have drawn on the actual words used by participants in their responses to Question 4. Each descriptor is based on one or two statements that epitomise that theme. In the sense that each of these themes constitutes the *naming* of the potential value of sites selected for SOSE, each theme can also be considered as *a discourse* drawn upon and mobilised by participants to explain why they choose particular sites for fieldwork in SOSE. For this reason, I redefine the six themes as categories which encapsulate key discourses framing the justification of field sites in the second pedagogical moment—a framework that, understandably, is broader than that which frames the choice of sites in the *first* pedagogical moment.

Although I acknowledge the complex meanings ascribed to the term *discourse* (Gee, 1997; Hiller, 1998; Lee, 1996), I draw initially upon a meaning offered by Gilbert (2001c, p. 95) for thinking about discourse analysis of the texts used in SOSE: “The term ‘discourse’ refers to the practices through which people use symbol systems such as language in their everyday activities and interactions, and how these systems enable and constrain their practices.” This is the meaning to which I refer in identifying participants’ key discourses. In my discussion of the key discourses used by participants, I refer also to broader discourses of schooling, including those of SOSE and fieldwork.

By “discourses of schooling,” I refer to the values underpinning curriculum and pedagogy in particular sites. With reference to differing discourses of schooling conveyed through two policy documents, Grundy, Warhurst, Laird and Maxwell (1994, p. 116) argue that “patterns of language are underpinned by different logics and assumptions about people, knowledge and the nature of ‘the good’ in individual life and human society.” Although such discourses may act to position students and teachers in particular ways—for example, either as passive receivers of knowledge or constructors of it—the effect of such positioning would also seem to be far from deterministic. As Lee (1996, p. 19) argues, “the relation between discourse and subjectivity” is complex. My priority is not to discuss in detail the complexities or pros and cons of varying theorisations of the relation between discourse and the subject, but to remain cognisant of the potential for such debates to elucidate my interpretation of the data and to refer to them for this purpose. My purpose now is to explore the discourses participants use to justify their choice of sites for implementing fieldwork in SOSE.

Although I discuss each of the discourses as a separate entity, this does not imply that participants employed only one or another of these discourses. As the complexity of the responses indicates, participants of this study employ a *range of discourses* in explaining their reasons of choice.

From my reading of the data, I identified six key discourses which I bring together in Table 6.12. The order of the discourses does not indicate order of priority, frequency or importance. I have listed the discourses in a way that facilitates discussion. Together the range of discourses is broad in its scope—a feature alluded to by participants when they noted the difficulties and tensions in arriving at a choice of field site to use as the basis of the assignment. Participants draw upon a range of available and competing discourses that cohere closely with broader educational ones—the discourses of the SOSE guidelines themselves, of fieldwork pedagogies, and of taken-for-granted views about educating children. There are, however, other discourses that remain outside the parameters of this decision-making frame and in this respect, constitute silences within participants’ overt range of discourses.

Table 6.12 Key discourses framing the choice of sites for SOSE

No.	Statements which exemplify each key discourse
1	Diverse in its potential; because it integrates history, sociology and geography
2	To develop critical thinking
3	To look at community values
4	Opportunity for research at site and in the classroom
5	Because it's part of the children's environment
6	An inspiring place to go

In Table 6.13, I illustrate each of the key discourses with reference to selected participant responses. I cite these examples to more richly convey the meanings encompassed by each discourse—an interpretive framework arising from my analysis of data for Question 4.

The first two discourses listed in Table 6.13 relate very closely to SOSE as it is articulated in the national and state policy guidelines. The first of the discourses, *diverse in its potential; because it integrates history, sociology and geography*, reflects the very strong emphasis on the interdisciplinary nature of SOSE and the tendency for early childhood and primary education to integrate the conceptual strands, each of which also integrates several social science disciplines. This discourse also reflects one of the Social Education assignment requirements: “Write a rationale justifying your selection of the site and its relevance to SOSE curriculum guidelines and/or school policy, prior learning of students, significance for learning and any other relevant aspects.” (University of Tasmania, 1997). As indicated in the examples listed in Table 6.12, this is a discourse of integration. Given the centrality of SOSE to the unit with which this study is concerned, an emphasis on the integrated nature of SOSE does not seem at all surprising.

Table 6.13 Key discourses for Question 4 with illustration of their meanings

No.	Key discourse	Key discourse exemplars
1	Diverse in its potential; because it integrates history, sociology and geography	To learn about the social and historical factors in the use of place and space The importance of history and sociology to the Tasmanian Aborigines Looks at aspects of history and change—Georgian and Victorian architecture
2	To develop critical thinking	To see through different viewpoints Gives students the opportunity to explore many possibilities To develop critical thinking about people's effect on the environment
3	Opportunity for research at site and in the classroom	Allows children to find out why people value natural and built environments
4	Because it's part of the children's environment	It's a good application of SOSE in the daily lives of children This is a site visited by most students Builds on prior knowledge of children in the early years
5	To look at community values	To teach the importance about the local community To show the consequence of actions, who has to face them, procedure and protocol To show the importance of water to the community Important to value wilderness and its preservation To accept change as part of daily life Because it was a major historical event
6	An inspiring place to go	Important for children to see beautiful wilderness first hand

Likewise, the second of the discourses listed above, *to develop critical thinking*, reflects the emphasis on critical thinking as one of the skills required for SOSE as well as the assignment requirement to justify site selection in relation to SOSE guidelines (Australian Education Council, 1994b; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a). Inclusion of a discourse of critical thinking, however, does not necessarily imply that students move towards a critical pedagogy of space and place or foster critical literacy of SOSE texts. Reference to statements coherent with the discourse of critical thinking

tend to suggest that the interpretation may be a more technical interpretation, similar to that referred to in some sections of the Tasmanian documents for SOSE with their emphasis on de Bono's approaches such as "CorT" and "Six Hat" thinking (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b), rather than one based on critical theory. Although the questions listed on the SOSE Planning Grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b) and intended as the basis of SOSE enquiry imply a broader interpretation of critical thinking based on critical theory, this view would not seem to be paramount in talking about critical thinking. The emphasis is on appreciating multiple viewpoints rather than power relations or deconstruction of discourses.

The third of the discourses listed in Table 6.13 also aligns closely with the emphasis in the learning area of SOSE on students gathering and interpreting data (Australian Education Council, 1994b). In addition, the data gathering discourse is closely related to the enquiry orientation recommended as a desirable approach to fieldwork (Bale, 1987; Cranby & Matthews, 1996; Laws, 1989). Thus, three of the discourses used by participants in justifying their choices with reference to the implementation of SOSE, *relate very closely to SOSE*; one of these directly coheres with specific recommendations for a particular fieldwork approach. Not surprisingly, the learning area with which this unit of Social Education 1 is primarily concerned—including the emphasis of the assignment—is reflected in several of the discourses employed by participants in explaining why their selected site was important for implementing SOSE.

The discourse *because it's part of the children's environment* may also be seen as drawing from discourses of schooling. By schooling, I refer to the institution of schooling, its public image, and the almost ubiquitous nature of school experience (Britzman, 1991, p. 3) that assumes a taken-for-granted reality that is a simplistic and stereotypical version of its elusive complexity. As a societal institution, schooling is known through master discourses—"authoritatively sanctioned and conventionally taken-for-granted ways of understanding, thinking and acting." (Foucault, cited in Britzman, p. 17). Such master discourses amount to powerful ways of delineating what counts—or does not count. To the extent that these various discourses of schooling are linked to a deficit view of the child as lacking certain modes of thought and experience, they relate to broader societal discourses of childhood (Egan, 1988; Jenks, 1996; Luke & Luke, 1995; Woodrow, 1999). Jenks (1996, pp. 32–33), for example, argues that although the child is "constituted socially" in *varied* ways, in certain situations and discourses—such as learning theory—dominant views tend to hold sway:

As a consequence of the adult member being regarded within theory as mature, rational and competent (all as natural dispositions), the child is viewed in juxtaposition, as less than fully human, unfinished or incomplete. Such dichotomous discrimination in terms of socio-cognitive competence assumes its most explicit form in theories concerned with the learning process.... Within social theory particular versions of rationality are devised and manipulated in order to contrive the exclusion of certain groups. In learning theory it is the child who is so excluded.

Jenks (p. 21) argues that “this exclusion operates within pedagogic theory and curriculum planning.” Likewise, taken-for-granted and non-contested views of the child underpin local policy as well as the SOSE curriculum guidelines.

A local policy document specifically directed to early childhood and primary education, *Our children: The future—Teaching and learning* (Department of Education and the Arts (Tasmania), 1991, p. 21) recommends that fieldwork or excursions take place in the locality of the school—a view, to some extent, based on pragmatic concerns about the costs of taking children on excursions. SOSE guidelines (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b) also encourage fieldwork in the locality—albeit from an *expanding horizons* orientation to curriculum planning that is “based on the principle of working from the known to the unknown and using what is presently known as a basis for learning new material” (Cox, 2001a, p. 110). From this point of view, it is commonly assumed that what is familiar to students is close at hand. The “expanding environment”—the term used by Cox (p. 110)—may also refer to a curriculum focused on the attainment of ever more sophisticated understandings; according to this belief, learning should also proceed from the simple to the complex.

The SOSE Statement (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 19) recommends “home, school and community” as well as the “immediate environment” as sites for data gathering by young children; older children however, are assumed to be interested in broader horizons: “Students’ interest in and curiosity about the world around them has begun to move away from the home and local area” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 29). These various forces, in combination, produce as a dominant discourse the view that fieldwork for early childhood and primary children should occur in the school locality—supposedly an environment familiar to children. Reference to the examples cited in Table 6.13 confirms that participants of this study do convey an expanding horizons view of curriculum, a view that seems to shape their view of what is appropriate for children’s fieldwork. Prior learning and familiarity are features of these responses.

Although I structured fieldwork in students’ immediate institutional locality, my intention was not only to begin with what was close at hand, known and familiar but also to explore participants’ understandings of such an environment. Through this approach, I aimed to more fully understand their ways of knowing—an understanding intended to facilitate conversations about pedagogical and curricula decision-making. In this respect, I aspired to the view of teacher education proposed by Wilson and McDiarmid (1996, p. 312) to engage students in “debates about curricula and teaching.” My intention, also, was to lead towards a critical pedagogy of space by beginning fieldwork enquiry with students’ “mattering maps” and “cartographies of taste” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 286). In addition, I hoped to position students as “knowers” following on from Slater and Morgan (2000, p. 272) who argue for pedagogy that acts as an inversion of the usual pedagogical positioning in which the teacher is privileged and students are seen as lacking in

knowledge. Despite my best intentions, I question whether this approach tended to reflect a patronising stance towards the learner.

The fifth of the discourses used by participants to justify their choice of site in terms of its importance for SOSE—to *look at community values*—is closely associated with the emphasis on the locality and the expanding horizons curriculum orientation. In this case, however, not only does learning occur in the local and familiar environment, it must be *valued* by children. Again, mention of the community features in SOSE related discourses in SOSE texts and formal curriculum guidelines, both national and state. These documents do not acknowledge the varied meanings of the term *community* (Jacobs, 1996; McDowell, 1999, p. 30); yet, as Barke and MacFarlane (2001, p. 92) state, “community is a contested concept, frequently invoked in a variety of ways by different interest groups.”

The SOSE Statement (Australian Education Council, 1994b, pp. 5–6) emphasises *care* of the environment and understanding *changes* that have occurred in the local community as well as the socialising intent of SOSE encapsulated in the three substantive values identified in the same document. These values are democratic process, ecological sustainability and social justice. In all of these, there is an emphasis on commitment and responsibility as citizens—a feature of the exemplars listed in Table 6.13. Of all the participant discourses mentioned so far, this one, *to look at community values*, brings to mind Ploszajska’s (1998) suggestion that fieldwork was garnered for patriotism. I have cited several exemplars to illustrate the richness of the data associated with the discourse of community values. One of these responses refers to an important historical event: the Launceston flood of 1929 that resulted in the inundation of much of central Launceston. The 1929 Launceston flood looms large in the memory of the Launceston community and continues to have a bearing on local planning decisions and concerns about maintenance of the levee banks protecting parts of Launceston built on the flood plain of the Tamar River. For this reason, I have included this response as an exemplar of the discourse *to look at community values*.

In responses that emphasise the inculcation of children into values of the community, I read a strong socialising agenda and a moralising intent which is in alignment with Egan’s description of Western discourses of education based on Greek and Christian views of the child as “primitive” or deficient (1988, p. 92).

Children are assumed to begin in confusion and ignorance, and education is the process of inculcating rationality and knowledge. In Plato’s enormously influential theory of education, the process of educating is seen as analogous to unchaining helpless prisoners in a dark cave, able to see only fluttering, meaningless shadows, and leading them outside to behold the source of light and truth. Christian ideas of education blended quite well with this, representing the child as beginning in sin and ignorance and being able to progress only gradually and with great difficulty to virtue and knowledge.

The final discourse listed in Table 6.13, *an inspiring place to go*, can be seen in a similar light. One interpretation could be that children require *inspiration* in order to learn. On the other hand, the last of

the discourses, *an inspiring place to go*, seems to have some commonality with the *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* emphasised by participants as the overriding reason for selecting sites in the first pedagogic moment. As indicated earlier in this chapter, participants described places in terms of their intrinsic worth. However, such places were also described in terms of their peacefulness and tranquillity, wildness, beauty, prettiness and as spectacular places. Such language would tend to support the view that the sites were selected for their inspiring qualities. As places of reverie, it would seem that the sites selected in the first pedagogic moment were inspiring. However, the places were also overwhelmingly *central and familiar* locations. It appears that reference to community values are less related to discourses of schooling and more closely in tune with the yearning for belonging identified in my interpretation of data for the first pedagogic moment.

In summary, the dominance for the culturally hegemonic emerges strongly when participants consider their chosen field sites in terms of SOSE; this trend is far more evident than when participants cite reasons for choosing these sites for the assignment. In Question 4, when participants considered the importance of the selected field site for the implementation of SOSE, high status and social values are mentioned as reasons of importance. This consideration is one not mentioned when participants were asked in Question 3, “Why did you select this field site for fieldwork planning?”—instead, participants focused on the local and familiar. Likewise, cross-correlations for Question 4 differ from those for Question 3. Although gender would again appear to be factor influencing the reasons given for choosing particular sites, the findings from cross-correlations point to some interesting differences between data for the two questions. Female participants cite *focusing on identity issues* more frequently than do their male peers. Female participants mention reasons in accord with this category in 19% of cases compared with *no* male participants. Male participants, on the other hand, focus more often on the category *linking with curriculum*: 45% of male participants cite reasons in accord with this category, whereas 25% of female participants do so. I speculate whether male participants have relatively less need to mention identity issues. Lee (1996), for example, argues that the dominant discourse of geography tends to privilege the male subject. Although the subject is situated within competing and contradictory discourses, Lee (p. 210) cites evidence to suggest that within the discourse of geography and more specifically, fieldwork, it would seem that “Being in the field” is the *“the thing that men do”* (italics indicative of the original). I question whether an effect of this tendency might be that male participants tend to see the curriculum in an unproblematic way.

This gender difference in reasons of choice for Question 4 contrasts with the finding for Question 3, where female participants focused more often on *relating to curriculum content and process* than they did on *highlighting the affective*. I suggest that in responding to this question, the participants—as students—are positioned in a more subservient manner and have responded accordingly. Given the strong requirements to comply with assignment requirements and curriculum guidelines, the participants as student subjects are positioned within a “strong framing of pedagogic relationships and strong classification of educational knowledge [where] in Bernstein’s (1971) sense, transmission pedagogies emphasize the separation and the setting and policing of boundaries” (Lee, 1996, p. 209).

As Lee continues to argue, such a pedagogy is read as masculine. In this instance, female participants, in focusing on curriculum content and process, may have taken up a position of compliance; the finding brings to mind a case cited by Lee (p. 210) where a female geography student opts to “take up a position as the compliant, echoing subject of transmission pedagogies.” The situation is not clear. I do not have the information at my disposal. However, I reflect on the view expressed by Lee (1996) that the positioning of student and teacher is contradictory. Lee (p. 209) suggests that within progressive child-centred pedagogies the teacher is positioned as feminine and the student as masculine. In thinking as students then, it appears that female participants taken up a position where they attend to—and “echo”—a focus on curriculum content and process.

I suggest that there is some similarity between the categories *highlighting the affective* and *focusing on identity issues*; both relate to the human dimension of teaching. When responses for both questions are considered, human concerns and curriculum issues are a point of emphasis for both genders; taken overall the gender differences in a sense, cancel out. However, given the ways that participants are positioned differently within the complexities and contradictions of curriculum and pedagogy, making such an assumption is fraught with danger. What is more certain is that the stance I took up as a teacher educator was not always consistent. Although I tended towards a progressive student-centred pedagogy and a pedagogy which aimed to privilege the learner, I also took a privileged pedagogical position in respect to assessment but—in some respects—allowed myself to be positioned by the mandates of curriculum. It would seem that the participants of this study responded to these varying positions along gendered lines—a trend, however, that is in no way deterministic. As a researcher, I cannot help but reflect on whether this gender effect could go some way towards explaining the relatively low rate with which male school-leavers opted to be involved in this study.

In the second cut of the data for Question 4, at least four of the discourses which I identified relate very closely to discourses of schooling—albeit of a particular kind. Together the range of discourses is broad in its scope, a feature alluded to by participants when they noted the difficulties and tensions in arriving at a site for the assignment. Participants draw upon a range of available and competing discourses that closely cohere with broader educational discourses, the discourses of the SOSE guidelines themselves, of fieldwork pedagogies, and of taken-for-granted views about educating children. From my interpretation of both Questions 3 and 4 it would seem that sites for the assignment are selected on the basis of reasons that are very different from those cited for site selection in the first pedagogic moment. When participants select a site for the assignment, they focus on curriculum concerns in seeking places of worth and status. It appears that they make “political” as well as personal choices and perhaps give the answers they believe they are expected to give. Their rationale seems based on culturally hegemonic choices. There is some evidence in data for Question 4 that participants do not lose sight of their preference for places that satisfy their *yearning for sanctuary and belonging*. In the next chapter, these findings will be further elaborated in relation to the interview data.

Chapter 7

Discourses, pedagogy and choices for SOSE

Introduction

When participants justified their choice of well-known, named, highly visible, and bounded sites for implementing SOSE, it seemed that they drew upon and mobilised a range of discourses at once broad in their scope, yet also tending towards the culturally hegemonic. Intriguingly, in the second pedagogical moment, sites were described not only for their peace and tranquillity but also as places of wildness—places on the edge. Remembrance of childhood experiences suggested that these were also places of belonging—as conveyed also in references to *home* when talking of sites selected in the first pedagogical moment. As Robertson (2000b, p. 131) argues, recollections of past experiences contribute to a “sense of ‘place’ belonging [which] can be viewed as a major influence on identity construction.” Data for Question 6 point to similar findings—including intriguing silences—which suggest that participants base their choices on past experience of fieldwork and craft their answers in light of curriculum dictates.

In this chapter, following a discussion of key findings for Question 6 of the survey, I analyse “official” blueprints—curriculum and policy guidelines as well as the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997)—for their dominant discourses. In the third section of this chapter, I discuss the discourses encapsulated within interview data and remaining survey data, comparing and contrasting these in light of discourses already identified in Chapter 6, as well as in “official” blueprints.

Binaries in the data—Fieldwork remembered and curriculum discourse

In this section, I discuss key findings from analysis of Question 6 of the survey—“Why do you think these kinds of places have been selected?” Although the data refer to participants’ perceptions of sites chosen for the bulletin board display, I take the view that participants may more freely respond to a question of this nature than when they comment on the reasons for their own choices, shaped as they may be by the teaching and assessment context. In interpreting the data, I again use constructivist grounded theory and follow the three phase process described in earlier sections of this thesis; data coded through open coding is rearticulated through axial coding. Through selective coding I further reduce the data by identifying a core-category, which encapsulates most of the data.

By cross-referencing to findings from the last chapter, I seek whether differences exist in reasons cited for Question 6. In Questions 3 and 4 of the survey, when participants comment on *their own* reasons

of choice in the second pedagogical moment they tend to give answers expected of them and emphasise curriculum relevance, even if this is balanced by factors of expedience such as familiarity and accessibility. Will participants say that what they saw as natural, historic, civic and cultural sites (as indicated earlier in my discussion of data from Question 5) are chosen because of curriculum concerns, as they say when commenting on their own reasons?

Data for Question 6 indicate that participants think the sites were selected for a fairly limited range of reasons—a phenomenon that also tends to belie the dissonance conveyed when describing their selected sites. Table 7.1 lists codes with their corresponding categories and category frequencies. Despite the limited number of categories and their apparent similarities to categories for Questions 3 and 4, analysis of data for Question 6 points to several significant findings. Findings from Question 6 are particularly revealing when considered against findings for Questions 3 and 4.

Table 7.1 Summary of codes, categories and category frequencies, Question 6

Code	Category	Category frequency	% Frequency
Seeing opportunities for enquiry	Focusing on curriculum relevance	18	32
Focusing on curriculum content			
Highlighting social values			
Noting practical concerns	Selecting the familiar and accessible	24	42
Drawing on prior knowledge			
Valuing novelty and interest	Highlighting intrinsic appeal	15	26
Totals		57	100

The data point to a tension between *remembered curriculum* and *current curriculum* as articulated in “official” blueprints such as the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997) and curriculum and policy documents (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b). On the one hand, participants say that fieldwork sites have been selected on the basis of curriculum relevance. Yet, they make *no mention* of critical thinking, a discourse, which emerged when commenting on the choice of sites for SOSE. The mention of critical thinking in one instance and its omission in the other points to a tension. It is highly likely that participants have mentioned critical thinking in justifying sites in terms of SOSE because of its mention in SOSE curriculum documents. It is a discourse expected of them. However, when it comes to commenting on why certain kinds of sites have been selected, this factor is overlooked. Instead, participants say that the recollection of fieldwork in times past is important in shaping the choice of sites. Familiar places are indicated as familiar *field trip places* known from school field trips: *traditional places; previous school sites; places students know of that fitted in with the assignment* and which were *visited when at school*. Closely connected with the mention of traditional fieldwork locations, are references to cost, safety and ease of organisation, which point to participants’

orientation to classroom teaching. As one participant put it, fieldwork sites were selected because it was possible to “see how they could be used in the classroom.”

In these mentions, there is a strong suggestion that *discourses of schooling* feature in shaping choices of sites for fieldwork. Through their memories of fieldwork experienced when they were at school, participants perpetuate fieldwork of a certain kind and bring their past experience of fieldwork *in practice* to the selection of sites for children’s learning. The mention of such reasons is significant as it amounts to an impetus to site selection not already identified in data for either of the earlier questions. The mention of remembered curriculum on the one hand, and the oversight of critical thinking on the other, tends to suggest that participants have not drawn upon “official” blueprints as they suggest when they say that sites have been selected because of their curriculum relevance.

Yet, participants also say that fieldwork locations have been selected for their qualities of *fun* and *interest*—as places *which children like* and *of interest to children*; places which *appeal to children*. These words convey something of the view of children as learners—that they have particular, well-defined interests and that topics should be chosen on the basis of their assumed interests. Otherwise things to be learned need to be *made interesting*. The intrinsic/extrinsic binary poses a fascinating tension between the intrinsic motivations the participants mention for themselves and those assumed for children. Participants’ own choices are not made on the basis of qualities of fun. When it comes to their own learning, the data suggest that participants choose places which *matter*, *feel comfortable* and *mean something to us*. They choose places of personal *meaning*. *Fun* is a quality reserved for thinking in terms of *children’s learning* and suggests the existence of a patronising stance in relation to planning fieldwork for school children. These comments, when juxtaposed with the omission of critical thinking, point to discourses encapsulated in national and state SOSE curriculum guidelines and local policy documents; such discourses are particularly evident in the way curriculum overviews are translated for application in early childhood and primary schooling. In the following section, I discuss the discourses located in these “official” blueprints to which participants refer in seeking guidance in their choice of fieldwork locations.

Five official blueprints

Five “official” blueprints comprised key reference points for participants in their choice of sites for the assignment. The SOSE Statement and SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c); SOSE Guidelines and SOSE Planning Grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b) and the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997) comprised the five “official” blueprints to which students referred. Although the course outline for Social Education 1 (EPC146) was the primary document framing student choices, both of the assignments for this unit required students to not only refer to “official” blueprints for SOSE curriculum but to base their assignments on the parameters for SOSE curriculum suggested by these documents (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b). The

assignment comprising the framework for this study required students to justify their choice of field locations accordingly—specifically in addressing one of the assignment components as well as one of the assessment criteria: “Evidence of breadth and depth of understanding, including relevance to current curriculum guidelines and policy documents” (University of Tasmania, 1997).

In addressing this criterion, students also were required to demonstrate their consideration of fieldwork protocols based on sections of three other official documents addressing practical and legal considerations of primary importance in planning fieldwork and therefore, referred to within the course and emphasised in lectures and tutorials. Although these documents—*Our Children: The Future—Teaching and Learning* (Department of Education and the Arts (Tasmania), 1991), *Outdoor Education Management Handbook: A Management Guide and Instructions for Schools and Colleges* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1997), *Environment: A Learning Resource* (Committee on Primary Education, 1988)—contributed to considerations of a very practical and unavoidable nature in the choice of sites, my primary interest in this chapter are the five official blueprints more specifically concerned with SOSE.

As well as directing students to these documents, the course outline encapsulated several competing discourses reflecting the differing discourses of SOSE. Stated objectives included understanding of the social science disciplines, an underpinning framework of SOSE, as well as an introduction to course design and planning for effective learning including experiential learning through fieldwork and demonstrated competency in accessing teaching and learning resources in the community. Despite the breadth suggested by the stated objectives, in both of the assignments and in criteria for assessment, the official curriculum blueprints for SOSE were highlighted as key references. Within the context of this assignment, these official blueprints refer primarily to official blueprints for SOSE and where relevant, to other official curriculum and policy dictates. Specifically, students were expected to refer to two national and two Tasmanian SOSE curriculum documents (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b) in use at the time of this study. Given their centrality as mandatory references, I briefly describe these four official blueprints.

At the state level, the two nationally constructed documents commonly referred to as the SOSE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c) were interpreted for use in Tasmanian schools. The two resulting locally produced documents—*Studies of Society and Environment in Tasmanian Schools K–8: Guidelines and Support Materials* [SOSE Guidelines] (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) and the *Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* [SOSE Planning Grid] (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b), formed the basis of local policy, further supported by sample units demonstrating the integration of the eight key learning areas into practical units for school use and adaptation. Most notable, are three publications in the “Integrated Units Collection” (Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c)—*From igloos to yurts:*

Years 4–7, Oodles of Noodles: Early years, and *Part of a pattern: Years 2–3*. Given their prominence in the Tasmanian context where applicable I discuss these publications and other similar exemplars used by teachers and available to teacher education students. Of greatest interest, however, are the five “official” blueprints.

The national documents—the SOSE Statement and Profile—are directed to all years of schooling. The SOSE Statement outlines the content and processes in some detail. Of particular interest for early childhood and primary schooling are the sections of the two national documents describing the learning area in general, as well as those subdivisions, or *bands*, which more fully describe the content and processes deemed appropriate for these years—Bands A and B. The Profile indicates “intended outcomes” for students at differing levels of attainment. In all there are eight levels. Although it is recognised that the levels are not arbitrary but dependent on individual attainment and opportunities for learning, sample units reflect the view that learning is linear and sequential. In practice, the first four levels are most frequently used as intended outcomes for achievement in the early childhood and primary years.

The profile of intended outcomes for the differing levels of attainment reflects taken-for-granted theories of cognitive development. There tends to be a marked division between the levels of thinking expected for Levels 1 to 4 and those for Level 5. The intended outcomes for Levels 1 and 2 indicate that children are limited to lower order thinking—*describe, identify, select, compare and contrast*. The intended outcomes for Levels 3 and 4 again place greatest emphasis on similar levels of thinking with some indication that higher levels of thinking are expected. *Overwhelmingly*, the wording of the intended outcomes suggests that learning progresses according to fixed stages of cognitive growth and therefore children in early childhood and primary schooling are limited in their abilities for higher order or complex thinking. In these documents there is little suggestion that learning occurs across modes of thinking from higher to lower and lower to higher (Biggs & Moore, 1993, p. 50) or that “human experience is more complex than any theory can explain” (Robertson, 2000a, p. 9).

As official learning area blueprints, these various documents consist of an amalgam of varying approaches to the study of society and environment. At one level, with its strong allegiance to social science disciplines, the SOSE curriculum tends to derive from an academic rationalist (Print, 1993, pp. 47–48) approach to curriculum. At another level, SOSE moves beyond a strict academic rationalist position and reflects broader trends in the social sciences. Whether the focus for learning is one discipline, or many, the documents tend to promote a multidisciplinary approach. Although each of the conceptual strands prioritises one or more disciplines, each one incorporates several disciplines. Four of the five conceptual strands, listed as *Time, continuity and change*, *Place and space*, *Culture* and *Resources*, specifically allow for the inclusion of “multi-disciplinary studies” (Australian Education Council, 1994b). For example, “Time continuity and change” is primarily centred on history, but “may also draw on philosophy, anthropology, archaeology and ecology” as well as “Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies, Australian studies, Asian studies, community

studies, multi-cultural studies and women's studies" (p. 14). Similar statements are made for the multi-disciplinary nature of other conceptual strands of the SOSE Statement.

Within these very broad parameters, the focus for enquiry is *bounded* by named curriculum perspectives and values which frame the learning area. As Gilbert (2001a, p. 112) says, these perspectives and values serve to define the parameters for content in the learning area: "They tell us what SOSE should be about ... they remind us to consider what and whom SOSE is for, so that the needs of all students are addressed." Not surprisingly, there are slight differences in the parameters of the official blueprints at the state and national level. Although both national and state curriculum documents are based on the social sciences, Tasmanian SOSE documents adopt a social issues stance to enquiry from a range of perspectives described as curriculum organisers.

The state Department of Education and the Arts documents consist of an explanatory folder (*Studies of Society and Environment in Tasmanian Schools K-8: Guidelines and Support Materials* [SOSE Guidelines], 1995a) and a planning chart (*Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* [SOSE Planning Grid], 1995b) that integrates various sections of the national SOSE Statement. The planner is intended as a guide for curriculum revision and remodelling of SOSE by schools and their teachers; it promotes "a problem-solving approach to learning" (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 13) based on the use of questions as a catalyst for enquiry. Two highlighted sections of this planner point to an issues-based curriculum orientation and social constructivist pedagogical approach based on cooperative learning. These sections are based also on a particular vision of critical inquiry; it is associated with critical thinking as lateral thinking drawing on the work of de Bono (as indicated on the SOSE Planning Grid) and an approach to mind mapping similar to that promoted by Buzan (1989). The questions intended to be used as catalysts for unit planning are listed on a grid which cross-references content strands of SOSE and curriculum organisers—some of the curriculum perspectives and values from the national SOSE Statement, as well as sections included on the basis of local curriculum emphases. In total there are seven organisers: Gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Career and Work Education, Civics and Citizenship, Ecological Sustainability, Australia's Global Connection and School Community Organiser. The chosen perspectives as well as the questions listed highlight the strong citizenship intentions of SOSE in Tasmania. Accordingly, the SOSE Planning Grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b) lists several attitudes and attributes developed through SOSE:

- independence of mind;
- willingness to suspend judgement and to tolerate uncertainty;
- fairmindedness and integrity;
- respect for differences and alternatives;
- habitual consideration of personal motivations, assumptions and points of view; and
- an acceptance of one's own fallibility or shortcomings.

Accompanying the descriptions of each of the organisers are lists of references to promote on-going professional development. The questions vary in their potential complexity. When they are investigated from a range of perspectives, even closed questions such as “What makes a good community?” and “What is meant by the term ‘good citizen’?” may promote consideration of complex social dilemmas. Many of the questions are similar to those that occupy the minds of academics and national policy analysts. Questions such as “How do local, national and global boundaries influence the behaviour of governments and private enterprise groups?” (Place and space/Civics and Citizenship) are contentious and not easily answered.

Supplementing this planner, and included as inserts in the folder containing the SOSE Guidelines (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a), are other similar grids—“Tasmanian studies of society and environment (SOSE) planners,” which list ideas and activities related to the kinds of questions listed on the SOSE Planning Grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b). Two planners included as inserts in the SOSE Guidelines folder and intended for Band A and B are of particular relevance for this study: *Band A Starter: Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment SOSE) Curriculum Planner* and *Band B Starter: Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment SOSE) Curriculum Planner*.

Although the learning area parameters are broad in scope, they are translated in quite clearly defined ways depending on the intended level of schooling. These dominant translations of the SOSE curriculum reflect a strong allegiance to theories of cognitive development, assumptions about children’s experience, and education for citizenship; all are underpinned by a taken-for-granted assumption about the nature of childhood. In SOSE, the socialising agenda of schooling, in general, tends to become concentrated and crystallised.

Ironically, as a learning area oriented to understanding society and environment, the official blueprints reflect unproblematic and taken-for-granted assumptions about cognitive development and children’s experience. They also tend to promote a socialisation agenda through aims for citizenship education very largely based on the cultural transmission of stated values. Accordingly, as I demonstrate in the next section, the discourses of SOSE for early childhood and primary schooling serve to constrain the potential of the learning area—a trend that is reflected in interview data. In the following section, I discuss briefly the official blueprints and their dominant discourses—drawing links with the key discourses identified in the last chapter and in association with interview data.

Dominant discourses

In this section, I discuss several inter-related discourses reflected in the national and local SOSE curriculum documents and which relate to two discourses dominating the description of SOSE in Bands A and B. One of these discourses runs through the official blueprints as a pervading theme.

This discourse, which I term a discourse of community, operates in several ways. As a discourse oriented to learning through direct experience in the immediate environment, it exists as much for factors of expedience—financial and time constraints, as well as concerns for teachers and schools to fulfil their “duty of care” to students—as it does for pedagogical concerns: learning for young children takes place in their “immediate environment” (p. 19). The mention of learning occurring in the local environment and about the local community is a recurring theme frequently aligned with the intended aim of citizenship education.

The second of the dominant discourses is a discourse of history. Although the five strands are described in similar detail and at similar length, one tends to claim priority over the others. In the general strand description, “Time, continuity and change” is described as a strand which “is a vital part of integrated studies” (Australian Education Council, 1995b, p. 14). None of the other areas is described as *vital*.

While the SOSE documents do mention many other places, the far greatest emphasis is on the immediate locality, both in relation to the discourse of community and the discourse of history. When the environment is seen as bounded, severe limitations are placed on opportunities for children to learn about society and environment in an increasingly global context.

Discourses of the “immediate environment”

As I have indicated in earlier sections of this thesis, policy guidelines including the following documents—*Our Children: The Future—Teaching and Learning* (Department of Education and the Arts (Tasmania), 1991), *Outdoor Education Management Handbook: A Management Guide and Instructions for Schools and Colleges* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1997)—provide a strong rationale for addressing such concerns. These documents were also referred to within the course. Students were drawn to practical considerations in conducting fieldwork. They were encouraged to consider fieldwork in the locale of a school selected as the basis of this assignment. As is to be expected, participants’ comments reflect this emphasis—exemplified in the following statement.

I remember you talking about looking for places that are close ... like if you were say centred at a school in Glenorchy and they were close to the surroundings and would not cost as much with their funding and everything. So I thought ... it would be easy walking distance to Glenorchy.

Likewise, through their mention of ensuring adequate supervision by adults—an acceptable “adult to children ratio,” participants allude to the discourse of duty of care; an unavoidable concern to be “taken into consideration of where you go.” Participants also tend to prioritise issues of safety, described by one participant as being “my upper thought.” In the current climate with debates about personal liability, insurance and litigation such concerns are non-negotiable: “The only thing—the only thing that I would have to consider I think *really* would be safety aspects.”

Closely associated with mention of adult supervision, safety and children's behaviour, is mention of the necessity to justify fieldwork plans to senior staff, a comment that points to another of the hurdles to be faced in teaching through fieldwork—gaining approval from appropriate educational authorities as well as parents. To conduct fieldwork, many barriers have to be negotiated; fieldwork cannot be conducted without the approval and consent of parents and senior staff. As one participant explained, these wide ranging concerns all influenced and complicated the choice of site:

If I had just picked three things and done the assignment, that would have been fine but to go behind that and say what value is this, how am I going to justify this to a principal, what considerations do I have to think of, and then where do I go from here? How does it link in to a school?

Again this statement alludes to directives to first of all consider fieldwork in a school locality. However, such considerations are also related to a dominant discourse of SOSE, particularly for children in early childhood and primary schooling.

In frequent references to children's involvement in exploring their surroundings, the SOSE Statement reflects the view that children, and more especially young children, learn through concrete experiences. Although there is mention in the SOSE Statement of children exploring "a range of social and environmental settings" (p. 19) and specific mention of differing communities—for example, "the school and local or global community," there is a dominant discourse of children "exploring their immediate surroundings" (p. 21). Although this strong emphasis declines for the learning of older children—reflecting an underlying cognitive developmental discourse—the importance of direct experience continues to be mentioned: "Experiences with people, places, environments and artefacts remain important." Immediate environments also are seen as familiar environments—the two tend to be conflated. The SOSE Statement, for example, describes familiar places for children as "homes, schools, shopping centres and local neighbourhoods" (p. 21).

One of the problems with this discourse is the implication that children's direct experience is limited to their home, school and community. Moreover, the three tend to be conflated. There appears to be an assumption that school children are characterised by racial and cultural homogeneity. Another assumption would seem to be that all children attend schools close to their home. In a state such as Tasmania characterised by rurality, many children do not attend school in their immediate locality. They travel considerable distances from home to attend an area school. As school rationalisation and closures occur this is the reality for even more children; nor is attending school in their immediate locality the reality for the small group of children who attend special schools or for many students attending schools in the independent school sector. For some children, prioritising learning in the immediate environment may well constitute a pedagogy of exclusion rather than inclusion. Yet learning that is conducive to inclusion is emphasised in current policy documents such as *Equity in schooling: Policy and implementation plan* (Equity Standards Branch, 2003) and is emphasised through one of the curriculum perspectives of the SOSE Statement (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 8):

Inclusive approaches in this learning area seek to recognise and value student diversity by building on their varied experiences and interests. All students should have the chance to contribute their own experiences and to consider what others know about issues being studied. Issues relevant to all groups of students, both now and in their futures, should be explored.

Likewise, it is assumed that children attending school in the locality in which they live do not have diverse place experience. Tellingly, the Band A Starter suggests that children “Explore lifestyles in high density urban areas or rural areas in contrast to learners’ environment.” Yet, most rural children travel to high density urban areas for recreational reasons. It is also suggested that children find out about other places through *indirect* experience. Band A of the SOSE Statement (p. 19), for example, states that “Students are encouraged to imagine the world beyond their immediate environment through stories, maps and photographs.” Such statements do not acknowledge the diversity of experience that may be the norm for many children, even if this does not include places far distant from their homes. The wisdom of such assumptions about children’s limited place experience is increasingly questioned. As Robertson (2000a, p. 14) argues, “multiple spaces [constitute] the child’s world.”

Although one of the work samples in the SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994, p. 38) demonstrates that children may have travel experience from holidays in other places, such recognition of diverse place experience tends to be the exception. Despite such examples of a contrary discourse, the dominant discourse suggests that children’s place experience is largely confined to their immediate—and familiar—locality.

The discourse tends to presuppose that environments and communities are bounded entities. However, the contemporary world is characterised by complex spatial processes (Jacobs, 1996, p. 163) and as Robertson (2000a, p. 12) argues, “For adult and child alike the places and spaces in which we live no longer have fixed localities.” In the contemporary world when many children’s lives are characterised by family relocations and travel, it is likely that for even very young children, direct experience of the environment will include experience of many different environments. It is just as likely that for some children, opportunities for diverse informal place experience is constrained—particularly if these lives are highly regulated. A curriculum discourse, which makes unproblematic assumptions about children’s place experience, tends to universalise children’s experience and potentially normalises the experience of some children over others. It does not acknowledge that children are “entitled to know” (Slater & Morgan, 2000, p. 272).

In their mobilising of the discourse, because it’s part of the children’s environment, participants reflect the limiting assumptions reflected in official SOSE blueprints. The tendency to select not only places in the children’s locality, but places considered to be relevant in terms of their common experience points to a view of children as lacking in environmental experience—or capacity to engage with the unfamiliar. Participants chose locations that would connect to *their perceptions* about

children's experience. In one case, a site was selected on the basis that it included a school room set up to re-enact school life in the past:

but I finally chose this one because it was school-related and something that the children were in at the moment. Like they're at the school stage and you know school and home are their life so I thought this would be appropriate.

School experience is thought to be common to childhood; thus, it seems that schooling from the past is considered an appropriate topic for children to learn about—even if this is from a stereotypical perspective that has much in common with schooling from the 1950s as it does with schooling a century earlier.

In various ways children are seen as lacking—either in their ability to observe, explore and/or understand. In statements that suggest children do not know their own places from recreational pursuits there is something of an irony. Family experiences—“staple family outings” and “going to all sorts of places around Tasmania”—are the very ways that many of the participants said that they had found out about places. As one participant said, “Like you know with my family when I grew up we did quite a bit of gadding about Tasmania.” Yet interview data suggest that “recreational purposes” such as picnicking and going to sites “with their parents” are not seen as conducive to learning. Some statements suggest that children *do not know* their own localities: “so they might go there with their parents and not know anything about it”; or know them only in a limited sense: “In a lot of cases children might have just picnicked in the Gorge area where the water is really slower and they haven't seen the full amount of it you know coming down the river and the dam.”

Likewise, some participants decided to opt for novelty—a stance conveyed in the Band A Starter with reference to choosing sites in contrast to learners' environments. A lighthouse was selected because “my [child] didn't know what it was for, and had never seen one.” This points to the way that family experiences enrich children's place experience, as much as it does for selecting sites for the assignment. More tellingly, one participant reflected the reference in the Band A Starter to choosing contrasting environments: “I think it depends where the school was. If it was in the city then I wouldn't take the kids around town but would go to the country. If it was a country school then I would go to the city.” These statements convey a *tabula rasa* or *empty vessel* view of the learner. It is interesting that parents are seen as inadequate educators of their children. Participants cited childhood and family times as integral to their own knowledge of and experience of place and space. Likewise, participants who were parents talked of similar family times as experiences for their own children. In talking of their own learning, participants recognise informal learning but not when they talk of their potential students. As one participant who conducted fieldwork in businesses in the local community put it, “This is to widen children's mindsets.” I question whether some children may perhaps already know something of these places from family members who may very likely work in such local enterprises; although, as I indicated earlier, making assumptions about children's experience and knowledge is misguided.

Discourses of the “local community”

In all of the official blueprints, it is largely through the discourse of community and more specifically the local community that the overall stated citizenship aim of SOSE is particularly evident. Two approaches are dominant. Students are inculcated as participating community members through involvement in community events and through a pedagogy of cooperative learning. In addition, through a curriculum of community, it is intended that students develop community appreciation, particularly appreciation of the constructive contributions of community members. At times, so intertwined are these two approaches that it is difficult to separate them.

In the SOSE Profile, through the sub-strand of Participation, there is a strong underlying theme of carrying out the rights and responsibilities of citizenship: following rules, cooperation, negotiation, taking turns, and carrying out roles and responsibilities. Throughout other sections of the SOSE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c), there is evidence of the skills, knowledge and values underpinning participation in citizenship—frequently in programs allied with environmental education. However, there tends to be neglect of what Gilbert (2001b, p. 119) refers to as the cognitive processes integral to informed and active participation in democratic life, particularly critical thinking such as detecting bias. This omission also tends to reflect the developmental stance to learning clearly conveyed in the linear and sequential listing of intended outcomes in the SOSE Profile.

Likewise, the emphasis on the “local community” and community values reflects a strongly hegemonic trend and a discourse of socialisation through a cultural transmission approach to curriculum. In investigating their community’s past for example, children find “out about important local historical sites, buildings, place names and memorials on visits” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 21). In both Bands A and B, children learn about and *celebrate* the heritage of the local community, take part in community events and learn about roles of community members. Although Band B places less emphasis on the local community, reflecting an expanding horizons approach to curriculum, the community discourse continues to be dominant when it comes to talking about children’s *participation* in society: their involvement in “celebrations of heritage” (p. 28), “environmental improvement projects” (p. 29), “community events that reflect the cultural heritage of Australia” (p. 30), and the work of community organisations (p. 32). Through community involvement, children are inculcated as community members with pride in community traditions and working willingly for their community—including the environment.

Closely associated with the community discourse is an underlying discourse of environmental values, preservation and *care* of the environment. An added dimension of this discourse is a focus on environmental duties as a component of citizenship duties. The SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b) names as one of the component sections of the strand Place and Space, *Care of places*. By specifically naming this section of the curriculum as a separate entity unconnected from

the strand Natural and Social Systems, the SOSE Profile tends to reflect a view of environmental education that neglects the complex meanings of *environment*. Fien and Greenhall Gough (2001, p. 174), for example, suggest that the meaning of environment is more adequately explained with reference to four inter-related systems—the biophysical system, the social system, the economic system and the political system. Moreover, when considered in all their diversity, these entities are not singular but multiple. There are many social, economic and political systems. In the sub-strand, *Care of places*, however, the greater emphasis is on disposing of litter, recycling, conservation, pollution, looking after places in the community, preservation of buildings, parks, old mining sites, among others.

In addition, there is emphasis on *activity* rather than building deep understanding about the complex scientific, social, cultural, economic and political issues inherent in appreciating and enacting principles of ecological sustainability. Even the brief statement outlining *ecological sustainability* as one of the core values of the SOSE curriculum, emphasises “stewardship and conservation, a commitment to maintaining biological diversity, and a recognition of the intrinsic value of the natural environment.” The emphasis on activity and associated duties tends to preclude reflection and suggests a worrying trend towards training in supposedly agreed upon responsibilities. As Hunt, Murdoch and Walker (2001, p. 301) highlight, there is a fine line between student involvement in community action programs and “political indoctrination.”

Yet, constructive contribution through cooperation is a pervading theme conveyed through statements such as “Studies of how people and communities use personal skills and abilities to meet needs and wants give students an appreciation of the ways in which people cooperate and depend on one another in their daily lives.” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 23). Likewise, in the SOSE Statement, there is emphasis on interdependence and the role of formal rules:

Students examine the ways that, as individuals, they are members of these groups, the interdependence of group members, and the rules necessary to facilitate cooperation. Students recognise that formal rules affect many aspects of life—for example, where and how people can safely play, work, travel and live. (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 25)

In statements such as these, the curriculum documents reveal a disciplining trend also included in sections related to the “People and Work” sub-strand through emphasis on cooperative arrangements such as “the sharing of household responsibilities, and people’s work for and contributions to voluntary service organisations, community clubs and societies” (p. 32). Work samples in the SOSE Profile reveal a similar emphasis on unproblematic and settled community involvement: for example, showing “how they and others help in the family” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 25) and planning “a stall at a school mini-fete” (p. 72). In all of these comments, there is evidence that SOSE places emphasis on *cooperative arrangements* leading to community harmony and overlooks the struggles that, as Apple (1990, p. 92) suggests, are frequently part of community life and yet not recognised in social studies education. It would seem that SOSE is no different.

Local SOSE blueprints reflect a community discourse particularly dominant in the Band A Starter, but evident also in the Band B Starter, notably in the organisers for “Civics & Citizenship, Democratic Process & Social Justice” and “Ecological Sustainability.” In local policy documents, a similar citizenship discourse of cooperation and community harmony is evident but by no means the only discourse of citizenship. Through discussion of “Teaching for Democratic Action in a Deliberative Democracy” in the SOSE Guidelines (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, pp. 34–40), there is recognition that political problem-solving involves conflict and the resolution of difficult issues: “Learning means uncertainty, intellectual conflict, tension, and confusion. These conditions can be viewed as necessary and desirable and exciting signs of growth or they can be avoided and discouraged” (p. 37). There is also recognition that a curriculum which fosters docile compliance and which makes token attempts to involve students as active participants may not lead to willing involvement in public issues.

Why then are students expected to keep patient, polite and positive in situations where they have little control, low levels of ownership and no say in defining success? Given that sort of schooling experience, a lack of interest in public life is hardly surprising. (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, p. 39)

The Bands A and B Starters (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a), tend to reflect a community discourse which implies recognition of different perspectives towards issues. The emphasis placed on “de Bono’s Six Hat Thinking” and “CorT Thinking” (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b) is reflected in these planning starters as a way for students to explore different ways of looking at issues.

Through the mention of role play in the Band A Starter, there is recognition that community decisions are not always made easily or without conflict, even if roles tend to be described in ways which essentialise and stereotype the stance taken by different community groups such as “holiday makers” and “professional fishermen” to development—in this case, the construction of a boat-ramp. By naming discrete community groups in this way, there is the potential to reduce standpoints to polarities. Group affiliations become homogenised and reduced to the status of political lobby groups, implying a particular form of political participation.

Although the SOSE documents mention different communities, different cultural groups and different heritages, underpinning all of these concepts is an essentialising trend, further perpetuated in the isolating of particular groups in terms of identity construction through cultural attachments such as gender and culture. These groups are described for their homogeneity. Identities are described in terms of singular attachments. There is little recognition of identity construction in terms of multiple fields of meaning or diversity within discrete categories. It is also implied that identities are static. Yet, recent studies point to the complexity of identity construction as variable and uncertain (Jacobs, 1996). On the basis of findings from a Tasmanian study of children’s memories of place, Stratford (2000, p. 166) posits the need to think in terms of “heterogeneity of categories of meaning.”

Through the choice of field sites, the discourse of community implies homogeneity and unchanging nature of Aboriginal identities. When field trips are mentioned in a unit with the theme of Aboriginal Studies; the Aboriginal Studies Framework is cited in the SOSE Guidelines (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, pp. 143–147). However, the sites included in the SOSE Guidelines as places to visit are those kinds of sites associated with traditional Aboriginal life—middens, significant Aboriginal sites (for the latter a museum, Tiagarra, is a site listed), and a “Field trip—local Aboriginal to demonstrate bush tucker, shelter, etc.” These suggestions do not support the mention in other sections of this document for exploring contemporary Aboriginal life and identity. They promote a fixed notion of Aboriginal identity conducive to the persistence of stereotypes rather than acknowledgement of the “dynamic nature of Indigenous identities” (H. McDonald, 2001, p. 147).

Participant statements imply a particular view of what is entailed in citizenship—not only is there an emphasis on rights and responsibilities, but more pointedly what almost amounts to inculcation in the “moral and social virtues” (Gilbert, 2001b, p. 115) of community institutions and those same qualities which it would seem that children should also acquire. Interview data suggest that sites are chosen for children to appreciate community services—the fire and police services and maritime pilots among others—as well as civic institutions such as the local council. There is also some recognition of different values but sites are excluded if seen as likely to raise potential difficulties through having to deal with a conflict of values. A number of statements all point to a community oriented discourse, which emphasises appreciation of industry including the contributions and sacrifices of people who work there. As one participant so aptly put it, “Yeah, appreciating what others do in the world.” The tone of the statements verges on proselytising:

Three things I wanted to try and get across is that commerce involves people and not just money, and that the people that are involved are the majority of the time the workers that work at the coalface so to speak. That means wharfies, that means the sailors who bring it in, that means the merchants that went backwards and forwards ...

Appreciation of what others do tends to be confined to certain contexts—those publicly valued. Admittedly, there is mention of roles usually not ranked high in status, such as wharfies and sailors, but these mentions reflect a gender bias. It is not only appreciating what others do in the world *now* but valuing efforts that have gone into *preserving* evidence of the community’s past—a museum is justified as an appropriate site:

So if you take children to a museum and they can see that there's effort that's gone into keeping things, putting them into special glass cases or making special writing about them and putting them on display—then you're saying that old things can be useful just to look at and learn about. And that what has happened before is—is of relevance to now. So somebody's bothered to make a museum.

As one participant points out, “It’s do with preserving history that’s important for the community and keeping a sense of place so that it’s still there but they are also changing it as well.” While there is mention of change, the trend is to talk in terms of working toward community harmony: “To me it’s

the issue of community, the person's place in the community and the contributions that people make to the community. Living there and working there."

There is a strong agenda of censorship. Interview data indicate that, through the discourse of community values, participants seek a tight sense of control over what children may learn. Apparently, children need to be *taught* such things as they are not likely to pick them up. This perception does not suggest that participants have great confidence in the ability of parents as educators in such matters. One wonders how such a controlling impetus would impact on the school/home relationship—or lack of it. The responsibility of the teacher for *being in charge* of learning tends to be prominent. Yet, there is a desire for children to consider themselves a "vital part of the community" and to appreciate their responsibilities as citizens. The messages are contradictory. There is a desire for children to see that they "have choices," but only if they work together for the good of the community. The tone of such statements implies not just inculcation but indoctrination.

As exemplified by the following participant statement, the discourse tends to be one of compliance and acceptance:

I just think it's important for children to know you know that the places they live in now weren't the same years ago and that everything's progressing and changing and will continue to change. And just get them aware of that. The fact that change is continual.

Comments such as these tend to reflect the tenor of citizenship education in the national SOSE Statement and Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b, 1994c) rather than that of sections of the SOSE Guidelines (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) with an emphasis on deliberative democracy. The tenor of *citizenship of obedience* suggested by the data raises questions about how the B.Ed. students view their own roles as productive citizens.

Interview data suggest that natural sites and those associated with environmental concerns are selected—but that these sites are also excluded as controversial or lacking in educational potential. Interview data suggest that participants are divided when it comes to choosing sites as places conducive to learning *to care*. When mention is made of conserving and preserving the environment for the future, certain social values are taken as gospel:

I would teach children about the beauty of the environment. I think it's something to do with forests being chopped down ... the area of conservation. Children would learn about world heritage and national parks.

Natural locations were described in contradictory ways: on the one hand a recreational reserve valued for its natural attributes was described as a "bit of a soft option"; on the other hand, a site associated with the timber industry was described as "less contentious." In a state such as Tasmania, where environmental and ecological action is conflated with "green" politics, participation in such programs has the potential for controversy, particularly in towns where the economic welfare of the community is largely dependent on forest resources and water. Although history in this state is notoriously

contentious, it tends not to be as prominently politicised as environmental issues and therefore may seem less likely to cause controversy.

Although a “cooperative learning” dimension of the discourse did not emerge in the course of the interviews, it is mobilised in survey responses in which participants reflected on the purpose of the tutorial exercise. Data for Question 10 of the survey, “What do you think is the relevance of the tutorial exercise for your teaching practices as a prospective Early Childhood and Primary educator?”, suggest that participants valued the opportunity for learning from others and that this involved awareness of differences and of different points of view. Admittedly, mutual respect is also mentioned as important.

It helped me to develop new ideas and made me aware of how different we are. It has made me aware that we all come from different backgrounds and that we need to respect and take an interest in each others' points of view.

Difference is not valued when it comes to talking about children. When diversity of school groups is acknowledged, it would seem to pose a threat to educational harmony and a desire for homogeneity.

the central business district. I wouldn't have chosen that. As for the economy part of it. You'd find it hard, well for me I think I'd have found it hard to get information on it and also there could have been a lot of family—not problems—just relationships with the business district. And because someone would have said you know my dad works here and somebody could have said, 'Oh, my dad works for your dad!' And found that out in the process and I just didn't want—and if I had a class I didn't want that to start occurring with the class. Domination type of thing already starting with the kids.

There would appear to be a fear of difference—at least within the educational context. Participants value difference within their own cohort but not for children. The data suggest that childhood is essentialised; childhood experience tends to be universalised and seen in terms of deficit. One has to wonder about the implication of such a view for the primary/secondary transition and the difficulties encountered by primary students as they are expected to become more self-sufficient in the secondary school environment. Data suggest that it would seem to be one thing for class differences to exist in adult society but not for children. This paternalistic attitude suggests an unrealistic view of children's lives. Such a glamorised view of the children's world does not acknowledge that children are part of society, in all its manifestations. This attitude suggests that children must conduct their lives “with blinkers” much of the time

Discourses of “history”

The strong discourse of history that exists as an undercurrent in recent national and state “official” blueprints is a continuation of overt valuing of history for social studies in early childhood and primary schools. History, so it is argued, is the discipline *par excellence* when it comes to social studies for children—and more particularly for field visits. Yet Degenhardt and McKay (1988, p. 249) suggest that it is not history but *pedagogy* that encourages the imaginative re-enactment of events.

With reference to two examples that demonstrate different pedagogical approaches, Degenhardt and McKay indicate that learning about history may be tedious just as it may be engaging.

As teachers we can learn much from these examples. They show the importance of choosing topics that are themselves important to learn about, that generate a holistic picture, and that are affectively engaging. Teaching strategies must be varied, must encourage sympathetic imagination or empathy, and sympathetic re-enactment, and must leave time for reflection and the development of individual responses. The support materials must be rich and authentic to nourish children's imaginations and to answer some of their best questions. (pp. 249–250)

Although neither the fieldwork assignment nor the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997) prioritises history overtly, one component of the assignment requires students to justify the choice of site and “its relevance to SOSE curriculum guidelines and/or school policy, prior learning of students, significance for learning and other relevant aspects” (p. 4). Further, in lectures and tutorials, the SOSE Statement and Profile were referred to as “official” blueprints for planning to teach SOSE. Thus, the discourse of history, while not overtly prioritised within the course, existed as a *sleeping* discourse in references to relevant policy documents. Given the reference to the single discipline of history in the Social Education 1 Course Outline it is not surprising that participants may talk in terms of history rather than “Time, continuity and change,” the nomenclature used in the official SOSE blueprints. Although “Time, continuity and change” strictly implies multi-disciplinary enquiry, the terms history and “Time, continuity and change” tended to be used interchangeably in the course.

In earlier curriculum documents as well as recommended texts, history is emphasised as an area of enquiry with particular relevance for social studies (Egan, 1979, cited in the *Primary Social Studies Guidelines*, Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985; Johnston, 1989). It is argued that along with the arts and humanities, history is “of special importance in the earlier stages in the study of society” (Johnston, 1989, p. 38). History is described as more accessible for young students than the comparatively abstract forms of knowledge constructed and conveyed through the social sciences (Johnston, 1989). History is aligned with “the environment of the imagination” (Egan, 1979, cited in Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985, p. 15)—teachers are advised to “look to the people, places and heroic persons of history, literature and the media to enrich the experiences and referential systems of children” (p. 15). Just as learning in the “immediate environment” reflects a cognitive developmental discourse, so does the emphasis on history. Rather than drawing on actual experience to promote learning, Egan proposes the use of story to “draw students into academic content” (Egan, 1988, cited in Biggs & Moore, 1993, p. 51). This strong focus on the pedagogical use of stories as rendering history accessible is reflected also in more recent SOSE documents. Although Degenhardt and McKay (1988, p. 249) suggest a pedagogy that promotes the uncovering of stories, children are actively involved in seeking “a story to be uncovered”; their view is not one based on the uncovering of historical *truth* but of recreating a situation or event with reference to a wealth of historical sources—a process that allows time for reflection. This emphasis is not always maintained in recommendations to teach through stories.

Recent documents reflect the bias of earlier documents that promote the use of story—including history—as an appropriate organiser for social studies content. The discourse of Bands A and B seems to imply that “Time, continuity and change” is of particular importance when it comes to teaching children. In the elaborated description of the strand for Bands A and B, the area is more strongly claimed as a strand in which children are inherently interested. The description of “Time, continuity and change” for Band A (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 20) begins by stating that: “Studies in this band build on students’ interest in their surroundings, sense of time and delight in stories and tangible sources of knowledge.” In comparison, “Place and space” is described as an area in which “Students’ curiosity about places is developed through sources such as films, photographs, drawing, and listening to fiction and non-fiction material” (p. 21). Thus, in the latter strand, it is implied that children are not *inherently* curious about places. Rather, curiosity is latent and waiting to be developed whereas “a sense of time and delight in stories” is claimed as *already existing*. It tends to be implied, not that children should be engaged in the rigorous process of recreating stories but that they should be immersed in stories that perpetrate a particular version of the event. It would appear that history is aligned with certainty, rather than, as Carr (1964) reminds us, about *interpretation*.

In Band B, even stronger claims are made for “Time, continuity and change” as intrinsically interesting for children: “Students are fascinated by long ago events and periods. They are keen to investigate periods when Australia was a different size and shape, with people living in different ways in different environments.” None of the other conceptual strands makes such a strong claim for children’s intrinsic interest. Nor does the description of SOSE for Band C (Australian Education Council, 1994b) make any such claim for “Time, continuity and change” as an area of intrinsic interest for the learner.

Earlier curriculum documents mobilise a particular kind of history—the language of the *Primary Social Studies Guidelines* (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985) reveals a Euro-centric bias with its reference to stories of heroes from the classical and Western traditions. This discourse promotes a particular kind of citizenship based on heroic contributions to society. In many instances, these examples differ somewhat from the compliant kinds of citizenship characteristics promoted by the discourse of community appreciation and involvement. The community discourse tends to promote a collective approach, the historical one—an individualistic approach. The community discourse tends to promote compliance and harmony, whereas heroic acts may be accomplished in defiance of accepted and taken-for-granted societal norms.

With its emphasis on the exploits of “leading individuals” (Hoepper & Vick, 2001, p. 208), this excerpt reveals a “liberal, progressive or ‘Whig’ approach” to history—an approach which Hoepper and Vick (p. 208) argue limits the inclusion of perspectives outside its hegemonic stance: “This leads [such histories] to overlook much of the rich diversity of human experience, and marginalise the individuals, groups and nations whose practices do not fit into the line of development they trace.” Moreover, the *Primary Social Studies Guidelines* (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985,

p. 16) mentions other heroic characters such as “Ulysses or Captain Kirk, Florence Nightingale or Joan of Arc” as those with whom children at the romantic stage—the primary years—want to associate. Admittedly, the heroic figures cited are representative of both genders—albeit particular constructions of them.

The examples of heroic figures mentioned in the document cited are drawn from a *narrow cultural tradition*. The focus is almost entirely on “dead white European males.” Such narrow choices may serve to marginalise those children whose own cultures are not represented. As Davison (2000, p. 259) reminds us, Australian society is characterised by profound cultural diversity. Although Tasmania is less culturally diverse, it is far from homogenous. Approximately ten percent of children in Tasmanian schools, for example, identify as Aboriginal. The most recent wave of migrants includes refugees from war-torn locations—Croatians, Kosovars, Afghans and Somalians.

Work samples in the SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b) are decidedly hegemonic. The work sample for Level 1 illustrates the “things people do at different times of their lives” (p. 22). “Which people?” one has to ask. The work sample for Level 2 illustrates the recording of personal experience—albeit a particularly privileged version which is likely to be the exception rather than the rule. Work samples for Levels 3, 4 and 5 in the SOSE Profile reflect unproblematic descriptions of the voyages of Captain James Cook, of the arrival of the First Fleet and life in Sydney Town, and the Anzac legend. A similar discourse operates in the Tasmanian SOSE curriculum blueprints, particularly in statements about *visits* to field sites. This kind of emphasis tends to contradict the stated intention for SOSE to include a multicultural curriculum perspective with a valuing of the achievements and contributions “of individuals and groups of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 7). The SOSE Statement also states that “Students consider how social and institutional structures could be improved in the interests of social justice” (p. 7). This statement stands in stark opposition to the culturally hegemonic tone in other sections of the document. One has to wonder whether the authors of this document envisioned that students might consider this curriculum document when considering ways that institutional structures “could be improved in the interests of social justice” (p. 7).

Both the Band A and B Starters (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) mention *historic sites* as suitable sites for children to *visit*. The Band A Starter, for example, suggests a “Visit to a home/museum like Narryna, Franklin House or Highfield to see how the work in a house in the 19th century was organised.” The Band B Starter suggests, for example, “Battery Point, Entally House, Port Arthur, and national parks” as possible sites to visit. With the exception of “national parks,” all of the other locations are iconic sites promoted as tourist attractions of historic interest. The only places *named* as locations to *visit* are all *bounded sites* representative of the same era. All of the houses—Entally House, Franklin House, Highfield and Narryna—were constructed by 1836. All are *substantial* residences. Port Arthur was established as a penal station in 1833. Battery Point, an inner suburb of Hobart, also evolved as a residential area from 1830. Such narrow naming of sites for

children to visit constitutes *extraordinary bias* within SOSE and is particularly worrying for its neglect of children's diverse experiences and for the limits it suggests for fieldwork in early childhood and primary schooling.

When it comes to fieldwork, the greater emphasis is not only on "local heritage sites and places" (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 21) or "cultural heritages of people in Australia today" (p. 31), but heritage of a particular kind and representative of a distant past. Moreover, when it comes to fieldwork, heritage tends to be interpreted as European heritage.

Even in units written as exemplars to guide teachers in their curriculum planning, there remains a valuing of the distant rather than the more recent past. Perhaps it is also seen as *a safer past*. In a unit based on the examination of housing in the community, it is suggested that students "locate examples of early housing in the community." (Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1996b, p. 4). The unit implies that some areas are more appropriate as sites for an analysis of housing. It is recommended that where a "major part of the school community is on a new estate, it may be necessary to move further afield" (p. 4). Such recommendations constitute a discourse, which values some historical periods over others. Tellingly, the unit is titled *The good old days*.

This untroubled view of the past is akin to what Davison (2000, p. 165) terms "Pop history": a view of history that is promoted through limited collections of photographic images and artefacts such as "old photos, advertisements and bric-a-brac" as well as "'pioneer villages' and 'folk museums'." Through appeal to a nostalgic, generalised view of the past as the "good old days," the past becomes sanitised and stands in contrast to what is seen as a less desirable present: "The pop historian view of the past is soft focus through a sepia filter, looking back to a day when people were more virtuous and when society was simpler and more unified" (Davison p. 165). With reference to one of Australia's well known "historic sites" designed as a re-enactment of the past, Davison (p. 170) describes the way that such sites *literally* recreate a sanitised environment:

The truth, of course, is that the goldfields of the 1850s were a noisy, dirty and insanitary environment where large numbers of people—mainly young working-class men—toiled incessantly under conditions that no modern unionist or health inspector would tolerate for a moment. The reconstructed goldfields of Sovereign Hill are necessarily quieter, cleaner and more orderly. The handful of young men in spotless dungarees and red neckerchiefs who drive the gold escort are far outnumbered by the middle-class matrons in crinolines and bonnets who form the nucleus of the park's band of volunteer guides. Sovereign Hill is a pleasure resort rather than a real mining town. It has many shopkeepers but few miners, several entertainers but no prostitutes, a picturesque school-house but no undertaker.

Just as "official" blueprints and related texts prioritise distant rather than recent history, so do participants. Given reference to the *single discipline* of history in the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997), however, it is not surprising that participants mobilise the

discipline of history rather than “Time, continuity and change.” The names tended to be used interchangeably within the course.

In interview, the discourse “Because it integrates history, sociology and geography” fades as a discourse of note and is replaced by a very strong focus on history—an emphasis participants justify in terms of children’s interest. Children are described as being “interested in heritage” and history an area that they “hook into to.” For participants also, it would appear that history is a drawcard. Sites are decided upon for their historical interest: “I think just the history of it”; and “Well just the history angle of it was interesting.” Interview data suggest that in explaining the selection of fieldwork locations, history exists as a *discourse in its own right*. The words, “Just the history angle of it was interesting,” serve to encapsulate the existence of a discourse of history in interview data.

In many cases, participants use a tone of reverence in their mentions of history. The atmosphere of history, beauty and a sense of sanctuary are mentioned as qualities which set such a site aside from the present:

and it makes for a spectacular place to actually feel that atmosphere of history and it's also a beautiful natural phenomenon ... when you go there it's like going into a world where you leave your stresses behind and you can relax

Overwhelmingly, such a site is described as a place of sanctuary and belonging. Homogenous, sanitised, harmonious: a narrow view of history is quarantined from other facets of SOSE. When viewed in this way, history is valued for offering some distance from contentious contemporary social issues. As one participant quite overtly stated, “I mean I guess the greater emphasis on Low Head is on history. And maybe that is much less likely to be contentious.” History, then, became associated with the accessibility of a site. Such an anodyne view of history distorts the contested and analytic nature of historical enquiry and frameworks for historical narratives. It amounts to a very narrow view of history, perhaps based on the mimetic nature of museum exhibits displayed in environments usually characterised by qualities of peace and quiet. Written and unwritten behavioural codes work to create the bounded locations of museums, historical sites and galleries as places of sanctuary set aside from the everyday world. These are ordered, settled sites, even if the displays housed within are designed to unsettle conventional narratives.

The mention of history as “less contentious” is particularly interesting given the notoriously contentious nature of Tasmanian history as well as the contemporary re-writing of “official” Tasmanian historical narratives. In his recent study, *Contested Places: Tasmania's Northern Districts from Ancient Times to 1900*, Breen (2001, p. 3) argues, for example, that recent Tasmanian studies have examined the contested nature of power, particularly in relation to Aboriginal history. Currently, such work is being strongly contested by further revisionist work; history and attitudes to it are anything other than settled as current debates of dispossession in Australia clearly convey (Chugg, 2003; Milne, 2002; Ryan, 2003; Yallop, 2003). As Davison (2000, p. 259) so graphically argues, for some people, a less settled view of history is *not* easily forgotten:

The happy family, careless of history is a caricature shorn of the real-life characteristics that make history important to people. It could not be a family of Serbian or Macedonian or Irish or Vietnamese immigrants, for history has followed them here and even as Australians they cannot forget it. It could not be an Aboriginal family for history, both the pre-European past and the history of colonisation and settlement, continues to shape its members' everyday lives. The family could not be Catholic or Protestant, Jewish or Greek Orthodox, or they would regularly participate in beliefs and rituals grounded in history. It could not include sons and daughters of ex-servicemen from any of Australia's wars, for the pride and sorrow of past battles and imprisonment are still felt in their lives. And it could not be politically active, at any level; otherwise it would participate in debates about rights and obligations that can only be understood historically.

Abbott-Chapman (2003, p. 3) also highlights the reality of the past as anything other than calm and settled: "As Voltaire, the French Philosopher said in 1767 'History is no more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes.'" What relevance can history, mobilised as less contentious, have for any and all of those mentioned by Davison? In light of the statement by Voltaire, what relevance can it have for *anyone*? Ironically, "going back in time" is recommended as a way of introducing highly emotive and controversial issues (Stradling, Noctor & Baines, 1984, cited in Gilbert & Hoepper, 1996, p. 69). When history is seen as less contentious, there would appear to be little scope for students to explore controversial issues at all. Drawing on a sanitised view of history in the teaching of SOSE is likely to be a hindrance in fostering an understanding of the complexities involved in the contemporary issues such as global terrorism, international conflicts and globalisation.

The *Primary Social Studies Guidelines* (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985, p. 16) comments on children's fascination with the exotic, spectacular and bizarre—all mentioned as suitable topics for social studies. This would seem to be a very different view of the learning area from that communicated in the current documents, which draw so heavily on the social science disciplines as well as varying perspectives to these areas of enquiry. Previous documents peddle a decidedly culturally hegemonic curriculum fraught with dangers of perpetuating heroic stereotypes.

The data suggest that participants of this study are people of their time; the stories mentioned are those which would tend to be ignored by "liberal" histories: participants of this study mention stories of Polish immigrants, maritime pilots, workers on the wharves, stories of shipwrecks and Aboriginal history. Thus, participants reflect the emphasis in current curriculum guidelines (Australian Education Council, 1994b; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, 1995b) on perspectives such as multicultural, career and work, and Aboriginal.

The stories referred to by participants are those told as authentic representations of the past, validated by experience. Such reference to story-telling aligns with discourses of Social Studies in Tasmanian curriculum guidelines published in the 1980s—a time when many participants of this study would have been students in Tasmanian primary schools. Admittedly, while the stories mentioned in this study are not those of the heroic figures of the kind referred to above, they are stories of the exotic: for example, stories of fairy penguins and the work of shipping pilots, life on the wharves, and of a local

figure such as George Robinson, employed by the government to gain the trust of the Tasmanian Aboriginal population in order to effect their relocation to Wybalenna on Flinders Island: “The result of this trust was the placing of the remnants of these people finally on Flinders Island, in a sort of concentration camp where most of them perished” (Robson, 1985, p. 16).

It is significant that gender does not figure in the list of stories mentioned by participants. Although, there is one reference to home, it is mentioned as a site appropriate for children due to its familiarity to them. The domestic sphere of home tends to exist as a silence in the discourse of history; an oversight all the more interesting given the popularity of genealogy and family history (Davison, 2000). This omission is particularly interesting given participants’ mention of home in the first pedagogical moment when sites were selected as places conducive to a *yearning for sanctuary and belonging*—in several cases these sites were described as reminiscent of *home*. It is perhaps even more intriguing that home should be seen as a site of sanctuary—for many of the participants of this study, home may not in reality be an idealised site of sanctuary. One recent review of literature on domestic violence—“Domestic Violence in Regional Australia” (Partnerships Against Domestic Violence/Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2000)—indicates that domestic life in areas of Australia such as Tasmania is *not necessarily* peaceful.

Descriptions of the content of “Time, continuity and change” in Bands A and B in the SOSE Profile (Australian Education Council, 1994b) convey a decidedly Euro-centric bias. Although Band A allows for inclusive content through the inclusion of family history, what is taken up in examples of how the suggested content may be interpreted is a universal notion of people’s experience and essentialising of the local community. In addition, when it comes to fieldwork, as I have already indicated, the greater emphasis is not only on “local heritage sites and places” but local heritages sites and places of a *particular kind* and representative of the *distant past*. Moreover, when it comes to fieldwork, heritage largely is interpreted as European heritage. Such curriculum bias is also largely mobilised by participants of this study in their choice of sites. Through immersion in a filtered, censored, sanitised and universal past, potential students are exposed to unacknowledged curricula bias and constrained by pedagogy limited to a moralising intent.

The overwhelming and disturbing trend to mobilise “pop history” as a vehicle for SOSE amounts to a probably unconscious but strong and highly paternalistic form of censorship constraining the opportunities for children to engage in meaningful and critical enquiry. Some topics are out of bounds. There are only some things fit for children to know. Such a stance is the very one which Slater and Morgan (2000) aim to counteract by prioritising children’s knowledge. Yet, the pedagogy espoused by participants of this study not only tends to value what adults know; only *some of what adults know* is fit for children to learn. “Pop history” appears convenient as a source of untroubled content, which allows participants, so they say, to step aside from valuing and drawing upon the diversity of students they will be teaching in Tasmanian schools. Surely this discourse stands in direct opposition to participants’ search for sites with “good potential” for learning through fieldwork.

The sanitised, homogenised and settled views of history so far discussed appear to *believe* a concern with critical thinking. In a few cases, participants tended to demonstrate an awareness of the limitations of the “liberal approach” and tended to promote a “deconstructionist approach” which “opens up questions on issues ignored or excluded by other approaches” (Hoepper & Vick, 2001, p. 209). Embedded within the discourse of history as settled, there is some recognition that history is not as seamless a narrative as some statements would suggest.

I think not a historical house—wouldn't want to look at colonial history or to glorify that. I remember on a prac that we went to [an historical house] and it was a fairly uncritical view. But at the same time I would want to make sure that it was not glorified or looking from one point of view. You could take children anywhere as long as you were looking from more than one point of view.

It is interesting that the participant who made the previous statement also referred to *academic study* as influencing this critical stance:

I have done a fair bit of philosophy and literature and sociology and I wanted to look at it from the point of view of perspectivism—of drawing those in. I think I have been surrounded by post-modern perspectives or viewpoints.

Given the last statement, *just the history angle of it was interesting*, may seem a misnomer for the key discourse concerned with history. This statement suggests keen awareness of “frames of reference,” which Hoepper and Vick (2001, pp. 208–209) argue is an imperative feature of critical thinking. The statement made by this participant is, however, *one statement* among very many. It is the *only statement* which quite overtly recognises the way frames of reference may shape knowledge construction. Also, the data suggest inconsistencies—in the final analysis, “one aspect of society” (Hoepper and Vick, 2001, p. 209) is privileged: “I think there were Polish people. And the children could look for stories. Tasmania is not a very multi-cultural place and so I wanted to look at that history.” Thus, embedded in the previous statement and in the discourse *just the history angle of it was interesting*, there are different interpretations and understandings of history as a discipline.

Even when participants mobilise the discourse of history in ways that convey some awareness of differing historical approaches, they tend to adopt a trivial approach to history when it comes to children's learning. Children “look for stories” but there is little suggestion that they should examine primary and secondary sources in the process of the recreation of history or that these stories may be difficult and painful. For most participants, a settled notion of history tends to hold sway.

Chapter 8

The third pedagogical moment: Fieldwork in retrospect

Introduction

An examination of the interplay between the dominant discourses of five official blueprints and participants' responses suggested that participants were influenced to enact a SOSE curriculum and pedagogy conducive to conformity rather than critique. Yet, as I have noted in other sections of this thesis, critical thinking is one of the espoused aims of these documents, particularly evident in local documents with their foregrounding of critical thinking, particularly in the sense of asking questions and conducting critical inquiry and analysis through approaches such as de Bono's "Six Hat Thinking" and "CorT Thinking", as well as "Mind Mapping" (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a, pp. 13–14; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b). The last chapter indicated that, even when participants demonstrated their awareness of critical thinking and talked as critical thinkers, they neither overtly mobilise a discourse of critical thinking by naming this as an issue in site selection nor do they plan children's learning accordingly. When they allude to critical thinking this tends to be in fairly limited ways, for example, in terms of critical thinking through asking questions or as lateral thinking—seeing events from varied viewpoints. Interview data suggest that participants favour the asking of unproblematic *nice* questions that are unlikely to lead to lack of harmony. While they may scrutinise fieldwork practices as being basically "a day out" or "art work—rubblings and sketches," the participants do not realise their ideal to offer a more rigorous kind of fieldwork than that of which they are critical; nor do they elaborate on what they think might be appropriate alternatives. Although interview data suggest that some participants move to a *critical zone* of enquiry (Hoepper & Land, 2001, p. 76), it would seem that their critical stance tends to be one associated with acknowledging dissatisfaction with fieldwork rather than with using concepts that "provide for enhanced reflection, judgment and decision-making" and which "throw up questions of value—of *why* and *why not*, *how ought* and *how else*—which point to more complex socio-cultural issues" (Hoepper & Land, p. 76). This is my point of departure for planning fieldwork in the third pedagogical moment.

In this chapter, I elaborate on the third pedagogical moment and analyse interview data in light of the discourses already discussed in previous chapters. In talking of the third pedagogical moment, I refer specifically to the section of Social Education 2 (University of Tasmania, 1998) that was designed to challenge fieldwork practices. Specifically I seek how the third pedagogical moment and time for reflection may have influenced participants' view of fieldwork and their previous fieldwork choices. What kinds of places would they select now—and on what basis?

The third pedagogical moment: Rationale and description

The first and second pedagogical moments, including survey and interview questions, were designed with the intention of promoting interpretation of the kinds of sites selected for fieldwork and to promote questioning of these choices. However, in making choices supportive of a culturally hegemonic curriculum that served to exclude rather than be inclusive, participants did not consider questions such as “Whose perspectives are present/absent?” My aim in the third pedagogical moment was to more overtly promote reflection on such questions rather than to *model* fieldwork conducive to inclusion, as was my intention in the first and second pedagogical moments. Even in aspiring to plan pedagogy conducive to inclusion, there were issues of equity that were difficult to accommodate; not all participants had equal access to resources such as transport. As residents, some students were *new* to Launceston; although they were selecting field sites in *the local area*, this area was not particularly familiar to them. Thus, a question inviting students to select a field site familiar to them and appropriate for children’s fieldwork posed difficulties. This was a point, poignantly made by one participant who was unable to get home to a mainland country town during the semester and therefore chose a local site. This difficulty points to the problem of catering for all students. In earlier year groups, some students had taken up my suggestion to plan their assignments around a site in their own home locality, thereby adding to the richness of data available in the bulletin board display. However, as several students pointed out in the course of their interviews, it was more convenient and therefore feasible to choose a site within easy access of campus. It is not surprising then, that most of the sites were in the Launceston area.

More specifically, participants tended to choose generic sites, ones that were similar to those they may find in other locations. More importantly, the generic locations were the kinds of sites so often valued as fieldwork sites for children. One such site was City Park, a quintessential urban park designed for civic education as much as for a place of respite from the city centre. Not surprisingly, the Band A Starter (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) makes several references to parks as suitable sites for children’s enquiry. My decision to conduct fieldwork in a site considered a traditional field site for children in the Launceston region was shaped partly by criticisms of fieldwork as trivial. I hoped to foster questioning of the largely taken-for-granted view that, by choosing a site for its novelty—or “something new,” as one participant put it, more meaningful fieldwork would result. I was also concerned that dictates for children to explore “their immediate surroundings” tended to be in tension with directives to explore “significant sites and symbols in the local community” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, pp. 21 & 23). For some children, such juxtapositions may seem a sure way to devalue their own surroundings. It is significant that the parks chosen by participants of this study tend to be those publicly valued rather than more obscure suburban parks. Significantly, one participant rejected a local park in a suburb dominated by public housing because it was considered lacking in potential for learning,

But I wouldn't go to any of the parks around here because there's not a lot to see. If we lived in a locality like City Park or perhaps the Punchbowl where there's a lot of different things to look at. We've got very basic parks up here. You know, good for a bit of sport.

It would appear that leisure sites are only deemed appropriate for fieldwork when characterised by their many features or as sites of civic or citizenship education. It is interesting that while leisure sites are seen as lacking in potential for civic or citizenship education, work places are selected for the lessons to be learned from them. Sites such as this were chosen for teaching children how much of value there was in the local environment. Yet, tellingly, local parks in areas dominated by public housing were not valued as were parks in other areas. It seemed important for teacher education students to think about why such publicly valued parks may be valued as sites for children's learning—all the more so, when I reflected on an incident experienced when conducting fieldwork in City Park with a group of teacher education students. Since this incident was integral to my pedagogical decisions in the third pedagogical moment, I describe the incident and the issues it provoked.

Fieldwork in City Park

On one occasion when conducting fieldwork in City Park with a group of teacher education students in an earlier year group, I was drawn to reflect on the trend to unproblematically celebrate the identity of a place such as City Park as a given; an identity in stasis to be valued unequivocally by all generations and societal groups. City Park includes a number of memorials to war. One of these, the South African War Memorial, is a neo-classical structure—a hexagonal monument at once a memorial for lost lives and a celebration of colonial supremacy. Inscribed on the monument are the words, “in remembrance of Tasmanian lives lost for throne and empire in the South African War 1899–1902.” On the dome stands a figure redolent of classical mythology. Is this Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry associated with themes of heroic achievement? The emblems of Calliope are “a stylus and wax tablets” (Calliope, 2003). The figure on the South African War Memorial carries a sword—perhaps a stylus—and a tablet on which is depicted the imperial lion symbolising the British crown. Standing in an arched niche on each face of the monument is a statue of a soldier commemorating those who lost their lives as a result of their involvement in the South African conflict.

On our particular visit, early one Monday morning, a group of students discovered that the monument had been vandalised during the weekend and statues decapitated. There was a sense of outrage and absolute anger. The transformation of the monument was seen not only as desecration of public property but also desecration of a sacred monument. It seemed that through such desecration, the monument was no longer merely a memorial characterised by what Denning (1998, p. 1) describes as “rhetorical signs of heroics and reverence.” For me, the act of vandalism posed other questions about the nature of heroism, cultural hegemony and civic and citizenship education. I questioned whether vandalism, however abhorrent, was always wilful and committed for no purpose? While an analysis of this monument could have been conducted by considering it as a primary source reflecting the “age

in which it was produced” (Hutchinson, 1988, p. 28), the very act of vandalism served to not only highlight such a perspective, but also to question the unproblematic acceptance of the lessons that the semiotics of such a monument were designed to convey.

In reflecting on such questions, I was drawn to question the relevance of memorials such as the South African War Memorial in City Park as a form of civic education. The great majority of students did not understand “the classical iconography of statuary” (Davison, 2000, p. 54). Yet, as a monument commemorating military sacrifice it was considered sacred. In expressing such an attitude the students tended to reflect the celebration of heroes so evident in the *Primary Social Studies Guidelines* (Education Department, Tasmania, 1985) and dictates in the SOSE Statement and Profile to care for and “conserve local places” and for finding out about past achievements (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 21)—so very similar to the curriculum and pedagogical impetus suggested by interview data for this study. As Davison (p. 41) reminds us, monuments such as the South African War Memorial in City Park not only reflect the civic culture of their time but are also likely to be valued in a time when “The revival of hero-worship is both a lament for a lost world of moral certainty and a cry for its return.” Tellingly, the statue has now been restored and physically enclosed with a high vertical iron fence topped with arrowhead finials. Somewhat ironically, the monument “in remembrance of Tasmanian lives lost for throne and empire” is located alongside a monkey enclosure housing Macaque monkeys, a gift from Japan. This juxtaposition raises questions about imperialism, particularly in the local and more recent context. Ironically, the South African War memorial, as a monument to lives lost in a contest over place, was testament to the contested nature of place and space; yet, students did not acknowledge that likewise, the destruction of the memorial might be read as evidence of a contest *over place*—in this case, described as vandalism. How, I wondered, should we read the imperial impulse and its public celebration?

Yet, these students expressed a view that children should be taught to value monuments such as this, a view of citizenship education reflected also in the dominant discourses of the official blueprints and in interview data. With this prevailing attitude, I wondered what opportunity there was for inclusion of gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, global and multicultural perspectives to the SOSE curriculum as well as directives to implement a curriculum *inclusive* of all students. What meaning would notions of empire have for those students who identify as Aboriginal? Although a female figure adorns the South African War memorial and another memorial in City Park is an elaborately housed drinking fountain celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, the monuments tend to honour male heroism. How would the monuments be read from a gender perspective? A recent newspaper article, “Too few female achievements are set in stone” (*Examiner*, 2003, p. 19), has reported research based on the investigation of public monuments and a questioning of why they are “dedicated to men”; this newspaper reports the work of Lake who suggests that public monuments tend to represent the lives of powerful white men and exclude women and Aborigines: “In Launceston yesterday to inspect and photograph monuments as part of research for a forthcoming book, the professor of history [Professor Marilyn Lake] at Melbourne’s Latrobe University was intrigued by that

aspect of historical immortalisation” (p. 19). Davison (2000, p. 41) also notes the strong bias that tends to be indicative of public monuments: “Public statues were an honour reserved for men (seldom for women) of conspicuous fame or public service.” I question whether there are monuments to Aboriginals who lost their lives in Tasmania’s black war (Breen, 2001). Surely these were lives lost, if not *for* empire, *to* empire.

In planning the third pedagogical moment, I aimed to unsettle the taken-for-granted notion of place, particularly of place as bounded and settled, a view so prevalent in the dominant discourses of the official blueprints for SOSE and in the discourses taken up by participants when they talked of choosing sites for children’s fieldwork. At the forefront of my mind was the work of Massey (1994) who argues that places are characterised by complex interactions and social relations—a point that I saw as conveyed in the paintings by Jeffrey Smart to which I referred earlier in this thesis. Earlier in this thesis, I argued that the motif of the palm trees in *Corrugated Gioconda* could be read as evidence of the global within the local, a view promoted by Massey (1994a, p. 5) as place defined “through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections” which lie “beyond” the immediate site. In taking this view, it seemed that City Park, a quintessential urban park, was an exemplary site for exploring the interconnections that cohere in one place; its many structures and monuments are tangible evidence that even as an island Tasmania is not, and has not been, immune from influences operating beyond its boundaries.

In addition, a site such as this, rather than being a settled site publicly valued for its civic value, was also a contested site (Jacobs, 1996)—a point only too clearly conveyed by the vandalism of the South African War memorial. Although the participants of this study valued City Park as a site remembered from family visits and school field trips, clearly the site was not valued *equally* by all members of “the community.” In reflecting on this disparity in the way public sites were valued, I turned also to the trend for participants of this study to teach *about* difference, rather than *through* difference. In teaching there seemed to be a *fear* of the differences which may exist within the class of children. There was a trend to homogenise the group in an attempt to establish harmony and untroubled learning. Thus, I aspired to foreground a mode of enquiry that prioritised difference and was “directed at attempting to adjust older notions of justice based around equity for a universal citizen so they are more responsive to difference.” (Young, 1990, cited in Jacobs & Fincher, 1998, p. 15). Rather than teaching *one perspective* to the monument in City Park, for which there was after all no substantial evidence, I chose to pose questions such as those cited on the *Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b) to open discussion and raise questions not previously suggested by participants. The monuments of City Park, for example, are representative of racial and gender bias in their celebration of achievement; yet, neither of the research participants who selected City Park as a field site commented on—and perhaps were unaware of—such inherent bias.

The fieldwork was planned in recognition of very significant time constraints. At one level, the intention was to draw students' attention to a site traditionally selected for children's fieldwork and for which there exists an extensive and diverse range of primary and secondary source material in local museum collections, a point also made by participants of this study. Within the context of Social Education 2, the visit to City Park was planned in conjunction with a visit to the Community History Museum to gain familiarity with the diversity of resources available, not only for City Park, but more specifically for records of Launceston's industrial and migrant heritages. In addition, however, I wished to plan fieldwork subsequent to that which had been experienced as part of Social Education 1. In earlier fieldwork I had chosen to begin a "critical pedagogy of space" with students' "mattering maps" and "cartographies of taste" (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 286). In the third pedagogical moment I sought to adopt a more definite stance through the asking of key questions.

In planning fieldwork based on questions from the *Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b), I also wished to draw attention to ways in which a global perspective could be incorporated into SOSE for younger children. As I noted in the last chapter, Band A prioritises the local environment, the immediate locality and the community as parameters for young children's enquiry (Australian Education Council, 1994b). As Land and Bennett (1996, p. 34) note, the existence of an expanding horizons curriculum poses difficulties for incorporating a global perspective in Band A of the national SOSE Statement and Profile: a task they describe as "challenging." Global education is described as involving critical reflection based on several skills—one of those listed is critical thinking, further described as "The ability to evaluate the quality, relevance and priority of information, to distinguish between fact and opinion, and to recognise perspective and bias" (Fien & Williamson-Fien, 2001, p. 136). In addition, in drawing on the educational principles of Freire, global education also involves a stance to reflection which is grounded in critical theory: "a process of cooperative critical reflection to reach an awareness and understanding of the oppressive structures, their origins, the interests they serve, and the means by which they are maintained" (p. 134). When local places are recognised as unbounded and inclusive of the global, it is more feasible to incorporate global perspectives even when the curriculum prioritises the local. In addition, the stance to critical thinking described by Fien and Williamson-Fien can be applied to *any site*. Global education, according to this explanation, offers a platform for critiquing a site such as City Park. Two questions adapted from the *Tasmanian Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) Planning Grid* (Department of Education & the Arts, 1995b) were identified for follow-up discussion:

What images and stories are reflected in the monuments and artefacts to be found in City Park?

In City Park, what evidence can you find of the contribution of immigrants, the working class of the 19th century... to the community?

In thinking of City Park as an open-air museum, I also prioritised the kinds of questions suggested by Moore (1997) for interrogating artefacts. To supplement the kinds of observation and data recording suggested for participants in the first pedagogical moment, I highlighted the asking of questions such as those recommended by Moore.

What is this for? Why does it look like this? Why is it decorated this way? Why do you think it has its particular colour, texture, size and weight? Is it in good condition, or damaged in some way? What exactly do we mean by these terms? (p. 59)

What does it make you feel like? Do you like it or not? (p. 60)

When, where, how, why and by whom was the object made? This would reveal the technology, commerce, labour and social history of the time. (pp. 60–61)

What has been the significance of the object, in its time of construction, in its subsequent history and for us today? (p. 63)

I also wished to challenge students to think of City Park as a symbolic environment reproductive of “cultural norms and establishing the values of dominant groups across society” (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 125). My aim was to not only highlight the way that the “symbolism of landscape” may contribute to cultural reproduction, but also to point to the way that educators may unwittingly add to such tendencies. In recommending the reading of landscape as text in this way, Cosgrove does not attempt to deny the many ways in which landscapes may be known and appreciated. Rather the intention is to challenge “taken-for-granted assumptions” (p. 127). Tellingly, Cosgrove (1989, p. 127) suggests that children tend to be attuned to landscape meanings: “Very often it is children, so much less acculturated into conventional meanings, who can be the best stimulus to recovering the meanings encoded into landscape.” Presumably, Cosgrove implies that in not complying with behavioural codes, children help to highlight those codes that adults tend to take for granted. I am drawn to reflect on the children’s ability to recognise such environmental codes, even if they cannot be named as such. In my experience, some children *recognise environmental codes* and unselfconsciously comment upon them—I recall hearing a child on entering a corridor in the Faculty of Education building, which the participants of this study frequented, commenting with some surprise, “This is just like a hospital!” The comment by Cosgrove also served to open discussion on assumptions about what children could be expected to know. A section of Cosgrove’s paper (1989, pp. 125–127) was selected for reading by students as part of preparation for the third pedagogical moment. Again, I intended to point students to scholarship in the academic disciplines that underpinned SOSE.

During the tutorials that followed this fieldwork in City Park, many students commented that the fieldwork enquiry had prompted them to see City Park through a new lens, that it was no longer such a taken-for-granted site. Students were drawn to consider the symbolic meaning of landscape:

All landscapes carry symbolic meaning because all are products of the human appropriation and transformation of the environment. Symbolism is most easily read in the most highly-designed landscapes—the city, the park and the garden—and through the representation of landscape in painting, poetry and other arts. But it is there to be read in rural landscapes and even in the most apparently unhumanised of natural environments. These last are powerful symbols in themselves. (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 126)

From reading maps dating from the early nineteenth century at the Community History Museum, students were able to trace the evolution of the site. Along with photographic evidence, these images helped to challenge their taken-for-granted acceptance of the site—this was indeed a constructed site. Analysis of a range of sources helped to underscore the symbolic reading of an urban park such as this: “Despite the passage of time, these characteristic slices of English urban landscape still symbolise ideals of decency and propriety held by the Victorian bourgeoisie” (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 126)—although in this instance, the park included local bird life such as black swans and was set against a broader landscape of Eucalypt forest visible on hills along the horizon. These features situate the park very much within its locale.

In discussion, students were encouraged to see National Parks as cultural environments as much as repositories of *wilderness*—the irony being that in setting aside so-called pristine sites, such places then conveyed a sense of *terra nullius*, as sites that had not been inhabited. The debates surrounding the meanings of natural environments, and wilderness in the contemporary context tend to be fraught with complexity and are contested (Hay, 2002a). Although these debates could not be explored in depth, students were encouraged to question their own taken-for-granted ways of talking about environments, to see their local worlds from a number of perspectives and to consider a range of symbolic meanings. By pointing students to literature in cultural geography (Cosgrove, 1989; Massey, 1994a), my aim was to highlight the existing debates. Hopefully, as well as seeking resources directly applicable to teaching and learning, students would also be drawn to other resources which could help to inform their ways of viewing place and space. I hoped that their teaching would be informed by their broader knowledge. At this stage, I tended to sidestep what I now see as the power of theories of cognitive development and the social construction of childhood in shaping curriculum and pedagogy for children. In the next section, I again turn to interview data to seek how fieldwork in the third pedagogical moment may influence the kinds of fieldwork sites participants of this study would seek if they were again choosing a location for children’s fieldwork.

Taking an evaluative stance: What decision would you make now?

In this section, I discuss findings from the last section of the interview: “*Reflecting on the assignment itself*—If you imagine you were doing the same assignment now, what kinds of places might you choose?” In examining the data, I make comparisons with earlier findings. I seek to find firstly whether participants indicated that they would now make a different choice; I then seek whether any

other sites emerge and whether new discourses are mobilised when participants talk of choosing sites for this assignment.

Fieldwork decisions: Considering the possibilities

Of the 22 participants, only five gave a clear-cut response to this question. Two said they would choose the same site, three said they would choose different sites. By far the greatest number of participants, however, tended to be guarded or even defensive in their responses. As one participant good-naturedly put it, “No I think I picked a *really good site*.” Another participant who was more defensive said, “I was pretty happy with the way it turned out and thought it was pretty good.” In very many cases, participants tended to justify their choices before turning to answer the question more directly. Two who tended to vacillate about what site would now be selected, in the end mentioned parks—in one case, City Park; in the other case, a similar park in Hobart, St David’s Park. It seemed that in choosing these locations the aim was to give the answer I may expect. In several instances, participants referred either to sites selected for the bulletin board display or places referred to within the course as alternative choices. With only one exception, these were bounded sites. Two locations mentioned offer particular insights.

The one unbounded site mentioned as a possibility was described as “streets in Mowbray”—the suburb adjacent to the university campus. I had referred to this location during tutorials. Some students had also found reference to the site during the field visit to the Community History Museum. That this unbounded site was named is particularly interesting; the streets concerned, as the participant commented, are “named after military people.” Even when an unbounded site was chosen, the site would appear to have been chosen for its public significance, as a memorial of sorts. The “military people” named are military leaders of the First World War.

One of the bounded sites mentioned was generic: “a cemetery.” This was an example from the bulletin board display and as I indicated earlier, was a site some participants excluded as being inappropriate for children’s fieldwork because of the association with death—not a fit subject for children, so it seemed. Yet in being asked to reconsider, one participant said, “I liked the idea of a cemetery.... I thought that there were things like old dates and old names, the causes of death and the ages, mortality rates and things like that.” It is interesting that despite the association with death, the possibilities for enquiry and learning were described as “fun”: “I think it would be educational but it would still be fun to learn about it.” It seems significant that the cemetery was chosen by a school leaver, whereas those who commented negatively on the appropriateness of a cemetery as a field site were mature-age. This perhaps implies that for younger students, the associations with death are differently perceived.

Even when a less sanitised site such as a cemetery is selected, it would appear that it is chosen very much with children in mind. This response points to earlier findings that the places selected for children to visit should be those perceived to be *fun*. Likewise, another participant describes children

as either lacking in concentration or ability for increasing depth of enquiry: “If you are going to a site that they have been to before, [it’s important] that you go with a new idea and a new tactic to keep them interested in it.” Particularly revealing is the statement suggesting that a site may be “a fascinating site for students” because it has “a lot of little hands-on artefacts that the kids can touch and work with.” Through language use children tend to be trivialised as learners—and as people.

Despite their involvement in tutorial discussions that raised issues about *children as knowers*, participants’ responses indicated that this discourse was taken up by very few participants; others talked of children in terms of deficit. One participant, for example, talks about selecting “other areas that children don’t have as much opportunity to access. In like everyday life.” This contradictory statement is intriguing—surely everyday sites are the very ones children would learn about. Despite the continuing trend for children to be considered non-knowing, two participants talk in terms of children *initiating* learning. Such statements are significant. They are the only evidence that some participants may be willing to relinquish some control of the learning process and that they see children as willing agents of learning.

but you know it depends on the theme—what you’re working on with the children. What stress is being developed by the children, I mean if the children have an interest and something starts up and they all get interested in a certain idea—and you follow up that as well and that might be as I say at Clarendon House, the children might be saying, “Gosh, you know what did people wear? How did they live back in those early days? So Clarendon House would obviously be a more interesting area to answer some of those questions. So if the children sparked off some of those questions, you’d follow it up.

Likewise, another participant says:

I thought a little bit about it afterwards and I’d kind of like to probably brainstorm with the kids first, about the kinds of places that they’d be interested in learning about. And try to get some idea of where they’re coming from and see if their ideas fitted with what I thought could be accomplished by using different sites.

The last statement suggests that it is difficult to totally relinquish control over what the children will be learning. One wonders what the outcome will be for fieldwork, if the sites selected by the teacher are out of synch with children’s choices. The statement immediately preceding this one also points to tensions. Despite the recognition of children as agents of their own enquiry, it is also significant that “those early days” are still idealised as generic and characterised by homogeneity. By implication, it seems that living in grand houses such as Clarendon House was the norm! Where is the mention of convict labour in its construction—or of the lives of small landholders? There seems little opportunity for society of this time to be studied in all its variety. The mention of “those early days” is revealing of boundaries that tend to be placed around what children may learn—if visiting Clarendon House, what are the other possibilities for enquiry? Following the fortunes of the building through time may offer different insights. Again, however, the era selected parallels the mention in the official blueprints of sites representative of the early colonial era in Tasmania. Is there no other era between *then* and the present—or even before? With the propensity to choose places in the remote past and ignore all other time frames, there seems little connection between the past and *the present*.

Significantly the participant who *had* selected Clarendon House as the basis of the assignment talked about again choosing “something in history” but this time choosing “the view of like a *commoner* or the view of an Aboriginal. As opposed to the rich and wealthy.” In elaborating on this answer, it would seem that there is a disparity between a homogenous “wealthy past” and more diverse present. Assumptions are made about identities. There is a sense of confusion about why different perspectives should be chosen. Seemingly, the inclusion of multiple perspectives is related more to issues of inclusion, than to understanding society and environment in all its complexity: “To have more of a worker’s view or an Aboriginal’s view I think it would benefit the students to see how people similar to them would have acted in that way.” It is stated that people now tend to be “middle class,” the implication being that children may not relate to history about the wealthy: “Well what I was trying to say was you know people nowadays are sort of middle class. That’s what they would have had to be like then. There was no middle class—there was either commoners or the higher class.” This seems an extraordinarily simplistic view of society in the past. Are we to infer from this explanation that children are only equal to learning about the familiar? Moreover, in the post-industrial world, children may *well understand* a disparity between scales of wealth. Statements such as this one point to the difficulty many participants have in justifying their choices, which in many instances are made on the basis of fairly spurious assumptions about the past and children “in the present moment.”

In another case, children are quite overtly referred to as “knowers.” In justifying the choice of a car park, an alternative suggested earlier in the course of this particular interview, the participant refers to the central city being an area most children in the Launceston area *know*:

I think it’s the centrality of it and that children would understand what it meant. Launceston’s a small place—children growing up know the city—in that it’s a central part of Launceston and it would have some sense for them.

Although this statement points to children as knowers of their local environment, the statement also alludes that children would not know further environments. In selecting a car park, a non-traditional site in the sense that such a location is not mentioned in the official blueprints or included in the bulletin board display, the aim is for children to explore issues of conservation: looking “at the act of pulling down something to build a car park.” Thus, even in choosing this site, the dominant curriculum emphasis on “care of places” is drawn upon. Moreover, development issues are highlighted in the Band A and B Starters (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a) as suitable issues for children to explore in thinking about the preservation and care of place. While the statement cited above points to children as knowing their place and feeling some attachment to it, in other statements there is the suggestion that fieldwork intentions are based on the need to foster a sense of belonging in place, that children will not otherwise establish a sense of place. Knowing the past, for example, is described as giving “students and other people a sense of community, a root—an identity.” References to identity and sense of place allude to attachment to a local, clearly defined place. There is little recognition that such attachments may be multiple (Anderson, 1999; Jacobs, 1996) and mobile (Pratt, 1998, p. 26). Considering that many of the participants of this study have lived in more than one location and that many have lived in other locations nationally and globally, it

seems intriguing that many participants think children may not feel an attachment to place or know the place in which they live. I question whether this point of view tends to reflect the *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* expressed by participants in the first pedagogical moment—that they feel a sense of anomie within the contemporary environment and think that others might feel the same.

Multiple readings of the one site: Pedagogical and personal

As participants reflect on their choices, their final comments indicate, overwhelmingly, that while there is a trend to reflect what the official blueprints say and to stress the citizenship aims of SOSE, choices are very closely related to an idealised reading of the environment. In their readings of the visual and place and space, participants bring to bear both a curricula and pedagogical impulse as well as very personal readings of their environments. These are by no means readings of one kind. To illustrate I refer to the Jeffrey Smart painting *The New School* (Capon, 1999; Appendix A) to which I referred earlier in this thesis. If we assume that the figure placed centrally in the image, represents a teacher constrained by the parameters of schooling with its many discourses, this teacher also faces *outwards* from the school building. It is significant that through technology and design, the school building is so totally on its own within its surroundings. The teacher is a bearer of past experiences, which shape readings of the visual and place and space; however, readings of the visual and place and space are also influenced by the constraints—and possibilities—of schooling.

Likewise, in my reading, participants' comments suggest that sites are selected for affective reasons and in many cases, on the basis of quite profound place attachments, memories and strongly held beliefs. Sites are not only selected on the basis of discourses of schooling. They are not *any* familiar locations, they are locations which resonate with personal attachment and meaning. A wharf is chosen not only for its familiarity from childhood memories but from knowledge of it as a hazardous workplace. There is an expressed desire that children appreciate the dangers experienced by workers in these kinds of industries—to make them understand “what happens out there”:

Funny when I was—one day a child said, “Oh Daddy come back today.” Because they'd heard about all the industrial accidents that go on. And where I used to work, I had an apprentice's hand went through a roller and another guy had his arm crushed and they went to work that day and then the next—that same day they don't come home. And they're injured. And it's very hard—perhaps it can happen in an office—but it'll happen in a car accident. It won't happen in a clerical office but in an industrial site like a wharf which is very dangerous—the kids will see their parents go out and then they won't come back.

A local community is chosen as a fascinating site in which as a new resident a participant is tussling with the notion of belonging.

I have moved a few times in my life and I've always wondered what my place is and what impact I'm having on others' lives and knowing the impact they're having on mine implicitly, and trying to find a way of fitting in and making my mark and it's—I've struggled with that sort of question and those concepts all my life and I still haven't quite found out.

This statement alludes to the struggle involved when one's place attachment is in a sense, "out of place" (Pratt, 1998, p. 26). It is significant that establishing a sense of belonging is identified by this participant as integral to the choice of site for children's fieldwork. Interview data suggest that integral to thinking about fieldwork are issues of identity. Although theories of identity are not specifically mentioned, this participant talks in terms of identity construction involving strategic decisions: "But I think it's important even if you stay in one place all your life, to know where you fit in. And know it well enough that you can change if you want to. You don't become fixed." Sites appreciated for their strong sense of the past and sense of personal meaning are chosen by another participant who reflects on memories of an uncle who uncovered "beautiful little ornaments" on archaeological "digs on the York sites." Associated with these memories there is the view that Tasmania is *young*. There is also a strongly expressed conviction that children should be taught "to respect and look after things."

It is significant that the fieldwork conducted in the third pedagogical moment appears to have made little impact on the kinds of statements made. I speculate whether the fieldwork of the third pedagogical moment had little connection with the very strong influence of the official blueprints as demonstrated in Chapter 7. Participants make no references to fieldwork locations in terms of their symbolic meanings—perhaps with the exception of talk of a cemetery as having associations with death and of suburban streets as named to represent military endeavour. There is little suggestion that sites have been thought of as unbounded sites or in terms of their permeability—as local sites encompassing the global. One comment however, quite overtly refers to a site in terms of its intercultural associations. This is not the only statement to mention the cultural; it is however, the only one to elaborate on the importance and suggest depth of meaning. Although in another case there is very generalised reference to City Park as being a cultural site—"Well there are some Australian influences—the traditional, and then there's a lot of European ... Well there's pine trees and the roses and things"—the tenor of this response suggests that the implications are not readily articulated, even if they are appreciated. However, the wharf is noted for its intercultural qualities. In reflecting on the kind of field site that would be selected now, one participant highlights an insight that occurred in the process of active reflection.

I've actually been out to the mine site—it has a great cultural aspect because there were Chinese working in the area as well. There are a lot of intercultural aspects. And so Robbie, getting back to the other question, what I was looking at too was the intercultural interaction that used to happen at the wharves. People from outside building and creating society. That was the intercultural part.

This statement is the only one that quite overtly indicates the permeability of boundaries. It is significant that such recognition of places as unbounded would appear to be related to childhood memories of growing up in one of Australia's maritime cities, a city whose economy depends on its status as a port and for its associated shipping industries.

The mention of Chinese miners is also significant. During tutorials, I referred to the Chinese Carnival of 1891, which took place in City Park (Walden, 1991), but of which there is no record in the park itself. Walden (p. 77) suggests that the “tone of moral responsibility” adopted by the local press as well as government leadership helped to stem the racism, which characterised European–Chinese relations in other parts of Australia at the same time. Despite such apparent harmony, however, Walden (p. 73) points out that tolerance tended to be extended to the “merchant class” rather than Chinese miners per se. There is evidence also of harassment of Chinese immigrants, particularly once the economic benefits accruing from tin mining had declined. Although these references to Chinese immigration reflect discussion from tutorials, the links are not commented upon and there is no evidence that one may flow from the other. However, the link between childhood memories and work-life is quite overtly demonstrated. This raises questions about the interaction between pedagogic repertoires and experiences exterior to, and often prior to, the classroom experience. It also raises questions about the relative influence of these various experiences.

The previous statement points to the tendency for participants to make of the fieldwork curriculum and pedagogy what they will, in terms of prior experience and referential knowledge—just as it may be said, I have done in my reading of *Corrugated Gioconda*. The lessons conveyed in this painting are not unequivocal; nor are the lessons of SOSE in teacher education. Understandings of place and space, and of society and environment, would appear to be formed on the basis of experience as much as from any overt educational intentions. Although participants reflect some facets of the teaching context and reflect the dominant discourses of the official blueprints, the way that they mobilise the many discourses available to them is by no means certain. They take up those which mean something to them—in the words of one participant in this study, the sites selected are “those which mean something to us.” Teachers would do well, therefore, to find out more about students’ patterns of meaning as externally referenced, to draw them out and to subject them to critical enquiry as part of classroom discourse. This does not mean that participants are totally inward looking—or that they do not take account of debates surrounding difference and the pluralistic nature of society. As many comments suggest, they are concerned with issues of identity and difference but are uncertain about how to harness these differences as teachers. Even when the dynamism characteristic of an intercultural environment is commented upon and valued, there is still a fear of managing differences within a class group and an assimilationist desire to foster homogeneity. Even when there is a keen awareness of perspectivism, there is an unwillingness to see a school group as itself encompassing many perspectives. The participants of this study say that they value a pedagogy which they see as aiming to teach in recognition of such differences; they do not similarly value such potential themselves as teachers. The implications of these findings are likely to extend beyond the teaching of SOSE; the findings are likely to have implications for curriculum and pedagogy within teacher education more broadly.

Chapter 9

Conclusions and discussion

Introduction to the research

In concluding this naturalistic, multi-layered, multi-phase study, it is timely to acknowledge the reality of the research journey and the nature of the research findings as outcomes of that journey. As Coffey (1999, p. 159) says, the research journey of fieldwork involves a process which “can be understood as a series of real and virtual conversations and interactions with informants and significant others; particular places; ideas; family and friends; lovers; memories; and self.” This statement resonates with my own experience of the multiplicities involved in the research process. The research has evolved according to increasing depth of interpretive understanding, not least as a result of findings emanating from careful fieldwork and constructivist data analysis and discussion—in an iterative cycle of investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Wolcott (1995, p. 252) says, “It is fieldwork’s time-consuming, slowly focusing, sometimes convoluted and inefficient but always contextually rich, life-mirroring approach that needs to be protected in our age of efficient anxiety.”

What began as a desire to investigate and test my presuppositions and concerns about teaching SOSE within the context of a first-year undergraduate unit in the B.Ed. program at the University of Tasmania, evolved to encompass broader concerns and more probing research questions. The course was one, albeit in many respects already established, that I coordinated and taught with others. I found that I was poised on the brink of a pedagogic experience with expectations that were not fully developed. As the study progressed, two initial research questions relating to curricular choices, as manifested in the choice of sites for a field-based assignment, expanded to encompass additional and more deeply rigorous research questions to take account of issues emanating from data analysis. The data led to further exploration of participants’ interpretations of teaching and learning in a constructivist framework and deeper enquiry into the factors influencing participants’ curricular and pedagogic choices. I questioned whether certain discourses provided a hegemonic curriculum and how these may relate to ideals of inclusivity. I also speculated whether some worlds predominated over others, and whether this tendency may affect perceptions of children’s everyday experience of society and environment—a world that I, personally, viewed as unbounded and characterised by diversity. Ultimately, the following five questions were used as the basis of enquiry.

The research questions

Five key research questions were explored in the context of a multi-mode analysis of responses of students in the B.Ed. program. The questions are re-stated below.

- i. What artefacts (that is, self-selected or nominated sites) did students of teaching choose for field-based curriculum planning?
- ii. What factors contributed to the choice of sites for SOSE?
- iii. What interpretations of teaching and learning were involved?
- iv. Do certain discourses provide a hegemonic curriculum framework?
- v. How do these discourses relate to ideals of inclusivity?

The key research questions were explored in the context of a multi-mode analysis of responses of students in the B.Ed. program at the University of Tasmania. Data sources comprised participant observation, my own pedagogic reflections as a form of reflective practice, in addition to participant responses from an open-ended survey and semi-structured interview. With the exception of the interview, all other data was gathered when participants were students in Social Education 1. This multi-layered and multi-phase approach to data collection provided a richly diverse set of data sources that were contextualised within a naturalistic teaching enquiry situation. Students were, to a certain degree, research collaborators or co-researchers, giving the study an added dimension of action research.

Key themes arising from a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to the analysis of survey data were used as the basis of interpretation of the interviews. In addition, interview transcripts as well as official blueprints for SOSE were analysed thematically in terms of their dominant discourses to elucidate the overt and hidden curricula and pedagogies mobilised by participants. This phase of analysis was integral to drawing out the richness of the data. It is at this point of the research that findings are particularly illuminating. As I indicate later in this chapter, participants' choices of places were intimately linked with their beliefs about students' learning and a biased interpretation of the SOSE curriculum.

As the sequence of the key research questions indicates, the study became more and more overtly concerned with the hidden and explicit curriculum and pedagogies of fieldwork as implemented in early childhood and primary education and, more specifically, within the teaching of SOSE as a specific site of knowledge construction in teacher education. The force of evidence led me to look at the data in a new way and to ask new questions grounded in the data. Participant responses pointed to a sub-textuality which suggested that they were paying lip service to a number of factors; yet, deeper analysis of the interview data suggested that they were making decisions which unknowingly precluded their stated goals. These findings suggested that decisions were made within a socialising context of some complexity. Such findings also suggested that developing understanding and meeting the challenges, in both the ways we teach SOSE and the ways we teach young children about the world around them, are not quickly accomplished.

Significance of site selection in SOSE teaching and learning

Several issues underpinned my decision to focus on the sites selected as fieldwork locations. As discussed in Chapter 3, there is widely held agreement that both the teaching of SOSE (or social studies) (Adler, 1991a; Armento, 1996; Reynolds & Moroz, 1998) and the teaching of civics are alienating to students (Williamson & Thrush, 2001). There are concerns that teachers of social studies retreat from the challenges in managing differences and shy away from dealing with controversial issues (Apple, 1990; Nelson, 1991). Yet, strongly evident in the national and state SOSE curriculum documents, is a focus on difference, diversity and social justice (Australian Education Council, 1994b & 1994c; Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a & 1995b). Added to this is a contemporary view of identity construction as complex and uncertain (Anderson, 1999; Danielewicz, 2001; Jacobs, 1996; Jacobs & Fincher, 1998); there was also a concern arising from the literature (Adams & Ward, 1982; Gold et al., 1991; Ploszajska, 1998) as well as from my own practice that, in selecting fieldwork locations, certain kinds of sites tend to be selected over others.

On the basis of such viewpoints as well as previous experience in teaching this course and assessing students' assignments, I explored site selection within the context of three pedagogical moments within Social Education 1 and 2 (University of Tasmania, 1997, 1998)—compulsory components of a B.Ed. degree course. As Chapters 3 and 4 reveal, I primarily intended to highlight alternative approaches to fieldwork with the emphasis on the enquiry-oriented approach that is deemed to be preferable to teacher-directed didactic instruction in the field. My aim was also to design a pedagogy conducive to promoting critical thinking by students and to foster questions about the increasingly unbounded nature of children's—and B.Ed. student's—contemporary worlds. As Chapter 8 indicates, in the third pedagogical moment, I aimed to overtly promote a critical perspective towards the appraisal of place and space through enquiry based on questions adapted from those listed on the SOSE Planning Grid (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995b).

Some of the key findings of this research underline the broader significance of site selection at a personal and pedagogic level. Students in their first year of a four-year B.Ed. program, sought sanctuary and belonging through time-out from pressures of the world and sought a similar sense of retreat from the harsh realities of the contemporary world in their curricula and pedagogical decisions. How much more likely is this in times of global turmoil, which accompany hotly contested debates surrounding war in Iraq, the rise of global terrorism and the re-development of nuclear armaments, in addition to increasingly stringent institutional requirements? It would seem little wonder that other studies have found that school students of SOSE see little connection between their learning in SOSE and their everyday experience (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994, 1996). In a time when the critical understanding of society and environment *globally* appears to be increasingly urgent, there seems little place for the parochial. Sophisticated understandings of the unbounded societies and environments in which children live are unlikely to be accomplished with a retreat into a sanitised version of society and environment or avoidance of critical thinking.

This study points to an intimate connection between site selection, pedagogical approaches and dominant discourses encapsulated in the official blueprints of SOSE that, in combination, contribute to a culturally hegemonic curriculum framework. As I suggested in Chapter 8 and discuss in this chapter, such a curriculum framework is out of step with ideals of inclusivity encapsulated in official blueprints. These findings transcend my early intention to explore curriculum as shaped by site selection. As I indicate in a later section of this chapter, this study raises further questions to be explored in seeking to elucidate the findings, which I outline in my conclusions and discussion of findings in this chapter.

The place of the visual in SOSE curricular choices

In this study, visual imagery was used in several ways. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, visual imagery was used as a basis for articulating pedagogical and curricular concerns. The use of visual imagery in this thesis acknowledges the increasing use of the visual as a mode of communication (Kress, 2000), as well as the particular relevance of the visual and spatial modes of communication to SOSE, particularly the discipline of geography (Boardman, 1983; van der Schee, 2000). The visual mode of experience was also seen as highly relevant to data collection as a way of exploring curricula decisions within SOSE. The visual nature of data collection in fieldwork and the role of the visual in environmental appreciation, underpinned the choice of visual images as integral to data collection in this study.

The disparate range of issues to be taken into consideration in planning to teach SOSE in teacher education, led me to draw on two paintings by Jeffrey Smart to locate the themes that informed my pedagogical approach. With reference to these two paintings—*Corrugated Gioconda* (1976) and *The New School* (1989) (see Appendix A)—I elaborated on the *Gestalt* upon which my own decisions were based. In Chapter 2, I referred to the term *Gestalt* in my discussion of Korthagen and Lagerwerf's (1996) and Korthagen and Kessel's (1999) "realistic approach to teacher education." As Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) explain, a *Gestalt* is a holistic image upon which behaviour—or practice—is based. Although Gestalts are not only visual in character, reference to a visual image such as the multi-layered image of *Corrugated Gioconda* is one way of articulating the complexities to be considered in pedagogical decision making. It is argued that that visual imagery is useful for resolving complex problems: "famous scientists such as Einstein used visual imagery to represent and manipulate the elements of a problem" (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995, cited in Robertson, 2000a, p. 16). Likewise, the highly visual nature of environmental appreciation as well as field-based data gathering through recording of visual observations suggested the use of fieldwork locations as the basis for investigation of curriculum and pedagogies in SOSE. Rather than gathering data through the use of photographs, a research methodology used in local studies exploring place preferences (Robertson, 1995; Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2001), this study was based on gathering data about sites participants selected for field enquiries. Since this study is grounded in the choices of fieldwork

locations, such an approach to data gathering was viewed as a logical starting point for exploring curriculum choices.

In hindsight, it is with some regret that in my teaching of Social Education 1 and 2 (University of Tasmania, 1997, 1998), I did not use paintings such as *Corrugated Giaconda* and *The New School*—as well as other works by Jeffrey Smart and other painters. I now consider that Jeffrey Smart's highly accessible and recognisable representations of contemporary Western urban and rural landscapes may serve as a useful *pedagogical counterpoint* to the representations used to promote Tasmania as an environmentally desirable location for the purposes of tourism, niche agriculture and craft-based industries when, at the same time, there exists a high rate of youth unemployment and high rate of dependence on social security benefits. In the main, representations used to promote Tasmania tend to very largely reflect harmonious, picturesque landscapes. Through my own reflection on this phenomenon, I was drawn to write the following view in a stanza of a poem titled, *An Arcadian idyll* (Johnston, 2002).

In images representing an unpeopled, untroubled place,
designers and educators create a pastoral present,
when round-about
ring fires of protest
and retailers of the mall complain
that postcolonial, post-modern youth
pollute public place.

I now consider that taking a bold and quite overt pedagogical approach, in addition to the experiential one that I have explored in Chapter 4 in this thesis, *may* have contributed to different outcomes. I consider that such an approach may provide a useful catalyst for offering students an alternative way of thinking about societies and environments, including schooling—a way of drawing their attention to the issues in a frank, accessible and memorable medium. I see such pedagogy as generative. In tandem with the pedagogical approach I have elucidated throughout this thesis, I see that such an approach may appeal to young men—those students who did not take up the opportunity to participate in this study to any great degree—as well as being amenable to female students; as this study has shown, female participants have a sophisticated appreciation of their material and social environments.

The role of the teacher as action researcher

As discussed throughout this thesis, the role of the teacher as both action researcher and teacher posed various conceptual, pedagogical and ethical issues. At the forefront of these were ethical issues. As acknowledged in Chapter 4, planning action research demands sensitivity to issues of ethical conduct that exceed the usually accepted protocols—all the more so when, as in this case, participants were at

the one time, co-researchers and students in a course being taught and assessed by the primary researcher. The research was conducted with a stance of mutual respect with particular emphasis that participation was voluntary and would in no way influence the grades awarded for Social Education units. The non-coercive nature of the study was reiterated to participants at each phase of data collection. Life circumstances are dynamic in nature. Therefore, it was essential that students felt able to discontinue their involvement if they so wished—36 students chose to be involved as participants in data collection through the open-ended survey and 22 in the semi-structured interview.

Through both the pedagogical choices and the research process, I aspired to a critical pedagogy, which was “dialogic” rather than “interrogative” (Grossberg, 1994, p. 18, cited in Morgan, 2000, p. 286). I designed a pedagogical approach largely based on a view of children—and students of teaching—“as knowers” and of children as “entitled to know” (Slater & Morgan, 2000, p. 286) with the intention of fostering “critical inquiry capacities around key issues and ideas in the field” (Wilson & McDiarmid, 1996, p. 312) of SOSE curricula and pedagogy. Accordingly, I followed Morgan’s suggestion (p. 286) for “teachers to start with ‘mattering maps’ or cartographies of taste, stability, and mobility within which students are located.” By beginning in this way, I also sought to foster the consideration of varying fieldwork possibilities.

Since participating students—and indeed, all students in Social Education—drew on a bulletin board display as a data source to which all students in Social Education 1 contributed, it was important to strive to maintain open communication about the intentions of the research with *all* students involved in the course. All students received information outlining my intention to conduct this research. In hindsight a longer lead-in time to allow for open discussion about the research on the basis of reflection would have been the preferred approach; presenting a research proposal towards the end of semester when students have more pressing concerns is less than an ideal environment in which to invite students to participate in a research study when, as first-year students, many may know little about the aims and protocols of qualitative research. The required formality and distanced stance in seeking involvement tends to be off-putting. Time was of the essence, particularly since changes to the B.Ed. course structure were planned for the following year. Less hurried implementation of the survey may have alleviated my own apprehension and unease about the power differentials between students and teacher in an institutional context—and may possibly have contributed to an increased participation rate. However, as indicated in Chapter 4, the participation rate was sufficiently high for findings to appear valid and robust.

Findings were grounded in the data through a constructivist approach to grounded theory. In this way, the research fully honoured the statements made by participants. Taking a multi-layered approach to answering the research questions and examining the data through many iterations of analysis was integral to research reliability. The research was both qualitative and quantitative; frequency counts were conducted to identify the relative emphases in the nature of sites and the factors contributing to site selection. Cross-correlations pointed to varying emphases according to participants’ background

characteristics. By shifting between analysis of survey and interview data, the findings were elucidated and clarified.

By drawing on a number of approaches to data gathering and interpretation, I aimed to build a rich image of socio-cultural constructs influencing curriculum and pedagogical decision-making within a teaching/learning framework. This process included the recognition of identity constructs in accordance with specific background characteristics—age, preferred teaching specialisation, place of residence during early childhood or primary schooling and gender. As indicated throughout the thesis, through several phases of the research, the research questions were explored in a number of different ways through sub-questions which I refer to now by the term, research items. These many research items contributed towards the richness of the data and the complexity of data analysis and interpretation of the findings.

In Chapter 6, for example, findings from the very many iterations in examining the sites selected in the second pedagogical moment, gradually pointed, *layer upon layer*, to participants' orientation towards curriculum relevance and the dissonance that this created in choosing sites on the basis of their personal meaning. These findings were further elucidated with reference to findings for the choice of sites in the first pedagogical moment. In combination, the findings pointed to further examination of the data in terms of the discourses participants mobilised to justify their choice of sites for implementing fieldwork in SOSE. Notably, the six key discourses were identified with reference to survey data for Question 4, "Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE?" In turn, these findings were clarified and elaborated with reference to interview data overall, as well as the official blueprints for SOSE.

In all, this was a creative, complex and challenging process involving many stages and many ways of interrogating the data through several iterations based on my desire to seek depth of understanding and to strengthen the quality of the research. The following sections outline findings for the key questions, the conclusions drawn and the implications for practice.

Research findings for five key research questions

i. What artefacts (that is, self-selected or nominated sites) did students of teaching choose for field-based curriculum planning?

Answering the research question

As indicated above, this question was probed through the asking of many contributing questions and an iterative approach to analysis. To elucidate the qualities of the sites named by participants, as they saw them, answers were sought through varying sections of the survey and interview. Participant statements about the kinds of sites selected by the student group overall and as encapsulated in the

bulletin board display helped to confirm a preference for certain kinds of places for children's fieldwork. In interview, participants elaborated on their chosen location in response to a request to tell me more about the site selected.

As well as seeking information about site selection in the second pedagogical moment, participants commented on sites selected *on campus* in their roles as students in the first pedagogical moment. The third section of the survey form asked participants what site had been selected and how they would categorise that site. Sites identified as preferred locations on campus were not solo choices as choices for the assignment had been. Data suggested that sites selected for the assignment were not made *strictly* in isolation; participants indicated that, in actuality, their choices of site for the assignment had been made, in many cases, in consideration of the sites selected by their peers. Participants commented on sites considered but not finally selected; they were also asked to indicate three sites that they would definitely not consider choosing for fieldwork. Finally, in interview, I asked participants to reflect on the kinds of sites they may choose with hindsight.

The first pedagogical moment

Preferred locations on campus: Findings emanating from tutorial discussions

When students selected preferred locations in their roles as students, the sites tended to be sites situated along the "campus corridor" which serves to largely define the parameters of everyday campus movements. In tutorial discussions, students described these locations as social places with natural attributes. In many cases, students described these locations as places of retreat. Some expressed a preference for locations that allowed a window to public life, at the same time as offering a sense of seclusion—places conducive to observation without their presence being conspicuous.

In tutorial discussion examined in Chapter 5, students commented that their preferred campus locations, as identified by collaborative mapping of the sites identified during fieldwork, tended to be socially valued, central locations with natural features and with limited spatial distribution. Particularly popular were the social hubs of campus life: the café and the amphitheatre adjacent to it. It seemed that very few of the sites were located outside maps of familiarity. One of the peripheral locations sought as a preferred location was Newnham Hall, a Georgian residence used as residential accommodation and a teaching venue by the Australian Maritime College (AMC). Significantly, this location was familiar to students; students had experienced fieldwork at this site in another unit of the B.Ed. course.

Preferred locations on campus: Findings emanating from survey data

Students' preference for social and natural locations was very largely confirmed with reference to survey data. Locations mentioned by participants as the objects of their attention were explored through open, axial and selective coding. Findings suggested that places were within easy access of

the campus corridor and located near the home ground for Education students. In addition, findings confirmed that the most frequently selected sites were the social hubs—the café and amphitheatre. Significantly, the data suggested that in survey responses, participants did not emphasise social attributes of their chosen locations as they had during tutorial discussions. Although it is not possible to provide definitive answers for the difference, it may be that the findings are different because the data for these research items drew on different groups of students—on the one hand, all students taught by me, and on the other, only those students who wished to be involved in the study. I speculated that participants may have been less likely to be seen as socially focused when completing their written responses to survey questions; or they may have tended to give answers that they thought I might expect. I questioned whether participants, positioned as students, avoided making candid responses or whether they avoided being seen as fritterers of time in seeking overtly social locations during self-directed tutorial time.

Cross-correlations pointed to differences between the sites selected by participants according to intended teaching specialisation as a background characteristic. Significantly, the early childhood group focused more often on meeting places, a finding which led me to speculate whether this preference may be related to the strong orientation of early childhood education towards socialising young children. It may be that participants responded to the survey on the basis of their orientation as teachers rather than as students, as they had been positioned when talking of sites in tutorial discussions.

Survey data confirmed that the spatial distribution of sites identified as preferred locations was limited. Places described in terms of their built, aesthetic or artistic qualities were sometimes places away from the everyday foot-traffic areas but tended to be highly visible locations. Although sites are so obviously centrally located, they were less frequently described according to their location. Places were identified in terms of their visual appeal, tranquillity and sense of belonging as well as in terms of natural attributes and as student meeting places. Significantly, however, data pointed to the multiple realities experienced in everyday life, a feature so evocatively portrayed by Jeffrey Smart in *Corrugated Giaconda*. In some cases, participants identified more than one site; in others they described one site in relation to its surroundings or in connection to a number of locations. Participants may have selected places within easy access of the campus corridor; they were not, however, constrained in their awareness of places beyond the campus boundaries.

Male participants focused more often on the built environment as exemplified in statements categorised as *focusing on the built environment, art and aesthetics*. However, cross-correlations according to age suggested that this gender bias was less conclusive than it at first seemed. Most of the male participants were mature-age—only one of the group identified as a school leaver. For school leavers, however, sites were described in terms of their spatial attributes. School leavers and female students tended to view sites with greater complexity, a finding that served to counteract a deficit view of women's and young people's appreciation and knowledge of their environments.

The second pedagogical moment

Site attributes with reference to survey and interview data

The 36 responses to Question 1 of the survey were analysed. In this phase, when participants were asked to identify their chosen location for the assignment, 31 different locations were mentioned. Most places tended to be located within easy access of the three main population centres of Tasmania—Hobart, Launceston and Burnie. Few places were really rural. Fifteen of these locations were places of some public significance. These were clearly defined places of natural or cultural significance, marketed and promoted as tourist attractions and known through their representation in many formats—brochures, posters, advertisements, news reports and political references in the media. Several were of iconic status, two particularly so. Cradle Mountain and Cataract Gorge feature as places of considerable status through their marketing as tourist attractions. Many of these sites were museums. Included also were two National Trust properties—Clarendon House and Franklin House. The character of very many of the chosen locations evolved during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The constructed environment of Cataract Gorge is an example of high Victoriana and another of the sites, Supply River Mill, is a ruin with attributes consistent with the Picturesque aesthetic—craggy rock faces, a water course, and natural attributes such as overhanging trees and other vegetation as well as a building in a state of ruin. Several of the locations are known as places marketed for their historic interest for tourists—Richmond and Richmond Gaol, Wybalenna on Flinders Island, Low Head Pilot Station. Other locations were places of considerable interest as sites of urban re-development—Launceston Esk Wharves and the Inveresk Railway Development Site. Two other fieldwork choices were civic institutions—Burnie City Council and a Fire and Police Station. Only one of the locations was a non-named generic site—a local suburban creek. In the main, the places selected for children’s fieldwork were highly visible locations.

The strong preference for named sites was reflected in findings emanating from data for Question 5, “What kinds of field sites have most frequently been selected?” Although participants were commenting, in this case, on the sites selected by the student group overall, 15 participants chose to *name* sites as exemplars of the kinds of locations selected. Mostly, these sites were well known places; the mention of Cataract Gorge, a recreation reserve of iconic status within the city boundary of Launceston and only a few minutes walk from the Launceston CBD, accounted for *one-third* of places named.

In interview, when participants were asked what places they had considered as possible choices for the assignment, they also tended to mention named, well-defined and bounded sites that also tended to be places of high culture. Of the places named, two were city parks, 10 recreational reserves, 5 historic houses or properties and 4 were historic precincts. Three of the latter feature as jewels in the crown as Tasmanian tourist attractions—Port Arthur, Evandale and Richmond. Although places mentioned as possibilities were mainly located in the Launceston area, most were well-defined and

bounded locations of high culture. One of the places mentioned was an Aboriginal midden but as I discuss in talking of the factors influencing choice of field sites, this possibility was excluded for practical reasons.

Field site attributes of self-selected fieldwork locations suggested by interview data

Reference to interview data to identify the attributes of the sites selected for the assignment elucidated the nature of the sites as participants chose to describe them. Through a process of open coding, the data suggested that, in their descriptions of the places selected for the assignment, participants tended to talk of locations in terms of five broad groupings: *mentioning natural features, focusing on the built environment, arts and aesthetics, emphasising location, highlighting status, and focusing on the human aspects of place and space*. Through a process of axial coding, it appeared that sites were described in terms of two categories—*focusing on the material and seeking places of worth*.

In their focus on the material aspects of their chosen locations, participants mentioned considerations such as availability of information, safety and cost as well as the accessibility of the locations as convenient places for conducting background enquiry for the assignment. Strictly, such considerations amount to factors influencing the choice of site; it is significant that such matters were mentioned in describing the site itself. Sites were described in terms of their natural features. However, natural attributes were mentioned in conjunction with other aspects such as time, status and/or beauty. As places with natural features, the locations were in very many cases described for their sense of peacefulness and tranquillity as places of quiet reflection: places with “beautiful scenery,” of “peacefulness,” for their “atmosphere of history.” Such places were also described as human environments, bringing the visual, private and social dimensions together.

Places described in terms of the built environment, arts and aesthetics were places of status; there tended to be a focus on the past and novelty. Places were described as “representing power and status in the community” and as “a community place.” Data suggested that participants appreciated locations for their sensory qualities: beauty and the wind. However, in the main, these locations are also inhabited; as one participant put it, “it’s the *people* who make the place not the place that makes the people.”

In summary, sites selected for the second pedagogical moment tended to be identified in terms of their intrinsic worth; whether due to status, continuity with the past, authenticity, aesthetics or importance as human habitats of community value. Places of public status were preferred to nondescript places. Although most tended to be bounded sites, in some cases, locations were mentioned for their liminal nature as places on the edge or as junctions. In one case, a site was selected for its dynamic, intercultural qualities. Most were settled, harmonious sites, but in two cases, places were described for their quite evocative qualities. As revealed in Chapter 8, even in hindsight, participants did not tend to radically alter their propensity to choose sites such as the ones I have described. Although such

locations were described as places of intrinsic worth, they were in many cases locations of intense personal meaning described, in the words of one participant, as those that “mean something to us.” Data indicative of the factors influencing the choice of sites for children’s fieldwork and as the basis of the assignment, indicated that other factors played a part—as I discuss in the next section.

ii. What factors contributed towards the choice of sites for SOSE?

Answering the research question

In answering this research question, I turned to sections of the survey and interview that asked participants why they had chosen particular sites. Other sections helped to clarify the findings—particularly informative were sections of the survey and interview that probed for deeper reflection. In such sections, participants were asked to say what sites had been considered but not finally chosen for the assignment as well as to comment on what sites they would definitely not choose for children’s fieldwork. To answer this research question, I also made the “constant comparisons” recommended by Charmaz (2000). This was an essential approach given the varying ways in which participants chose to answer the questions. The analysis of data in terms of the dominant discourses mobilised by participants was also particularly informative and helped to confirm and clarify trends emerging from earlier data analyses. The multi-phase nature of the study as well as the multi-mode approach to analysis led to considerable insights about what shaped the choice of particular kinds of sites—albeit not exhaustively.

The first pedagogical moment

Reasons suggested by survey data

Places identified in terms of their visual appeal, tranquillity and sense of belonging as well as in terms of natural attributes and as student meeting places—as well as in recognition of the multiple realities of everyday life—were selected on the basis of a *yearning for sanctuary and belonging*. The impetus to choose sites on campus in the first pedagogical moment was made on the basis of this quite overwhelming factor of choice, as indicated in Chapter 5. Whether centrally located or peripheral sites were selected as preferred locations, the yearning for sanctuary and belonging was a major influence. This category of choice emerged from selective coding of earlier iterations in which data were analysed through open and axial coding.

As shown in Chapter 5, through the process of axial coding of data for Question 9, 7 initial codes were reduced to four categories: *finding a place of respite*, *seeking facilities and convenience*, *valuing a sense of place*, and *seeking friendship and belonging*. Rearticulation of the data through a process of selective coding resulted in two codes, one of which accounted, overwhelmingly, for most of the data. In 89% of cases, a *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* emerged as the factor of choice and in 11% of cases, sites were selected on the basis of *seeking facilities and convenience*. Participant responses

categorised as *yearning for sanctuary and belonging* were highly evocative. For this reason, data was represented in poetic format to convey the impetus underpinning the choice of preferred locations on campus. As the last stanza of the poetic representation of the data indicates, places were selected with a keen awareness of the multiple realities encountered in everyday life.

Because I love the power of the river, the fresh smell in the cool
wet air,
birds singing, surrounded by old trees, a sunny wide open
space,
an oasis in the urban jungle, a relaxed meeting place with
natural features,
contrasting with all the grey buildings.
It's sunny. It reminds me of home.

The category *seeking friendship and belonging* was selected almost equally by all groups of participants, according to the background characteristics identified in this study. This category is mentioned slightly more often by participants identifying as having a rural background during their early childhood or primary schooling than those with urban and rural or urban experience at that time of life. It would seem that for rural participants, where they are and who they know is more important than for participants with urban backgrounds. The latter group, on the other hand, tended to mention material aspects of the environment—the built environment and a sense of place—more often than those whose early experience had been rural.

In giving reasons for the preference of a particular location on campus, female participants and school leavers answered with greater complexity than their counterparts. Cross-correlations indicated that 21% of female participants cited 3 or more categories, whereas no male participants answered with this level of complexity. In addition, 30% of school leavers cited three or more categories, compared with only 5% of mature-age participants, who all cited four categories. Since most male participants identified as mature-age, it seemed difficult to say which characteristic was influential. One might speculate on a number of reasons for the differences and similarities between groups; however, it is not possible to be definitive about what may underpin differences and similarities of choice.

The second pedagogical moment

Reasons for choosing sites for the assignment: Findings from several contexts

There were significant differences in the kinds of sites selected by participants on campus, compared with the kinds of sites selected for the assignment and children's fieldwork. In combination, the data from several sections of the survey and interview suggested that these differences are a result of a different impetus shaping the choice of sites in the second pedagogical moment compared with those chosen in the first pedagogical moment. In tutorial discussions about the choice of sites selected by the group overall for the assignment, students conveyed a sense of reticence in talking about their

choices. They tended to be defensive about the choice of sites, suggesting that the chosen locations could be justified in relation to the official blueprints for SOSE. Data examined in Chapter 6 show that such reticence and defensiveness when considered along with their obvious enthusiasm for the bulletin board display, prompted me to speculate whether the somewhat tentative response was partly due to their positioning as students awaiting evaluation of their work. After all, their expressed concern for curriculum relevance did reflect the criteria for assessment listed in the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997). On the one hand, student knowledge had been placed as central, on the other hand, institutional expectations had been emphasised. The dissonance that I sensed in tutorial discussions was reflected in other aspects of data collection and caused me to question whether such dissonance was influenced by tensions operating more broadly. It now seems that a pedagogical tension as well as other factors may have played a part.

In interview, when participants were asked to tell more about the site selected for the assignment, they tended to be hesitant in knowing how to proceed; in most cases, however, they began by talking about their chosen locations in terms of their intentions *as teachers*. They talked about their intentions for teaching and referred to practical considerations to be taken into account in actually implementing fieldwork with a class of children. In addition, they talked in terms of childhood. In this respect, participants convey a close attention to the assignment topic and to criteria for assessment.

In categorising their chosen locations in response to Question 2 of the survey, participants focused on aspects of curriculum relevance. In responding to this survey question—“How would you categorise the site?”—participants conveyed an overwhelming orientation towards curriculum relevance. Of 35 participants who responded to this item, 21 categorised their chosen location in terms of more than one of the social science disciplines underpinning the SOSE curriculum. The propensity to respond in this way suggested consideration of the interdisciplinary nature of SOSE. However, history/historical was cited as a category more than any other area: 16 listed history/historical as a category compared with 6 for geography, 7 for sociology/social, 8 for economics or commerce, 3 for industry/industrial and *one only* for politics and culture. As noted in Chapter 6, *one participant only* mentioned the latter categorisations reflecting that culture and politics received little prominence in the way sites were categorised. Industry/industrial was another category of little prominence according to the frequency with which it was mentioned. Even when this category *was* mentioned, examples revealed that sites were industries of a certain kind: in one case, an industrial/historic site; and in another case, a small-scale, boutique, niche industry—a farm-based cheese maker. Sites categorised by terms that indicated their importance as *outdoor* locations were mentioned with some frequency; they were identified by terms that suggested they were valued for their non-built characteristics: environmental, natural, reserve, wildlife, outdoor, open space, recreational reserve, and wilderness area. Of all the categories for this item, it appeared significant that one was mentioned with disproportionate frequency: history/historic.

Despite the finding that participants tended to categorise their chosen sites according to curriculum relevance, notably history, when they commented on what kinds of sites had been selected for the fieldwork planning assignment, the mention of natural came to the fore. The data for Question 5, “What kinds of field sites have been selected for the fieldwork planning assignment?”, were coded as *identifying the natural*, *identifying the historic* and *identifying the civic and cultural* in that order of frequency. I speculated on what may account for the difference between the categorisation of sites actually selected by participants and the kinds of sites they thought had been selected overall. I questioned whether differences between the choice of sites by the participant group and the group of students overall accounted for the different emphases, or whether—in categorising their own choices—participants had been more concerned to be seen to be adhering to curriculum content.

Reasons suggested by interview data: Sites considered and sites excluded

To some extent, interview data for the question in which participants were asked what sites had been considered as possibilities suggested a difference in the factors influencing the choice of site in the first and second pedagogical moments. As I suggested in the last section, participants tended to choose places of worth and high culture. Yet, in the first pedagogical moment, they had selected places on the basis of a yearning for sanctuary and belonging. When participants were asked in interview to comment on sites that they would definitely *not consider* as fieldwork locations, they answered in terms of appropriateness for children as well as practical teaching considerations such as safety and providing adequate supervision. On the basis of previous fieldwork experience either as school students themselves or as adult assistants accompanying groups of children on field excursions, sites were excluded because they were deemed to be trivial or boring in terms of SOSE. A number of the places named as excluded places were also ones frequently visited by school children in northern Tasmania—Cataract Gorge, Hagley Farm School, Hollybank Forest Reserve and Punchbowl Recreational Reserve. Port Arthur was excluded as being remote in terms of travelling time and City Park, “because it’s been done to death constantly.” Although some participants said that any site could be chosen, in other cases participants said that it would all depend on the actual cohort of children for whom fieldwork was planned. Most significantly, some places were excluded because they were seen as inappropriate for children in terms of raising issues *not suitable* for children. A cemetery was excluded for its associations with death; a church was excluded for its connection with issues of social justice thought to be too complex for children to appreciate. Likewise, sites considered to have the potential to raise controversial issues were excluded. Such places were those associated with forest industries and Green politics as well as those that may raise creationist debates.

It is not surprising that considerations such as children’s safety and the provision of adequate adult supervision should be mentioned since they were, after all, related to unavoidable issues connected with duty of care and the legal liability of teachers. However, the exclusion of some sites seen as inappropriate for children prompted me to reflect on childhood as a social construct and one that could

be characterised by its diversity—albeit by dominant meanings in Western culture, particularly in theories of child development (Luke & Luke, 1995).

Reasons suggested by survey data for Questions 3 and 4

Factors for site selection were also indicated in the survey questions that specifically asked participants to state their reasons of choice. In Question 3, participants were asked, “Why did you select this site for fieldwork planning?” and in Question 4, they were asked, “Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE?” Through a process of open and then axial coding, three categories were identified from data for Question 3. In order of frequency these were *relating to curriculum content and process*, *seeking the familiar and local*, and *highlighting the affective*. The three-way categorisation indicated that in the second pedagogical moment, participants chose locations for reasons that were different from the reasons for choosing sites on campus. In the second pedagogical moment the very strong emphasis on affective reasons of choice in the first pedagogical moment faded into the background.

Cross-correlations for Question 3 indicated that choices differed according to gender. Male participants were divided equally in their choices, whereas 45% of female participants cited *relating to curriculum content and process* and 23% cited *highlighting the affective*. This difference was considered significant, particularly in relation to the preference of female participants for campus sites described as social places and those with facilities and convenience. It would seem that in both instances, male participants focused on the affective—in the first pedagogical moment, male participants most frequently mentioned sites in terms of their qualities of respite; in the second pedagogical moment, they mentioned the affective more than did the female participants. Male participants also tended to describe sites in the first pedagogical moment in terms of their material qualities. I questioned whether male participants may have greater accord with the material aspects of the built environment and hence, also with an assignment based on fieldwork than did female participants. I also questioned why female participants might choose sites on the basis of their relevance to curriculum content and process. I speculated whether female participants were more conscientious, were more oriented towards the assessment criteria for the assignment, or whether they may have less affective attachment to an assignment based on material attributes of the environment, and therefore be more inclined to focus on course requirements such as curriculum content and process.

Significantly, when participants were asked in Question 4 to say why their chosen sites were important for the implementation of SOSE, male participants focused on curriculum content and process, whereas female participants focused more often on identity issues. Questions were raised in Chapter 6, as to whether male participants had little need to mention identity issues if, as earlier findings tended to suggest, they had more attachment with an assignment focusing on fieldwork. However, I also questioned whether the contradictions evident in the different phases of my own

pedagogy tended to position students differently. Findings suggest that the situation is not clear; differences suggested by cross-correlations pointed to possible differences but were not unequivocal. When data for Questions 3 and 4 are considered together, it appears that both male and female groups focused on affective aspects. In relation to Question 3, male participants focused on the affective; in relation to Question 4, female participants focused on identity issues.

For Question 3, however, there were marked differences according to intended teaching specialisation, for both the categories of focus and the complexity with which participants responded. The early childhood group and those as yet undecided about their preferred teaching specialisation focused on the category *relating to curriculum content and process* whereas the primary group focused on the category *seeking the familiar and local*. I speculated whether the difference may result from a tendency for the early childhood group to take for granted the trend to focus on what was near at hand and familiar for young children's learning and thus, not see this point as worthy of note, whereas the primary group saw the familiar and local as worthy of mention by dint of its relative novelty as a consideration for the learning of older students. Although the early childhood group focused more often on the category *relating to curriculum content and process*, in 82% of cases, it was not the only category mentioned by this group. On the other hand, the primary group were more evenly distributed when complexity of response was considered. Some of the primary group provided a rationale for site selection of greater complexity than did the early childhood group. As I concluded in the discussion of these differences, cross-correlations are suggestive of differences in the orientations of participants according to intended teaching specialisation; they are, however, inconclusive in pointing to the reasons for such differences to exist. Overall, however, the orientation of participants to site selection in the second pedagogical moment differs from that of the first pedagogical moment. Although, as noted in Chapter 8, participants did choose places of meaning as sites for the assignment and children's fieldwork—in some cases, on the basis of intense personal associations—in the main, the factors influencing their choice of sites in the second pedagogical moment tended to differ quite markedly from those influencing their choice of sites on campus.

The very strong trend to choose sites on the basis of curriculum relevance, quite understandably, emerged as a factor of influence when participants responded to Question 4, "Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE?" Of the original 8 codes identified from open coding, several related to curriculum content and process. This trend was evident in two of the categories resulting from the process of axial coding—*highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons* and *linking with SOSE curriculum content*. Many of the responses coded in Chapter 6 as *highlighting enquiry and broadened horizons* emphasised a sense of activity and engagement that suggested participants tended to follow recommendations to take an enquiry approach to fieldwork. This emphasis tended to contradict the yearning for sanctuary and belonging evident in the first pedagogical moment. In data for Question 4, there was no suggestion that students should be engaged in quiet reflection.

As discussed in Chapter 6, the oversight of quiet reflection raises questions about a curriculum tension between critical thinking on the one hand, and learning through activity on the other. The SOSE curriculum documents tend to focus on group work and active enquiry to the relative oversight of quiet reflection. They also emphasise recognition of diversity of students through an inclusive curriculum. Yet, the dominance of active engagement tends to overlook the yearning for sanctuary and belonging that participants of this study expressed in citing reasons for their choice of preferred places on campus. The combination of recommendations for active enquiry, on the one hand, and considering students' interests, on the other, amounted to a dissonance within curriculum, which may be a constraint on young people's successful quest for meaning through SOSE.

Analysis of data for Question 4 confirmed the trend to seek sites on the basis of curriculum relevance. Selective coding of the data suggested that a category termed *focusing on the culturally hegemonic* accounted for most of the data. Data for Question 4 suggested that identity issues were cited as a justification for site selection for the implementation of SOSE in only 15% of cases. This relatively low frequency stands in stark contrast to the frequency of 89% with which sites in the first pedagogical moment were selected on the basis of a yearning for sanctuary and belonging. Conclusions drawn from findings for Question 4 suggest that it would seem as if sites for the assignment were selected on the basis of their evaluation in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and status. The overwhelming trend to select sites that were culturally hegemonic in terms of site status and perceived significance is an inversion of the impetus for site selection on campus. On the one hand, sites are selected on the basis of a yearning for sanctuary and belonging; on the other hand, they are chosen according to a focus on the culturally hegemonic. As noted in Chapter 6, the tendency to choose culturally hegemonic sites for children's learning dominated a concern with identity.

As I have indicated in this section, the data suggested that in choosing fieldwork locations for the assignment, participants responded as teachers in mind and in the making. They made choices on the basis of their perceptions of what was thought to be appropriate for children. In some respects, they also tended to make their choices on the basis of their pedagogical positioning. Curriculum relevance emerged as a dominant factor influencing the choice of sites. Moreover, the choices are revealed to be culturally hegemonic.

iii. What interpretations of teaching and learning were involved?

Many competing and contradictory views of teaching and learning

The interpretations of teaching and learning discussed in this section sit within the interpretations of teaching and learning that underpinned my own pedagogical decisions that, in turn, frame this research. Data in Chapters 6 and 7 show that participants give lip service to many competing and contradictory views of teaching and learning, reflecting a similar trend in the official blueprints for SOSE. However, the dominant discourses evident in interview data suggest that in actuality,

participants planned fieldwork on the basis of a much narrower interpretation of teaching and learning. The six key discourses mobilised in justifying the choice of sites for SOSE in relation to Question 4 of the survey suggest that participants drew upon a range of interpretations of teaching and learning.

Six key discourses mobilised in justifying the choice of sites for SOSE

The first of the discourses encapsulated in the data for Question 4—*diverse in its potential, because it integrates history, sociology and geography*—suggested that participants focused on the multidisciplinary nature of SOSE. Although this trend emerged also when participants categorised their chosen field sites for the assignment, as indicated earlier in this chapter, close examination of the data suggested that participants tended to favour some of these disciplines over others. Likewise, the second of the discourses mobilised demonstrated recognition of the emphasis on *critical thinking* particularly evident in local curriculum guidelines. In keeping with the mention of critical thinking in these documents, participants tended to mobilise a technical orientation through the mention of critical thinking as synonymous with appreciating multiple viewpoints rather than power relations or the deconstruction of discourses. Through the discourse, *opportunity for research at the site and in the classroom*, participants reflected the enquiry orientation to fieldwork discussed in some detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis. In one respect, this discourse is closely aligned with curriculum mandates; in another respect it conveys awareness of recommended fieldwork pedagogy.

Another discourse—*because it's part of the children's environment*—revealed an expanding horizons orientation to curriculum planning with its emphasis on proceeding from the known to the unknown and based on a view that children know what is close at hand. This discourse reflects the emphasis on learning in the immediate environment, a dominant discourse of the SOSE Statement (Australian Education Council, 1994b), particularly for the learning of young children. Terms such as familiarity and prior learning were also associated with this discourse. The fifth discourse—*to look at community values*—revealed a more overt socialising agenda and moralising intent to teaching and learning through the emphasis on children's inculcation into community values. The discourse reflected the mention of community and community values inherent in SOSE blueprints. In this respect, it is one discourse that brings to mind the concern noted in Chapter 3, that fieldwork in the past had been garnered for patriotism (Ploszajska, 1998). The final discourse mentioned in association with Question 4, *an inspiring place to go*, reflects a view of children as reluctant and needing inspiration in order to learn. However, as discussed earlier, the discourse also reflected the strong emphasis on sites of peace and tranquillity as sites of yearning for sanctuary and belonging. As places of reverie, sites selected in the first pedagogical moment were also seen as inspiring places to go.

In another iteration of analysis of interview data for Question 4, the data suggested that on the one hand, participants emphasised learning through enquiry; on the other hand, they revealed a didactic and at times, patronising stance as teachers through their use of words such as *shows, gives, looks at*,

and *important for children to see*. The way intentions were worded implied that teachers were the agents of the learning enterprise and that the receivers of it needed to be *developed, shown, given, and allowed to learn*.

The interpretations of teaching and learning that participants mobilised in justifying sites for SOSE related very closely to competing discourses of schooling. Although the discourses tended to be broad in their scope, they reflected competing discourses of the SOSE guidelines, of fieldwork pedagogies and of taken-for-granted views about educating children. Significantly, in their justifications participants made no mention of a discourse of critical thinking based on critical theory; nor did they mention quiet reflection, the desire so strongly expressed in the first pedagogical moment. I was prompted to speculate whether the different emphasis to teaching and learning evident in the second pedagogical moment was evidence of political choices suggesting that participants may give the answers that they believed were expected of them.

Findings clarified with reference to survey data (Question 6)

I also referred to Question 6 of the survey, “Why do you think these kinds of places have been selected?”, within discussions in Chapter 7. In three respects, data for this question were particularly illuminating. Participants made no mention of critical thinking, they emphasised that the selected locations were those known to be traditional fieldwork locations and they suggested that fieldwork locations had been selected for their perceived “fun” and “interest to children.” As I noted in Chapter 7, participants own choice of sites had not been made on the basis of fun. The mention of *fun* as a criterion for the choice of sites for the assignment tended to reveal a patronising stance towards the choice of sites for children’s learning and reflected the way that curriculum overviews are translated for application in early childhood and primary schooling.

Dominant discourses identified with reference to interview data

With reference to the official blueprints for SOSE as well as the dominant discourses mobilised by participants in the course of their interviews, I sought to elucidate the participants’ dominant orientations to teaching and learning. Analysis of five of the official blueprints used by participants in their preparation of the assignment, revealed a curriculum bias in the four official SOSE blueprints that received such prominence in the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997). As indicated in Chapter 7, the documents tend to encompass an amalgam of varying approaches to the study of society and environment. Although the curriculum shows strong allegiance to the social science disciplines, it is suggested that these be studied according to a number of curriculum perspectives and values that serve to frame the learning area. As was also indicated earlier in this thesis, Tasmanian SOSE documents (Department of Education and the Arts, 1994b, 1994c) take a social issues approach to enquiry from a range of perspectives described as curriculum organisers. Local documents also reflect a social constructivist pedagogical approach based on cooperative learning and a view of critical thinking as lateral thinking.

Although all of the official blueprints are based on interpretations of teaching and learning that are broad in their scope, they are translated in quite clearly defined ways depending on the intended level of schooling. Dominant translations of the SOSE curriculum for children's learning are based on a strong allegiance to theories of cognitive development, assumptions about children's experience and education for citizenship. In turn, they are underpinned by taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of childhood. These views were reflected in the interpretations of teaching and learning in interview, both through their overt mention—or avoidance. As indicated in Chapter 7, through the discussion of the dominant discourses mobilised by participants, several trends emerged. I now discuss these trends by focusing on interpretations of teaching and learning that were mentioned as well as those that tended to be avoided. In Chapter 7, these varying interpretations were integrated within discussion of the discourses themselves.

Three broad interpretations of teaching and learning

An expanding horizons approach to curriculum and a tabula rasa view of the learner

One of the dominant discourses discussed in Chapter 7 and identified in the SOSE official blueprints as well as in interview data is termed a discourse of the “immediate environment.” This discourse reflects an expanding horizons approach to curriculum, with recommendations that learning for young children take place in the immediate environment. It is also implied that the near at hand is familiar to young children. This approach is based on a *tabula rasa* view of the child as learner—a view that shapes participants' interpretation of teaching and learning. It is assumed that young children's immediate experience is limited to the home, school and community. As indicated in Chapter 7, the discourse of the “immediate environment” fails to acknowledge the diversity of experience that may be the norm for many children. Children are also seen as lacking in their ability to observe, explore and understand; significantly participants conveyed the view that children would not know their own places from recreational pursuits—yet, as indicated in Chapter 8, data suggested that many participants of this study chose places that they remember from their own childhood experiences. Participants recognised informal learning as contributing to their own knowledge but not when they talked of their potential students.

Enquiry or moments of quiet reflection

Data for Question 4 revealed a trend to steer away from an eye-balling approach to fieldwork (Bale, 1987). This trend towards an enquiry-based approach to fieldwork was also suggested by the mention of data gathering through research at the site and in the classroom as one of the key discourses mobilised in justifying site selection for SOSE. However, mention of this discourse was countered in comments that emphasised a more didactic stance. Terms such as *shows*, *gives*, *allows*, *looks at*, and *important for children to see* suggest that contradictory pedagogical discourses prevail. The didactic stance tends towards the proselytising, in some cases.

In interview, participants talked of valuing the opportunity for reverie and quiet reflection but did not recognise the same need for children apart from saying that children would like these kinds of places. There is a disparity between participants yearning for sanctuary and belonging on the one hand, and their lack of recognition that children may have similar needs. As indicated in Chapter 7, enquiry tended to involve activity to the detriment of time for quiet reflection that is integral to the building of deep understanding about complex issues.

Avoidance of critical thinking and cooperative learning

Another of the discourses associated with mention of the community is the discourse of “local community.” This discourse revealed a cultural transmission approach to curriculum and a pedagogy of cultural immersion. Teaching and learning is based largely on activity rather than through the building of deep understanding. Through emphasis on cooperation, the documents reveal an associated impetus to control. As indicated in Chapter 7, the pressure is for conformity rather than critique, an approach that closed down opportunities for critical thinking.

The third of the dominant discourses identified in the official blueprints for SOSE and mobilised by participants also conveys an avoidance of teaching and learning for critical thinking. This discourse emphasises a view of history as characterised by certainty and as uncontested. Through such an interpretation of history, opportunities for critical thinking tend to be precluded; a sanitised, homogenised, and settled view of history tends to belie a stated concern with teaching and learning for critical thinking, as suggested by data for Question 4. As indicated also in Chapter 7, through an anodyne view of history as “less contentious,” participants suggested that children should learn about events in the past through stories—a view that is considerably different from the enquiry orientation so dominant in some components of the SOSE documents. Through a curriculum based in an appeal to a nostalgic, generalised view of the past as the “good old days,” the past becomes sanitised and stands in contrast to a less desirable present. As implied in Chapter 7, such sepia filtering of history is antithetical to opportunities for critical thinking.

Paradoxically, despite a curriculum emphasis on learning the skills of cooperation for active citizenship, participants made no mention of cooperative learning as an approach to teaching and learning for children; they did, however, say that they valued the opportunities offered through their course in Social Education to “share ideas with others.” However, they did not tend to interpret teaching and learning for children in this way.

iv. Do certain discourses provide a hegemonic curriculum framework?

The three dominant discourses evident in the official blueprints for SOSE, are shown by the data to contribute in varying ways to a curriculum framework that is culturally hegemonic where cultural hegemony is taken to mean the protection of the status quo through “ideas, structures and actions” that

are taken for granted (Brookfield, 1995, p. 15). The three dominant discourses—discourses of the “immediate environment,” the “local community” and “history”—reflect taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching and learning that value the interests of some over others.

Discourse of the “immediate environment”

As indicated in Chapter 7, the curriculum discourse of the “immediate environment” tends to subvert the value of children’s experience relative to the dominance of a limiting curriculum that prioritises the immediate locality. Although this discourse, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter, is related very closely to a *tabula rasa* view of the learner, it is culturally hegemonic in the sense that it prioritises learning in the immediate environment where this environment is largely viewed as a bounded entity. This curriculum discourse tends towards a valuing and prioritising of the *parochial* rather than everyday experience. Such decisions are made on a largely taken-for-granted assumption that children attend schools within close range of their homes, a view that is largely unfounded and in many cases, highly likely to be incorrect. When learning about society and environment in the locality of the school dominates curriculum content in SOSE, children of a young age may be engaged in learning about a world that is not as familiar as it is assumed to be. It is through a discourse of the “local community,” that the discourse of the near at hand becomes more overtly hegemonic.

Discourse of the “local community”

The emphasis on “local community” and community values encapsulated in the official blueprints for SOSE, and mobilised by participants in interview, reflected a strongly hegemonic trend and a discourse of socialisation through a cultural transmission approach to curriculum as well as cultural immersion as cooperative, contributing citizens. When participants referred to children “appreciating what others do in the world,” they tended to refer to *select others* valued for their contributions to the workplace, industry, and civic institutions and community services. Appreciation of what others do was confined to certain contexts—mostly publicly valued places, valued also for the contributions of men, in the past. Interview data suggested that sites were chosen for children to appreciate community services such as the fire and police services and the work of maritime pilots as well as civic institutions such as the local council.

Official blueprints prioritise values of conservation and preservation that are largely taken-for-granted. Through a discourse committed to particular core values of ecological sustainability and dutiful citizenship, certain societal interests are privileged and un-critiqued. To a certain extent, those viewpoints are contradicted by the mention of the core value of “democratic process” described as involving “respect for different choices, viewpoints and ways of living” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 5). As indicated in Chapter 7, interview data suggested that participants were divided in their willingness to choose natural sites as contexts for children to learn civic duties such as care of the environment. In some cases, interview data suggested that environmental sites were

excluded for their potential to raise controversy. As discussed in Chapter 7, the culturally hegemonic trend within the discourse of local community was supported by a strong agenda of censorship—interview data suggested that through the discourse of community values, participants sought a tight sense of control over what children may learn.

Discourse of “history”

As indicated in Chapter 7, although history was not prioritised within the Social Education 1 Course Outline (University of Tasmania, 1997), in official blueprints and texts recommended as background reading for the course, it is privileged as a desirable vehicle for the implementation of SOSE. However, it is in the biased interpretation of history that the discourse is most obviously culturally hegemonic. Participant responses revealed a Euro-centric cultural bias evident also in current documents for SOSE and even more so in previous guidelines such as the *Primary Social Studies Guidelines* (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985) through the mention of heroic figures representative of a narrow cultural tradition. The celebration of such heroic figures is based on heroic acts that are very often accomplished in defiance of societal and taken-for-granted societal norms. In this respect, the culturally hegemonic trend evident in the discourse of history counters the tendency of the discourse of local community to promote compliance and harmony.

Local official blueprints such as the Band A and B Starters (Department of Education and the Arts, Tasmania, 1995a) also promote a culturally hegemonic basis for site selection. In the Band A Starter (Department of Education and the Arts, 1995a), the mention of publicly valued, named and bounded historic sites representative of a narrow time-frame, the early decades of the 19th century, reflects extraordinary bias within the official blueprints for SOSE, a bias that is reflected in participants’ choice of sites. As implied in Chapter 7, along with the celebration of publicly valued heritage within the discourse of the local community, the discourse of history promulgates culturally hegemonic bias. Such a stance is further perpetuated through a view of history as uncontested and conveyed through nice stories conveying a view of the past as harmonious and settled, when in actuality, Tasmanian history as well as history in a more general sense is largely contested and contentious. Although participants did mention stories of groups not usually associated with a hegemonic curriculum, in the sense that they concerned minority interests and the working class, the stories of these groups made available for children tended to be those told as authentic representations of the past, validated by experience. Moreover, these stories were largely stories of male working life. The domestic sphere of home existed as a silence. As noted in the conclusion of Chapter 7, the greater emphasis in discourses of local community and history is not only on “local heritage sites and places” but local heritage sites and places that are very largely representative of European heritage and a remote past, all with a strongly gendered bias.

v. How do these discourses relate to ideals of inclusivity?

Discourse of the “immediate environment”

This discourse is based on an assumption of cultural and racial homogeneity. In this respect, this discourse fails “to recognise and value student diversity by building on their varied experiences and interests” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 8). As noted in the earlier discussion of this discourse as culturally hegemonic and in Chapter 7, the discourse is based on the assumption that children attend schools within their local home environments and thus, the locality of school and home are conflated. However, this is a spurious assumption that lacks recognition of the diversity of children’s place experience. Not all children attend school in their immediate home environments.

Likewise, the view that children learn about other places through indirect experience also fails to recognise the diversity of children’s experiences. For some children in a time of increasing mobility and residential re-locations, children may well know about other places through direct experience. *Other places*—that is those remote from the school vicinity and even from their current place of residence—may in all possibility be places more familiar to them than what is described as their immediate locality or immediate environment. Some children may be excluded by prioritising learning in the immediate environment.

Discourse of “local community”

Interview data discussed in Chapter 7 suggested that participants tended to essentialise childhood. Thus, childhood experience tended to be universalised and seen in terms of deficit. With such a prevailing view of childhood, it would appear that participants did not value childhood diversity. Moreover, through the tendency for the discourse of community to involve a pedagogy of cultural transmission of ideals of community harmony and constructive community contributions, there was an added trend for differences to be ignored. Official blueprints tend to privilege a community citizen of a particular kind—one characterised by active, largely unreflective involvement. Through immersion in such taken-for-granted roles, students are inculcated into particular views of what it is to be a good citizen: as implied in Chapter 7, this approach does not acknowledge the trend for young people to engage in a personal quest for meaning through quiet reflection.

It is also difficult to account for students’ diversity when identity groups are described in terms of mono-cultural attachments such as gender. These groups tend to be identified in terms of their homogeneity and there is little recognition that identity is made in relation to multiple fields of meaning or that there is diversity within categories identified as discrete. Fixed notions of Aboriginal identity, for example, tended to be conducive to the persistence of stereotypes rather than acknowledgement of identity construction as a dynamic process. It is widely agreed that identity formation is complex and uncertain; identity is not formed in relation to “one-line attachments” (Anderson, 1999) such as gender or age. Therefore, notions of identity as static or fixed tend to give

rise to *identity stereotypes*. When identity is understood in this way, the complexities involved in identity construction tend to be overlooked; such views tend to close down the opportunity for “all students to contribute their own experiences”—a process that is described as the basis of an inclusive curriculum approach (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 8).

As indicated in Chapters 6 and 7, participants tended to be ambivalent about fostering critical thinking. Interview data and data for Question 6, suggested an avoidance of critical thinking. Moreover, participants made no mention of cooperative learning for children, although participants did say that they valued opportunities to share ideas with others when it came to their own learning. When combined with an impetus to institute a pedagogy of control and censorship and to celebrate European heritage, the discourse of local community failed to acknowledge different points of view about issues being studied. Interview data suggested that not only did participants implement a pedagogy out-of-step with inclusive ideals, they were fearful of doing so. Even in statements acknowledging the diversity of school groups, there was the suggestion that such differences pose a threat to educational harmony and a desire for homogeneity.

Discourse of “history”

The discourse of history, which has emerged throughout the analysis, suggested that young children have an inherent interest in “a sense of time and delight in stories” (Australian Education Council, 1994b, p. 20). Although interview data suggested that participants drew stories of the past from broader cultural traditions than those suggested in previous curriculum guidelines (Education Department, Tasmania, Australia, 1985), interview data also suggested that the stories mentioned privilege male experience and public life. Correspondingly, such stories excluded aspects of domestic and home life and tended to exclude stories of female lives in the past. Although Band A of the SOSE Statement (Australian Education Council, 1994b), for example, allows for inclusive content through the mention of family history, examples of how the suggested content may be interpreted tend to reflect a universal notion of people’s experience. Interview data suggested that even where participants were keenly aware of different perspectives and cultural imperialism through a privileging of particular historical eras and social experience, they tended to mobilise a view of history in which identity is essentialised. In recognition of minority ethnic experience, there was no recognition that groups of students may include children who identify with such experience through family stories—or their own experiences. In teaching about difference, participants did not tend to acknowledge the potential for ethnic diversity in relation to the children they may teach. They tended to teach about difference but not through difference as is recommended for inclusive approaches to SOSE curriculum.

Conclusions and implications for teaching

Findings from this study highlight the significance of “blurring the distinction between in-classroom and out-of-classroom learning” (Rawling, 2001, p. 177), as well as in-school and out-of-school learning, not only in geography but also in SOSE and teacher education, as well as research in these areas. The kinds of choices made and the reasons of choice given by participants, differed markedly according to context. It appeared that participants made decisions according to their “centres of care” (Relph, 1976 & Seamon, 1980, both cited by Crang, 1998, p. 110). The impetus for choosing sites in the first pedagogical moment was considerably different from that operating in the second pedagogical moment. In both contexts, however, background characteristics tended to shape participants’ choices. Intended teaching specialisation emerged as a contributing factor in both the choice of sites in the first and second pedagogical moments. Findings suggested that gender and age were influential in shaping site selection. Numbers are, however, small; the investigation would need to be replicated in a larger sample in order to establish more conclusive findings.

The diversity of responses suggested by analysis of the data in terms of background characteristics pointed to multiple readings of the visual and place and space. Many forms of prior learning contributed to the way that identity was articulated depending upon context and circumstance. Not only did participants bring their own ways of reading the visual and space and place, they were also positioned differently by curricular and pedagogical constraints, some of which as an educator are difficult to resolve. It appeared that the stance taken to pedagogy and curriculum influenced the relative positioning of participants according to gender. The almost equal emphasis on seeking friendship and belonging as a reason for choosing sites in the first pedagogical moment also pointed to the yearning for security that appeared to be an almost universal need of this group of participants. These findings suggest that this aspect of the enquiry would be well worth repeating elsewhere.

Findings suggest that, in choosing locations for the assignment, decisions were made with reference to master discourses of schooling encapsulated in the dominant discourses of the official blueprints for SOSE. Despite contradictions in the discourses encapsulated within the official blueprints, participants were drawn towards the dominant discourses of community and history. Publicly valued, high status places reflecting an anodyne view of the past and perceived authenticity as places of some aesthetic value or importance as community habitats were considered to be of some worth for children’s learning. It might be argued that such choices amounted to a culturally hegemonic curriculum.

Certain locations were excluded, being seen by students as places of controversy. Sites were selected for their perceived propensity for settled enquiry; locations were excluded when they were thought to be conducive to exposing inherent differences and strongly held points of view. These trends pointed to a strong impetus for students to censor what was available for children’s learning. It appeared that such decisions were made without full recognition of the multiple realities encountered by children in everyday, contemporary life. This approach amounted to a worrying *tabula rasa* view of children,

which suggests that teacher education should be designed with greater recognition of the complex, multi-layered, contemporary contexts in which children live their lives. In conjunction with such overt recognition, it would seem imperative to include critique of official documents and curricula frameworks in terms of their many competing and contradictory as well as dominant discourses—not just as the basis of research but for teacher education students.

Teaching and learning were interpreted according to a three-way framework. Participants talked in terms of an expanding horizons approach to curriculum, based to a certain extent, on a *tabula rasa* view of the learner as lacking in experience and the ability to observe, explore and/or understand. The *tabula rasa* view also tended to be out of step with the choice of sites based on memories of places from their own childhoods—known, in many cases, through informal learning from family times. A tension also existed between conducting enquiry-based fieldwork and taking a didactic stance to teaching in the field, more in line with a cultural transmission or cultural immersion interpretation than an enquiry oriented approach. Contradictory discourses prevailed.

There was little acknowledgement that children may yearn for time-out for quiet reflection; a need so evocatively expressed by participants in relation to their own lives as students. There was a disjuncture between planning for active learning for others, on the one hand; and on the other hand, seeking time for quiet reflection in their own learning. This disjuncture appears to be particularly illuminating when considered against other literature suggesting the desire of young people for time out for quiet reflection in order to make meaning of their lives (Abbott-Chapman, 2000; Webber, 2002) and seemingly, contradictory suggestions that active modes of learning may help to address the alienation students have expressed for SOSE (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994). Participants of this study expressed a yearning for seclusion and time for reflection but did not tend to plan accordingly for children's learning. They tended to follow recommendations for enquiry-based fieldwork, but not in a way that allowed time for reflective thinking. Participants paid lip service to critical thinking but did not make choices for a curriculum and pedagogy conducive to critique.

Although participants of this study recognised that as a group they were characterised by diversity, and even in many instances, desired to teach about difference, through their choice of a controlling impetus to pedagogy they acted to work against their acknowledged values and desires, notably time for quiet reflection. So strong was their desire to promote harmony that they tended to implement an assimilationist pedagogy. Homogeneity tended to be valued over difference. Through their curriculum and pedagogic choices, most probably unwittingly, SOSE was implemented in ways that tended to normalise some children's experience and marginalise others. Although some participants aspired for a curriculum that recognised difference, fear of difference tended to preclude teaching in recognition of the differences that may characterise any group of children they may teach. Fear of managing differences precluded teaching in recognition of the ideals of inclusion.

As a lecturer, through the three pedagogical moments in which the teacher education students and I were involved, I aspired to promote a critical pedagogy of space and place. This did not include critique of the discourses encapsulated in the curriculum documents to any great degree. Through the three pedagogical moments, I mobilised a pedagogical approach that embodied contradictory discourses not overtly acknowledged in Chapter 3. From the enacted pedagogy (including broader discourses of schooling), participants took up and mobilised discourses in ways that were to some extent, at least for them, unprecedented.

The findings of this study suggest that the pedagogical approach taken through the three pedagogical moments did not contribute, to any significant degree, in participants implementing a critical pedagogy of space and place and that this trend, in large part, was due to the preconceptions and referential knowledge that they brought with them to the class. In *The New School* (Appendix A), the dominant modernist school building with its red doors signifying schooling of an idealised kind, which tends to be closed to broader societal discourses, is constraining of students and teachers—even while they remain grounded in multiple worlds. And the school cannot, in itself, constrain them.

It would seem that it is not enough to highlight a critical approach to the understandings (and/or embedding) of broader environments outside of schooling but that ways of transforming them need to be found. As indicated in the third pedagogical moment, raising issues of hegemony and taking a critical theoretical approach to environmental analysis could not counter the trend for participants to interpret the official blueprints in terms of broader, taken-for-granted assumptions about the construction of childhood and associated discourses of schooling. These influences represent another constraining set of referential norms. There is, therefore, an emerging tension between students' own preconceptions, prescriptive curriculum frameworks and the pedagogic intentions of the teacher.

The findings go some way towards elucidating the potential for curricula and pedagogical bias of the learning area and suggest that this should perhaps be brought to the forefront of discussion in learning to teach SOSE—albeit with some degree of speculation about whether other teacher educators may reach similar findings in taking a similar pedagogical approach. The study suggests that in teacher education there is a need to explore more widely the curriculum issues this study has raised and to explore whether these findings of curricular and pedagogic bias are common to other areas of study in teacher education.

In teacher education, it would seem important to promote *a pedagogy of engagement* that does not step back from teaching through difference and diversity or the inherent contradictions of schooling and a critique of its master discourses. It would also seem important to implement a pedagogy that engages and challenges students, as shown in examples discussed in Chapter 8. Such an approach would also involve quite overt acknowledgement of differing discourses of critical thinking. Most importantly, findings indicated that time for quiet reflection is a deeply felt need. This finding suggests that avoiding haste for students of teaching and for the students they will teach may be

educationally sound. Learning does not only depend on activity; no matter what stage of understanding one has reached, knowledge creation and the getting of wisdom require time. Developing an understanding of complex social, cultural, environmental, and political issues requires the opportunity for rigorous intellectual engagement and pedagogical support, including time for reflection. Such implications and ramifications for teacher educators become ever more evident and urgent in overtly contested times.

In times such as the present, it tends to become crystal clear that seeking to teach SOSE through sanitised curricula choices is out of step with reality and not conducive to developing an understanding of the world in which we live. Such choices not only lack recognition of conflict in the present but also in the past: as Carr (1964) points out, albeit from a Eurocentric stance, history is not as anodyne as participants of this study tend to suggest. History is “littered with bloody massacres, pogroms and persecutions, with wars and insurrections” (Abbott-Chapman, 2003, p. 2). Likewise, highly politicised and contested times highlight pedagogical difficulties. It becomes more evident that neither a controlling pedagogy of cultural transmission nor a pedagogy of cultural immersion is appropriate—nor is an enquiry approach that does not include understanding of competing discourses. Any of these approaches has the potential to marginalise and alienate.

In times of international conflict and polarised debates as have existed with the lead-up and initiation of the second Gulf War, teachers have no option but to take contested readings of the local and global into account in their teaching. This becomes especially clear when the media are involved in portraying and possibly distorting “reality.” When complex relational and spatial interconnections are taken into account, it seems that the realities are multiple—all of these many situations impinge on everyday experience. For those actually engaged in the conflict or living in the conflict zone, no matter on what side, the realities may tend to be not only multiple, but also *simultaneous*. This point was passionately made by Grzinic (1998) in her lecture, “Aesthetic Features of the Real and the Virtual Spaces,” as she described her personal experience of sheltering in the cellar of her home in Slovenia whilst watching, with her infant son cradled on her knee, television coverage of the very bombardment from which they were sheltering as bombs rained down and air-raid sirens pierced the air outside.

Despite such immediacy, understanding of the complexities within which one is immersed is almost beyond the bounds of understanding. As scholars of ancient civilisations have suggested “the decline and fall of a civilisation anywhere in the world is always a complicated process, dependent upon multiple political, ethnic, linguistic, religious, economic and even geographical factors which [may be] beyond the grasp of our knowledge (Roux, 1966, pp. 269–370). Added to this is the complexity of understanding the past from the vantage point of the present, a view alluded to by Denning (1998) and Carr (1964).

Yet, in times of conflict there is no shortage of advice about how teachers, among others, should proceed. At such a time, teachers are vulnerable to attacks about their well-intentioned approaches. Teachers, and parents, are in the front line of dealing with complexity even while they are charged with pedagogical roles with their students and/or children. As van Manen (1997, p. 43) suggests, the nature of pedagogy and pedagogical relations between parents and teachers with children is inherently complex, but also involves a moral imperative.

Managing pedagogy at any time would appear to be a complex matter, but ever more so in highly and overtly contested times of immediacy and intensity. Teachers find themselves in an invidious situation—what might be described in colloquial terms as “between a rock and a hard place.” They are likely to be open to sectional attacks for the stances they may take. As reference to newspaper articles indicates, there is no shortage of advice and criticism. In a *Weekend Australian* editorial titled, “Teachers should not indoctrinate” (2003, p. 28), the Australian Education Union has been criticised for taking what it is claimed, is a partisan stance to Australia’s involvement in the United States coalition’s invasion of Iraq in March, 2003 through the cultural immersion of students in activism for peace.

It is not the role of teachers in our schools to impose partisan political views on impressionable minds. The war against Iraq has aroused a fervent debate on the rightness or otherwise of our involvement. But to throw open classrooms to such a divisive debate is questionable, if the presentation of the subject is going to be biased.

Other newspaper articles draw attention to school programs through which schools attempt to celebrate diversity—albeit in the midst of geo-political conflicts. For example, Crossweller (2003, p. 5) reports a Victorian primary school’s celebration of the culturally diverse school population through harmony day—ironically, a photograph of three girls in happy childhood play, is juxtaposed with a major headline, “Unthinkable terrorist threat now fair dinkum” (Chulov, 2003, p. 5). Other advice suggesting how teachers and parents might deal with issues of conflict for children is psychological in its orientation (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1997; “Traumatic time for kids”, 2003). Although considerations of psychological well-being and peaceful co-existence are undoubtedly important, answering children’s questions as truthfully as their age group and level of comprehension will allow is also recognised as an important component of psychological care—but difficult when one reflects that adults simultaneously may be attempting to understand. In their potential roles as generalist teachers, students of early childhood and primary teaching should also consider specific SOSE-related issues in this context. Conscientious teachers must make up their own minds about how to deal with these realities in the classroom while trying to protect young children from images that would clearly be distressing to them but which cannot at all times be avoided.

Teacher education students need guidance to know how to proceed. Guidelines such as “Talking to children about terrorism and war” (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology, 1997) offer some suggestions. These guidelines suggest that children are resilient, and at times desire to

continue with normal everyday activities as well as to take time out to reflect. These guidelines also recommend that children should be supported in their quests to understand the complexities involved—but not beyond what they seek to know. These recommendations seem equally important for educators of children and particularly for teachers and teacher educators. Surely understanding of the complex issues involves understanding many kinds of struggles and the values involved, as well as complex, contested and interdependent socio-cultural environments and their histories. Teachers need to consider issues from many perspectives; they need to convey strong and imaginative powers of empathy, willingness to acknowledge the realities of human suffering and awareness of the difficulty of transcending personal or socio-cultural points of view (Denning, 1998).

Teacher education students should be aware that they may be called upon to deal with difficult and contentious issues as well as to promote opportunities for quiet reflection and our universities should prepare them for this. The thesis' findings suggest that teachers of SOSE should surely remain attuned to the competing discourses that may be bound up in their choices of fieldwork sites for teaching purposes. As teacher educators of SOSE, should we therefore discuss official curricula documents and frameworks used as official blueprints critically with our students and examine their embedded discourses more openly with a view to their practical implementation? Such discussion may be as appropriate within the context of the selection of fieldwork locations as places and spaces laden with values and meanings as for any other context involving curricula and pedagogical choices. Moreover, findings suggest that this kind of critique may be even more important in a climate of on-going revision of curricula frameworks and the introduction of *new* mandates. Such discussions may also have the potential for teacher educators to model ways to deal with socially contentious issues openly and honestly. Moreover, teacher educators might be more likely to be empowered to contribute to the debates in which they find themselves, recognising also that they may do so within highly politicised contexts. As authors such as Drusilla Modjeska (1990) and Lily Brett (2001) acknowledge, silences of the past may continue to live on in the present—but with meanings that are by no means predetermined.

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Appendix A

Paintings referred to within this thesis

The themes of this thesis are located with reference to two paintings by Jeffrey Smart, an Australian born (1921), expatriate artist currently living in Tuscany. On following pages of this section, copies of both paintings are provided for reader reference. Copies of these paintings are included in *Jeffrey Smart retrospective* (Capon, 1999). Table 1 indicates details for the paintings referred to in this thesis and the sources of prints included on the following pages.

Table A.1 Details of paintings and sources of Jeffrey Smart prints used in this thesis

Painting details	Source of photographic print
<i>Corrugated Gioconda</i> 1976 oil on canvas 80.8 X 116.6cm National Gallery of Australia, Canberra 1976.1065© © National Gallery of Australia	Leonie Handreck Rights and Permissions Co-ordinator National Gallery of Australia Parkes Place Parkes ACT 2601 Tel (02) 6240 6481 Fax (02) 6240 6427 copyright@nga.gov.au
<i>The New School</i> 1989 oil on canvas 36 X 94cm private collection © Jeffrey Smart	Stephen H. Rogers B.A. (Syd) Archivist for Jeffrey Smart 26 Plunkett Street Nowra NSW 2541 Tel (02) 4421 0066 Fax (02) 4421 0517 stephen@rogers.net.au

***Corrugated Gioconda* 1976**
oil on canvas
80.8 X 116.6cm
NGA, Canberra 1976.1065

Record Shot Only
Not suitable for reproduction
© National Gallery of Australia,
Canberra

The New School 1989
oil on canvas
36 X 94cm
private collection

Record Shot Only
Not suitable for reproduction

Appendix B

Research correspondence

This section documents formal correspondence with students and evidence of ethics approval from the Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee, University of Tasmania. Copies of correspondence included in this section are indicated below:

- i. Letter inviting students to participate in the research
- ii. Statement of informed consent
- iii. Notification of ethics approval
- iv. Letter advising students of additional information



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education

17 October 1997

To students of Social Education 1 (EPC146)

Your reflections on the fieldwork-based learning this semester are of relevance to my teaching and research interests in the links between everyday, informal and formal learning and decision-making in relation to teaching and learning about society and environment.

Would you be agreeable for me to use this information in possible research analyses and to participate in possible follow-up interviews? Please read the Statement of Informed Consent Form. If you are agreeable for the information to be used in a possible research project, complete the form and forward it to me.

You are assured that your willingness to participate will in no way influence the grades awarded for your work in this or subsequent Social Education units. If you have any further questions about the nature of this study please do not hesitate to contact either Professor John Braithwaite or me.

Phone 03 6324 3264 or email: Robbie.Johnston@educ.utas.edu.au

Robbie Johnston
Lecturer, Early Childhood/Primary Education

THE STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Title of project : Everyday contextual learning, informal learning and formal education: decision-making for contextual learning in early childhood and primary education.

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves the following procedures:
 - completing a questionnaire, "Reflections on Fieldwork Planning"; and
 - possible voluntary involvement in follow-up interviews in 1998.
4. I understand that the following conditions apply to this study:
 - my participation is voluntary;
 - my anonymity is assured i.e. publications will not include any material which enables my identity to be identified; and
 - no information will be disclosed or revealed to any persons other than the researchers.
5. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
6. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice. i.e. if I choose not to be involved in this study, my academic standing will in no way be affected.

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a subject.

Name of subject

Signature of subject Date

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

Name of investigators Professor John Braithwaite
 Robbie Johnston

Signatures of investigators
 Date: 17-10-97

Robbie Johnston
 Date: 17.10.97.

Robbie



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA
Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee, Launceston

18 November 1997

Professor J Braithwaite
Head
Primary Education
UTAS LAUNCESTON

Dear Professor Braithwaite

Ethics Application from Robbie Johnston

Your application to undertake an investigation involving human subjects titled, "Everyday Contextual learning, informal learning and formal education: decision making for contextual learning in early childhood and primary education" has been received and recommended for approval by the Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee in Launceston subject to the following amendments being made:

- voluntary participation of students is ensured
- to ensure anonymity of participants for example by using a code name or number
- to include contact name and number for Ethics Committee Executive Officer Chris Hooper as an avenue of addressing any individual concerns

Approval is subject to annual review.

If you have any queries about these requests, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Sub-Committee. Thank you for your submission and best wishes with your research.

Yours sincerely

Ms Di Vernon-Reade

pp Ms Di Vernon-Reade/Dr J Wilson on behalf of
Social Sciences Ethics Sub-Committee, Launceston
(Ms. L Carey, Ms Trudy Cowley, Assoc Prof Mike Hazelton, Dr Marion Myhill, Ms Della Rowley, Ms Di Vernon-Reade, Dr J Wilson)

cc: Chris Hooper

PO Box 1214 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone 03 63242763
Facsimile 03 63242765
E-mail Marion.Myhill@utas.edu.au



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education

2 December 1997

To students of Social Education 1 (EPC146)

In the lecture of Week 13 a questionnaire was distributed to Social Education 1 students. If you were unable to hand in the questionnaire and the consent form that accompanied it, you may still wish to do so. I have therefore provided you with additional copies and a postage paid envelope to mail the forms back to the University of Tasmania. I would very much appreciate your contribution.

Details about the nature of the research study are included in the letter and consent form attached. You are assured that the following conditions apply to the research study:

- your participation is voluntary;
- the anonymity of all participants is ensured ie. by using a code name or number to replace the student name;
- you may contact either of the researchers (Professor John Braithwaite and Robbie Johnston), or Ms Chris Hooper, Ethics Committee Executive Officer, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay, Hobart (ph. 03 6226 2763) if you have any queries about the request.

Your information should assist in the continuing refinement of Social Education curriculum units for undergraduate students. If you are willing to participate, please send both the signed consent form and the completed questionnaire in the envelope enclosed as soon as possible.

Robbie Johnston
Lecturer, Early Childhood/Primary Education

PO Box 1214 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone 03 6324 3725
Facsimile 03 6324 3048
E-mail Robbie.Johnston@educ.utas.edu.au

Appendix C

Research instruments

Survey questions

Table C.1 Questions listed on survey form: Reflection on fieldwork planning

Section	Introductory statement	Questions
A.	Reflect on the site you selected for fieldwork planning ...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What site/s did you select for fieldwork planning for Assignment 2?2. How would you categorise the site/s?3. Why did you select this field site for fieldwork planning?4. Why is the field site you selected important for the implementation of SOSE in the early childhood or primary classroom?
B.	From close observation of the display of bulletin boards ...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. What kinds of field sites have been most frequently selected for the fieldwork planning assignment?6. Why do you think these kinds of sites have been selected?
C.	Reflect on the independent fieldwork conducted earlier in this semester (Week 8) ...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. What place/s on the Launceston campus were <u>preferred</u> environments identified by you?8. Describe this place and its location on the Launceston campus.9. Why did you select this preferred site?
D.	Reflect on the purpose of this tutorial exercise ...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">10. What do you think is the relevance of the tutorial exercise for your teaching practices as a prospective early childhood/primary educator?
E.	Please answer the following questions ...	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Are you a mature age student or school leaver? (ma/sl)12. Do you intend to be an early childhood or primary educator? (ece/primary/undecided)13. What was your place of residence during your early childhood and primary schooling? (rural/urban/ both)14. Are you: male/female?

Interview schedule

Table C.2 below indicates the main questions used as the basis of the interview. Where appropriate, these questions were supplemented by follow-up questions to encourage elaboration.

Table C.2 Interview schedule: Questions used as the basis of the interview

Section	Introductory statements or questions	Question
A.	[Permission to tape interview; opportunity to ask questions of clarification]	Please tell me more about the site you selected for the fieldwork assignment ... How would you describe the site? What were its characteristics or qualities?
B.	I'd now like to reflect on the decisions that you made ...	When you were thinking about the assignment, what other sites did you think about or consider? Why did you decide not to focus on those places? Looking back, which three sites would you definitely not have chosen for fieldwork? How did you decide to focus on [your chosen site]? How did you find out about [your chosen site]?
C.	Thinking now in more detail about the educational aspects ...	What do you think children would learn? List three things important from your viewpoint.
D.	Reflecting on the assignment itself ...	If you imagine that you were doing the same assignment now, what kinds of places might you choose—the same or others instead? What do you think may have influenced these decisions? Would there be other qualities you may look for in a site? Reflecting on the educational significance, can you tell me what you think are the three most important aspects (of this location)? What qualities would you look for in choosing now?