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A Meta-dilemma in the Ethics of Qualitative Evaluation
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Introduction

This paper describes the problems of access in a naturalistic
study into evaluative practices in Visual Arts. A naturalistic
methodology as outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1981 & 1985) and
Rubin (1982) has been chosen as an appropriate method for an
investigation of value. This research is grounded by a
naturalistic investigation of conflicting evaluative paradigms
surrounding art education. The appropriateness of the
naturalistic research design for the intended purpose of my study
is discussed.

In particular I want to consider the conception and process of
research from the perspective of my experience of research in
progress. My account of the dilemmas in the beginning phases of
my naturalistic study entail issues of funding, bureaucracy, the
impact of time, subjectivity and ethics. Overarching ethical
considerations also emerge which are common to both myself as
researcher and the major gatekeepers and stakeholders involved in
the study. The main concerns are for establishing an authentic
research design and consideration of the confidentiality of
respondents. However, these shared intentions, commitments and
concerns do not seem to result in smooth implementation. The
exacting conditions required of the researcher in academic
practice and the requisite conditions of the various gatekeepers
and stakeholders involved in the study expose a meta-dilemma in
the ethics of conducting an inquiry when conditions are imposed.
I contend that it is all right to say that you intend to conduct
a naturalistic study, however, the realities of a commitment to
the setting place enormous difficulties on the process of
implementation.

Conception

The research study was conceived from my teaching experiences in
secondary schools and subsequent research work in a Masters
Honours program. In common with research by (Ball, 1991, 166),
"...the origins of [this study] lie in a sense of frustration."
Practical dilemmas arise for art educators when they undertake

evaluation in their art classrooms. Competing assumptions about the nature of art, education, evaluative practice and tutorial convention result in what Guba and Lincoln (1981) refer to as an action problem for teachers. Conflicts arise that render choices from alternative courses of action moot. Disjunctions arising between what is said and believed and thence what is actually done warrant investigation.

The national and state political education agendas involving the increased bureaucratic control of curriculum provide recent instances of some of the issues competing for teacher time and space. A type of behavioralistic revival can be evidenced in current bureaucratic documentation such as the State Board of Studies (1991) Course Performance Descriptors for Year Ten in Visual Arts. Visual arts is deemed to require flexible methods of reporting. Yet, the Five Processes of Perceiving, Responding,

Organising, Manipulating and Evaluating identified in the State Visual Arts Syllabus (1987) could just as easily be called Visual Arts behaviours: where action has been construed as performance.

"The section at the top, Areas for Assessment, provides groupings of the knowledge and skills objectives from the syllabus. These objectives are both observable and measurable. Objectives from the affective domain, such as attitudes and interests, have not been included because they should not be used in determining a student's grade."
(State Board of Studies, Visual Arts Course Performance Descriptors, 1991, 2).

This credentialling mechanism aligns the five visual arts learning processes with an extrinsic School Certificate. Knowledge and skills objectives must be observable and measurable behaviours. It has as its basis the behavioralistic "... view of teaching as an "applied science." (Zeichner in Giroux, 1988, 123). Grundy's (1990) analysis of School's Renewal in NSW discusses a similar problem in what she sees as "... a technical understanding of the evaluation process." (Grundy, 1990, 3). An interest in technical and instrumental control, with its underlying management pedagogy, continues to dominate educational discourse in 1993. Such concerns underpin some of the bureaucratic problems of access outlined in this paper.

The latest exhaustive attempt to fit the discourse of School's Renewal can be evidenced by the State Board of Studies (1992) Subject Outcome Statement for Creative Arts 7-12. In contrast to the vagueness of the current Visual Arts Syllabus, where teachers are asked to align assessment tasks with such loosely defined aims as "the potential to think and act creatively" (1987, 6), a

seemingly polemic position is established. The Outcome Statement lists more than thirty pages of outcomes for Visual Arts. King (1992) has dissected the following details. There are eighty one outcomes listed. Using an average of four assessment tasks per year one student would be assessed three hundred and twenty four times. An average class of twenty five students would provide the teacher with eight thousand, one hundred assessments. Five classes of twenty five students would yield forty thousand, five hundred assessments over that one year period. Constructing such a schedule is an extremely difficult proposition.

In contrast, the current (1987) Visual Arts Syllabus provides little direction to teachers in terms of their evaluative practice. Theoretical perspectives are not provided. Evaluating as one of the five visual arts processes has both an intrinsic merit based role in students' evaluative practice and an extrinsic role as a performance descriptor. Reconciling and aligning such evaluative strategies with actual practice may reveal further disjunctions for teachers. The (1987) 7-10 syllabus contains four pages out of a twenty eight page document on the topics of Assessment of Student Achievement and Evaluation of Programs. Suggestions are vague and consider student use of media, processes and subject matter. It is suggested (1987, 27) that the effectiveness of the sequences of learning experiences can be considered by asking questions such as, "have the sequence of learning experiences developed the students' visual perception, sensory awareness and imagination?"

Constructing a schedule to ascertain and measure visual perception for example, is problematic. The disjunctions apparent between the nature of art and evaluative practice represented by the Visual Arts Syllabus, Performance Descriptors and Outcome Statements provide examples of the conflicting value frameworks surrounding art educators. The problem suggested is manifest in

many aspects of art pedagogy. Teachers are subverted in their efforts to achieve ideal conditions. Brown (1991) points to a similar practical dilemma "When different poles of knowing in art are forced together..." This dilemma he suggests results in art teacher guilt, "... a conflict between assumptions about the nature of art and tutorial convention."
(Brown, 1991, 13).

In an attempt to investigate such concerns a highly descriptive and detailed map evaluative practice in art education is the intended result of my research. My main interest is in evaluative practice as a method of teaching value, not the whole question of evaluation. There is already considerable research covering the field of evaluation where program evaluation and assessment are

the driving forces. In the art educational field a concern with evaluation methods and student assessment is evidenced in the work of Haynes (1985), Richardson (1980 & 1984), Maling (1983), McBryde & van der Heide (1989) and Orme (1987). Evaluation criteria are dealt with by Hoepfer (1984), Boughton (1984) and Zimmer (1981).

However, most evaluation models and studies reflect pre-determined value frameworks evidenced here by McBryde and van der Heide's (1989) study of evaluative practice. The study describes the processes and rationales behind student assessment practices in secondary colleges in the ACT. This is a review of existing evaluative criteria and established assessment practice. The significance of my research is represented by the naturalistic investigation of conflicting evaluative paradigms surrounding art education. Very little research into the beliefs and practices about evaluation by art educators has been conducted. The investigation of multiple perspectives and individual meanings is not strongly represented in art educational research. Simply carrying out an evaluation of existing programs or curriculum will not produce any clear terms for mapping evaluative practice. It therefore becomes necessary to break the circularity of evaluation, to break clear of the field. The use of naturalistic methodology becomes imperative. Its emergent and pluralistic nature vital in any attempt to escape personal baggage and investigate underlying value frameworks.

A naturalistic paradigm, outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1981), is an appropriate qualitative method for such an investigation of value. This ethnographic approach portrays the concerns and issues of people in terms of value conflicts. Rubin (1982, 61), uses Madeja (1977) to explain that the naturalistic method is suited to an investigation of multiple perspectives and individual meanings. Similar notions are valued in art educational pedagogy.

Research Process

The following account of the dilemmas of the beginning phases of a naturalistic study illuminates aspects of material data which were not initially apparent in 1992. The subsequent effect of such unacknowledged material on the direction and form of the study will be considered. A quandary of how to conduct an inquiry when conditions are imposed will be laid open. In this paper a characterisation of my real life experiences form the major reference points.

Rubin (1982,) has identified a three phase naturalistic evaluation process, by contrasting the naturalistic approach

"with more conventional pre-ordinate designs that utilize a
priori concepts stated as hypotheses and that attempt to test

these specific hypotheses in a controlled environment." (Rubin,
1982, 58). The three phases are familiarisation, action and
synthesis. Even though she is describing an approach to
assessment and program evaluation, the analytical procedures used
are appropriate qualitative devices for this study. She
emphasizes emergent design qualities, a responsive approach from
(Stake (1975) and Guba & Lincoln (1981) in Rubin 1982); and a
pluralistic value perspective. Using Rubin's model as a framework
each phase of my study is outlined as:

Familiarisation Phase - concerned with a basic acquaintance with
the field, the development of initial schedules and analysis
procedures and gaining entrance to the three settings chosen for
the study. Identifying stakeholders and gatekeepers relevant to
the study and securing their approval.
Action Phase - interviews with respondents, unobtrusive
observation and document analysis are used to uncover significant
issues emerging from actual practice. Analysis of material and
emerging concerns are reviewed at regular intervals by an auditor
and with respondents via member checks.

Synthesis Phase - the aim here is to make the findings relevant
to the audience of the study. Interpretations of issues and
concerns should present the multiple viewpoints and values of the
respondents.

The original timetable for the study as set out in my Research
Proposal spanned two years of part time study divided as follows:

Year 1 - (1992)   Familiarisation Phase -6 months
               Begin Action Phase - 6 months

Year 2 - (1993)   Complete Action Phase - 6 months
               Synthesis Phase - 6 months

It is nearly the end of Year 2, October 1993 and I am still
preoccupied with the familiarisation phase of the study. The
reason for this paper is to set out some of the problems of doing
qualitative research from my experience and perspective. An
explanation of the difficulties encountered in the practical
implementation of a naturalistic study entail, issues of funding,
bureaucracy, the impact of time, subjectivity and ethics.

Funding

The study could not proceed unless funding was gained. This procedural problem existed on two levels which required rapid cognisance. First, the importance of obtaining funding to begin the project and second, the difficulty of obtaining funding.

The significance of funding was an early realisation and focused on a personnel budget for the Action Phase of the study. The provision of funds for within school casual relief would enable the three art educators involved in the project to participate in a meaningful way. Asking three secondary art educators to squeeze extra duties into an already overcrowded timetable is unreasonable and unethical in a naturalistic study which relies on voluntary co-operation of respondents. Characteristic features of a naturalistic method, such as building mutual trust and feelings of genuine researcher interest in respondents may be enhanced by an offer of relief from teaching duties. Furthermore, an example of the State Department of School Education's Application to Conduct Research form obtained from one region, contains a section for researchers to indicate if either their Research or Evaluation is externally funded or associated with an academic institution. The authenticity and reliability of the study may be enhanced from the perspective of the gatekeepers and stakeholders (such as the Department of School Education and individual Principals involved in the study), if funding from an unimpeachable body such as a University was obtained. From my perspective permission to conduct research would seemingly be easier to gain if funding details were in place.

The practicalities and difficulties of obtaining funding were a major source of disruption and delay to the proposed timetable. A variety of potential sources were explored. The State Department of School Education as the organisation governing the school's selected for the study, administers Regional Research Committees. The type of research that I am interested in pursuing falls into a category which must be referred to the Regional Research Committee as I am not on the staff of any of the three schools involved in the study, that is "All research to be conducted by personnel outside the school, research of a sensitive nature and research involving more than one school must be referred to the Regional Committee." (Department of School Education, 1992).

Being thrown at the gatekeeper community therefore emerged at an early stage. The Department also encouraged the presentation of research for Regional funding. Progress reports and submission of report findings on completion of the study, together with publication of research are requirements for all research undertaken. Whilst it is recognised that any funding body would

require progress reports a certain degree of reluctance was felt concerning the Department as the funding body. As the major gatekeeper for the study, the Department holds the control of permission to conduct research in schools and by implication the studies existence. This occurrence together with Departmental funding if secured and publication imperative may have resulted in the study being subject to the gatekeeper community, resulting in possible impositions that may skew and constrain the study.

Other sources of funding that were investigated from the beginning of my Master Honours Program follow: October 1992 - Australian Postgraduate Research Awards (A.P.R.A) as a part-time Masters Honours student and full-time secondary art teacher which was unsupported. May 1992 - University Award from the Faculty Management Research Committee (F.M.R.C). as a part-time Masters Honours student and full-time secondary art teacher, which was unsupported. May 1993 - University Award from the Faculty

Management Research Committee (F.M.R.C.) as a full-time Staff member and part-time Masters Honours student which was successful. As with the Department of School Education's Application to Conduct Research, each funding application required considerable debate and input concerning the phraseology and type of application required. The 1993 successful version succinctly set out the benefits to the University of my current research. Funding was requested for three days for each of the three art educators involved in the study. Without support of approximately $160.00 per day which is based on a teachers average daily casual relief rate for state teachers, implementation of the project would not be possible. Each application to the University F.M.R.C. required a two page outline of the nature of the study using the following headings:

* Aims and significance
* Research Plan, Methods and Techniques
* Justification of Budget
* Relevant Publications
* Timetable

A report is required at the end of the funding year. There are no other constraints or impositions. Having commenced the search for supporting funds in February 1992 it has come to pass that adequate funds are available from May 1993. This just leaves the dilemma of finding time to implement data collection.

Bureaucracy

In addition to funding obstacles, a contrast between the various

gatekeepers and my conception of research design presented a further procedural dilemma in the research process. I approached the major gatekeeper in the study, the State Department of School Education in March 1992 regarding the conduct of research in government schools by region. Included in the package of information that I received following my inquiry were two documents titled Regional Research Guidelines (1990) and Conducting Research in Schools Guidelines for Applicants (1990). A form titled Application to Conduct Research in State Departmental Schools was attached to the second document. Under the heading Design and Procedures qualitative research is mentioned. "For qualitative research, specified information on areas to be investigated, questions to be asked, and the proposed methods for gathering information must be provided." (State Department of School Education, 1990).

This requirement is difficult to fulfil. Pre-specification of questions is not an authentic means for gathering material in the research design that I have identified. Also in the package received from the Department was a letter which set out some guiding conditions, dated March 1992. This was accompanied by yet another form titled Application to Conduct Research in Metropolitan North Schools. This second application form did not mention qualitative research. A disjunction between the two application forms is an added encumbrance. The information required on this form focused on the authenticity and position of the researcher, their institution (if relevant), name of School Principal (if in-school) and other necessary information. However, the dilemmas for a researcher conducting a naturalistic study expanded when the documentation to accompany the application requires copies of all letters to be sent, tests, questionnaires or interview schedules. The implication of testing and the possibility of pre-specifying all letters, interviews and other empirically conceived data gathering devices invoked the pre-ordinate research design abandoned by Rubin (1982) and Guba &

Lincoln (1981, 1985 & 1991).

Casual encounters and unobtrusive observation remain unacknowledged by the Department of School Education. They want a hypothesis. However, the concerns, issues and multiple meanings of respondents are emergent in a naturalistic study. From the perspective of the auditor of the study such impositions from the gatekeeper may skew the nature of the project, compromising or distorting it. The perspectives of each of the stakeholders, gatekeepers and auditor of the study all vary and shape the direction and nature of the study.

The development of initial interview schedules have also been a

focus in the Familiarisation phase of the study. In particular
the material gathering and analysis procedures to be used. The
first schedule is planned as a structured interview, where it is
possible to identify an area for investigation. The material will
then be analysed and re-introduced to the respondent in a non-
structured interview situation. The emphasis on the analysis of
emergent concerns and issues of the respondent as a focus for
subsequent non-structured interviews is a necessary part of my
naturalistic research design. Setting out this non-structured
interview in an authentic way is impractical if pre-specified
questions are required.

An extensive statement setting out the relative merits of the
naturalistic method versus the pre-specification of scientific
inquiry is a necessary adjunct to this application. The
acceptance of which is subject to a Regional Research Committee.
The clarification of meanings in use and a highly descriptive map
of evaluative practice in art education is the intended result of
my research. Such information and thick description is unlikely
to be gleaned from specific and pre-specified tests and
questionnaires. The warranted value of such instruments is
limited in a vexed and contested field such as evaluation. The
committees views on the educational value of this project may be
very different from my own. Applicants are asked to note "that
provision of all the required information at this stage will
expedite approval." (Application to Conduct Research in
Metropolitan North Schools, 1992).

Research to date has focused on attempts to write appropriate
letters to the three Principals and respondents involved in the
study and establishing informal contact with respondents. That
is, attempting to adequately complete some of the documentation
required to gain entrance to the settings. During this time the
secondary gatekeepers in the study, the Principals of each school
remain uninformed. The school system guidelines set out
procedures to be followed.

"When a study is approved by the Director-General or the
Assistant Director General (Region) the relevant Principals,
Cluster Directors and regional personnel should be informed in
writing of the approval. Where research is at school level,
approval is provided only for the research to approach the
Principal's of the school's concerned to seek their co-operation
in the study. The final decision for a school's involvement is
made by the Principal of the school."
    (Conducting Research in Schools, 1990, 3),

Principals only hear of the research once regional approval has
been given. Their right to approve and/or withdraw from the
research at any time is also set out. Rights to impose any

specific conditions are based on the Principal receiving "full
details of all aspects of the research, including the research
instruments before agreement is given" (Conducting Research in

Schools, 1990, 3).

The difficulty here focuses on the type and amount of explanation
about the project, that the system requires, the school requires
and the respondents require. Disclosure of all aspects of the
research to the system and school Principals necessitates their
willingness to accept that issues and concerns will be emergent
throughout the study. An acceptance of the naturalistic method as
a research approach which may engage some unexpected and
previously unacknowledged data is part of a process which many
Principals in 1993 may not care to engage.

Informing the respondents of all aspects of the research is
another predicament. If respondents are informed about exactly
what the researcher is investigating their responses and
participation may be corrupted. The instances of research
subjects disclosing what the researcher wishes to hear may be
increased. The reason for human instrumentation, observation and
interviews is precisely to gain insights which may not be
revealed in an objective questionnaire. Decisions regarding the
amount and type of information which should be given to each
gatekeeper and/or stakeholder are closely linked to ethical
considerations and the degree of stake that each holder has in
the study. I am for instance mindful of the need to avoid
deception as in the feeling that one has been set up or tricked.

The Impact of Time

Funding and bureaucracy the two major problems of access outlined
above, combine with the impact of time to enlarge the context and
scope of access problems at system, school, art community and
personal levels. Initial contact was established with the
respondents selected to participate in the study, in early 1992.
Since this time a considerable number of changes and subsequent
procedural difficulties have emerged. Achieving a degree of
authentic equivalence between the impositions that impact on the
study and the research design and methodology focus on ethical
dilemmas. These dilemmas arise from a number of sources.

Dilemmas of Subjectivity and Ethics

Dilemmas of subjectivity and ethics loom most pressingly in the mind of the researcher undertaking this kind of inquiry. The problems cluster in the following ways: The changing educational context, calls for increased accountability, confidentiality and informed consent, the small art educational community and reciprocity, encounters with my own subjectivity and belief system and my personal and professional relationship to respondents.

The Changing Educational Context

External factors affecting the study have varied. Most particularly the respondents increasingly demanding professional life as teachers. For example, gaining the position of Advanced Skills Teacher. To attain the position the teacher completes a form and is interviewed by a panel of three, which has executive representatives from another school. If they are deemed eligible the teacher is then placed on a list which is current for twelve months. The number of positions is determined by the Cluster Director and is based on the numbers of teachers in each school. Those on the eligibility list are ranked and a restricted number

of positions are offered. This position requires negotiation with the Principal concerning the duties of the teacher, for a small allowance of an extra $24.45 net per fortnight. (This figure is based on the individuals annual salary rate. The example uses the figure of $38,950 per annum in this state in 1993). These added demands intensify workloads and may increase division in the teaching community. The push for qualifications and seniority may reduce the amount of co-operation offered to an independent researcher. Accordingly respondents as the primary stakeholders require more stringent parameters, more information, more reassurance. Setting out the reasons why a respondent should be involved and exactly what they gain from participating in the study, is an increasingly difficult task. Against this backdrop it is anticipated that the gatekeepers of the study namely Principals and school systems will also require increasingly stringent parameters to be established before research is undertaken.

Calls for Increased Accountability

The deliberations over funding and access procedures mean that I have had to maintain respondents' ongoing interest in the project against increased calls for accountability and competition amongst schools for their customers. Kenway (1993) discusses the incursions and impositions of economic rationalism via business and vocational models into schools. The background of a behaviouralistic revival sketched earlier in this paper increases the level of accountability required of schools and their

systems. Increased levels of competition and division amongst the schools in this state is evidenced by enlarged numbers of Selective and Technology high schools, together with Centres of Excellence in various subject areas. Increasingly schools are having to compete for custom. Against this backdrop a respondents' reluctance to participate in a research project which does not set out a founding proposition may result in the researcher intensifying detailed explanations of the project. Being accountable may compromise the research. Choosing appropriate terms for such a discussion is a difficult proposition in a study which relies on discovering emergent concerns and issues, rather than implanting expectations and probable replies in respondents.

In March 1992 such a detailed explanation was requested by a respondent during a casual encounter. Such encounters are not unusual in the relatively small art educational field. On this occasion I was able to provide a description of inherent difficulties of obtaining funding and assurances that their participation in the study will be gained using the formal requirements of the school, the system and the university. After being thrown into the school and respondent communities such explanations if not previously considered, may place limitations on the authenticity of the study.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

The Department of School Education's Regional (1992) Application to Conduct Research form asks on page one, "Confidentiality: what procedures will be in place?:" At this time my application to conduct research and required documentation is still being formalised. The confidentiality procedures that are in place in my study are set out in the pre-specified draft letters required by the State Department of School Education, as support documentation on the application to conduct research in schools. My procedures of confidentiality entail alerting the respondents to the formalities of naturalistic research protocol. Respondents are asked not to discuss or compare their experiences of the study, particularly with other participants, until the debriefing. All material collected from this letter on will be colour coded, rather than named. References to particular schools and individuals will be removed from all documents and reports. Information collected during the study will be stored securely with me. The three sites chosen for the study will be conceived as one setting for the purposes of research reporting. This means that the identity of individual schools and participants will be

further protected. My decision to include these various procedures is a negotiated position between the respondents right to privacy and the requirements of the research design.

Placing myself in the shoes of a respondent in my study was a necessary phase in the development of an ethical position on confidentiality. The evaluative practices of art educators has emerged as a contested field which is closely linked to assessment and accountability. The ethical commitment to the respondents in my study is linked to the political nature of education in 1993. The acceptance or denial of my confidentiality procedures depends on a three phase process. First the decision of a regional departmental research committee, then the review of a school Principal and finally the views of the respondents. Of the need for provision of further negotiation I have no doubt. Needs for accountability and confidentiality will change according to the specific context and the needs of the Department of School Education and each school setting.

The confidentiality requirements on the (1990) "Application to Conduct Research in State Departmental Schools" requests different information from that required in the (1992) regional application. Another disjunction in the bureaucratic documentation emerges. The 1990 form requests information on "Provision for the protection of participants' privacy" and "Provision for informed consent". The dominance of what Guba (1991) would call conventional or scientific beliefs is apparent in the Department of School Education's request for informed consent. "Originally developed for biomedical research informed consent is now applicable when participants may be exposed to physical or emotional risk." (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, 112). Glesne and Peshkin also suggest that the provision of informed consent may be readily accepted. Yet, "If it were required for all research projects, however, then much of the work of the qualitative researcher would be curtailed. Written consent would eliminate all unobtrusive field observations and informal conversations." (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, 112).

This point was raised in a generic way earlier in this paper under the heading of bureaucracy, where casual encounters and unobtrusive observation remain unacknowledged by the Department of School Education. An ethical dilemma over the Department of School Education's requirement for informed consent and the researcher's requirement for unobtrusive observation in a qualitative study is apparent here.

This naturalistic study is personal, not dispassionate, objective nor rational in the scientific sense. Permission to carry out

unobtrusive observation is therefore not requested on the consent
form. Instead the relative merits and imperative of using a
naturalistic methodology for my research are set out. The
strategies that I am employing to negotiate a workable position
follow. The letter that accompanies the Principals consent form
sets out the nature of qualitative research, especially the focus
on mapping actual evaluative practice and emergent concerns. The
significance of the research such as the additional
understandings that will extend and clarify evaluation theories
and practices is also established. In my study these points are
vital in gaining the Principals' understanding of the need for
unobtrusive observation. An authentic naturalistic design relies
on this method of data gathering. The number of visits and the
nature and type of event that will take place are detailed. A
minimal amount of disruption to the school community is
envisaged, details of which will be important to the Principal.
The involvement of students is negligible, teachers are provided
with casual relief and I will unobtrusively observe teachers in
classrooms and engaging in other aspects of school life. By
explaining the significance of the methodology and the intended
results of my research it is hoped that a negotiated position may
be established.

Other aspects of gaining permission to conduct the research have
been addressed by the inclusion of informed consent. We are
reminded here that the provision for informed consent was
requested by the Department of School Education. This is a
legitimate and important consideration. Who else will protect
interests of the school communities and individuals ? Walford's
(1991) description of the long access negotiations with the
Principal as the primary gatekeeper in his study, reveal similar
ethical concerns. After all, I can't tell Principals to protect
their subjects. My ethical responsibilities as a member of both
the research and art educational community also represents a
strongly similar legitimate concern for the subjects involved in
my study. My responsibility for an authentic and appropriate
naturalistic research design also has ethical implications. The
incompatibility of the two systems in terms of informed consent
from the scientific paradigm and unobtrusive observation from the
naturalistic paradigm reveal a mutually exclusive set of dilemmas
at an ethical level.

In writing the draft letters to respondents and Principals for my
application to the Department of School Education, I have
followed Glesne & Peshkin's (1992, 111-112) outline of informed
consent. In an attempt to empower the researched two different
colour coded Respondent and Principal consent forms have been
designed. The form designed for respondents is accompanied by a
letter and considers awareness of the voluntary nature of their
participation, any aspects that might affect their well-being,

such as the small art educational community and their right to stop participation at any point in the study.

The form designed for Principals focuses on gaining their permission to conduct the study. First, permission for the respondent to participate in the study. Next, permission for the school to participate in the study, with the provision for conditions to be added. Then, permission to copy school, faculty and individual teacher records governed by the provisions for confidentiality outlined above. At this time I am still working through the nature, method and type of consent required for publication to be considered. Negotiations in the form of member checks will enable the presentation of material to respondents

and Principals, for their consideration. They will be invited to comment, they may differ and disagree or simply withdraw from the study. The possibility of mortality is omnipresent in a study of this nature. Throughout the research process negotiations and communication between the researcher, respondents, gatekeepers and stakeholders is of vital importance. The type, amount and nature of the material will necessarily differ between the various audiences in the study. The similar concern for the provision confidentiality by both myself and the Department of School Education is apparent. This has necessitated a thorough investigation of the Department's need for informed consent and the researcher's need for an authentic qualitative, unobtrusive method. For the purposes of this paper the ethical dilemma concerns the seemingly mutually exclusive nature of each audiences requirements.

A meta-dilemma in ethical considerations is emergent. How people are willing to participate in the study is a fundamental ethical question. Confidentiality is not just about ensuring that it occurs. Ethics is an inherent structural principle when dealing with human affairs and is not to be dismissed lightly. A dilemma of the human condition that is not apparent in nature and science is revealed. The dilemma is the incompatibility of the two systems. This incompatibility reflects a structural problem of logical entities. A dilemma reflects the logical problem if x then not y. The ethical assumptions of each system or audience may all be legitimate, however, two ethical systems both trying to act on a set ethical agenda may be self defeating. The subsequent negotiations which in this case are yet to be enacted may as (Walford, 1991, 95), describes, reveal the need for my self-censorship of whole areas of interest. The possibility of changes to the authentic nature of the study must be noted.

The Small Art Educational Community, Reciprocity and Subjectivity

Being thrown at the respondent community also emerged at an early stage in 1992. This is especially obvious in the small art educational community within which this study is located. News concerning courses of further study, achievements and just general gossip travels fast. The careers of respondents within this small field may be compromised if respondents and schools are named. These aspects of the research which may affect the respondents well-being, are set out in my draft letters together with suggested strategies to avoid such dilemmas. (See section above on confidentiality).

The position held by each respondent within their own school and the art educational community may affect the level of commitment to the project and perhaps shape the amount and type of information received by the researcher. Commitment by the respondent to the project is a necessary condition for progress. In addition to the provision of confidentiality a level of mutual trust and rapport is an essential requirement for the respondents authentic participation in this study. Glazer in Glasne & Peshkin (1992, 122), provide a definition of the notion of reciprocity as "...the exchange of favours and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community" (Glazer, 1982, 50). Reciprocity is also discussed by Glesne & Peshkin (1992, 122-124). They acknowledge that, "Researchers do not want to view people as means to ends of their choosing. [and] Equivalency may be the wrong standard to use in judging the adequacy of your reciprocity" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, 122).

In my study the notion of building an authentic equivalence began before 1992. A framework that acknowledges the respondents time,

company and contribution to the study has been initiated and has involved working with respondents on many levels. Working in art educational societies, volunteering for collaborative marking, finding colleagues from student days, studying at a tertiary level and going to in-service courses. Opportunities to engage executive staff who may be in charge of a respondent are contingent in this environment and must be prepared for. In April 1992 an opportunity to engage the interest of an executive gatekeeper in the project resulted in a general discussion concerning the value of finding out more about our evaluative practices. Engaging with the respondent community in this way as a participant in the art educational milieu reinforces my sense of ethical commitment to the respondents in my study. As I am still part of the art educational community rather than an objectified manager conducting a Head Office Quality Assurance Review, I am conscious of the need for the reciprocal nature of actions.

The conventional dualist objectivist epistemology, (Guba &
Lincoln, 1991, 159) which asserts that an observer can remain
detached and distant from the object of study in a value free
environment is often called 'subject-object dualism'. This
approach to respondents reflects a mode of inquiry which denies
my responsibility and participation in the art educational
community. Head Office reviewers don't have to live with their
policies, however, as a member of the art educational community
we all have to live with the consequences of my study. As an art
educator in a secondary setting for eleven years and now as a
tertiary lecturer we share the culture of art education. The
respondents and schools chosen for the study are closely located
and the respondents are all known to me on various personal and
professional levels. An ethical need for an authentic equivalence
between the confidentiality of respondents in my study, the art
educational community and the research design has led to
explanations of reciprocity in letters to respondents. Such an
authentic equivalence may allow respondents to find their voice
and provide opportunities for self-reflection. The frustration
and angst that I experienced in my evaluative practice during
eleven years as a secondary visual arts educator provided
inspiration for my study. The respondents in my study may have
experienced similar dilemmas and it is hoped that the exposure of
concerns and conflicts will also be the source of reciprocity.
Encounters with my Own Subjectivity and Belief System

Recognition acknowledgment and cognisance of areas of possible
difficulty have required me to constantly consider my role as a
researcher and how I view the role of respondents. Glesne and
Peshkin's discussion of the importance and awareness of your own
subjectivity, seeks to clarify the motivational aspects of
qualitative research. For example, "... what questions that drive
your work, what emotions you feel as you contemplate the subject
of your research, are clearly important matters." (1992, 100-
107). Initially in 1992 I was focused on naturalistic methodology
and the theoretical underpinnings of my research study. However,
early in 1993 questions concerning my ethical responsibilities to
respondents and schools emerged. The personal ethical dilemmas
experienced have been acute. The confidentiality of and sense of
community with respondents whilst maintaining an authentic
research design have been problematic. Charting a path between
misguided notions of myself as exploiter, champion of the
subject-object dualists and my shared responsibility to the art
educational community has required deep reflection and intense
reading of ethical research literature. These deliberations have
led to this paper concerning the problems of access in a
naturalistic study. The ethical dilemmas outlined above provide
an added source of data for my study and were unanticipated at

the beginning in 1992.

Personal and Professional Relationship to Respondents

The relationship both personally and professionally between
respondents and myself is linked to ethical notions of the art
educational community discussed under the previous heading. As
the formal permission of each Principal involved in the study
will not be sought until regional approval has been gained,
reciprocity on a school level is problematic. Contingent
encounters with schools are few and if they occur via my position
as a lecturer, must be unimpeachable. The history of my
encounters and relationships with school communities is also
important in the small art educational field in which my study is
located.

Since moving from the position of a secondary art teacher to that
of a tertiary lecturer my locutionary place has changed however,
I am still a member of the art educational culture. A sense of
that change has pervaded some of the contingent encounters with
respondents in our shared small art educational field. In March
1993, negotiations between two colleagues in the same setting,
was necessitated by a conflict of roles. One colleague is a
voluntary respondent in my study, the other colleague was being
offered a paid paraprofessional duty by my institution. A meeting
was arranged and we discussed the following details. The small
pool of art educators and my change in responsibility from
teacher to lecturer, necessitated changes to what could be asked
of both colleagues and accounted for the conflict of roles. The
research respondent had been asked to participate in my study in
late 1991. The other colleague had been selected on merit for the
paid role in March 1993. I wanted to set out for both colleagues
the situation, as clearly there may be some feelings about the
responsibilities of the research and the responsibilities of a
separate paid position for my institution. Why, for example had
one colleague been chosen for paid remuneration and not the
other? An explanation of the reasons for the selection of
voluntary versus paid dispositions was set out. Payment of the
research respondent would affect the validity of the study and
the institution had made the selection for payment, not me. My
desire to have the respondent participate in my study was
reiterated. Finally the respondent was asked to let me know if
any problems or conflicts developed over their continuing
involvement with the research project. An ethical dilemma arose
with the impact of time and changing roles. Negotiating an
appropriate resolution to such dilemmas in an authentic subject
to subject relationship entailed setting out the situation as it
existed and allowing the respondent to reply. My responsibility

and relationship to the respondents in my study is a reflection of Guba & Lincoln's statement that, "A Monistic, Subjectivist Epistemology asserts that an inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in such a way that the findings of an investigation are the literal creation of the inquiry process." (Guba & Lincoln, 1991, 159).

Walford (1991) gives a diarised account of the content, degrees of success and type of contact that he established with the primary gatekeeper in his ethnographic study of the first City Technology College (CTC) in England. Negotiations with the College Principal began in March 1988 and continued until September 1989 , when permission to conduct his inquiry was given. Walford's account provides evidence of problems of access, ethical dilemmas and the lengthy negotiation process. Gaining access to the CTC setting to investigate the underlying government political agenda of privatisation stemmed from his

commitment to the public's "right to know" (Walford, 1991, 90). This "...right was not absolute, and that it had to be conditional on not causing `too much' harm to individuals involved..." (Walford, 1991, 90). The level of intrusion into respondents lives is clearly an ethical dilemma for Walford. His study names the school which is the subject of his investigations. The continuing careers of staff and their possible identification led to whole areas of interest being deleted and discussion of material occurring in very broad terms. He states that the reason for recounting the long process of gaining access in his study is "...because I believe that such a description is necessary to understand the nature of the research and the constraints under which it was subsequently conducted" (Walford, 1991, 88). These remarks resonate with my reasons for describing the problems of access in a naturalistic study into evaluative practices in art education.

Conclusion

The magnitude of the requirements of the gatekeeping and stakeholding audiences involved in the study, was not apparent in the naive idealism of this beginning researcher. Each step seemed to reveal a contingency. The subsequent propulsion of the researcher into various gatekeeping and stakeholding communities raised the possibility of imposition skewing the nature of the research. Adjustment to the practicalities of qualitative research engages the academic system, funding bodies, research protocols/methods, bureaucracies, supervisors, auditors, schools,

respondents and personal perspectives in context in Sydney, 1993.

The meta-ethical dilemmas set out in this paper have the potential to distort and limit the intent of the study. The necessary conditions of the researcher, academic institution and the various gatekeepers and stakeholders are focused on similar ethical concerns for an authentic unimpeachable research design and the welfare of the respondents in the study. These ethical dilemmas are also the focus of the restrictions and conditions that are imposed. A meta-dilemma of ethics is therefore exposed. The extent to which such ethical dilemmas determine access and procedures, relies on achieving an authentic equivalence between the procedural requirements of the various research audiences, whilst maintaining a convincing naturalistic research design. All parties to the research desire authenticity and ethical correctness. Yet, my characterisation of problems of access in this study involving funding, bureaucracy, time, subjectivity and ethics from the perspective of my real life experience, seem to reveal enormous problems in implementation. This is a possible subtext as to why the naturalistic tradition is rare within my subject field and the educational community. A further dilemma is revealed if decisions and requirements are weighted in the direction of scientific dualist models. There is a danger that the research community will only engage with questions that fit comfortably within that tradition. The powerful interests and monolithic role of the Department of School Education in the position of gatekeeper, may legitimate their authority and practice.

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Kim Snepvangers AARE 1993