CHAPTER SEVEN

PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS WHOSE REFLECTION SHOWED CONSIDERABLE CHANGE

I am, I think, by nature a reflective person ... but ... I’ve learnt to reflect on my teaching and what teaching is all about and ... on theory and practice and how to integrate the two and ... to reflect on the things that don’t feel quite comfortable in my teaching. And I’ve learnt different ways of reflecting and different ways of writing about it. So yes, I do think that I’ve learnt to reflect more. (Nina, 5/12/95, B53)

The previous two chapters highlighted the importance of several factors which appeared to influence whether the student teachers participating in the study became more reflective. Chapter Five concluded that student teachers are unlikely to become more reflective unless they are committed to teaching, value reflection as a means of professional and personal growth and / or move beyond an epistemological perspective of received knowing in a learning environment which they perceive as supportive. Chapter Six illustrated how these factors can act as motivating forces which contribute to but, in some circumstances, also limit the development of reflection. This chapter shows how, in the absence of restraints, synergy arising from these factors can contribute considerably to the development of reflection.

The profiles presented in this chapter follow a similar sequence to those of previous chapters. The focus first, is on the importance of commitment to teaching, including the effect of passionate creeds. The roles of an epistemological perspective of constructed knowing, commitment to reflection, and a supportive environment are then considered, although the synergy created by these factors makes these distinctions somewhat artificial.

COMMITMENT TO TEACHING: KASEY

Like many of the participants in the study, Kasey was from a socially and economically advantaged Anglo-Australian background. The year before entering the program, as a school leaver, she had enrolled in an arts degree intending to major in psychology. A traumatic experience as an adolescent, from which she had not fully recovered, had led to an interest in becoming a child psychologist. It had also resulted in a difficulty in trusting people. "It takes me a long time to establish trust and to be open and honest about myself” (March, 1993), she explained. She hoped that participating in the project
would provide an "opportunity to face these issues and overcome them" (March, 1993).

"I Can't See Myself As A Teacher At All!"

For Kasey, teaching had "always been a fall-back position - never a first choice" (29/3/93, 133) only to be considered "if I didn't have a high enough TER for psychology" (29/3/93, 132). After realising in her first year of her arts degree that she "couldn't focus on children until postgraduate level" (25/10/96, B139) she decided to enrol in the early childhood program so that she could later return to her psychology studies "with more experience and more knowledge" (25/10/96, B141). She did so with considerable trepidation, commenting:

I can't see myself as a teacher at all! (29/3/93, 39), Ms Mitchell ???!!!
[pseudonym] Yuk!! It sounds awful. I just hate it. It's a real barrier (29/3/93, 295). I hate white chalk! I hate the idea of a blackboard with the teacher up the front standing above all the kids. (29/3/93, 37)

After the wide choice of options in her arts degree, she found the early childhood program "so narrow and so structured - like a pyramid with a teacher, Ms Mitchell, at the top" (29/3/93, 319). She disliked the thought that, as a teacher, she would perpetuate the "production line" (29/3/93, 380). On an institutional level, she resented the perceived narrowness and restrictions of teaching. On a personal level, she worried about what "I guess is every student teacher's nightmare ... that I will not be able to control the kids" (1/4/93). These themes of openness, freedom, restriction and control were to characterise her search for meaning as a teacher.

To her relief, during her early field visits she "was not put in a corner and told to observe" (1/6/93, 362) but was "able to jump in and work with the kids ...[and] test my insecurities and try out my ideas" (1/6/93, 363). As a result, she "found myself really questioning ..." (1/6/93, 247); "pondering what it would be like if ... " (1/6/93, 323); and "being torn between what I knew was right and ... " (1/6/93, 195). These initial responses suggest that, in contrast to Erica (Chapter Five), Kasey's concerns about teaching were likely to prompt considerable reflection as she progressed through the program.

Kasey's concerns about lack of freedom as a teacher heightened during her first practicum. While she admired the way that her cooperating teacher "gave the children so much scope to explore ... There was no mass production" (25/10/93, 344), she was disappointed to find restrictions on her own freedom. Her cooperating teacher's ideas about effective teaching were non-negotiable.
She told Kasey: "These are the elements of a good teacher. You must do these things if you're going to be a good teacher" (27/3/95, 300). In addition, Kasey continued: "She more-or-less told me what my goals should be. I found that very stifling" (25/10/93, 27). To some extent, she was able to overcome these limitations by ensuring that "by the end of the first week [of the practicum] I had achieved most of her goals, so then I could set my own goals for the second week" (25/10/93, 28). Her determination to take responsibility for her development as a teacher contrasted with the lack of responsibility demonstrated by several of the student teachers profiled in Chapter Five.

Tragically, during her first practicum a staff member (and mother of an 18 month old child) died suddenly. Attempting to come to terms with the tragedy, Kasey focused on what she referred to as:

the amazing opportunity that this will present to James' future preschool teacher. No-one will ever replace Kerry, but I know she'll be watching over him, grateful for the love, support and encouragement he will receive from some-one like me. (October, 1993)

Her realisation of the contribution she could make as a teacher and her success in achieving her goals for the practicum gave her "the confidence and motivation to begin my second year [of the program] with the knowledge that I have chosen the right career" (October, 1993). In this respect, the practicum represented a watershed in her commitment to teaching.

Unfortunately, illness ended her second practicum prematurely and abruptly. On her last afternoon at the school she had taken her "first ever whole group activity" (9/3/95, 136). It was not a success. Kasey described how:

We were sitting in front of the computer. Five minutes into the lesson, a man came in to fix the computer. The headmistress came in too, and the children were terrified of her. She decided to watch my lesson, but that wasn't the problem. Two boys had been playing up. I had it all worked out about how I would manage them. But then the headmistress jumped in and yelled at them. It 'threw' the whole thing. Then we all had to get up and move so that the man could get to the computer. And at that stage it all just fell apart. Then my cooperating teacher said 'Look, this isn't fair to you. Let's stop'. (9/3/95, 164)

For months after this incident, Kasey "had nightmares about being out of control" (9/3/95, 242) prompting her to return to the experience time and again, "repeatedly going over the situation in my mind, going over and over and over it again. Thinking about what I could have done; what I should have done; what I'd do next time" (9/3/95, 267). She identified several reasons "which contributed to the
lesson falling apart" (9/3/95, 236) and although she had reason to do so, unlike Marina (Chapter Five), did not blame external factors. She described how:

As soon as I got flustered, I started to forget names. I was thinking
and thinking and thinking - and then I slowed down. The lesson wasn't
moving quickly enough which I think was partly because I had been
thrown off balance. And nerves, too, because it was my first whole class
lesson ... I was really beginning to lose it. I was stalling and skipping
and, for the first time ever, I had to go back to my notes because I'd lost
all track of where I was going. I'd been so focused and suddenly I had a
big blank. When I looked back at my plan, the children noticed straight
away. I could see that they were getting bored and frustrated.

(9/3/95, 239)

Kasey's graphic account of this incident (ten months after it had occurred)
highlighted its emotional impact and the impetus it provided for reflection. Her
response exemplifies Boud et al.'s (1985) notion of reflection as making
sense of experience by returning to the experience, attending to emotions
and re-evaluating the experience. It also highlights the power of emotions by
illustrating how seemingly insignificant experiences can resonate beyond
their original context to have far reaching effects (Conle, 1996).

Interestingly, after participating in relaxation and visualisation sessions,
Kasey's perception of the above incident changed. Previously, she had
represented diagrammatically her inability to balance her priorities of "ideas,
names, plan, interest, enjoyment, action, aesthetics, children's comfort" (16/3/95, 194)
with the "elements in the environment that were happening around me" (16/3/95,
199) including "pressure, disruption, relocation" (16/3/95, 195) which were
essentially beyond her control (see Appendix 15a). She spoke of the panic
she had experienced when she had tried to "link the two [ideals and
environmental factors] together but couldn't (16/3/95, 196) and how she had felt
"trapped, closed in ..."(16/3/95, 200). The night following the first relaxation and
visualisation session, Kasey had an "even more frightening" (16/3/95, 155)
nightmare about the incident. It proved to be her last, though. As she
described: "It was as if I'd cleared it out of my system" (16/3/95, 190).

Henceforth, Kasey was determined to maintain the sense of calm, space,
flexibility and flow that she had experienced during the relaxation session.
Her "new look" (16/3/95, 166) or revised perspective (see Appendix 15b)
focused on her perception that the above factors would provide "escape
routes" (16/3/95, 172) so that she would never again be "boxed in" (16/3/95,
287). Her account again highlights the importance of the motifs of openness,
freedom, restrictions and control to her search for meaning as a teacher. It also suggests that participation in the relaxation and visualisation sessions provided "an emotional calmness" (16/3/95, 230), a more balanced perspective, some sense of resolution and a direction for future action.

This change in perspective and seeming detachment from her earlier concerns enabled her to focus on the potential freedom instead of the perceived constraints of teaching. She commented:

I had thought that by the time they [children] got to second grade, they'd be so institutionalised ... that I really wouldn't have much scope. I thought that my program would be so dictated by the curriculum ... that I wouldn't have been able to have an impact ... Whereas I've found ... a lot of freedom to go beyond those bounds. (14/9/95, 211)

Her previous fears subsided. In her words:

I guess the 'Ms Mitchell thing' doesn't worry me ... now. 'Ms Mitchell' was part of that institutionalised notion of 'I am the teacher. You are the children. Sit on the floor and listen to me'. But, in reality, it hasn't turned out like that. I actually see myself as a member of the class, along with the children ... not the authority figure that I had expected. (14/9/95, 245)

In this atmosphere of openness and unexpected freedom, Kasey was able to develop a trusting and respectful relationship with children which far surpassed her earlier expectations and assisted in her healing process. She explained:

I felt that I could talk to the children as equals. When I say 'equals', I mean that we had very different roles ... That was understood. There were certain respectful interactions that went both ways in accordance with that. But at the same time ... I could be a person, not just a teacher. That's taken me a long time to realise, and a long time to relax into ... I would never have thought that I could know children so well and that they could know me so well ... So that seemed very profound. (13/10/95, 201-240)

Her realisation that she could be "in control" without being controlling helped to resolve one of her key concerns about teaching.

"I've Realised That It's A Case Of Taking The Aspects That I Believe In"

No longer feeling 'that I had to transform into this 'teacher person'" (2/12/96, 541), Kasey instead "realised that it's a case of taking the aspects that I believe in ... and integrating these aspects into my life rather than transforming myself into a teacher (2/12/96, 543). She became increasingly aware that as a reflective teacher, she would have many opportunities for personal and professional growth. This awareness reaffirmed her commitment to teaching. She explained: "I've
come a long way in terms of respecting the role of teacher ... I've realised that I can have much more of an impact and achieve so much more ... than what I ever thought I could (2/12/96, 470). It also suggests a reflexive relationship between her commitment to teaching and her reflection.

In contrast to her previous "focus on problems" (16/3/95, 166), her growing commitment to teaching encouraged her to explore ways to "integrate my beliefs and my practices" (13/10/95, 271) and to "seek changes" (16/3/95, 165). Early in her third practicum, for example, she referred to her inner conflict about adopting her cooperating teacher's reward system. She explained: "Debbie uses a very well established reward system (bribery??) of stickers and stamps ... I feel quite insincere [using it] ... but as the children expect these rewards and work towards them, I can't deny them" (September, 1995). Yet her sense of responsibility appeared to prevent her from accepting the status quo and caused her to search for alternatives. By midway through the practicum she had "found a happy medium - the children accept that I don't hand out as many stickers as Debbie but understand that the praise I give them is genuine and deserved" (September, 1995). By the end of the practicum, Kasey had stopped using rewards, having concluded that they were demeaning to children because they encouraged them to "perform .... to get the reward" (13/10/95, 57) and distorted "natural interactions" (13/10/95, 68) between teacher and children. This sequence illustrates how Kasey's commitment to teaching prompted reflection about issues of power and control and resulted in changes to her practice. Unlike Felicity (previous chapter), she was not diverted from her consideration of broader issues, including those of a moral and ethical nature, by the more immediate attraction of practical solutions.

To sum up, Kasey's profile illustrates how her initial concerns about teaching generated considerable reflection even in the early stages of the program. As she began to realise that some of her concerns might be unfounded, she became increasingly committed to teaching. In Dewey's terms, her growing wholeheartedness and sense of responsibility then prompted further reflection about how she might change the status quo. Her turmoil seemed to provide a richer base for reflection than Felicity's more sanguine outlook. Despite their commitment to teaching, neither developed an identifiable passionate creed. In this respect, they differed from Jessica and Sarah, profiled below.
PASSIONATE CREED: JESSICA AND SARAH

In some respects, Jessica and Sarah had much in common. Both underwent considerable changes in the early stages of the program; both developed similar passionate creeds about teaching; and both demonstrated considerable development in their reflection. As their profiles show, however, their preferred approach to reflection differed considerably.

Jessica And Sarah: An Overview

Sarah and Jessica came from similar Anglo-Australian backgrounds to Kasey. Sarah entered the program as a school-leaver while Jessica had spent a year in Europe as an exchange student between completing high school and enrolling at University. Jessica had planned to become a primary teacher but "at the last minute, added early childhood teaching as my last option on my University preference form" (20/11/95, 349). In contrast, Sarah had wanted to become an early childhood teacher since she was a young child. She was distraught when her TER was too low to gain normal entry to the program but was accepted eventually under special entry provisions.

"It's Really Very Puzzling"

Sarah was tremendously excited about becoming a teacher. On her first day at University she wrote: "I am about to begin a really exciting part of my life. I have wanted to teach young children for as long as I can remember, and finally, it is a dream come true!" (March, 1993). She had a clear image of herself as teacher and described how she "used to dream of being a teacher ... and giving out colouring stencils, going home and marking books, and putting stickers in them" (27/10/93, B4). Basically, she looked forward to providing children with the same types of activities that she had enjoyed as a child. She was surprised, therefore, to encounter views different from her own and disconcerted to find many of her ideas about teaching challenged. As she explained: "It had never occurred to me that some traditional rhymes could be seen as racist. I'd never thought about that sort of thing!" (24/3/93, 170). As a result, she became anxious, noting: "I'm scared of saying some things now, because people are going to say 'That's really bad!' (25/5/93, 355). Her uncertainty is evident in the following extract:

I think that there is a place for things like that [colouring stencils, teacher directed activities, traditional rhymes] ... but lecturers sometimes say that those are really bad things to do. I'm starting to think 'Am I wrong?' I don't know. It's really very puzzling.

(24/9/93, B115)
Conflict and confusion characterised Sarah's first year in the program as she sought to reconcile her image of herself as teacher, her beliefs and the values and practices advocated by her lecturers with her desire to "live up to everything I want to do and be a really good teacher" (24/9/93, B115).

She was particularly puzzled about the appropriateness of themes as a basis for curriculum planning. Initially enthusiastic, she commented: "Themes make it more exciting. The children have something new to look forward to if you have themes and they learn something major each week" (25/5/93, B15). Consequently, she was delighted to find themes used by the staff in her first practicum placement. This practicum presented "a great opportunity to think about things ... It was such a time of thinking ... I was constantly trying to work out where I stood" (27/10/93, B114). In particular, she focused on clarifying her views about themes, especially after she became aware that "there was a problem at the preschool in that the boys wanted to play outside all the time. They weren't interested in doing anything inside. I wondered whether it was because they were bored with following a theme" (27/10/93, 72). Increasingly, Sarah began to question the value of themes. She explained:

> Now I don't know whether I really like the idea of themes. Some kids don't 'fit' into the theme. They may not be interested in it, and if they aren't they miss out. If you base all your activities on a theme, then the children really haven't got a choice.  

(27/10/93, 84)

Typically, Sarah's reflection during her first year in the program involved reconsidering her previous assumptions. She was discomforted by the loss of her initial certainty and would have liked "the security of knowing that I am doing the right thing" (24/9/93, B114). Yet she found it "very satisfying" (27/10/93, B113) to be "building my own value system" (24/9/93, B110) through exposure to new ideas and experiences.

"I Don't Rely On What I'm Told"

Her epistemological shift from received to constructed knowing continued in her second year of the program when she increasingly welcomed opportunities to take responsibility for her learning. This shift was evident in her comment:

> What I love the most about University is that it's not structured. There seems to be a big focus on learning for yourself. You are encouraged to work for yourself, not for other people ... Prac. was really good because we weren't told 'You must do this' and 'You must do that'. You don't have to do anything in any particular way. You can choose for yourself what you want to try. You can try what you think is best for you, and the children you're working with.  

(28/7/94, 89)
She continued:

I’m not as worried about whether people will think I’m a bad teacher if I use stencils or stickers or themes. I’ve gone beyond that. I don’t rely on what I’m told. I’m learning for myself. Last year, I was so concerned about doing the right thing. Now, I think that if you can justify what you are doing, and as long as it’s based on what you are learning, then it’s okay... I’ve changed... I think I’ve grown up! (28/7/94, 122)

Moreover, she deliberately looked for strategies to help her "make up my own mind about what I believe in and why" (September, 1994). These extracts suggest that Sarah’s commitment to teaching and her perception of a supportive learning environment contributed to her epistemological shift from received to constructed knowing. Conversely, Jessica’s epistemological perspective of constructed knowing seemed to contribute to her growing commitment to teaching.

Jessica "enjoyed kids and wanted to work with them" (20/11/95, 355) in some capacity. She decided on teaching because of the opportunities it enabled for travel. After graduating she planned to take an extended overseas working holiday because she considered it "really important to get away from the usual things that you’ve grown up with and take for granted and to see different ways of doing things" (21/10/94, 474). Her eagerness to experience new perspectives, apparent from the initial stages of the program, contrasted with Erica’s (Chapter Five) reluctance to venture beyond a familiar environment.

Nevertheless, Jessica was so disconcerted to find herself unexpectedly enrolled in the early childhood program that "it took me a while to get my feet on the ground" (20/11/95, 348). Her first semester was a blur. She recalled "just watching what was going on, without really taking anything in..." (20/11/95, 383). In retrospect, she considered that she had been "too laid back" (21/11/95, 348), unaware of the complexity of teaching or the responsibility involved.

Her first practicum, which she found "exciting and fun" (10/11/93, 154), seemed a turning point. She enjoyed especially the challenges she encountered for she equated challenge with growth. As she put it: "When you are met by challenges, your perceptions are challenged, too" (20/11/95, 139). "If you don’t challenge yourself, then you are not learning" (20/11/95, 322). Challenges made her "more aware of things that I would have taken on face value before" (10/11/93, 66) encouraging her to consider critically the ideas to which she was being introduced. She explained:
It's like, well, 'This is what I've been told at University - now it's a matter of assessing how I think'. It's not like these are the ten commandments. You've got to assess the situation, and take account of people's values. (10/11/93, 235)

They also made her aware of "how much more there still is to learn" (16/9/94, 350) which, in her opinion, "keeps you excited about what you are doing" (20/11/95, 322). Her growing awareness of the complexity of teaching sparked an enthusiasm for teaching which had not been particularly evident when she entered the program. At the end of her first year, Jessica commented: "I know now that I want to teach" (10/11/93, 7).

"If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You Just Follow Along"

Both student teachers, now predominantly constructed knowers and highly committed to teaching emphasised the importance of developing their philosophy of teaching. As Jessica pointed out: "If you don't have your own beliefs or philosophy to follow you tend to just follow the teacher ... If you don't know where you're going, you just follow along" (Jessica, 17/5/94, 421). Similarly, Sarah found her philosophy "particularly useful in helping me justify why I believe in certain things and why I teach the way I do" (July, 1994). She likened her philosophy "to having a second conscience - it helps you to act appropriately. Sometimes I hear or see myself doing something that I don't believe in and my philosophy helps me to stop and think" (July, 1994). Both found their philosophy a source of considerable empowerment. For example, when Jessica's cooperating teacher for her second practicum "made some suggestions about what lessons I might teach" (17/5/94, 423), Jessica explained:

At first I thought 'Oh, yes, I can do that'. But then, I realised that I didn't want to do it. I was able to say that I would really prefer not to do that. I would rather do it this way because ...

(17/5/94, 423)

Likewise, when Sarah was asked to use extrinsic rewards in her second practicum she explained her reluctance to do so in terms of her philosophy. She said:

I was asked to hand out stickers and stamps. I told the teacher that I didn't feel comfortable about that. Later she asked me why and I was able to explain ... I based a lot of what I said on what I believe about individuals. I could back up how I felt with my philosophy.

(28/7/94, 175)

The sense of empowerment and responsibility evident in these comments was missing in the student teachers whose reflection showed little change. While responsibility has been widely recognised as instrumental to reflection, the review of literature about reflection in Chapters One and Two suggests that relatively little attention seems to have been given to a sense of student teacher self-efficacy as a determinant of reflection.
As increasingly empowered learners, both Sarah and Jessica became
determined to assist others to become similarly empowered. Their
determination developed into a passionate creed which permeated their
reflective writing and interview responses. Sarah, for example, wrote:

I believe that it is important for all learners to assume some degree
of responsibility for their learning because the drive and motivation
to learn comes from within ... I believe that if children make their own
decisions and become responsible for their own actions, they develop
feelings of achievement, competence and trust in themselves as
independent problem-solvers. (April, 1994)

She puzzled over her unease after field visits to a school which prided itself
on the opportunities it supposedly allowed children to take responsibility for
their learning. Troubled by an apparent inconsistency between the espoused
philosophy and practices of the school, she commented:

They said that they focus on the children as individuals, but what
I noticed was that it was so structured. The teacher said that there
is individual choice, but I don't think that there really was. I think
that the children's choices were predetermined by how she set up the
classroom. What she means by individual work is that the children
have their own books, and they open up at a particular page and go
on from there. (24/9/93, 90)

Months later, while engaged in reflective writing, she experienced a flash of
further insight into reasons for her disquiet. She commented: "I have no idea
what suddenly made me work this out, but I've finally realised what didn't seem to
'click' for me about that method of teaching" (March, 1994). She elaborated:

My understanding of an 'open' approach doesn't match what I saw. I
associate an 'open' approach with activity centres and interactive group
learning, rather than children working individually on completely
unrelated things, mainly straight from textbooks and worksheets. These
are designed for the average child, so that schools can purchase them
in bulk. They are usually quite simplistic, and give the message that
learning is about sitting at a desk, working quietly and finishing the
book. Maybe this is a bit hard, but there doesn't seem to be any sense
of meaning involved. (March, 1994)

Like Kel (Chapter Five), her apparently sudden understanding seemed to
occur after a considerable period of incubation (Holman, 1994). These
extracts exemplify the content of much of Sarah's, and also Jessica's,
reflection. Although essentially practical, in their passionate creed there is,
nevertheless, an implicit but not fully articulated challenging of the status quo,
typically associated with critical reflection. Particularly in the later stages of
the program, neither student teacher engaged in a great deal of technical
reflection, possibly because neither experienced great difficulty mastering the technicalities of teaching.

Unlike the potentially limiting impact of Kristy’s passionate creed (Chapter Six), Sarah’s and Jessica’s determination to assist children to become more independent and empowered learners seemed to provide a springboard for reflection on broader issues. This was evident from the following extract in which Jessica refers to an untrained staff member recently appointed to her first position in the child care centre in which Jessica was undertaking one of her final two practicums. She explained:

She’s just starting out, and she’s developing her ideas. But she hasn’t learnt to reflect on what might be appropriate and what might not be. So I’ve tried to talk with her, just in general conversations, about how not everything that everyone does is always the best way to approach a situation. Because I can see that she looks to those who are trained and those who have experience, and she seems to assume that they will know the right way to do things. (14/9/95, B82)

This extract illustrates how Jessica’s interest in learner empowerment extended beyond children to adults. It later extended to an interest in constraints on adult learning, including her own. Although excited by the opportunity to undertake practicum in an alternative school, she noted: "I hope that my ideas haven’t been too inhibited by my past experiences of timetables and structure. I hope that my past experiences won’t control my thinking" (October, 1995). Sarah demonstrated a similar tentativeness when she remarked: "The emphasis that I place on different points isn't necessarily stable. Sometimes I hear something and I realise that I'm not quite as definite as what I had thought in terms of supporting one view over another" (31/3/95, 25). Their comments suggest that despite their passionate creed, they retained a sense of flexibility or openmindedness not readily apparent with Kristy.

"It’s A Matter Of Balancing Your Ideas"

Interestingly, their accounts of their experience of reflection also suggested flexibility and a state of flux rather than a fixed position. Jessica referred frequently to balance. She spoke of balancing possibilities: It’s a matter of balancing your ideas by looking at them from different perspectives" (21/10/94, 216) and different perspectives: "... getting a lot of different perspectives and trying to balance up those perspectives" (14/9/95, B67). Balance seemed integral to her reflection, even when focusing on technical skills. She explained: "You become much more able to handle the situation once you learn to balance everything that is going on around you" (8/3/94, 216). She also referred a great deal to rhythm.
Finding a balance made it easier to "get into a rhythm" (8/3/94, 215) which involved "getting my ideas together ... [and] finding the direction I'm moving in" (17/5/94, 35). To Jessica, "rhythm is something I can keep working from" (17/5/94, 36). She could not always sustain rhythm, especially when thrown "off balance". In many respects, her emphasis on balance and rhythm seemed reminiscent of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow of optimal experience or the harmony experienced when "thoughts, intentions, feelings, and all the senses are focused on the same goal" (p.41) For Jessica, rhythm, balance and flow seemed to emerge from both "a conscious attempt to master challenges" (Csikszentmihalyi, p.150) and receptivity to their complexity.

Jessica found herself "off balance" and in disharmony in her second practicum in which she worked with "children from a variety of cultural backgrounds, each with a different level of English" (April, 1994). She "assumed that all children understood what I was saying" (April, 1994), when, in fact, "they were struggling to make sense" (April, 1994). In her third practicum she reported "losing concentration on my teaching because I'm struggling to keep the group settled" (16/4/94, 69). In her final practicum, she again lost her sense of both balance and rhythm when her vision of herself as co-learner within a cooperative learning environment was threatened.

The nature of her attempts to regain her balance changed during her enrolment in Guided Practice. In her earlier practicums, she spoke of "tactics" (April, 1994). When working with children from culturally diverse backgrounds with differing levels of English she decided to "slow down when speaking with children" (April, 1994) and to "use actions that are associated with what I am saying" (April, 1994). Her responses were technical in that they focused on specific strategies with little apparent awareness of a broader context.

By her third practicum, her reflection was predominantly practical. When reflecting on her difficulty in managing group behaviour, she began with the premise that "if they are restless while I am reading a story, then there must be some reasons for that" (16/9/94, 146). She then considered a range of possible reasons, including the impact of the environment, developmental differences amongst children in the group, her choice of stories, her lack of skill in regaining the wandering attention of an individual child without disturbing the concentration of the group, and her ambivalence about whether children who
were not interested in listening to a story should be expected to remain with the group.

In her final practicum, when children expressed reluctance to participate in some of the activities she had planned, she debated with herself whether or not to insist as indicated in the following example of dialogical reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995). She commented:

I wasn't very happy with the activity. Their response wasn't totally positive. Some of them enjoyed it, but I wondered whether I was pushing them too much. After all, if they don't enjoy it, what are they going to learn from it? But then again, sometimes I think that it is important to push them. But how far do you push? It's a fine line, especially when you see them repeating the same mistakes. (24/10/95, 294)

It was important to her to facilitate rather than control children's learning while remaining accountable for it. When she found it difficult to balance these roles, her perception of herself as teacher was challenged. In turn, she began to challenge conventions which she had always taken for granted, asking for example: "Why do teachers rely so heavily on timetables? Why do they break the day into different curriculum areas?" (October, 1995). This questioning of the educational status quo might have been a precursor to questioning the broader socio-political-cultural context in which these educational decisions were made. This tendency was also evident in the final interview with Jessica which took place only two weeks later. Given that this apparent trend towards critical reflection occurred at the end of the data collection period, however, it was difficult to predict whether it was likely to continue.

"I Find That Pictures Come To Me More Easily Than Words"

In contrast to Jessica's emphasis on balance and rhythm, Sarah's reflection was guided by images. She explained: "Most of the time, actually, I piece things together pictorially. I find that pictures come to me more easily than words" (31/3/95, 8). Indeed, it seemed that images assisted her to articulate tacit understanding (Weber & Mitchell, 1996). In her first interview, for example, when asked to represent herself as a teacher, she drew herself in a preschool classroom in which featured a large blank wall (see Photograph 3). She explained that the purpose of this wall was "for the children to have free expression - they can paint and draw whatever they like on that wall" (24/3/93, 78). She linked this image to her early memories of one of her own teachers who had expected children "to listen to what we were told and react in a particular way" (24/3/93, 64).
At this stage, her ideas were relatively undeveloped, as the following excerpt indicates:

*Jennifer:* Could this drawing also be of a kindergarten (first year of school) classroom?
*Sarah:* I suppose so, but it wouldn't have the wall, though.
*Jennifer:* Why not?
*Sarah:* I don't know really ... (long pause) ... I suppose ... well, you just don't have that facility at a school. You just can't paint the back wall.
*Jennifer:* But you can't in a preschool either.
*Sarah:* Mmm ... I suppose I'm getting myself stuck on structured classroom activities and thinking 'Well, they just wouldn't be able to do that sort of thing in a school'.

(24/3/93, 103)

Nevertheless, this extract indicates the power of image, in this case in conjunction with conversation with a critical friend (Hatton & Smith, 1995), in illuminating, clarifying and extending current understandings.

During Sarah's second year in the program, what was to prove an enduring image of a rainbow emerged. She explained that, sometimes, the rainbow appeared as a path: *The rainbow is my path as an early childhood teacher ... It's a very happy and positive path ... It doesn't come to an end ... it's never complete (28/7/94, 48). My path is always changing (31/3/95, 71). It's my path to professionalism (31/3/95, 70). In another instance, the rainbow appeared above*
the image of a forest through which there were many paths. Several tracks led off the main path which was barricaded in places. Some of these tracks rejoined the main path further into the forest while others came to an abrupt end. Sarah explained that the paths represented her practicum experiences:

_Prac is like walking in a forest. You don't know what's ahead. There are paths but you don't know where they lead. It's up to you to decide which paths to take. The paths are decisions. There are many decisions on prac and you have to make up your own mind._ (28/7/94, B16)

As well as decisions to make, there were difficulties or hurdles to be overcome. Sarah elaborated: "I try to see hurdles before I come to them ... I know they are there, and I think about them ... Hurdles are something you are continually working out" (28/7/94, 274). In contrast, the side tracks representing unforeseen possibilities were unexpected. Those which came to an abrupt end required backtracking. As Sarah explained: "When something goes wrong you've got to go back. You've got to retrace your steps ... analyse it ... to see where you went wrong. That gets you back on track" (28/7/94, 12). This image, shown in Photograph 4, appeared to represent an analytical approach to reflection.

PHOTOGRAPH 4: Sarah's Rainbow Image - An Analytical Perspective
Interestingly, after the relaxation and visualisation sessions, a more holistic image came to Sarah "just like that" [clicking her fingers to give an effect of instantaneity] (31/3/95, 6). This time, the rainbow appeared as a puzzle with the pieces representing key aspects of teaching (see Photographs 5a and 5b).

PHOTOGRAPH 5a: Sarah's Rainbow Image - A Holistic Perspective

PHOTOGRAPH 5b: Sarah's Rainbow Image - A Holistic Perspective
In relation to Photographs 5a and 5b, Sarah explained: "They are all separate issues, but when you put them together, like in a puzzle, they all relate ... I like to see things linking, so I'm trying to work on that" (31/3/95, 96). At times, she commented, "drawing things together is very difficult" (31/3/95, 97). She attributed this to a perception of inherent fluidity: "I think that I'll always see myself in a different light in a new situation" (31/3/95, 34). As well, she referred to difficulties arising from an overemphasis on words: "To me, if you separate the pieces of the puzzle, then they become just isolated words ... They are not meaningless, but they are not the whole picture ... It's only when they are together that it all works" (31/3/95, 22). Given the timing of the appearance of this image, it seems possible that relaxation prompted a more holistic approach to reflection.

Although both student teachers emphasised that they had "always been reflective" (Jessica, 20/11/95, 435; Sarah, 15/11/95, 230), they considered that they had become considerably more reflective during their enrolment in Guided Practice. Jessica's reflection took "on a new perspective and a new dimension" (20/11/95, 435), outlined previously, while Sarah "began to systematically document my reflection" (15/11/95, 231). Initially, she engaged in reflective writing because "if I don't, I'm not going to pass the course" (15/11/95, 383) but later because it had became "so important to me" (15/11/95, 382).

Increasingly, Sarah found journal writing a valuable release from the pressures of practicum. She commented: "You get to explain to a piece of paper how you feel" (31/3/95, 394). She also appreciated being able to write "whatever comes into my head ... without the pressure of thinking about the 'right words' " (15/11/95, 345). As she explained: "Since I've started writing, I've been able to grow from my reflections" (15/11/95, 231) as writing "keeps you in touch with what you believe" (27/10/95, 323). Consequently, "often you can answer your own questions" (31/3/95, 216). Frequently, too, writing led to a kind of intuitive understanding. In her words: "All of a sudden ... it makes it more concrete" (31/3/95, 217). She tried to explain this sensation: "Sometimes, I just suddenly get a wave. It's like a light coming on, and I realise 'Oh, that's why I've reacted like that!' " (28/7/94, B60). In addition, through writing, she could "learn more about the teacher that I am about to become" (July, 1995). Her comments suggest that she saw writing more as a means of illuminating previously tacit understanding (Elbow, 1994) rather than a medium for analytical argument. They also
highlight the limitations of technical measures of reflective writing (e.g., Pulman, 1996) in identifying non-analytical components.

Jessica, on the other hand, described herself as "not a great writer - I can talk about my thoughts, but I'm not a great one for writing them down" (24/10/95, 479). For her, reflection mainly involved talking. She explained: "It's so much easier when you can talk about it" (17/5/94, 306). Talking exposed her to new ideas as "so many things come up in discussion that I'd never thought of before" (20/11/95) and revealed different perspectives, enabling her to "understand people more because you can see where they are coming from - people come from different backgrounds and have different beliefs" (14/9/95, 380). In turn, this helped Jessica "to understand where I'm coming from" (21/10/94, 246) and "to develop my own ideas" (21/10/94, 247). As well, talking helped her to "value other people's opinions" (21/10/94, 248) which she considered fundamental to creating a community of empowered learners, a key element of her passionate creed. She elaborated:

I think that it's really important to be able to understand other people's points of view. You have to be able to take in other points of view to be able to work well as a team. Because not everyone thinks the same as you do. I feel very strongly about that. (20/11/95, 418)

Finally, talking with others enabled her to "bounce ideas off each other" (24/10/95, 586) thus creating new connections and possibilities. These excerpts indicate Jessica's preference for reflection as a communal rather than individual undertaking. They also highlight the need for a range of strategies for reflection in order to cater for individual preferences and styles.

Although Sarah and Jessica preferred different strategies and used different imagery, their reflection had much in common. Both developed passionate creeds, which provided a focus for their reflection, but did not constrain it, and both implied that reflection involved a process of dynamic interconnections. Their commitment to teaching and their epistemological perspective of constructed knowing seemed instrumental to their reflection. In the following profile, the role of epistemological perspective is explored in more depth.

**EPISTEMOLOGICAL SHIFT TO CONSTRUCTED KNOWING: PIA**

From an Italo-Australian background, Pia spoke fluent Italian but regarded English as her first language. She was the first of her family to attend University and throughout her enrolment played a major role in supporting a parent through a serious illness. She also worked part time in child care
centres to ease family financial pressures. As a school leaver she had failed to gain the required TER for entry into the program but was accepted into an early childhood program at another University. After obtaining satisfactory results in her first year she was able to transfer but was required to undertake the entire Guided Practice sequence.

For as long as Pia could remember, her "heart had been set on becoming a teacher" (22/9/94, 30) and her failure to gain entry initially made her "realise even more how much I wanted to teach" (22/9/94, 33). Like Felicity (previous chapter), she entered the program wholehearted (Dewey, 1933) about teaching. Unlike Felicity, though, she sensed that teaching would be problematic, in part because her own experiences of school had not been particularly positive.

As a child, Pia had not felt especially valued by her teachers. She noted: "I felt that a lot of the time, the teacher wasn't really listening to what I was saying" (22/9/94, 61). Her needs as a learner had not been recognised. In her opinion: "What counted was how many facts you knew ... That system didn't work for me" (22/11/95, 234). She had resented "the labels attached to kids - like 'below average' or 'advanced'.... [because] everyone has their own way of learning and their own pace" (22/9/94, 100). She had also disliked the superiority assumed by the teachers, recalling: "I remember so clearly teachers saying 'Don't do that!' and kids asking 'Why?' ... [and teachers replying] 'Because I'm your teacher and I said so!"' (22/9/94, 113). Adamant that "the way I remember .... is not the way I want to teach" (13/10/94, 144), she entered the program "with a lot of questions" (13/10/94, 68) about how she could be a more "caring" (13/10/94, 67) teacher.

Nevertheless, at first, Pia's epistemological perspective was one of received knowing. She anticipated that she would be "given the theory" (22/9/94, 352) and "academic training" (22/11/95, 228) by lecturers "transferring knowledge" (22/11/95, 230) to student teachers. Like Pamela (Chapter Five), she assumed that "things would be either black or white, right or wrong" (13/10/94, 202) and was surprised by the emphasis on reflection. Initially, she responded: "We have to do such a lot of reflection! Is it really necessary?" (22/11/95, 364). Reflective writing was simply "a chore that had to be done at the end of each week" (22/11/95, 422). Despite the emphasis on reflection, she recalled that "when I first started Guided Practice, I don't think I did reflect much" (22/11/95, 471). She found that
"there was so much information to take in" (13/19/95, 133) there was little time "to really think about it" (13/19/95, 134).

"There Isn’t Really A ’Right’ Or ’Wrong’ Solution"

As Pia progressed through Guided Practice she underwent a noticeable epistemological shift. She explained:

> My view of knowledge has changed. Now, to me, knowledge is about finding out what you need to know, rather than the actual facts that you might end up with in the end ... Knowledge is about initiative ... [and] the skills that you build up for yourself in order to find out what you need to know. (22/11/95, 235)

Accordingly, she moved away from an absolutist view. As she put it: "Before, I saw ... ’right’ and ’wrong’ solutions ... But there isn’t really a ’right’ or ’wrong’ solution, but rather a ’better’ or ’worse’ one for that particular situation" (13/10/94, 460). She also "developed a lot more ideas and beliefs of my own" (24/3/95, 109).

What contributed to this move towards a constructed, as opposed to received, understanding? And how did it impact on her reflection?

Pia identified several factors which were instrumental in this shift, including program expectations which emphasised that "there is a lot of flexibility about how you go about it [learning to teach]. You adopt your own style. Within limits, you adopt what suits you most" (22/9/94, 352); her growing confidence in herself as a learner for "I just have the general feeling that it’s okay to try something else to see if it suits me better. I feel like I want to try different things" (13/10/95, 471); her recognition of the complexity of teaching because "it’s not as if you can think ‘I’ve got all the recipes so I’ll be set for the rest of my career’ " (22/11/95, 512); and support from her cooperating teacher during her second practicum who "helped me to become aware of the beliefs that I had, the beliefs that were behind what I was doing. She helped me to see where there were inconsistencies" (22/9/94, 150). Her comments highlight the importance of a supportive environment in assisting epistemological transitions but do not explain why she found this environment supportive, when most other student teachers who entered the program as received knowers did not. Possibly her commitment to teaching and her awareness of the problematic nature of teaching provided impetus for an epistemological shift which the program was then able to support.

As Pia moved to a constructed epistemological perspective, she began to value reflection more. She noticed three major benefits. First, it played an illuminating role. As she pointed out: "Reflection brings issues to the surface for
me" (22/11/95, 405) and was "a good way of highlighting issues which could get neglected. Those issues come out through reflection and it's a way of acknowledging them" (22/11/95, 374). Second, it was a means of ensuring congruence between her beliefs and actions, or in Pia's words:

"a way of keeping in contact with what you do believe in, rather than losing yourself in a system which might not be what you believe in ... Reflection is a good way to step out of the situation that you're in and back to what you believe in. It's a way to evaluate what you're doing to see whether it's really what you want to be doing, or whether you're doing it because of other influences." (22/11/95, 368)

Third, it assisted her in making connections. In turn, these connections "added so much more depth" (22/11/95, 272) to her understanding. She continued:

'I think that in the beginning, you tend to just look at you and the children. But as you progress, you realise that it's not just you and the children. The surroundings also matter because they influence you and you have to decide how much you will let them influence you. I think that you come to realise the significance of things more." (22/11/95, 554)

Interestingly, she made little mention of the problem solving aspects of reflection so heavily emphasised by Felicity (previous chapter), perhaps because she was aware of the problematic nature of teaching and more interested in exploring associated moral and ethical issues. A problem solving approach, with its emphasis on identifiable solutions, on the other hand, might be more likely to be adopted by those who do not see teaching as particularly problematic.

As Pia came to value reflection more, she willingly explored different reflective strategies. She found reflective writing increasingly helpful, preferring an unstructured approach which enabled her to make connections in a way that setting and evaluating her progress towards specific goals, a strategy which she had tried previously, did not. She explained: "Goals narrow things down too much. They make you focus on a specific thing when you might really want to focus on a combination of things that don't fit in to that particular goal" (22/11/95, 446). Her preference for lack of structure and the freedom to make her own connections contrasted sharply with Pamela's and Marina's intolerance for indeterminacy.

Typically, in her reflective writing Pia explored issues from various perspectives. In the following example of dialogic reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995), she wrote:
Today was a turning point ... I had thought that .... but today I found otherwise ... It changed my whole perspective (September, 1994); My impressions formed at first glance were very negative and were based on the fact that my cooperating teacher's philosophy was completely different from my own. However, I can now say that ... What this experience has shown me is that ... (August, 1995); It would be so easy to accept this situation and apply this solution. However, another way to view this situation would be to ...

(October, 1995)

A similar trend was evident in her interview responses, when she remarked:
I suppose that you can tend to take for granted that just because ...
(13/9/95, 356); I automatically judged that it was a negative situation and that I wouldn't get anything out of it. But what I didn't know was that ... So I guess that has taught me ...
(13/9/95, 327); It's a matter of perspective. A different set of eyes looks at the situation and sees things a little differently.

(13/10/95, 153)

These excerpts from different data sources suggest that perhaps consistency between written and oral reflection is a better gauge of the authenticity of reflective writing than the ability to master a conventional reflective writing genre, especially given the discrepancies evident in several earlier profiles.

Pia also considered relaxation and visualisation techniques a useful tool for reflection-on-action. In particular, she found that they "remove you from the here and now" (24/3/95, 93) and create "the time to feel distant, which normally I never have" (15/3/95, 339). This distancing effect provided a release from compulsive and constricting thoughts. As she put it: "I'm very analytical about things ... I go over and over and over them. They confine me and almost consume me and make me feel really boxed in. Whereas after the relaxation I could let them go" (15/3/95, 274). Freed from these binds, Pia felt "like I've taken back control. I feel stronger and more positive" (15/3/95, 286). She also reported a sense "of being able to deal with the different paths and roads that I'm going to come across ... and growing as a result of them, rather than feeling boxed in" (15/3/95, 315). Her experience supports those who, like Yinger (1990), argue for more attention to meditation to counterbalance the current preoccupation in the literature with analytical aspects of reflection.

It is interesting to speculate whether meditative techniques such as relaxation and visualisation might enhance reflection-in-action. Pia seemed to make implicit links between meditation and reflection-in-action. She appeared to find the latter difficult during practicum because constant busyness hindered her from focusing on the moment at hand. As she pointed out:
What I’ve realised is that you are so busy thinking you’ve got to do this, this, this, this and that .... it sort of takes your mind off what you are doing at the time and that makes it hard to make use of spontaneous teaching moments. (22/9/94, 235)

Using terms strikingly similar to Schon’s analogy of musicians’ improvisation, Pia explained that “being able to respond spontaneously is important to me ... That’s what I’m striving to achieve ... to be able to pick up on moments like that” (13/10/94, 52). Given that relaxation and visualisation assisted Pia’s reflection-on-action by stilling her tendency to compulsively revisit past events, mindfulness (Tremmel, 1993) in the midst of practice might enhance reflection-in-action.

The above extracts suggest that Pia, in contrast to Genni (previous chapter), was seeking a holistic way of knowing which included but was not limited to analytical thinking. Consequently, she questioned attempts to fragment children’s learning. She commented: “I’d like to see a lot more meshing together of curriculum areas. In life, things aren’t separate ... It makes me wonder about trying to put things in boxes. After all, that’s not the way the world works, so why do it at school?” (13/9/95, B90). As well as highlighting the importance of interconnections, she emphasised that furthering understanding was a process of ongoing change. As she noted: “Your philosophy grows and changes all the time. It’s not something that you develop one day and then it stays like that” (13/9/95, B131). Her conviction that dynamic interconnections are fundamental for learning, reflection and growth resonates with theories of universal interconnectedness referred to in Chapter Three.

Pia’s epistemological shift towards a constructed and interconnected way of knowing and her consequent interest in reflection contributed to her empowerment as a learner. Her determination that the children for whom she was responsible would not be disempowered as she had been as a child provided a focus for much of her reflection in the final Guided Practice units and indeed developed into a passionate creed. She was dismayed, for example, to find that the Year One children with whom she worked “always wanted instructions about how to do things. When I said to them ‘Well, how about you do it the way you want to?’, they were dumbfounded. They didn’t know what to do!” (13/10/95, 68). She then noted that because “there is so little autonomy for children” (13/9/95, B180) they had “lost their own sense of direction” (13/10/95, 69). Her subsequent attempts to provide them with “as much opportunity as possible
to discover their own knowledge” (22/11/95, 214) are described elsewhere (Sumsion, 1997).

To sum up, Pia's epistemological shift was greater than any other participant’s and the impact on her reflection more profound. In short, it not only enhanced her ability to reflect but also led to a commitment to reflection. While Marcelle (previous chapter) also made the transition from received to constructed knowing and, in doing so, became more able to reflect, her commitment to reflection was less certain. The importance of a commitment to reflection is highlighted further in Nina’s profile (below).

**COMMITMENT TO REFLECTION: NINA**

Nina, also from an Italo-Australian background, entered the program as a twenty three year old arts graduate with double majors in psychology and philosophy. For as long as she could recall she had been interested in teaching, having "always thought that childhood is a very important time, and that not enough is invested in children" (1/8/94, 15). As Nina explained, her father had discouraged her interest:

*Dad is a businessman and he thought that there wasn’t much future in it from a money-making point of view. He was also worried that if I was working with children, I mightn’t want to have any of my own. (1/8/94, 21)*

As a school leaver, her high TER had allowed her access to a wide range tertiary courses. She enrolled in Arts, "not really knowing what I wanted to do ... but I thought that it was important to go to University and keep up the family’s standards" (1/8/94, 43). After graduating, she travelled overseas but her attraction to teaching remained strong. Twelve months later, she returned to Australia to work as a volunteer in a child care centre before enrolling in the preservice program.

After her parents’ divorce, Nina was brought up by her father in Sydney’s West, a multicultural region with pockets of considerable socio-economic disadvantage. Despite her family’s comfortable economic circumstances, Nina had felt emotionally insecure. In her words: "I didn’t feel safe; I didn’t feel good enough" (1/8/94, 191). From childhood, she had been urged to strive for excellence in all she attempted. Her consequent insecurity affected "all aspects of growing up” (1/8/94, 190) and led to an inhibiting lack of confidence. She added: "When I was a child, I was a runner, and I represented the State. But I gave it up because I didn’t feel confident (1/8/94, 219). I had a real fear of failing” (30/3/95, 131). Now, she regretted this decision and considered that "if only I
had been more confident in myself I think I could have really achieved something with my running” (1/8/94, 219). Nevertheless, she valued her high standards because “if you set yourself high expectations then I think that your results are going to be higher than what they would be otherwise” (5/12/95, 345). Yet she also described them as “my downfall” (5/12/95, 341) for they continued to fuel her insecurity. As she put it: “I always have an embedded fear of failing. I feel that I haven’t got a real grip on things, and that I’m hanging on by the ‘skin of my teeth’ (30/3/95, 133). Given that “commitment to excellence” had become a “theme running throughout my whole life” (5/12/95, 341) it was not surprising that it had a major impact on her development as a teacher.

"You Were Able To Bring In Your Own Colours"

Nina entered the program with few preconceived ideas about teaching. She recalled: “I knew that the education of young children was important, but other than really general, broad beliefs, I didn’t have any predetermined thoughts. I had a really open mind” (15/3/95, 327). She described her early field visits as:

a real shock because they made me realise that at University we are
a tight community and think in a particular way. Just because we
think that way, doesn’t mean that other people working with young
children also think that way. (15/3/95, 336)

Yet she rarely questioned the ideas presented in the program. Initially, it was unclear whether this was because they resonated with her own emerging ideas or because they were presented by authority figures.

There seemed some evidence, however, of an epistemological shift during Nina’s enrolment in Guided Practice. During her second practicum, for example, she wrote: “Working within a team can offer a wealth of knowledge ... If we are prepared to listen to others, then there is much to learn” (April, 1994). By her third practicum, she seemed to place less emphasis on learning directly from others and more on developing her ideas through interactions with others. She reported "bouncing a lot of my ideas off my teacher" (17/10/94, 76) and discovering that she "had a lot of preconceived ideas, and that sometimes I was too critical, too quick to judge" (17/10/94, 80). These discussions led to "a really big breakthrough for me in terms of my professional development. I learnt to say, on a professional basis Well, no, I don't agree with you, and these are the reasons why ..." (17/10/94, 96). Her growing confidence in her own voice seemed linked to a sense of mastery. As she put it:
I've worked hard to achieve what I have. And I feel that I know much more about what I'm talking about - even with little things like being able to use professional jargon. Now, I'm confident about contributing new ideas and expressing concerns. (5/12/95, 112)

Nina also considered that Guided Practice had played an important role in helping her find her voice. She explained:

You were given the freedom to put yourself into it. You didn't have to tell the tutor or lecturer what they wanted to hear. It was okay to have different ideas as long as you could reflect on your ideas and understand them within your self. Obviously, you had to be able to back up your ideas in relation to theory and to justify them, but ... it wasn't cut and dried, it wasn't black and white ... You were able to bring in your own colours. (5/12/95, 308)

These extracts suggest that although there may have been some doubt as to whether her epistemological perspective had been one of constructed knowing early in the Guided Practice sequence, it clearly was by the final stages.

Throughout her enrolment in the program, Nina's goal was to achieve professional excellence. "My dream is to have my own preschool or long daycare centre, and for it to be a model centre" (1/11/95, 250), she confided. To Nina, excellence involved nurturing children's sense of security and confidence. In her view: "A good teacher helps children develop a sense of confidence, because that's necessary for really meaningful learning - without confidence, it's very hard to break through barriers and to try new things (1/8/94, 212). Much of her reflective writing explored these themes of security and confidence. At first, she tended to focus on the immediate impact of her interactions with children in specific situations. During her second practicum, for example, she wrote:

More children seemed to approach me today to talk to me or to ask for assistance. It made me realise that my personal demeanour was having a positive impact on the children. Because I was more relaxed, I became more approachable and the children must have sensed this. (April, 1994)

Her later writing focused more on wider ethical issues and implications arising from her interactions with children. Note, for example, the following account of her interaction with an extremely withdrawn toddler with severely delayed language skills and behavioural difficulties who had fallen from his bed.
I picked him up and held him firmly and closely. He cried, but did not push me away. I spoke softly, acknowledging that I understood that his head hurt. As I held him, I began to rock Billy in my arms. He fell asleep!! I sat there for several minutes holding Billy in my arms as he slept. I realised that I had made a small impression in this child's life - for that moment he trusted me and allowed me to comfort him. We were no longer two blank faces looking at each other. We were two people who knew a little more about each other. When he woke, I made a point of approaching him and offering a cuddle, which he accepted. I realised that he was learning to trust me and that we had begun a journey together towards discovery. I wish I could have stayed at the centre longer to work with him. Do children we care for and educate feel a sense of loss or betrayal when we leave, I wonder? (October, 1995).

This extract also provides glimpses into the richness of Nina's inner world of teaching (Yonemura, 1991). In addition, it suggests that her empathy for this child was integral to her reflection. As such, it supports the argument proposed in Chapter Three that emotion can be a medium for understanding rather than simply an impetus or barrier to reflection as asserted by Boud et al. (1985).

"The West Has A Bad Name ... I'd Like To Try To Change That Perception"

Nina's commitment to building a trusting and supportive relationship with individual children developed into a broader concern for children's well being. Increasingly, she located this concern within a wider socio-political context. She was determined that her "model centre" (1/11/95, 237) would be in Sydney's culturally diverse western suburbs. Here, she could contribute not only to children's well being, but also to that of the community. As she explained:

I've been brought up in the West, and because of that I've seen the trials and tribulations that some families from low socio-economic backgrounds go through ... I kind of feel that because of those difficulties the West has a bad name, and I'd like to try to change that perception in some small way. (1/11/95, 254)

She criticised the inconsistency between political and educational rhetoric about multiculturalism and the many instances of cultural insensitivity and bias she observed during her practicums and on the University campus. While she saw teachers as generally well meaning, she was concerned about their lack of insight into issues associated with cultural diversity and economic disadvantage. In a preschool catering mainly for Buddhist children, for example, she was troubled by what she saw as inappropriate celebrations of Easter. As she observed:
What is actually celebrated in our early childhood settings is often paralleled with what the shops and media tell society to celebrate. This episode seemed to be mirroring the commercial events promoted by our society - but how meaningful was it for this particular group of children, given their backgrounds? (April, 1994)

Similarly, in another example of critical reflection, she noted in a University lecturer's exhortation that student teachers challenge their thinking about culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged families, an assumption that early childhood student teachers were from middle class Anglo-Australian backgrounds.

Her perception of insensitivity to cultural and socio-economic differences and political inaction to improve social and educational opportunities in the West reinforced Nina's determination to redress "the stigma attached to the Western suburbs" (15/3/95, 415) by establishing a centre of educational excellence. Having "realised just what a profound effect you can have" as a teacher (5/12/95, 375), she wanted to extend her influence beyond "one group of children in one centre" (5/12/95, B118) to involvement in policy making decisions. She explained: "I would like to present seminar papers to council meetings and to politicians and to the general public ... to advocate on behalf of the early childhood profession" (5/12/95, B121). As her concerns extended to broader issues including those of a socio-political, cultural and economic nature, her reflection became increasingly characterised by wide ranging and complex interconnections.

Much of Nina's profile thus far has focused on her apparent epistemological shift to constructed knowing, her perceptions of a supportive learning environment and her growing commitment to teaching as a vehicle for reform. All three factors were instrumental to the considerable change evident in her reflection. Her renewed commitment to reflection, however, seemed even more significant.

Nina described herself as "by nature, a reflective person" (5/12/95, B51) but found reflection "hard to describe"(1/8/94, 46). She explained that: "Sometimes it is more a feeling or a thought than words" (1/8/94, 47) but also involved being "objective and critical" (17/10/94, 53), "asking questions of myself" (6/9/95, 252) or "my mind... fleeting" [from one thought to another] (April, 1994). Her experience highlights the diversity of reflection for even one individual and the inappropriateness of a narrow definition.
She considered that she had become more reflective since enrolling in the program. In particular, she had "learnt ... to reflect on my teaching and what teaching is all about" (5/12/95, 189). Consequently, she had come to equate reflection with professional growth and was now convinced that "reflection serves a really important purpose - it helps you to grow (5/12/95, 566) ... Without reflection, it's hard to move forward" (17/10/94). As well, she considered reflection essential for professional fulfilment. In her view: "It makes my teaching meaningful - it makes it more than 'just a job'. "(5/12/95, 198). She saw herself as responsible for her own development as a teacher and for achieving her goal of professional excellence, explaining: "I feel that I'm responsible for my learning. It's up to me" (1/8/94, 397). As part of this responsibility, she deliberately sought challenges which would contribute to her learning. During her final practicum, for instance, when she received only positive feedback from her cooperating teacher and University adviser, she commented:

"It would have been easy to say to my adviser and co-operating teacher 'Gee, thanks!' and to think 'Yeah, I'm doing fine' and to just breeze through it. But I need to know where I can do better and what my challenges are. So, I've needed to stand back and say 'Well, okay, what can I do better? What can I do to challenge these children?' That's been tiring ... but I wasn't prepared to go through a five week prac. and not get anything out of it!" (1/11/95, 167)

This extract highlights the sense of responsibility with which Nina approached learning to teach and highlights the relative lack of responsibility demonstrated by many of the less reflective student teachers profiled in Chapter Five.

The above extract also illustrates Nina's perception of a symbiotic relationship between reflection and professional excellence. Her commitment to excellence, her conviction that reflection was a prerequisite for excellence, and her consequent constant need to reflect most likely contributed to her impressive achievements as a student teacher. Yet they were also a source of considerable frustration and exhaustion. The following extract illustrates the consequent intensity of her inner world (Yonemura, 1991) for, as Nina explained:

"It [reflection on teaching] is always in my mind - in the shower, driving to prac., eating - it's always in my head ... It's so constant! I'm not necessarily sitting and writing, but it's here (gestures to head) and here (gestures to chest) ... It exhausts me. (6/9/95, 472)

Her commitment to excellence, however, did not allow her to give in to her often felt temptation not to reflect. As she put it:
Reflection is so hard and tiring that sometimes you think 'God, the last thing I want to do is reflective writing'. But you need to reflect if you want to grow, in my opinion. And there are always going to things that you don't feel like doing on some days. But you do them, and you overcome those feelings. (5/12/95, 565)

These excerpts highlight yet again the importance of Dewey's notion of responsibility and wholeheartedness.

At times, Nina found reflection painful. In questioning whether "the values and beliefs that I bring to teaching are necessarily the ones that I want to form the foundation of my teaching" (30/3/95, 121), she felt the need to re-examine the influences of her own childhood and her still unresolved views about competition and achievement. She continued:

I've always been brought up to believe that competition is healthy; that it brings out the best in you; that a bit of competition in your education is a good thing. But now, I'm wondering about whether it really is a good thing, and whether I will bring competition into my classroom. At this stage, I'm still unsure. I think 'Well, it worked for me' - but there were negative aspects, especially the pressure. So that's why I'm still really struggling with that concept. (30/3/95, 105)

For Nina, "struggling with my philosophy" (30/3/95, 119) also seemed to involve struggling with the reverberating insecurities and anxieties she had experienced as a child (Conle, 1996). Given that "constantly rethinking, constantly reflecting, constantly trying to do better" (30/3/95, 194) came at considerable emotional discomfort, her commitment to reflection was noteworthy.

According to Nina, the only times that she felt free of this constant pressure to reflect were during relaxation and visualisation sessions. She commented:

Hearing your voice and listening to the music made me feel that someone was trying to put their arms around me and say 'You're okay, you're doing all right'. It was a peaceful feeling because I always feel as if I'm not allowed to let go. That what I've done isn't good enough. That I've got to do better. (15/3/95, 375)

Freedom from this pressure enabled clearer vision, she reported:

I was visualising things more clearly in my head and focusing on my positive aspects as a teacher ... I could see more clearly and think more clearly. It helped me to focus and relax and let go of the worries. I didn't have that cloud of worry hanging over me. (30/3/95, 62)

Clearer vision also seemed to include heightened intuitive awareness. After the third session, she commented: "It was amazing, but during the relaxation, I was actually thinking about the questions you asked us afterwards!" (30/3/95, 54).
Given the impact of these sessions, Nina intended to incorporate the techniques used into her daily routine.

While Nina's profile highlights the importance of commitment to reflection, it indicates that reflection might not be without cost. Given the possible emotional discomfort involved, a supportive environment would appear to be necessary for reflection to flourish. In the final profile, the role of a supportive environment in fostering reflection is explored more closely.

**SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT: GERRY**

Gerry, the only son in a family of five children, was 33 years old when he enrolled in the program. As a child, he had been encouraged by his Eastern European parents to "be Australian" (11/3/94, 10) and although his family spoke German at home, regarded English as his first language. From age six he had thought "that when I grew up I would like to become a teacher" (11/3/94, 60) but later changed his mind because of the "formalised, didactic style of teaching in upper primary and high school" (11/3/94, 74). As a school leaver, he had enrolled in a Pharmacy degree which he did not complete, having realised that he would prefer to work with people. After periods of unemployment and a variety of unskilled jobs, he worked in personnel administration for five years before being retrenched. Using his retrenchment payout, he travelled extensively overseas, compiling a photographic portfolio in the hope of gaining entry to a photo-journalism course on his return. Although not successful in this goal he was happy to be accepted into the early childhood program, his second preference. He anticipated that teaching would provide "a challenging career which was people-centred and intellectually stimulating ... meaningful and fulfilling" (April, 1996). In addition, "after the brutalising effects of working in all-male environments" (April, 1996) he wanted "to move into an area not dominated by males" (April, 1996).

Apart from "a few days helping friends in a non traditional school run along the lines of A.S. Neill's Summerhill" (11/3/94, 85), Gerry had little prior experience with children. Although fascinated by "how children see the world and how their way is so different to an adult's way", it took him some time to feel "relaxed and confident" (11/3/94, 363) with them. Indeed, on his early field visits he considered that he "didn't even really know how to talk to them" (17/11/95, 286). He enjoyed his first practicum as his cooperating teacher had been "really positive and helpful" (17/11/95, B192) and her feedback "helped me focus on the
areas that I needed to improve on and .... helped enhanced my self esteem" (17/11/95, B105).

"I've Got More Experience Of The World To Draw Strength From"
Despite his excellent grades and positive practicum report, Gerry was highly anxious for much of his first year. He described the program as “interesting but very demanding and challenging ... There were times when I felt I was drowning” (11/3/94, 131). Disconcertingly, he experienced a sense of loss of identity. In his words: 'I feel constrained by an avalanche of theory: a swarm of 'do's and don'ts' that tend to stifle one's personal style" (April, 1994). Feelings of isolation exacerbated his perceived loss of identity. Like Colin (Chapter Five), he commented: "There are few people I talk to. The fact that I'm a mature age student - as well as a male - makes it doubly isolating" (11/3/94, 152). Nevertheless, he considered that "as a mature age student, I have certain advantages. I've got more experience of the world to draw strength from" (11/3/94, 386). Gerry needed to draw on this strength many times during his enrolment in the program.

Unfortunately his second practicum coincided with a period of great personal upheaval and was, in many ways, a major disappointment. Although he suspected that "a lot of it was because I was so down [depressed] about everything and not as bubbly as I should have been" (13/5/94, 181), he was convinced that this was not "the total story" (13/5/94, 182). In particular, he was concerned by the lack of feedback from his cooperating teacher. He explained:

She didn't really watch me do my presentations or small group activities. She'd just flit in and out and so she wasn't able to give me detailed feedback. She said that she didn't want to make me nervous but she had the opposite effect. At this stage, I really need some constructive feedback. (13/5/94, 112)

As well, he sensed:

Some parents don't particularly like having a male working in this area. It wasn't overt, but I think there was an uneasiness. That's a bit disheartening because it implies that ... I am automatically labelled a pervert ... which is pretty sick! (13/5/94, 299)

Wondering whether as a male he would always feel "a bit isolated .... a real interloper" (13/5/94, 401), he decided to delay his third practicum for 18 months and to undertake relief work in child care centres. He hoped that this would provide a clearer indication of whether he "would make a good early childhood teacher" (13/5/94, 299), from both his own and others' perspectives.
Relief work proved reaffirming with Gerry reporting "excellent feedback from some staff which has been really great for my confidence and my self esteem and my perception of how I'm developing my own style" (18/9/95, 201). He found it "really easy to discuss ideas with other teachers" (17/11/95, 212) and valued the opportunities for professional development this provided. The children responded very positively and, with obvious pride, he explained that "some directors request me specifically when they ring the agency for replacement staff" (September, 1995).

Much to Gerry's disappointment, his earlier concerns re-emerged during his next practicum where he again felt unwelcome. He commented: "Generally, staff have been very icy towards me - not so much as a 'Hello' on most mornings" (September, 1995). He found this "quite demoralising" (18/9/95, 376), especially as staff rarely gave him feedback. Gerry explained:

I periodically remind the director that I require feedback and that I would like her to read and comment on the work in my folder. She will do this sometimes, though it often happens that she is too busy or finds it too boring to do so - 'Prac. books are pretty dull reading' she said. You can imagine how this made me feel - spending hours each night writing after putting in an eight hour day at the centre and she can't be bothered to read my boring work! (September, 1995)

Lack of feedback had a deleterious effect on his self esteem. He found himself:

beginning to doubt my competence and abilities. I read their lack of feedback as embarrassment and reticence, on their behalf, to make negative comments about my work ... My self esteem and confidence are starting to evaporate. (September, 1995)

"In a situation where you get no feedback", he explained, "you automatically start wondering about your competence" (4/11/96, 401). The sudden wariness of several children who had welcomed him initially added to his demoralisation and sense of isolation. As he put it: "The recent refusal of some of the children to let me change their nappies is yet another blow" (September, 1995).

Pamela and Marina (Chapter Five) also complained about lack of feedback, a predictable response from their perspective of received knowledge (Belenky et al., 1986). In contrast, Gerry, a constructed knower, anticipated "right from the start [of the program] ... being quite independent and not moulded into a particular framework" (23/3/95, 258). Consequently, he reported, he was surprised to find:
the approach quite different from when I was studying previously many years ago. We were presented with a whole range of research on each topic. The nature of the presentation was Well, here are five different theories. They are all pretty much valid. You decide which one to go for, or you might decide to combine two or three of them, to take bits from all of them. Whereas here, it's There are many different approaches and we are taking bits and of all of them, but we are taking this combination for this situation because this is what we like and this is the combination that we want you to adopt. (29/3/95, 290)

Apart from Guided Practice units where "tutors would say 'We really want you to find your own style and your own way of doing things' " (29/3/95, 339), he sensed that student teachers were "expected to work out how to translate the theory into practice, but not to question the theory" (29/3/95, 344) and was disappointed that such "a framework was being imposed" (29/3/95, 259). As a constructed knower not dependent on the voice of authority (Belenky et al., 1986), why did he value feedback as much as received knowers? Furthermore, what impact did his perception of a less than supportive environment appear to have on his reflection, especially given that previous profiles have suggested that reflection might be more likely in a supportive environment?

His responses suggest that although feedback might be less important in an epistemological sense for those operating from a perspective of constructed rather than received knowing, it nevertheless plays a key role in enhancing self esteem. Unlike Pamela and Marina, Gerry appeared not to be looking for feedback as a source of specific answers, but for validation of his potential to develop into an effective early childhood teacher. Even for constructed knowers, feedback seems to provide much needed emotional support. The link between feedback, emotional support, self esteem and reflection became even more apparent during his final year practicums.

In the first of these practicums, Gerry was "very pleased to have a cooperating teacher who is willing to discuss issues and justify her decisions" (August, 1996). "Even if we do not always agree", he commented, "it is a most valuable vehicle for learning and sorting out one's own stance" (August, 1996). He was concerned, however, that "at present, I do not make full use of these interchanges. I tend to drink in the other person's ideas and justifications and deal with them internally instead of engaging in a friendly professional debate" (August, 1996). He attributed this to being "acutely aware of my neophyte status" (August, 1996). In the following example of dialogic reflection (Hatton & Smith, 1995), he wrote:
I'm reminded of Guffario's (1995) words: 'We all struggle to make sense of our actions to find ways that go deeper than what works at the moment. It is a struggle because what Dewey asks is our continued growth, reflection, intelligence, imagination and the risk taking and responsibility involved in creating ... our teaching self' (p.99-100). This is a big ask. I need strength and courage and lots of energy to do these things. I'm going to try to take those risks with imagination and reflection. (August, 1996)

Because of escalating difficulties with behaviour management in this placement, he was identified as "at risk" of failing the practicum. His teacher lost interest in his attempts to "work with children's interests and integrate specific targets into activities which children enjoy" (August, 1996) and, increasingly, he found his ideas "went down like the proverbial lead balloon" (August, 1996). On her advice, he focused on "pointers for behaviour management techniques" (August, 1996) rather than "the great variety of issues" (August, 1996) arising during the practicum.

Disturbed by Gerry's self critical evaluations of his "not very successful attempts" (August, 1996) to implement the techniques his teacher had suggested, his University adviser confirmed his "at risk" status. Gerry resented his adviser's comment that "I was probably my own worst enemy (4/11/96, 413), explaining: I'm a very honest evaluator and possibly dwell too much on things that don't work (4/11/96, 414). He continued: "So I thought that my adviser's comment was very unfair. Because the implication [seemed to be] ... that if I wasn't so honest in my self assessment, she might not have put me 'at risk'.(4/11/96, 415). While his perception might not have been accurate, it highlights the need for student teachers to perceive that the environment allows honest exploration and frank communication of thoughts and feelings without fear of repercussion. Feeling "very disheartened" (August, 1996) and aware of "the very negative effect on my self esteem as a teacher. My confidence in my ability to be a teacher was incredibly undermined" (9/12/96, 439), Gerry withdrew from the practicum.

To his relief, he found the children in his "make-up" placement "very responsive ... approachable and likeable" (4/11/96, 208) and he experienced no difficulties with behaviour management. Moreover, his cooperating teacher provided "lots of positive feedback" (4/11/96, 172) and he felt very welcome. In particular, he noticed "that air of suspicion ... just doesn't seem to be there. There's much more acceptance - not only by the children, but also by the parents and other teachers. Nobody asks Why do you want to teach this age group? " (4/11/96, 322). In this supportive environment, Gerry focused how he might "fit an early childhood philosophy" (4/11/96, 31) into a school context. When his cooperating teacher
expressed doubts about the children's ability to cope with his proposed activities, he explained that "I've got to take risks and so have the children. We've both got to extend ourselves a bit" (4/11/96, 197). For the most part, this new note of confident risk taking continued in Gerry's final placement which he perceived as similarly supportive, even though several of the children with whom he was working had severe behaviour problems.

The supportive nature of this practicum environment, the positive feedback from staff and his growing sense of efficacy enhanced Gerry's self esteem. As he remarked: "Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. And that's done heaps for my self esteem ... and my confidence." (4/11/96, 400). Did his enhanced self esteem and growing confidence, however, appear to influence his reflection?

To Gerry, reflection was a process of "sifting through" (9/12/96, B29) theories, experiences and events to develop his own understanding. By virtually all of the criteria referred to in Chapters One and Two, his interview and written responses demonstrated considerable evidence of reflection when he joined the project at the beginning of his second year in the program. Although he experienced similar frustrations to Colin (Chapter Five) his reflection, unlike Colin's, continued to develop. Yet his comment - "I'm not saying that they [frustrations] totally extinguish the urge or ability to find your own style but I find that they hamper that process" (29/3/95, 330) - suggests that this development might have been in spite of the program not because of it.

Communication and relationships were the focus for much of Gerry's early reflection. When asked in the first interview, for example, to reflect on his first year of the program, he mentioned: "A lot of change went on in terms of communication skills. The interpersonal communication stuff (Guided Practice 1) made me sit down, step back, and have a look at my self" (11/3/94, 420). Much of his reflective writing focused on exploring the practical implications of theoretical knowledge about effective communication skills. He wrote, for example:

> Today, I found myself trying to give effective encouragement in response to children's artistic endeavours. I fell into several traps: (i) reverting to bland meaningless responses like 'That's great!' or "Fantastic!" which are almost worthless personal judgments and aren't helpful to children in allowing them to become self evaluators; (ii) saying nothing, paralysed by an abundance of 'correct responses' - meanwhile the opportunity to respond slips away; or (iii) giving appropriate encouragement but sometimes sounding phoney eg., ... Kostelnick (1993) discusses these issues and says that ... Her advice is ... (April, 1994)
As in the above example of essentially technical reflection, he invariably referred to theoretical views and research findings in his reflective writing. Typically, there was also a strong emphasis on self evaluation. The less supportive the practicum environment the stronger his emphasis on self evaluation and the more self critical his reflective writing became.

In the supportive environment of his final practicum, in particular, Gerry seemed to gradually move away from such a tightly focused critique of his own perceived shortcomings to consider broader issues. He also seemed to rely less on theory, suggesting more confidence in his own voice. He wrote, for example:

My first 'proper' lesson went over time which did not represent a problem - all children were highly motivated and engaged. I can't help thinking that part of the reason for the success of this activity as that it: (1) allowed children to be creative; (2) gave children some ownership of their creations; (3) provided a welcome respite from stencils. I am much concerned that most of the curriculum in this classroom is narrowly based on intellectual development and the acquisition of discrete academic skills. (October, 1996)

Witnessing "early childhood theory ... crashing into the Real World of Teaching" (October, 1996) led him to explore "the constraints of teachers' decision-making space" (October, 1996). In the following example of critical reflection, he wrote:

Teachers feel pressured by Principals, the Department of School Education and parents to 'deliver the goods' by a set time and 'do the syllabus' in 'x' number of weeks ... I fear that in doing so, we sometimes sell our children short and fill them with facts instead of allowing them to come to a proper understanding through doing and experimenting. (October, 1996)

The broader focus evident in this sequence of reflections suggests that an accepting and "much more relaxed [environment] ... makes it easier" (4/11/96, 323) and "more conducive to making links" (9/12/96, 158) with issues other than those associated with immediate survival. In a supportive environment where self doubt is not all consuming, more energy might available for, in Gerry's words, "sifting through it ... all" (9/12/96, B30) and making more sense of "your professional knowledge base" (9/12/96, 581).

Gerry agreed that his reflection had developed considerably during his enrolment in the program and acknowledged the contribution of cooperating teachers who had provided positive feedback. He also emphasised the importance of the "development of a knowledge base" (9/12/96, 581), explaining: "It's given me the framework and the vocabulary through which to look" (17/12/96,
Interestingly, Erica and Josephine (Chapter Five), referred in a similar manner to their growing professional knowledge base, but their profiles illustrated that knowledge in itself does not necessarily enhance reflection. Gerry's profile, however, suggests that self esteem and a sense of self-efficacy should be added to Dewey's nominated qualities of wholeheartedness, responsibility and openness as important determinants of reflection.

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

These profiles, like those presented in the previous two chapters have highlighted the importance of commitment to teaching and reflection, epistemological perspective and the perception of a supportive environment in promoting reflection. They also illustrate the synergy arising from the presence of several of these factors. Gerry's profile, like Colin's (Chapter Five), suggests, however, that unless the learning environment is perceived as supportive, considerable development in reflection is unlikely, even if the other factors are present. The following chapter focuses on the implications of these apparently key factors for teacher educators and for further research into reflection.