

## **AARE 2009 November- December Canberra, ACT**

### **Locating myself in the research (GRE09946)**

**Monica Green**

**Monica.green@education.monash.edu.au**

**ABSTRACT:** Until quite recently the dominant ‘scientific’ view of social research located the researcher outside the research context. Inherent within this research approach is the supposed stance of neutrality, impartiality and detachment on the part of the researcher, who invariably becomes a disinterested, disembodied and disembedded observer (Usher, 1996). Approaches to research that recognise the ontological and epistemological influences within research processes challenge positivist research methodologies and its clear distinction between the subjective knower and the objective world as the privileged model of investigation. In this light, the position of the researcher is acknowledged as central to the research context. Rather than suspend our subjective experiences, research ought to invite the researcher to become explicit within the research process, and encourage us to identify our positionality as a starting point for acquiring knowledge.

This article is a reflective critique of the process within a study into place-based pedagogies in school food gardens. It highlights the researcher’s initial position of detachment, and her eventual transition towards a more central position within the research. The first part of the paper focuses on the background to the study and emphasises the developing relationships between the research participants (in particular, three gardening teachers) and the researcher. The paper explores how the researcher begins to make sense of her ‘multiple identities’ within the research. Finally, the paper speaks to the significance of how these identities generate ‘other’ ways of making knowledge in the research process.

### **Introduction**

The proliferation of food garden curriculum in Australian primary schools over the past 5-10 years reflects the rise and popularity of the current food garden movement. The multifaceted pedagogical possibilities that exist within these alternative settings are beginning to catch the attention of educators and broader school communities who recognise the benefits for their students, and for the broader school community (see M. Green, 2008a, 2008b). Garden-based curriculum, also known as ‘edible education’ (Waters, 2008) is part of a growing educational movement that promotes learner-centred experiences in food gardens within school ground spaces. It is becoming more and more recognised as an important medium for the integration of primary school curriculum. The research on which this paper draws focuses on three regional schools that have developed food garden programs to promote children’s relationship with food, and with the gardens where the food is grown. Subsequently, the research concentrates specifically on the teaching and learning experiences that occur within

these settings, focusing particularly on the ways the teacher cultivates within children, a sense of place or attachment to the garden.

In this paper I explore my emerging insights as a doctoral researcher and draw on my developing relationship with three gardening teachers and their students. My interaction with the teachers has prompted an interrogation of the ontological and epistemological aspects of the research in an attempt to distinguish myself as unequivocally embedded in the evolving research processes. The stories and subjective experiences of the research participants are without question, central to the study. Equally substantial is the perspective or worldview I bring to the research. The practice of presenting (my) self in these instances is 'not a form of 'confession' to overcome issues of bias as would be the case in positivist research, but as an explanation of the researcher's standpoint' (Malone, 1999, p.170).

In taking up Ruth Behar's (1993) sentiment about the 'strangeness' of observing and writing about others, the paper problematises the risky nature of the researcher who fails to recognise the implication of their 'disembodied and disembedded' researcher position (Usher, 1996, p.25). In examining how my perspectives inform the research process, the paper explores my developing understanding of the impact of the role and identity of the researcher. If we are to truly to 'engage' with the lived experiences of our research participants, then our research incites us to examine the concerns, values, stories and assumptions we bring to our research, which by and large assist us to discover new ways of seeing and being 'in' the research. The opening up and recognition of my own subjective experiences motivates my conscious abandonment of researcher detachment and objectivity.

The article begins with a summary of the context of the study followed by a personal narrative highlighting my own childhood and adult experiences of gardening and place making. I describe the significance of a research process that enabled me to find a way into the research and discuss the contributions these approaches have made towards my developing role as researcher.

## **Background to the study**

This research began in 2007 with a desire to examine the significance of children's relationships with the natural world via garden-based experiences in schools. With the methodological question: *How are place-based pedagogies taken up in food garden curriculum?* I take up the thread of this inquiry to weave a story about the significance of children's experiences in garden-based curriculum, and the accompanying teaching pedagogies that underpin these experiences. Initial reviews of the research literature reveal a plethora of garden-based literature espousing the benefits of children's engagement with gardening. Less obvious is a focus on how children develop connections to the garden 'place', including the effects of such attachment. Spurred on by this absence I became motivated to investigate garden-based practices that reflect how Australian children come to experience the garden place via food-growing experiences.

Place-based approaches to education signify the importance of establishing deep connections to the people and the land that informs identity (Cenkli, 2006; Pivnick, 1994). In coming to know a place students are invited to inhabit their local environment and engage with and observe the nuances of that specific locale (Sanger, 1997; Thomashow, 1995). Food gardens viewed in this light are not detached settings isolated from other forms or places of learning, but rather a gateway that connects children to the people, the communities and the places in which they live (Altman & Low, 1992; Riley, 1992).

The importance of place consciousness or place-sensitivity, particularly with regard to the exploration of 'significant' places is well considered throughout place discourse (see Cameron, 2003; Leopold, 1968; Massey, 1994; Tacey, 2000). Mitchell Thomashow (1995) and David Sobel (1993) take up a 'sense of place' orientation that asserts a collective focus towards relationships to place, place identity and attachment to place. Place does not refer simply to a geographic location (Wilson, 1997) but 'is thicker and more concrete' (Plumwood, 2008, p.44), therefore opening up the opportunities that are available to create meaning within a place.

At the commencement of the study I spent approximately two months travelling throughout West Gippsland, Victoria to investigate the extent to which schools in this district were developing garden and place-based learning within curriculum. My intention had been to locate appropriate school communities willing to participate in the study, and who would subsequently allow me regular visits to observe the children's experiences in these outdoor settings. Although initial visits to local primary schools exposed a range of modest food gardens, they each faced significant barriers that underpinned their ad hoc nature. The lack of children's consistent access to the gardens in each of the schools stemmed from a range of issues that included: an already overloaded and busy curriculum; limited funding; a lack of support from parents or volunteers; teacher's lack of gardening experience; the gardening program not being valued as a teaching tool; the amount of preparation time required; and to limitations of site within the school ground (Dyment, 2005; Ozer, 2007; Skamp & Bergmann, 2001).

These revelations equated to restricted and erratic observations of garden pedagogy, and would have a significant bearing on accessing appropriate data for the research. Confronted by this reality I was compelled to 'fine-tune' my criteria in order to seek suitable schools which:

- Had a well established gardening program that was beyond the beginning, planning stages
- Acknowledged the garden as part of the overall school curriculum
- Allowed children to experience the garden on an continuing basis, and which
- Involved students, teachers and community members.

The new criteria dictated exemplary, well-established gardening programs (not 'average' or 'typical' programs) that matched my desire to investigate the influences of pedagogical practices in garden-based settings and curriculum (Bell, 2000). To this end and three months later, I located three regional public schools (two in Victoria and one in Tasmania) that were developing curriculum that encompassed food-growing experiences, and which involved children caring for naturalised spaces within school grounds. Collectively, each school had a gardening/environmental

teacher who was responsible for the design and implementation of the curriculum. In two of the schools, the teachers had pioneered unique programs within the disciplines of sustainability and environmental education for all year levels (prep to grade 6), for a minimum of one and one half hours per week. The third school was in partnership with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation (SAKGF), an organisation which supports schools to focus specifically on the growing, harvesting and cooking of food, and which involves a weekly 45-minute gardening session, and one and one half hour kitchen (cooking) session for children in grades 3-6.

Philosophically each school is committed to a curriculum that is ‘supported and fuelled by a dynamic interface that relies upon interdisciplinary theoretical effort in the social, behavioural, developmental, ecological and agricultural sciences’ (Miller, 2007, pg.15). Whilst the children’s gardening and environmental experiences in each of these schools occur in a garden/outdoor site, learning is not exclusive to these settings: both the garden and the classroom learning contexts are recognised as mutual and critical sites for the development of children’s learning. Each school has made varying attempts to integrate and develop garden-based themes across the curriculum via other subject areas such as literacy, maths and science. These endeavours are generating innovative pedagogy that takes inside learning outside, and outside learning inside.

## **Methodology**

A crucial aim of this study has been the consideration of pedagogies that support children’s learning experiences in food gardens and naturalised spaces within school grounds. The following three inter-related questions provide an important framework:

- How are primary schools responding to the current food garden movement?
- What food garden pedagogies support children’s ecological understanding and knowledge?
- What is the role and significance of education towards developing children’s relationships with local places through food gardens?

Throughout the data gathering process (approximately 14 months) I have undertaken interviews with three primary school principals, one art teacher and a total of 53 children aged between 6 and 12, as well as repeat interviews with two of the three gardening teachers. Overall a total of 62 research interviews have been conducted. In addition, I have collected artifacts such as children’s writing and artwork, as well as photos of their modelling and mapping exercises that were part of garden design processes. Conversations with children, gardening teachers and principals in particular, offer important insights into the pedagogical significance of food gardens and school playgrounds, and have been critical to the new research knowledge that has been generated within the study.

The beginnings of this research project started long before the commencement of my doctoral candidature. My understanding of the world that I live in, and want to live in, and the experiences that I bring to the research are informed by my standpoint or

‘horizon’ that involves my situatedness in time, place, culture, gender, ethnicity etc (Gadamer, 1975 cited in Usher, 1996, p. 21). My own subjective experiences inherently inform how I see and make meaning of the world: their significance is central to my position as researcher and provides a continuous reminder of my implicit position within the research. In light of these experiences I return to an earlier narrative depicting my own profound experiences of a backyard vegetable garden:

It is the latter part of summer and the little forest of corn is ready to harvest. With great anticipation we peel away the protective sheaths that have nurtured the hidden cobs for the past months. The golden cobs are placed into the big pot of boiling water and within minutes we are smothering them with butter and munching into the unforgettable and glorious taste of sheer juiciness.

The sight of those yellow corn cobs brought great excitement for my siblings and me. In my childhood memories it is the weekend and my father is on the end of his gardening hoe, lovingly working his modest vegetable garden in our backyard in Morwell, Latrobe Valley. As an adult I have developed a much greater appreciation of what the garden represented for my dad: some well-deserved respite from the demands of a stressful working life, and from raising seven children on his own after losing his wife, my mum, in a car accident in 1969. His own recollections (below) of gardening as a youngster, combined with his developing love of growing food reveal the significance of himself as gardener, and make known the comfort he found from the garden, especially after my mother’s death:

My father had me involved and interested [in gardening] at a very early age. I recall one tip he gave me: always plant some radish seeds with things like carrots and parsnips. Radishes germinate in five days so they define rows. They grow fast and in my case never made it to the table. That applied to many things: peas, beans and tomatoes. Nothing comes close to the stuff we take directly from our gardens. Every day I spent the first few minutes looking over the vegies and despatching any weed that dared take root. Growing stuff is very rewarding, and in my own life it has been very relaxing. God and I both know I needed that (G. Green, 2009).

I come from a long line of gardeners and have inherited my father’s love of gardening. Today as I tend to my own crop of brilliantly colored heirloom tomatoes, head down, binding their unruly limbs to the solid wooden stakes, those emerging pungent smells will unexpectedly transport me back to my childhood, and to my dad’s garden.

My current place of residence is in Lilloo, West Gippsland. I am deeply implicated in this place; spiritually, psychologically, ecologically, emotionally and physically. It is central to my life, pulling me into a significant relationship with it. In recognising my own association with it, I am mindful that this place, this piece of land to which I am profoundly attached has a history. In 2003 I purchased the property from my farming neighbours, the Roberts family. Mostly cleared for grazing purposes this quintessential West Gippsland countryside is undulated, picturesque farming country with small to medium sized properties. The past decades have seen the clearing of substantial pockets of cool temperate rainforest, along with a generous dose of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides over the surrounding paddocks.

Historically this area boasts a high annual rainfall of over 1,000mm. Drought conditions over the past few years, combined with a changing climate reflect a declining rainfall. The once abundant local springs and soaks known for their reliability throughout this dairying landscape have either dried up or function spasmodically. Our water tanks are our lifeline to food and survival.

At the heart of my story is the making of a food garden. The garden itself is situated a short distance to the north of our house, accessible by a set of wide stone steps built from local mudstone that take you down into an edible landscape. The first garden bed I dug here nearly five years ago was for strawberries. Each year since the frontier of the garden has extended outwards, so much so, that the now widespread vegetable garden is an expansive, highly productive oasis. Most evenings one of our family members will embark on a brief journey down to the garden in search of an ingredient or two that will invariably end up on our dinner plates. In our garden, no matter the seasons there is always something to eat. Food in our home is always shared around our solid red ironbark table, often with extended family and friends, in conversation, and always with a candle. These are deliberate rituals of celebration. Growing and sharing our own food acquaints us to the source of our food and deepens our relationship *with* the food, and to the garden place itself.

In *Dialogue with Place*, Deborah Bird Rose speaks about the idea of ‘permeability’, that is the exchanges that take place between person and place, suggesting how permeability ‘open[s] us to dialogue not only with place, but with the history of the place’ (Rose, 2002, p.321). If I am to draw on the significance of my current connection to the land on which I live, and in particular to my food garden, Rose’s lens of permeability is a well considered reminder of how ‘we and other living things are co-participants in earthly reciprocities of being, becoming and dying’ (Rose, 2002, p.322). Her insights inspire me to expand my concept of self and self-interest by acknowledging and connecting with the history of the land that I have inherited, and on which I raise my two children. In this light, the land on which I live, and the associated embodied gardening experiences that occur throughout it have become central to the study. They provide a foundation from which to understand the embodied gardening stories of the children and their teachers, in relation to their own food gardens.

‘Gardening’ as Michael Pollan suggests, ‘gives most of us our most direct and intimate experience of nature – of its satisfactions, fragility, and power (Pollan, 1996, p.4). For me, time spent in my food garden enriches my own sensibilities towards the nuances of the non-human world. My sensorial experiences in the garden are many; I plant, I water, I weed, I dig in the green manure crops, I turn the compost and shovel it into the wheelbarrow, steer it down to the garden and spread it around the worthy food-bearing recipients. I care for the health and longevity of the garden. In this narrative I take part in a process of ‘ecological connectivity’ that involves an embodied connection between myself and the garden place (Rose, 2002). These experiences strengthen my attachment to, and familiarity with the garden. I know the garden intimately, like I know my own children.

Personal gardening experiences that include the necessary bodily labour required for maintaining a garden and producing food are grounds for contemplating the promise and potential of developing relations between myself and the garden. These experiences make solid my awareness of the ‘comings and goings’ of the natural

world. The imitation of nature is the underlying principle in an organic food garden: ‘gardeners have learned to mimic nature’s own method of building fertility in the soil, controlling insect populations and disease, and recycling nutrients (Pollan, 1996, p.212). In the garden care is taken to tend and refurbish the soil for its on-going yields. As any gardener knows, the benefits of supplementing the soil with additional, nourishing compost can be the difference between healthy and bountiful crops, as opposed to plants that merely struggle to stay alive. Growing healthy plants and healthy soil is by far the gardener’s greatest challenge, and I am attentive to its nutritional requirements throughout the different seasons.

Sustaining and understanding the significance of the natural systems that support the health of the garden are crucial to growing food. Although these insights are grounded in the garden place, they inform my broader understanding of the world and nurture my ‘ecological self’ (Matthews, 1991). Rose builds on Freya Matthew’s idea of the ecological self, describing it as ‘Materially embedded in specific places, as well as being consubstantive with the universe. The emplaced ecological self is permeable: place penetrates the body, and body slips into place’ (Rose, 2002p. 313). Rose’s language causes me to reflect on the provocative bodily relationships and exchanges that occur within my garden (which no doubt occurred previously on this land in other lifetimes). The volcanic red soil stains my skin and my clothes; it gets under my nails, is mixed with the sweat on my body, and in the wetter months sticks like glue to the bottom of my blundstone gardening boots. Rose describes this language as the

Far from being a singular, self-sufficient, stand-alone space (Plumwood, 2008) the garden place connects me to the land, to the people, the communities and local knowledges that exist nearby. In this sense, the garden is the bedrock on which my relations to these places and people are built, and connects me to the earth and to other living and non-living beings. I see the garden as an opening to the world: a threshold, a gateway; a boundary ‘that enables motion, exchange, liminality, and multiple perspective’ (Rose, 2002, p.314) from which to comprehend, and unite with the local and global world. Metaphorically the food garden is the bridge that links me to ‘the multiple, complex network of places’ (Plumwood, 2008, p.139) that support my life, and which enable me to honor other places and people, both immediate and far away. It is a place of spiritual, emotional and physical sustenance.

The reflections on my own attachment to/in place above, and in particular to/in a food garden, underpin the subjective experiences I bring to the research. Furthermore, they challenge the notion of researcher as a ‘disembodied observer’ (Usher, 1996), make explicit my position within the research process, and provide an important starting point for how I might acquire knowledge within the research process.

### **Locating myself in the research**

Examining my own position within the frame of the research picture I am attempting to paint has been ongoing, challenging and not always straightforward. At the commencement of the study I had a very limited awareness of myself as researcher and of the associated discourses of power and privilege that come with this role. In conventional or traditional empiricist epistemology, the subject and the knower are often portrayed as invisible, disembodied, and without culture, and I was initially of the belief that I too would (have to) observe my ‘research participants’ from a

distance in order to come to terms with the research. In essence, and unbeknown to me at the time, I had established a binary opposition of ‘them’ (research participants) and ‘me’ (researcher). How to move beyond this understanding was neither clear nor easy.

In their own unique way, each of the gardening teachers within this study take up the responsibility to cultivate and nurture their students’ relationship with the natural world. In an attempt to understand these endeavours, I have undertaken extensive interviews and conversations with the teacher’s about their educational practice and philosophy, specifically in relation to children’s ecological learning. Collectively, the schools have developed unique learning communities that generate place stories: a learning place ‘where love flourishes’ (hooks, 2003, p.130), and where children experience new ways of being, and seeing themselves in the world.

Further exchanges have occurred away from schools, sometimes over coffee and lunch at nearby cafes, sometimes at the teacher’s homes, always in fun, and very often with reference to our lives beyond the research project: conversations about our personal lives, our gardens and our families have become an important aspect of the research experience. The teacher’s pedagogical practices offer profound inspiration for my own work in teacher education, and present me with a poignant reminder about the many and divers responsibilities of education. These personal interactions and experiences connect us, particularly as women, as educators, and as mothers, and pose a fundamental disruption to the positivist frameworks that posit knowledge as certain, objective and secure. Our evolving research relationship opens up a deepened understanding about who we are in the research: we are, all four of us, deeply implicated in the exchanges that occur throughout the research project. In this research project, knowledge is constructed via intimate and shared experiences between the research participants and myself. These are not token, or superficial experiences, but meaningful contributions to profound (research) relationships that have been, and continue to be instrumental in (re) defining my role as embodied, empathetic and connected researcher.

To some extent the teachers and myself share some common ground (a fact I would not determine until well ensconced in the research). We are linked as white middle-class women: as mothers, as educators, as gardeners, and as women committed to the preservation of the ecological systems that support us, and on which we are inherently reliant upon. Like me, the gardening teachers have a well developed passion for gardening, as well as an established commitment to garden and place-based pedagogies in primary schools. We share substantial background experience and/or qualifications in environmental education/science either through study or via informal experiences. As the study has progressed, these collective experiences have emerged as significant contributions towards informing our collective and individual, philosophical and professional roles as educators.

Encounters with the gardening teachers have enabled a collective and reciprocal admission into our respective worlds: as women we have shared stories about our gardens, our children, and our private lives. These similarities are premised on the understanding that we each bring unique knowledges and distinctive subjective experiences to the study. The strong sense of ‘woman-to-woman talk’ (Oakley, 1990) has strengthened our conversations, and has possibly disrupted the power relations that may have existed as a consequence of my official position as ‘researcher’



(Ellesworth, 1989). Ruth Behar suggests that if the nature of what has been observed in research is to be understood, then ‘what happens within the observer must be made known’ (Behar, 1993, p.6). This provocative critique of the problematic nature of the researcher-researched relationship compels me to examine and define my own position within the research. I am not ‘an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but...a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests’ (Harding, 1987, p.9).

In the early stages of the study I perceived the teacher’s and the children’s stories as the ‘bread and butter’ of the research. Despite their profound contribution to the study, I had overlooked my own ways of ‘being in’ and ‘knowing’ the world. These epistemological and ontological influences have become further developed throughout the research process. The examination of the assumptions we bring with us as researchers is ‘a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p.183). Citing Alcoff & Potter, Lincoln and Guba portray reflexivity as a practice that ‘forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting (1994, p.184). Reflexivity provides a valuable lens through which to examine my own subjective experiences that positions the interviewer, writer, respondent and the interview as deeply intertwined, not as clearly distinct entities (Behar, 1993).

### **The unraveling of a researcher: leaping into the unknown**

As a consequence of my regular visits to the three schools over the past three years I have developed a strong and distinctive attachment to each school community: to the teachers, the students, and particularly to the places and gardens they inhabit and create via their weekly gardening/environmental work. No longer a complete stranger, children remember and welcome me; the teachers continue to be extraordinarily generous with their time; happy to continue our conversations and have me participate in their lessons. The ongoing visits have provided insights into how each of the garden places represent deep relational significance for all concerned, myself included, but it would take some time before I could find a way into understanding the meaning that lay within these deep relations.

To assist this process I read literature suggested by my supervisor and dabbled with other representational forms of knowing such as a hand-sewn quilt as a way of coming to know the research differently. Useful as this process was, I was still no closer to connecting with the deeper meanings that lay within the research stories. This was undoubtedly a frustrating and bewildering phase of the research process. In her article on postmodern emergence, Margaret Somerville describes this position of partiality and ‘radical doubt’ as the ‘chaotic place of not knowing’ (Somerville, 2008, p.210). Chaotic indeed. This uncomfortable and vulnerable in-between space put me on edge and intensified my self-doubts as a beginner researcher: I knew I had not yet come to a significant place of understanding the research. What would it take for me to find my way in?

My undeveloped meaning is in its early stages of 'come into being'. At present I have commenced the process of going deeper into the acquired material (data such as photos, children's artwork, quilt, and recorded conversations/interviews). Through writing about my own embodied experiences of gardening I can enter into a 'practice of responsiveness' that allows me to examine the layers within the research where new, meaningful knowledge lies. According to Somerville, as researchers we can't be closed off to this process. This leap into the unknown requires an opening up of ourselves in order to be available to the new (Somerville, 2008). Coming face to face with this process has been the turning point in my research. The emergence of new knowledge and understanding that is beginning to materialize as a consequence of this immersive process has been the 'undoing' of myself as a 'disconnected researcher' (Somerville, 2009). For the first time in the research process I have opened myself up to knowing the research work differently.

Important work recently undertaken in three chapters of the thesis has generated exciting new garden pedagogy knowledge. Important as these findings are however, it is the process of 'arriving' at a different point, a position from which to comprehend these understandings that has become most significant. The process of developing new knowledge brings with it a blurring of defined research roles. The roles of researcher and participants are no longer clearly distinct entities (Behar, 1993), framed in opposition as 'me' and 'them'. Instead, it is the shared and collective contributions that generate the new relational knowledge that sits in the space between self and other. Although the children and their teachers are responsible for the place-making endeavours in their food gardens and school grounds, these outdoor places have become part of us all. Like the inhabitants, I have developed my own attachment to these places, and to the experiences and emotions they invoke. More than ever I am beginning to make sense of the emerging multiple researcher roles that I experience: researcher, researched, educator, educated, gardener, colleague, friend and confidante. I am 'both identity and difference, self and other, knower and known' (St. Pierre, 1997, p.178).

## **Conclusion**

This paper emerges from a doctoral study that examines food garden pedagogies in three regional primary schools, and explores the different dimensions of my research trajectory as I come to terms with my role as researcher and collective knowledge maker. Despite the many existing barriers, garden pedagogy is becoming increasingly popular and significant within primary school curriculum. More than ever, school gardens are becoming recognised as important places that cultivate empathetic human-nature relationships, and which teach children fundamental lessons about the significance of growing food, and caring for school ground landscapes.

In the paper I develop a reflective piece of writing to signify my own embodied gardening experiences. These reflections provide deep meaning making about my own understanding of, and attachment to, my own garden place. The subjective experiences make me explicit to the research process and assist me to identify my positionality as a starting point for acquiring knowledge. These experiences, as gardener, provide an important framework from which to make sense of emerging new knowledge.

Throughout the research process I struggled to find ways of deepening my knowledge within the research. My earlier position as detached and disembodied researcher created a binary opposition between the research participants and myself ('them' and 'me') that was unhelpful. Despite my immersion in the research literature and other representational forms of knowing such as a hand-sewn quilt, I was still unable to find a way into understanding the research. Having gone through a 'process of unraveling' I began a process of opening myself to finding new knowledges. This is a productive place that I can continue to return to, and from which I won't get lost.

Whilst the nature and scope of this paper does not allow for an extensive discussion of the new knowledges that are emerging within the study, it highlights the importance of recognising my own subjective experiences as researcher, and to the emergence of new knowledge that has been generated throughout the research process.

## References

- Altman, I., & Low, S. (Eds.). (1992). *Place attachments*. New York: Plenum.
- Behar, R. (1993). *The vulnerable observer: anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bell, A. (2000). *Storied experiences of school-based habitat restoration*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario.
- Cameron, J. (2003). Introduction: Articulating Australian senses of place. In J. Cameron (Ed.), *Changing places: re-imagining Australia*. Double Bay NSW: Longueville Books.
- Cenkl, P. (2006). Mapping Student Connections to Place. *English Leadership Quarterly*, 28(4), 9.
- Dyment, J. (2005). Green school grounds as sites for outdoor learning: Barriers and opportunities. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 14(1), 24-41.
- Ellesworth, E. (1989). "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?". *Harvard Educational Review*, 59, 297-324.
- Green, G. (2009). On growing vegetables: Personal communication with my father Gordon Green.
- Green, M. (2008a). *Cultivating the Future: The promise of a children's food garden*. Paper presented at the 16th IFOAM Organic World Congress Cultivating the Future. Modena, Italy.
- Green, M. (2008b). *Learning in place: Pedagogical pathways for place making*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Changing Climates: Education for a sustainable future, QUT, Brisbane, QLD.
- Harding, S. (1987). Is There a Feminist Method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Leopold, A. (1968). *A sand county almanac*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1994). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and, emerging confluences. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Malone, K. (1999). Environmental education researchers as environmental activists. *Environmental Education Research*, 5(2), 163-177.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. London: Polity Press.
- Matthews, F. (1991). Atomism and its Ideological implications. In *The Ecological Self*. London: Routledge.
- Miller, M. (2007). 'A Rose by Any Other Name: Environmental Education through Gardening'. *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, 6(1), 15-17.
- Oakley, A. (1990). 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms'. In *Doing Feminist Research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Ozer, E. J. (2007). The effects of school gardens on students and schools: conceptualization and considerations for maximizing healthy development. *Health Education & Behaviour*, 34, 846-863.
- Pivnick, J. (1994). A piece of forgotten song: Recalling environmental connections. *Holistic Education Review*, 10(4), 58-63.
- Plumwood, V. (2008). Shadow Place and the Politics of Dwelling. *Australian Humanities Review*(44).
- Pollan, M. (1996). *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Riley, R. B. (1992). Attachment to the ordinary landscape. In I. Altman & S. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 13-35). New York: Plenum Press.
- Rose, D. B. (2002). Dialogue with Place: Toward an ecological body. *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 32(3), 311-325.
- Sanger, M. (1997). Sense of place and education. *Journal of Environmental Education*, 29(1).
- Skamp, K., & Bergmann, I. (2001). Facilitating learnscape development, maintenance and use: Teacher's perceptions and self-reported practice. *Environmental Education Research*, 7(4), 333-358.
- Sobel, D. (1993). *Children's special places: Exploring the role of forts, dens, and bush houses in middle childhood*. Tuscon, Arizona: Zephyr Press.
- Somerville, M. (2008). 'Waiting in the chaotic place of unknowing': articulating postmodern emergence. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21(3), 209-220.
- Somerville, M. (2009). PhD supervision communication.
- St. Pierre, E. (1997). Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(2), 175-189.
- Tacey, D. (2000). *ReEnchantment: A New Australian Spirituality*. London: HarperCollins.
- Thomashow, M. (1995). *Ecological identity: Becoming a reflective environmentalist*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Usher, R. (1996). Critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In D. Scott & R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding Educational Research*: Routledge.
- Waters, A. (2008). *Edible Schoolyard: A Universal Idea*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Wilson, R. (1997). Sense of Place. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 24(3).

