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**UNCOVERING EVERYDAY  
LEARNING AND TEACHING  
WITHIN THE QUILTING COMMUNITY  
OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Arts

at Massey University, Palmerston North,  
New Zealand

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**2018**





*Plate 1*

*Te kura Aotearoa*

Machine pieced and appliquéd, cotton, 1640 x 1890mm

Linda Warner, 2014

Quilted by Lesley O'Rourke

Inspired by New Zealand quilt designers Donna Ward and Jacqui Karl

Photograph: Richard Robinson



## ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the social and cultural phenomenon of everyday learning and teaching within the communal activity of quilting. Home-sewn quilts are rarely associated with the needleworkers' high level of knowledge and skill; yet, the quilters' act of knowing is practical, inherently social, and intentional. This research study examines the collaborative processes of "quilting together" to understand cultural patterns of participation; and investigates the participants' meaning-making experiences to facilitate an analysis of collective knowledge practices.

Using an ethnographic methodology, this research investigated the lived experiences of quilters within the situated context of two quilting groups, located in Aotearoa New Zealand. Observations were made of participants' engagement in quilting activities as they interacted with each other, material artefacts and quilting tools. These observations took place during regular quilting sessions and special events. Interviews were conducted with founding members to gain an understanding of cultural-historical processes, as well as a purposively selected sample of ten participants who shared their personal quilting experiences. Observation notes, conversation commentaries and interview transcripts were analysed in relation to the research question and two guiding questions.

Key findings are related to a variety of contextual issues surrounding the process of informal learning and teaching as it materialised through the quilters' engagement in idiosyncratic community practices: the practices of which are generative of quilting knowledge and vice-versa. Firstly, through social integration quilters developed a sense of belonging and responsibility. Secondly, cultural patterns of social interaction consisted of multi-directional learning with quilters having complementary roles. Thirdly, due to the tacit nature of quilting knowledge, embodied experiences and material mediations were essential for thinking and communicating with others. Fourthly, a constellation of knowledge practices co-existed in the quilting community. Finally, the quilters' informal learning was organised and supported within the community.

The study contributes to a body of locally-based and international research concerned with informal learning and teaching theory, situated in a quilting community-based setting. The emerging conceptual framework, “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning”, develops and extends participation-based approaches to learning. In addition, the quilters’ collaborative designing process of inquiry advances understanding of knowledge creation within craft maker cultures.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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“Little is the currency of everyday living.  
So let’s thank God for little lights,  
the warm smile, the hug, the phone call,  
a wave from a passing car, a cup of tea,  
an open door, a talent freely shared”  
(Cowley, 2002, p. 27).

This thesis is a celebration, and recognition, of everyday learning and teaching. It was completed with the encouragement of people who believed in the ethos of my research study, realising its contextual significance in today’s changing world.

I am truly indebted to the quilters who participated in this study, generously sharing their practical wisdom and love of quilting. The family of quilters’ friendship was a patchwork quilt of caring words, thoughtful deeds, and lots of laughter, as we stitched and learned together.

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*Hapaitia te ara tika pumau ai te rangatiratanga mo nga uri whakatipu.*  
Foster the pathway of knowledge to strength, independence and growth for future generations.

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### Image Acknowledgements

#### Gestural movements

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ClipartFest (Pointing hand gesture)

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Clipart Panda – Free Clip Art (Outstretched hands and V-shaped hand gestures)

<http://www.clipartpanda.com/categories/open-hands-of-god>

[http://www.clipartpanda.com/clipart\\_images/now-if-god-so-clothes-the-34206216](http://www.clipartpanda.com/clipart_images/now-if-god-so-clothes-the-34206216)

[http://www.clipartpanda.com/clipart\\_images/hands-open-receiving-hold-34206316](http://www.clipartpanda.com/clipart_images/hands-open-receiving-hold-34206316)

#### Selective sewing icons:

- Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7

Tourtillotte, B. (1988). *Copy art for quilters*. Bothell, WA: That Patchwork Place.

#### Māori patterns:

- Chapter 7

Brown, P. (2012). *Maori designs: 100 new and original hand-drawn copyright-free designs*.

Kent, UK: Search Press.

Other images were produced by myself, unless otherwise stated.

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## CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS

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Contextual semantics provide meaning to a word or phrase used in order to understand their relation to the situated text. To assist the reader, the following terms are explained as well as how they are used throughout the thesis.

- **Apprenticeship**

An apprenticeship approach to learning is reconceptualised for the current study. For centuries, learning through apprenticeship was commonly associated with the crafts, which involved a formal contract between master and apprentice defining the expectations and conditions of their relationship. The connotations of “apprenticeship” have since been utilised to produce contemporary perspectives of informal learning in family and community-based settings, such as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and guided participation (Rogoff, 1990). The current study develops these contemporary viewpoints of apprenticeship to extend our understanding of participation-based approaches to learning, with the introduction of “triological learning”. The tacit nature of quilting knowledge requires consideration of the quilters’ thinking, learning and development, with regard to their relations and embodied (inter)actions with other people, community, material artefacts and tools, forming a constellation of collective knowledge practices. Community members know who has expertise in particular quilting techniques and approach them for assistance; while those quilters who have more experience provide support and guidance, even when situated instruction or nuanced scaffolding is not intended. The individual learner decides whether to take up, ignore, or transform these ideas. Therefore, the term “apprenticeship” in the quiltmakers’ context refers to the development of thinking as a cultural process, where the quilters engage and learn from peers, embodied knowledge, actions, and the materiality of their environment. Consequently, expertise is socially and physically distributed, with the quilters becoming apprentices to their own future practices.

- **Community**

A community is a group of people who have a passion for a particular interest, in this case quiltmaking. As a community of learners they engage in a process of collective learning where responsibilities and roles are shared as they interact in their quilting endeavours. With such an assortment of different types of quilting collectives, for example house group, quilt guild, and quilting chapter, the two quilting groups involved in the current study are viewed as micro-communities within the wider quilting community of Aotearoa New Zealand.

- **Everyday learning**

The term “everyday” is a contestable concept. It is often assumed to be a way of describing that which does not have a cultural history. “Everyday” is regularly perceived as being: ordinary, mundane, routine, commonplace, matter of fact, unremarkable, humdrum, casual, lowly and nondescript. When applied to *learning*, within family and community-based settings, “everyday learning” has been described as: natural, practical, simple, second nature, and *informal*. Everyday learning in this thesis is conceived as a question about how and what the quilters know under their ordinary interaction of “quilting together”. Therefore, the terms everyday learning and informal learning are interchanged in the text.

- **Gender-specific pronouns**

While acknowledging men quilt too, in this study quiltmaking was a female-dominant leisure activity, and all of the research participants were women. Therefore, feminine third-person personal pronouns are used to signify the female entity rather than remain gender-neutral.

- **Informal learning**

There is an absence of an agreed definition of informal learning. However, the main tendency is to conceive it as *anything* that falls outside non-formal learning and formal education systems. For the purpose of the current study, this common conception of informal learning is positioned within the socially, culturally and historically constituted world of the quilters’ everyday social practice. As a consequence, the working definition

of informal learning comprises folk theory and folk pedagogy, practical wisdom, craft apprenticeship, experience and environment, active constructivist learning, everyday cultural tools and events, participation, and community.

- **Master quilter**

For the purpose of this study, a “master quilter” is defined as a person who understands and employs the basics of the quilting process, paying attention to details with accuracy and competency, to produce high quality quilts. While these quilters are identified as having extensive knowledge, skills and experience in quilting, it does not necessarily denote that they are professional quilters, teach quilting classes, or exhibit quilts.

- **Patchwork and quilting**

The evolution of quilts is closely connected to the historical development of patchwork and quilting. Technically, patchwork involves sewing pieces of fabric together either in the form of piecing with seams, or by appliqué where material pieces are stitched onto a fabric foundation. In addition, some quilt tops can consist of a single, large piece of fabric, known as wholecloth. Quilting, on the other hand, refers to the stitching of two or more layered textiles to hold them together. The terms – patchwork and quilting – are frequently interchanged, engendering common inference to a quilt or the act of making a quilt (Audin, 2013). In accordance with etiquette expressed by the quilters participating in the present study, the word “quilting” is used in the thesis.

- **Quilt**

Basically, a traditional quilt is a textile sandwich consisting of three layers: a cover top and a fabric backing with a layer of padding in between. The layers are held together by stitching which often forms a pattern on the surface.

- **Supplementary information**

Content footnotes supplement information in the text by providing readers with additional content, explanation and/or description.

- **Teacher / teaching**

Exploring the nature of informal learning, itself, views the quilters and the environment as learning resources. Thus, it may appear that the role of “teacher” and “teaching” are inconsequential or absent altogether. In this thesis, learning-and-teaching are considered to be inseparable with exchanges about how to do things occurring amidst other happenings. In the current study’s informal learning context, a different conception of “teacher” and “teaching” arose during the quilters’ social practice, whereby a) relations mapped their organised learning sequences in the improvisational flow of quilting endeavours; and b) the learning process was organised by ongoing process. Therefore, situated instruction (Lave, 2011), cultural teaching (Maynard & Greenfield, 2006), and my own term of “participation partnerships” (p. 206) identify that “teacher” and “teaching” are seen through, and in, the processes of learning. During the quilters’ collaborative processes there are diverse ways in which quilters assist and guide one another, thereby taking on the role of teacher or performing an act of teaching. In the present study, the quilters use a cultural category of folk terms which has its own intrinsic properties to describe the sharing of ideas or making suggestions, for instance *“I’ll show you...”*, *“You do this...”*, *“Would you like to learn how to make...?”* To advance understanding about everyday learning and teaching activities, it is important to develop and use the language of informal learning as it pertains to the community-based setting.

## CHAPTER 1

---

### INTRODUCTION

#### Why “Learning to Make A Quilt” Matters

---

You start wherever you can. You see a great need, so you thread a needle, you tie a knot in that thread. You find one place in the cloth through which to take one stitch, one simple stitch, nothing fancy, just one that’s strong and true. The knot will anchor the thread. Once that’s done, you take one more stitch.  
(Lamott, 2014, p. 93)

This is a study of everyday learning and teaching. It is an investigation about the process of quilting in a community setting, which occupies a place of significance in women’s lives. The finished quilt is a complex cultural object carrying many meanings for different people. Nonetheless, learning in everyday activities, such as the leisure pursuit of quilting, frequently goes unnoticed (Dickie, 2003), or is considered “second nature” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Its significance and value is often overlooked. Moreover, when the idea of investigating learning and teaching in a quilting community was first mooted, an astonished friend asked, “Do you need a PhD to *teach* quilting?” and a professional male exclaimed, “What a *waste* of time!” There remained an air of disbelief, sometimes with a touch of disdain, from further responses about my proposed research topic. It appears that the common conception of learning is rooted in theoretical frameworks of traditional schooling, rather than giving consideration to the *processes* of learning, no matter where it occurs (Lave, 2011; Rogoff, Callanan, Gutiérrez, & Erickson, 2016). The label “informal learning” triggers an implicit comparison whereby everyday ways of learning are identified as *not* “formal”. It became apparent that little is known about what the learning sequences are and how they unfold in “informal” ways. As Lamott (2014) expressed, I saw “a great need” to understand this social and cultural phenomenon of “learning to make a quilt” in much more depth.

This introductory chapter identifies the aims of the study and the contextual issues surrounding everyday learning and teaching in community settings. Theoretical

justifications for investigating the informal learning processes of a quilting community are presented. The origin of this study, providing the background story, is shared. The structural organisation of the thesis is outlined.

## **1.1 Research Aims and Context**

This research study aims to explore the organisation of informal learning and teaching in two quilting groups located in a similar geographical area of Aotearoa New Zealand. The main purpose is to gain a cross-site synthesis of findings, using a multi-site case study approach, to examine the defined contemporary phenomenon that is common to two groups within the quilting community. Specific attention is given to the collaborative processes of “quilting together” to understand cultural patterns, and changes, of participation as quilters contribute to shared quilting endeavours. This study also investigates the participants’ meaning-making experiences to facilitate an analysis of collective knowledge practices. These aims respond to a variety of contextual issues surrounding the process of informal learning and teaching as it materialises through the quilters’ engagement in idiosyncratic community practices: the practices of which are generative of quilting knowledge and vice-versa. There are underlying beliefs and assumptions regarding everyday learning and teaching, with legitimate ways of knowing predominantly framed by pedagogical models involving curriculum and assessment. In order to understand the influence of these perspectives, reference is now made to Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultural-historical situation.

In Aotearoa New Zealand’s historical past, home and community life was reliant on seasons, phases of the moon, and weekly schedules. Children of the early European settlers learned practical domestic skills as they helped with household tasks, such as cooking or working on the family farm without pay (Cook, 2013; Morris Matthews, 2008). Everyday learning was effectively a socialisation process for the transmission of culture. However, a new daily rhythm gradually unfolded when primary education was made free and compulsory in 1877. Girls’ education was preparatory for future wifedom and motherhood, and for working in domestic service – paid or unpaid. Many girls spent a large proportion of their formal schooling learning to sew which was already being taught informally at home as part of an everyday activity (White & Lange, 2017/2018).

Change continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with increasing numbers of children attending secondary schools, where girls could receive a “proper education” (Morris Matthews, 2008).

The current trend in Aotearoa New Zealand seems to value learning only if it is vocationally oriented and contributes to the nation’s economic growth. The focus of learning is on raising foundational skill levels of literacy and numeracy with the purpose to increase workplace productivity (Clark, 2012). Attention is almost exclusively paid to attaining skills and qualifications through formal provision, thus undervaluing the substantial role informal learning continues to play within everyday life of individuals, family and community. Although informal learning activities are extensive, these learning spaces are relatively marginalised in relation to the formal education sector (Coffield, 2000; Hager & Halliday, 2006; Illeris, 2007; Livingstone, 2001, 2006). Instead, informal learning is often portrayed as the poor relation of formal learning (Golding, Brown, & Foley, 2009). However, social practices of hands on practical activities, in these so-called informal learning contexts, provide very diverse and rich learning opportunities, with a high level of engagement (Golding, 2011).

Women who belong to quilting communities have a passion for quilts and quiltmaking. In Aotearoa New Zealand quiltmaking organisations, guilds and groups have a common goal to share knowledge about patchwork and quilting. This mission is exemplified through different types of quilting collectives’ stated aspirations:<sup>1</sup>

- To provide New Zealand quilters the opportunity to expand horizons, to share work, and to learn [National Quilt Association];
- To actively pursue opportunities to promote quilting, with a group of very talented people who are always willing to share their knowledge and experience [Quilt Guild];
- To provide a supportive and creative environment for people who want to learn the basic skills and for experienced quilters who continue to develop their creative talents [Quilting Group].

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<sup>1</sup> Sourced from various New Zealand quilting websites.

Based on these aspirations, the quilting community actively organises opportunities for learning and development in a supportive environment. The practice of “doing” quilting involves members of the community working collaboratively in an attempt to better understand their world of quiltmaking. Learning is connected to participation in practices valued by the quilters who are part of the community. The quilters’ act of knowing is, therefore, practical, inherently social, and intentional.

## **1.2 Justification for the Research**

Despite the increasing body of literature focused on teaching and learning in educational settings, the inclusion of investigating everyday learning and teaching in community-based settings of leisure activities lie on the peripheral of educational research. Even though quiltmaking involves perseverance, commitment, and effort, home-sewn quilts are rarely associated with a needleworker’s high level of knowledge and skill (Stalp, 2015; Stebbins, 2012). Since leisure crafts, such as quiltmaking, are practiced in free time (that is, not in paid or unpaid work time) these activities are, therefore, not taken seriously (Stalp, 2007; Visser, 1994). Yet, the quilting community encompasses a combination of novice, experienced and master quilters who participate in this leisure activity, sharing a common interest in the craft. This study provides a valuable opportunity to explore the quiltmakers’ meaningful and educational activity.

Much of what we understand about ways of knowing is filtered through the conventional idea of education, consistent with a “teacher-student” relational perspective (Thomas & Brown, 2011). But knowing that a quilt is constructed of three layers, and knowing how to *do* it are two quite distinct things. Given that the practical *know-how* (of stitching a quilt) is a product of the quilting community’s practice, then “teaching and learning do not necessarily imply a didactic, one-teacher model of cultural transmission” (Maynard & Greenfield, 2006, p. 158). If quilters can learn from more than one teacher in their joint activities, then it is assumed that the long-standing community members teach the newcomers in order to support cultural learning (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Conceptual frameworks of informal community learning are often oriented towards preserving tradition, and are conservative in nature. Cultural continuity, such as quilt

culture traditions, requires acquiring specific knowledge of the community. The central aspect of “doing things together” is necessary to sustain the quilters’ cultural practice for the next generation of quilters. Through their varying participation with others in ongoing endeavours the quilters become part of the quilting practice. However, there is ambiguity of the term “participation” which gives the appearance of shared meaning. More information is needed about how the quilters, themselves, form part of the activities, and the ways they contribute to meaning-making. In addition, with novel contributions being made by participants, it is necessary to consider moving beyond a culturally conservative model of informal community learning to a framework of cultural innovation and change.

### **1.3 Origin of the Study**

This section tells the story of my interest in, and motivation for, the study. Like many of my research participants I learned to sew at home, and by the age of fourteen was competently making clothes for myself and family members. I stitched my first patchwork quilt in 1979, based on a photograph seen in a magazine, and additionally attached a skirting frill and sham pillowcase. There was no batting and no quilting stitching. This quilt was gifted to my sister, while the second quilt I made was tucked into my suitcase, as a “piece of home”, when I headed off to Teachers’ College.

As a beginning primary school teacher, I developed a strong interest in exploring and improving teaching and learning practices. I learned much from my Year 7 and 8 students, as we engaged in creating classroom activities and social practices that supported genuine participation in collaborative technology-based processes of inquiry. A learning model, which we termed “A Classroom without Walls”, was extended to encompass a syndicate of classes, including a satellite unit of disabled children. Support from parents and staff members for this collaborative approach attracted the attention of contributing schools, who took the opportunity to view an alternative pedagogical practice.

Meanwhile, I discovered the dental nurse at the school was a “quilter”. She showed me how to construct a quilt with three layers, and guided my first attempts at hand quilting. My quilting obsession grew. The school principal exclaimed, “Quilting is for old people!

Leave it until you're retired." Undeterred, my enthusiasm became contagious as other female staff members also became "hooked", leading to a patchwork retreat weekend.

My professional career as an educator was further developed through various roles of district curriculum facilitator, regional school advisor, university lecturer, education consultant, and research manager for a national private training provider. A significant watershed moment for me occurred during a two-week professional development course, when the facilitator challenged our culture's image of the child, questioning "So who's in charge in a dance of free and equal human beings?" In everyday situations I began to notice cues of relationship, who was in control of the situation, and the types of support available in various interactions between adult and child, between children, as well as between adults. During my observation of this diverse range of everyday experiences I started to question my existing beliefs about teaching and learning.

Simultaneously, inspired by Australian mixed media artists Rosalie Gascoigne and Richard Tipping, I commenced designing and stitching "Road Sign" quilts. Subconsciously, the philosophical disorder I was professionally facing became symbolically portrayed in the textile series. For example, *Roundabout* (see Figure 1.1) depicts my teaching and learning conundrum represented by a slightly tilted rule-driven structure bizarrely placed in a natural environment. Confusion abounds with dogmatic arrows rotating in an anti-clockwise direction. American friends commented the sign looked normal to them, but in Aotearoa New Zealand we drive on the left-hand side of the road. Nonetheless, leaves from the native plant *harakeke*<sup>2</sup> begin to stealthily engulf the imposing edifice. I deliberately used the flax since it is often used as a Māori metaphor for *whānau*<sup>3</sup> and relationships, and drew attention to the significance of learning and teaching in our daily lives which has been underrated.

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<sup>2</sup> New Zealand flax found in the lowland swamps.

<sup>3</sup> Māori word for extended family or a family group. In a modern context the word is sometimes used to include friends who may not have any kinship ties to other members (Moorfield, 2011).



*Figure 1.1 Roundabout.* Machine pieced and appliquéd, machine and hand quilted, cotton, 920 x 1120mm. Personal Photograph (1.03.10).

But I was not about to “give up”. Instead, I became more focused on children’s informal ways of thinking and out-of-school learning, as well as adults’ informal learning practices in the workplace. Inundated with bureaucratic requirements of statutory mandates revolving around quality assurance, assessment, and credentials, I made the decision to leave the sphere of institutionalised education to work in the community. I was committed to finding out about what was commonly considered informal learning in community-based settings.

My multiple identities as educator and quiltmaker merged in an unexpected way. For me, quiltmaking is a form of relaxation and creativity, developing over time an eclectic mixture of traditional and contemporary quilting styles. Working with other quilters, whether face-to-face or online, has provided mutual support, encouragement and inspiration. I had never really thought too deeply about the learning and teaching that occurred during the making of a quilt – it just happened. When I contemplated investigating quiltmaking as a research topic, I realised I had a personal advantage being an experienced community quilter who, at least, understood the context and practices. For quiltmakers, like myself, celebrating the “extra-ordinariness” of everyday learning and teaching matters.

## 1.4 Organisation of the Thesis

The instructions of a quilt pattern, featured in the *New Zealand Woman's Weekly* magazine, provide an analogy for the writing and structuring of this thesis:

Bring a new lease of life to old floral fabric with a patchwork piece of art.

Try sticking to a rough colour palette or tonal theme.

Don't fret over wonky seams.

Iron as you add each piece and trim threads.

Chop excess fabric.

To hand-quilt together . . . use threads in a rainbow of colours to pick out prints and flower petals. ("Quilted Flower", 2014)

The current study employs an ethnographic approach and qualitative methods for this investigation of communal quilting. This research, effectively, brings a new lease of life to quilt studies, and presents an original piece of art. But, as Wolcott (2005) reported, it is difficult to separate art and science in the field of ethnography: "There is opportunity aplenty for good science in the work of the competent artist, good art in the work of a competent scientist" (p. 17). Using the artistic touch of an ethnographer, the thesis is composed to reflect the quilters' experiences, involving a process similar to the quilting steps of selecting tonal themes, ironing wonky seams, trimming threads, and chopping excess fabric. Meanwhile, a scientific result is produced to render what the eye "sees", reflected in the variegated threads of the key findings.

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 1 states the aims, provides a context and justification for the study, as well as background information in which to place and interpret the research. Chapter 2 reviews quilt-related literature from interdisciplinary research areas, as well as archival ephemera, to inform and support the aim of this study. Chapter 3 focuses on literature related to everyday learning and teaching in which to frame the research, with consideration given to gaps in our knowledge about this social and cultural phenomenon. Chapter 4 explores the methodological theory underpinning the study, presents the methods used, considers the ethical conduct of the research, and outlines the data analysis procedures. The data generated in relation to the two guiding research questions are presented in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively, with an emphasis on representing the beliefs and lived experiences of the participants

in order to build a comprehensive and cohesive picture of their quilting activities. Chapter 7 discusses the results of the research, and critiques these in the context of the literature. The final chapter, Chapter 8, summarises and draws conclusions about the study.



## CHAPTER 2

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### LITERATURE REVIEW I

#### The Historical and Cultural Fabric of Quilting Communities

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“The majority of quilt research is centred on finished quilts, and not quilters. Research that does centre on quilters often highlights professional or artistic quilters, and not the creative processes that everyday quilters face”  
(Stalp, 2007, p. 24).

The aim of this study is to explore the nature of learning and teaching within the quilting community of Aotearoa New Zealand. This chapter informs the reader about quilting traditions, situated within a historical and cultural context. Empirical evidence from quilt-related research literature, as well as ephemera from primary sources, is presented for the benefit of readers who know little or nothing about the phenomenon of historical and contemporary communal quiltmaking. The review of literature reveals an oral tradition for “passing on” quilting knowledge; transcultural knowledge crossings; learning and teaching processes from interdisciplinary perspectives; and ways of preserving quiltmaking traditions in Aotearoa New Zealand. Since quilting cultures have been historically produced, which endure and/or change over time, consideration of historical patterns assist with understanding and interpreting contemporary participatory quilting practices.<sup>4</sup>

To locate this study in a quiltmaking context, and to provide the reader with background information about quilting culture, the literature review is organised into five sections: literature review methods and sources; history of patchwork and quilting; international scholarly research on quiltmaking; quilting traditions in Aotearoa New Zealand; and academic studies on New Zealand quilting. Key points are highlighted in the chapter’s summary.

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<sup>4</sup> An interactive, social process of participating in a cultural quilting practice.

## 2.1 Literature Review Methods and Sources

The literature review begins by describing search strategies used to source primary and secondary material related to quilts and quiltmaking. Knowledge about the tradition of quiltmaking is interwoven with myths (Gillespie, 2010), contradictions (Parry, 2010), and red herrings (Audin, 2013). From the quantity of American-based quilt studies, one might incorrectly assume the craft originated in North America. Subsequently, for Section 2.2, details of quilting history from around the world were gathered from books, as well as journal articles, written by quilt academics, historians and collectors. These sources were cross-referenced to verify documentation.

For the purposes of this study, a thematic disciplinary approach was used in Section 2.3, to synthesise quilt-related research literature which had an association to learning and teaching. This decision was made due to there being only two quilt journals currently published: *Uncoverings* (American Quilt Study Group) and *Quilt Studies* (British Quilt Study Group). Another North American resource, The Quilt Index,<sup>5</sup> provided access to an early publication: *The Quilt Journal* (1992-1995). While these journals are valuable sources in academia, topics relevant to this study were limited. Next, I examined educational-based literature; but these quilt-related research studies mainly focused on formal education programmes planned to meet curriculum learning outcomes. For instance, using quilts in authentic mathematical activities to explore concepts of symmetry (e.g., Orey & Rosa, 2012; Wares, 2006). As a consequence, the electronic search of literature was widened to encompass a cross-section of disciplinary fields. Even so, research has predominantly concentrated on the material artefact of the quilt, and its connection to quilters or local community. Nonetheless, six themes emerged through the literature review from an eclectic collection of journals, books, theses, and statistical surveys. Table 2.1 highlights the themes, along with a sample of associated journals from which research studies were critiqued.<sup>6</sup> Selection of some material extended beyond a 15-year publishing date since there was insufficient current literature, and seminal works also needed to be included.

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<sup>5</sup> The Quilt Index brings together quilt information in a centralised online tool for education, research, and public access: [www.quiltindex.org/about.php](http://www.quiltindex.org/about.php)

<sup>6</sup> Some interdisciplinary research findings overlapped across the themes presented.

Table 2.1 Emerging Interdisciplinary Themes

<p><b>Art</b>            American Art            Craft Research            Folk Art            Journal of Aesthetic Education</p> <p><b>Material Culture</b>            Clothing and Textiles Research Journal            Context: Dress/Fashion/Textiles            Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture            Journal of Interdisciplinary History            V&amp;A Online Journal [Victoria and Albert Museum]</p> <p><b>Leisure</b>            Journal of Leisure Research            Leisure/Loisir            Leisure Studies            World Leisure Journal            Home Culture</p>	<p><b>Folklore</b>            Californian Folklore Quarterly            Journal of American Folklore            New Directions in Folklore            Western Folklore</p> <p><b>Gender</b>            Gender, Work, and Organization            Sociological Focus            Sociology Compass            Women's Studies International Forum            Women's Studies Journal</p> <p><b>Social Relationships</b>            Human Development            Journal of Public Health            Journal of Occupational Science            Journal of Women and Aging            OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health</p>
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Finding information about Aotearoa New Zealand’s tradition of quilting for Section 2.4, required a systematic search of archival newspapers (dating from 1840), magazines, photographs, museum catalogues, documentary videos, and other ephemera such as Wills. In addition, past government legislation papers and reports were examined, since newspaper articles revealed school pupils stitched and exhibited quilts. Currently, Fitz Gerald’s (2003) documentation of historical Aotearoa New Zealand quilts and their makers is the only available publication. Furthermore, founded on the ancient Greeks’ notion that knowledge is a partnership of *episteme* (or theoretical know-why) and *technē* (or technical know-how),<sup>7</sup> practical quilting exercises were undertaken. Although not ordinarily viewed as “literature review”, I legitimatise the inclusion of this practical component, by the fact the two knowledge approaches allowed me to discern adaptation of emerging quilt trends and stitching techniques, associated with the development of Aotearoa New Zealand’s sociocultural-historical context. This task was not straightforward, since some quilt patterns from Aotearoa New Zealand’s past

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle (trans. 1976) described three different types of knowledge: *episteme* (scientific knowledge), *technē* (craft practice), and *phronēsis* (practical wisdom). Refer to Chapter 3, subsection 3.3.1, for further details.

required familiarisation of tools and resources for reconstruction purposes.<sup>8</sup> For instance, to make an eider-down quilt (“Needlework,” 1890), required silk pockets of stuffed down feathers to be “overhand together”, using a fine sewing needle and silk thread (see Figure 2.1). While sewing tools from the past continue to be employed, such as scissors, needles and pins; some mediating artefacts, like printed instructions and textiles, demonstrated evolving modifications through the generations.



*Figure 2.1* Historical material sample of an eider-down silk quilt with pattern sourced from *The New Zealand Graphic and Ladies Journal* (1890, June 7). Personal Photograph (17.04.12).

For Section 2.5, a scarcity of quilt scholarship, focusing on Aotearoa New Zealand, drew on an assemblage of books, journals, and theses.

Examination of the vast array of primary and secondary sources provided a dynamic mixture of perspectives about quilt culture and quilting practices.

## **2.2 Patchwork and Quilting Traditions through the Ages**

A brief history of patchwork and quilting traces the development from Middle Eastern antiquity to European quiltmaking in the 1800s, when British immigrants began to

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<sup>8</sup> For example, a letter from English immigrant Lizzie Heath to her sister (dated 19 August 1868) stated, “I dry and bake every feather for feather beds and pillows are thought a great luxury here” (Porter, Macdonald, & MacDonald, 1996, p. 161).

colonise Aotearoa New Zealand. While scholars cannot fully explain similarities and differences of quiltmaking traditions, found in geographically diverse locations or across chronological times, social and cultural influences are recognised.

The practice of patchwork and quilting dates back thousands of years, with a tradition that began in the Middle East and Asia (Gillespie, 2010; Roberts, 2007). Due to the fragility and perishable nature of textiles there are few examples in existence. However, using material objects to understand history, make clearer the links between people and the craft of needlework. Garments appear to have been the first form of quilting. A carved ivory figure of an Egyptian Pharaoh wearing a quilted mantle, ca. 3400BC, provides the oldest evidence of this (Newman, 1974). It is theorised that quilting came to Europe by way of the Crusaders during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Roberts, 2007). Quilted garments were worn under heavy metal armour for protection and comfort. These padded items possibly led to local needleworkers quilting everyday clothing and, eventually, bed furnishings (Eddy, 2005).

The word “quilt” is derived from the Latin *culcita* (sack, mattress or cushion) which Varro (trans. 1938), a Roman scholar, recorded as being filled with “pressed chaff or stuffing or something else” (p. 156). The meaning, like the concept of the quilt, has been adapted from sleeping on it to a covering for the top of a bed (Roberts, 2007). However, reference to quilts is loosely applied to one, two or three layered bedcoverings, indicating various adaptations to construction methods (Rolfe, 1998). Silk scraps pieced together forming patchwork textiles, ca. 700-800AD, discovered in China resembled mosaic shapes and sewing techniques which are still used today (Colby, 1981). The earliest known surviving quilt, the Sicilian Tristan Quilt, ca. 1360-1400AD, was stitched by several hands evidenced by variance in sewing skills. The culture of quilting encompasses an oral tradition of passing on knowledge from one generation to the next.

Oral traditions occupied a special place in everyday folklore. According to Vansina (1985), memory carries culture to successive generations, like a repository of information, to reproduce past human experiences. He used the Ghanaian proverb: “*Tete ka asom ene Kakyere/Ancient things remain in the ear*” (p. xi), to highlight that oral traditions document the present, yet embody a message from the past. But,

because people from different communities or social networks communicate with each other, in practice a “communal social pool of information” (p. 150) is formed. From a quilting perspective, migration had a central role with quilting traditions being “transferred or absorbed” (Osler, 1987, p. 107), ensuring the transition of cultural customs through the “transference of techniques and styles” (Audin, 2013, p. 11). However, even though a particular quilting style and skills “were introduced by one group to another . . . often the latter would put their own stamp on the craft” (Gillespie, 2010, p. 12). For instance, 15<sup>th</sup> century Italian migrants’ knowledge of *trapunto*<sup>9</sup> quilting influenced the development of French corded work (Gillespie, 2010). Moreover, Indian embroiderers taught their unique quilting techniques to Portuguese needleworkers, in 16<sup>th</sup> century, transforming European quilt styles (Dhamija, 2006; Lemire, 2011; Majumder, 2006). Such knowledge became “collective wisdom” but this knowing was “not just a set of template outlines passed between the generations” (Osler 1987, p. 107), rather it was based on quiltmakers’ experience.

Quilt researchers (e.g., Colby, 1981; Eddy, 2005; Parry, 2010) have dispelled the commonly held belief that quilting “arose from the needs of the peasant class, and developed into more elaborate forms for prosperous members of the community” (Hake, 1937, p. 1). In 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain luxurious fabrics of Indian cotton, along with silk and satin, were used to make quilts. Needlework was a leisure pastime for British aristocratic women; although, it was likely they had assistance from professional craftsmen or domestic servants to stitch their quilts (Osler 1987; Prichard, 2010). Village women were skilled pattern makers: “ideas for pattern . . . shuttled through a community . . . [with] each worker putting on her own interpretation as she copied them” (Colby, 1988, pp. 11-12). As FitzRandolph (1954) noted:

Knowledge which is handed down by word of mouth is bound to undergo some changes from generation to generation and also there will be many streams of it, each with its own variations, in the many lines of transmission (generally families in the case of quilting). (p. 109)

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<sup>9</sup> Outlines are stitched to the fabric and then filled with stuffing from the back.

But, FitzRandolph and Fletcher (1972) also recognised that a daughter learned the art and craft of quilting through a model of cultural apprenticeship:

She watched her mother at work while she threaded needles for her, being allowed to put in a few stitches or mark round a template, and then worked side by side with her at the frame, thus absorbing knowledge slowly until she was able to set up, design and work a quilt alone. (p. 37)

Quiltmaking became the popular craft of the common people, by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to technological advances (Parry, 2010). Using readily available inexpensive fabrics of local homespun and manufactured cotton, quilting was “moulded and adapted” (Osler, 1987, p. 106) to fit the lifestyle of everyday folk. Consequently, the craft knowledge of quiltmaking journeyed with migrants to the British colonies of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

### **2.3 Quiltmaking as an International Scholarly Subject**

The resurgence of interest in traditional North American quiltmaking, of the 1970s, stimulated scholarly inquiry. Studies from interdisciplinary fields examine some of the ways quilting knowledge is passed on, and the purpose of quilting. Quilts, quiltmaking and quilters within, and across different disciplines, are viewed in differing ways. In order to evaluate and identify relations to quilting knowledge production, significant findings are examined within six themes: art; material culture; leisure; folklore; gender; and social relationships. Art literature is scrutinised first because antagonistic standpoints, initially, provided a platform for the development of quilt studies (Berlo, 2011; Worrall, 2012). Tension surrounding the value of quilts as art, stimulated reactive interest in the material artefact and ideological meanings. This revival of interest, in quiltmaking, is reflected in the other five themes but for disparate reasons.

#### **2.3.1 Art**

Academic controversy arose in the 1970s with the coinciding transformation of quilts as an art form and the feminist movement. The historically important exhibition “Abstract Design in American Quilts” held at the Whitney Museum in 1971 had a dramatic effect, not only on how quilts were perceived, but also as a scholarly subject for debate (Berlo, 2011). Holstein (1973), quilt historian and exhibition curator, compared the antique

pieced quilts to male artists' paintings. While contending there was an "intellectual process" behind the abstract painters' work, he surmised the same could not be said about the female quiltmakers. Furthermore, appliqué quilts were denounced as lacking originality and ingenuity, since the makers were more concerned with constructing elegant, fashionable bedcoverings which required little creativity. Feminist, Mainardi (1973/1982), responded that while Holstein had effectively discarded these women as innovators or artists, she considered women created patchwork quilts using mathematical, rhythmic or naturalistic inspired designs. In addition, she expressed scepticism about the popular view that the quilting bee was a place where members collaborated to make collective art. Instead, Mainardi argued it was individuals who were creative, using their initiative to decide quilt designs; requiring group members to merely assist with the monotonous task of quilting the layers together. It appeared the quilting bee was a blend of creative individuality and mechanical communal efforts.

The North American quilting bee, circle or party was an effective way to finish a quilt. Friends and neighbours sat around a quilt frame to co-operatively hand quilt a patchwork top, pieced by the hostess (Roberts, 2007). A well-established American tradition by the 1820s, it was noted by a visiting English woman, Mrs. Trollope, that "quilting frolics . . . are always solemnised with much good cheer and festivity" and "functioned as an important women's social activity" (Strasser, 1982, p. 133). However, utilitarian and decorative quilts were usually considered "folk art" because of quilting's historical association with women, and their everyday roles of wife and mother (Crichton, 1988; Hall-Patton, 2008; Williams, 1991). Creating material objects without formal training had relegated quiltmaking from traditional art hierarchies, recognised as "elite art", to a category of "low art" (Davis, 1990). The supposition was "real art" had to be taught in educational institutions to be valued by the professional art world.

Nevertheless, the discovery of a collection of so-called "low art" – the Gee's Bend Quilts – expanded the definition of "elite art". The utilitarian quilts, produced by African American women living in an impoverished and isolated region of Alabama, arose from a need for practicality and survival. The women acquired knowledge about recycling textiles to make quilts, working with a limited colour palette, to create a juxtaposition of bold colour and improvisation. The quiltmakers became recognised as artists, and

their quilts, labelled “artworks” exhibited in museums of fine art. Relevant to the present study, are the differing views of how these women learned to make quilts. Peter Marzio, Museum Director, interpreted the method as: “older women teaching younger women the styles and standards of beauty, a pedagogical process similar to that practised in academic salons or formal art schools” (from *Foreword* in Beardsley, Arnett, Arnett, & Livingston, 2002, p. 6). Conversely, from the quilters’ perspective, Aolar Mosley stated she “never told her daughter how to quilt; it was assumed that the inexpert apprentice would learn and improve through looking, listening, imitation, and competition” (P. Arnett, 2012, p. 14). While the art institutional perspective emphasised teaching, the everyday quilter focused on learning. In addition, Marzio’s comparison of informal quilting practice to formal education processes seemed a means to legitimise folk art’s creativity. But, Paul Arnett (2012) and William Arnett (2012), who were instrumental in documenting the Gee’s Bend quilts and studying the community, considered learning to quilt was a form of apprenticeship.<sup>10</sup>

While the hierarchical debate between “real art” and “folk art” continues, it would appear the creative production of quilting largely remains devalued and not well understood.

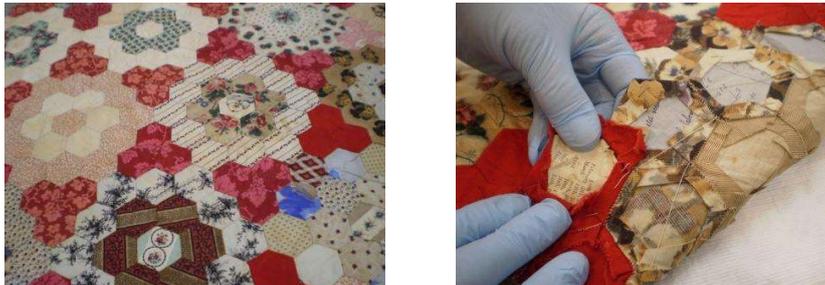
### **2.3.2 Material culture**

Material culture researchers study the quilt to understand it as a tangible product stitched, adapted and utilised by people. Viewed from this perspective, the quilt became a catalogue of historic textile patterns (Parry, 2010), a commodity of trade (Lemire, 2011), and an embodiment of the maker (Gordon & Horton, 2009; K uchler & Emike, 2010). In addition to expressing a quiltmaker’s values, skills and interests, the material object represented a relationship to others through the act of gifting (Boyd, 2009; Newell, 2008). But few antique quilts were signed or inscribed with extra information (such as date), so the makers’ identities and intentions are often unknown (Gordon & Horton, 2009). Consequently, it is necessary to engage in both written evidence *and* material forms to “read” historical objects, like quilts (Lemire, 2009). For instance, a recent discovery was made during documentation of an Aotearoa New Zealand quilt

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<sup>10</sup> Apprenticeship as a process of learning and development is discussed in Chapter 3, subsection 3.3.2.

collection. Originally, a hexagon quilt was dated ca.1856 based on the textiles used in the Grandmother's Garden design; but on close inspection of its paper lining, a snippet from a newspaper mentioned "Durham 1869" (see Figure 2.2). Although gaps remain in the narratives about some material objects, such findings can lead to cultural communities where quilts were produced.



*Figure 2.2* New Zealand quilt collection documentation of a Grandmother's Garden design (unfinished quilt). Unknown maker, England [ca.1856]. Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhoro Tā-ū-rangi, New Zealand. Accession Number: 68/202. Personal Photographs (27.05.14).

British quilt scholar, Osler (1987, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2010), has spent many years "reading" quilting designs and patterns of quilts stitched in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Of particular interest were the distinct quilt styles located in the mining districts of North-East England, which identified the existence of two types of quilt "clubs". Firstly, there were the church quilting clubs, where women stitched quilts to be sold at parish fairs. Although the main purpose was to raise funds, Osler (1987) noted weekly gatherings provided a space for women to "exchange news, views, and gossip" (p. 111). Quilt standards were of low-quality because many of the quilters did not have any design skill. The second kind of quilt club was run by widows or wives of injured miners, who needed an income to feed their families. Neighbours became subscribing members of the club, making small weekly payments to finance materials and labour, until a quilt was paid for. The quality of workmanship depended on the quilters' skill and speed with a quilt produced every two or three weeks (Osler, 1987). Like home quilters, family members often helped quilt club quilters ensuring skills and traditions were passed between generations (Osler, 2010). The social and economic influence of the community in which quilters lived and worked, shaped the way regional quiltmaking practices evolved.

By paying attention to everyday activities *and* associated material objects, historians realised objects, such as quilts, were inseparable from social routines. In a study of North American mid-19<sup>th</sup> century friendship quilts, Clark (1988) found the inscribed text (such as Bible scripture, poetry, rhymes and sayings) reified communal relationships into a visible, tangible form. With America's westward expansion, and demarcation of gender roles, interpersonal bonds were highly valued. The quilting party functioned as an important social activity for women, who shared common domestic roles and concerns. Since "home and the family were revered as the salvation of American society [they] became the model for other communal groups" (p. 79). Quiltmaking communities were based on the familial model, incorporating qualities of kinship, feminine nurturance, and companionship. But the interactions which occurred, during the production of quilts in these communal groups, have mostly gone unnoticed.

Due to this lack of historical knowledge about ordinary women's work, social historians have also studied archival records (e.g., Davis, 1997), photographs (e.g., Finley, 2012) and oral histories (e.g., Rongokea, 1992) to describe women's everyday lives, and the metaphoric relevance of quiltmaking. For instance, an examination of meeting minutes, by O'Bagy Davis (2002), showed the North American "The Busy Bees Club" was not formed solely for quilting. With the club motto: "Nothing is impossible to a willing mind", an essential aim was to create "intellectual stimulation" (p. 112), such as sharing helpful tips on housecleaning, kitchen arrangements, and favourite books. The goals of the quilting group appeared to emphasise moral improvement, reinforcing women's domestic roles, rather than regard quiltmaking as a cognitive challenge. During harsh societal times, when family and domesticity were a means of survival, the quilt had underlying cultural values uniting people, behaviour and intentions (Grassby, 2005; Webster, 2011).

### **2.3.3 Leisure**

Today, handicraft skills are no longer considered a necessity for day-to-day living; instead, people choose to learn quiltmaking through interest, as a leisure activity. Leisure is an important part of people's everyday lives. There are many definitions of leisure, but for the purposes of the current study, it is viewed as "uncoerced,

contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)” (Stebbins, 2012, p. 4).

Leisure is a positive activity, where people do something they are not obliged to do, intrinsically motivated to achieve a desired end. Free time has been, most commonly, described as time away from work, survival tasks, and other obligatory activities (e.g., Cordes, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Hamilton-Smith, 1991; Stebbins, 2012). Stalp (2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2015) found women’s leisure was constrained by available time and space for their quilting activity, with practices being altered to accommodate family commitments. Nonetheless, the activity of quiltmaking, negotiated around paid work and family-based responsibilities, resulted in personal enjoyment as well as a finished cultural object (the quilt, itself). In addition, there were changing trends of cultural “transmission”<sup>11</sup> for learning how to quilt. Stalp (2007) ascertained that most North American women learned to quilt as adults (when nearing or beginning retirement); paid non-familial others for quilting instruction; and made quilts as individuals in their own living spaces, rather than in traditional quilting bees. Furthermore, since quilting is mainly done by aging women as a home craft, Stalp (2015) argued its domestic nature is stigmatised as being feminine and sedentary – “too enmeshed in the non-economic (and therefore, less valued) world” (p. 269). Similarly, Statistics New Zealand’s (2011) analysis of leisure pursuits listed hobbies as non-productive activities, with handwork and crafts recorded alongside playing card games and collecting stamps (Hancock, 2011). Yet, this literature review has shown that the creative process of making quilts *is* a form of gendered *cultural production* (Stalp, 2006a).

In studying women’s leisure, it is not *what* quilters do, but *how* they do it which leads to understanding quilting as an activity, worth doing for its own sake. Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1996, 2014) found research participants were motivated by the *quality of experience*, or “state of flow”, they felt during involvement in their leisure activity. He argued that when an individual stretched her capacity and existing skills, as well as

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<sup>11</sup> Interdisciplinary fields frequently refer to “transmission” or “transference”, inferring learning is a process of taking in, or being supplied with, specific pieces of knowledge.

designed or discovered something new, the experience of an activity becomes intrinsically rewarding, and is a source of self-development and self-fulfilment. Although research discussion of leisure activities is largely focused on the individual, Stebbins (2012) contended collective leisure, for instance participating in a quilting group, “can add enormously to personal well-being in everyday life” (p. 10). The flow experience is primarily found in serious leisure activities, such as quiltmaking, which are systematic pursuits entailing the acquisition of special skills, knowledge, and experience (King, 2001; Stalp, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007; Stebbins, 1997, 2012). Consequently, contextual elements of social and cultural arrangements, that frame the quiltmaking activity, must be addressed.

Patterns of interactions and availability of resources may be regarded as *both* contributing and constraining factors, in collective leisure activities. From the perspective of learning opportunities, Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) noted that while North American textile guilds organised “formal educational programmes and workshops”, during regular meetings the combination of novice, experienced and master crafters allowed members “to interact with and learn from others” (p. 93). However, Weidlich’s (1997) leisure study of the “Sunday Friends” quilting group showed that members had “evolved as quilters (from beginners to advanced) without a corresponding redefinition of the group” (p. 88). When the quilters began bringing their individual projects to work on, rather than collectively stitching quilt tops, some participants commented “we probably ended our phase of learning together . . . that sense of sharing in our learning went away” (p. 90). Quilting communities need a sense of purpose and activity at its centre, managing and processing feedback to renegotiate, and accomplish, goals.

#### **2.3.4 Folklore**

The terms folklore, folklife and oral traditions are generally used interchangeably, and refer to information passed down through successive generations, by word of mouth. In studies of folklore (e.g., Gero, 1988; Hammond, 1986a, 1986b; Jones, 1997), the activity of quiltmaking involves ordinary women working together: “a communal folk process” (MacAulay, 2009, p. 200). From a folkloristic perspective, Jones (1994) proposed the

forms and processes of quilting have three characteristics. Firstly, they are symbolic of “our” way of doing things; conveying meanings, that transcend mundane routines associated with, or often ignored, in women’s everyday lives. Secondly, they are learned in quilters’ firsthand interactions and, therefore, are shaped by shared experiences. And, thirdly, they are traditional, displaying continuity and consistency of thought and action, across time and space.

However, Harris-Lopez (2003) argued, technology has had an unforeseen impact on folklore genre:

With the advent of quilting catalogs, the increase in economic opportunities to purchase cloth that would ensure look-alike patches, and the onslaught of “art” quilts, the practice has changed so dramatically that the idea of quilts being a record of “worn” and “warm” family history is almost passé. (p. 108)

Nonetheless, the notion of *folk* is frequently tied to the paradigm that people are bearers, not makers, of tradition.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, a focus on the context of the quilting situation necessitates conceptualising folklore in which communication and performance are the key features (Goldstein & Ben-Amos, 1975).

This concept of folklore explores communication, through examining the interdependency of speakers’ intent, listeners’ attitude, and meaning of semiotic messages. The traditional social context of quilt production, a family quilting bee, was analysed by Roach (1985) as a complex speech event. She recorded conversations of the grandmother, aunts and grandchildren as they worked together on a quilt over one session. Initially, with a mix of experienced and novice quilters, conversations consisted of detailed instructions which were expected to give quilting competence. Yet, one participant (who had the least quilting skill) stated, “I know how to quilt, but that’s not the thing. I know *how*, but knowing and doing it’s two different things” (p. 62). It would appear learning required more than explicit verbalisation. The social interaction also revealed what was culturally valued by the family: participation in a ritual task, work ethic, recycling ethos, and acceptance of each person’s quilting performance.

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<sup>12</sup> A “folk theory of mind” is reviewed in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.

The traditional aesthetic ideal of quiltmaking was further investigated by Ice (1993). She observed a small quilting group, who met weekly to quilt tops for paying customers, with funds raised donated to their local community. Discussion about customers' tops – choice of pattern, colour combination, and quality of work – occurred around the quilting frame. In addition, the ideal of making small, uniform quilt stitches was repeatedly mentioned; nevertheless, individual differences were accepted and supported, with words of encouragement. In the process, the quilters “negotiated and reinforced a shared aesthetic for the group” (p. 170). Social interaction drew upon the participants' quilting and verbal skills, moving between an individual's experiences and the collective identity of quilters stitching together. Rather than “isolate the quilt from its traditional sociocultural context” (Roach, 1985, p. 54), folklorist researchers began to examine quiltmaking processes in terms of “women's lives and work, concentrating on what women say about their work and what it means to them” (Ice, 1993, p. 166).

The notion of performance, within quiltmakers' everyday context, is an element of cultural enactment, ranging from improvisational conversations to highly structured rituals. Performance relies on an audience, where sound waves “spiral in a dialogic dance of interactive forces” (Kapchan, 2003, p. 133). In a study of African-American quilters, Hindman (1992) discovered conversations were listened to by everyone in the sewing group, even if the talk was directed to one person. The participants effectively became an audience prepared to respond and interpret; while simultaneously, mentally recording the quilt talk to be used for future reference. Each quilter had a particular style of “quilt talk performance”, for example using jokes or story-telling, to support each other for “getting it right” (p. 105) in their commitment to stitch fabric pieces correctly. Performances based on repetitions, such as reiterated verbal instructions, mediate and create patterns of behaviour and ways of speaking for tradition making (Kapchan, 1995).

Another cultural practice of “ordinary” quilters is the ritual of “Show and Tell”. This specific performance event entails a participant showing her quilt, and telling a story about the quilt or experience, to an audience of group members. Drawing on Langellier's (1992) study of Show and Tell narrative performances, the interactive structure between performer and audience was founded on “ground rules about inclusiveness, support, and reciprocity [which] complement each other . . . celebrating both unity and diversity

in quilting” (pp. 133-134). Individual and collective identities were actively created, acknowledging acceptance of quilting competence through positive feedback, without privileging particular participants. Verbal performances encode and transmit core values of traditional “folk groups” (Kapchan, 2003). Yet, Sikarskie (2011) recognised “the Web has allowed for the coalescence of new folk groups, as well as preservation of old ones in a new, virtual space” (p. 5). In today’s digital age, with access to various technologies, quilters and quilting may challenge community boundaries and folklore traditions.

### 2.3.5 Gender

Historically, the comforts of the family have depended on the needlework skills of women; but men, too, have stitched quilts for hundreds of years.<sup>13</sup> Today, the majority of quilters are female. Opinions abound about the gendered production of quilts and quilting processes. For example, in North America’s first quilt book Webster (1915) claimed, “the selection of design, the care in piecing, the patience in quilting; all make for feminine contentment and domestic happiness” (p. xxii). Whereas, nearly a century later, Greer (2007) questioned, “Why would any woman set about to make a portable artwork, a picture, out of old fabric?” (para. 1). Guided by a feminist perspective, Stalp (2007) noticed outsiders’ negative responses, such as spouses and work colleagues, to quilting endeavours. Their misinformed attitudes about quilting brought understanding to why “quilters tend to keep to themselves when talking in detail about quilting, as they feel others will be unappreciative or even mocking of quilting” (p. 41). Quilters were conscious of the devaluation of their craft through gendered assumptions made about quilting.

Feminist theorisation of quilting practices examines socialisation processes which shape gendered qualities and values. For Cerny, Eicher, and DeLong (1993) a North American quilt guild provided a specific example of “feminine culture” to analyse and define the parameters of “female identity through the collective practice of quilting” (p. 17). They argued that quilting was the bridge by which cultural knowledge was imparted to an individual, gaining meaning in her conceptualisation of selfhood. In structuring a

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<sup>13</sup> For example, it is known that male professional quilters in Bruges founded the *culctstickers* (quilt stitchers) guild in 1293 (Moonen, 2010).

framework for female expression, the “quilt guild directs the course of this socialisation” (p. 21) through planned educational programmes, such as quilting classes using a workshop-lecture approach, to “acquire more complete knowledge” (p. 21) of quilt traditions. Of particular relevance to the current study is that an individual’s “choices in the learning and refining quilting skills and in teaching others, contribute to her identity as a quilter” (p. 21). Meaning is shaped by the quilting community’s past and present experiences; as well as through an individual’s participation in communal quilting activities.

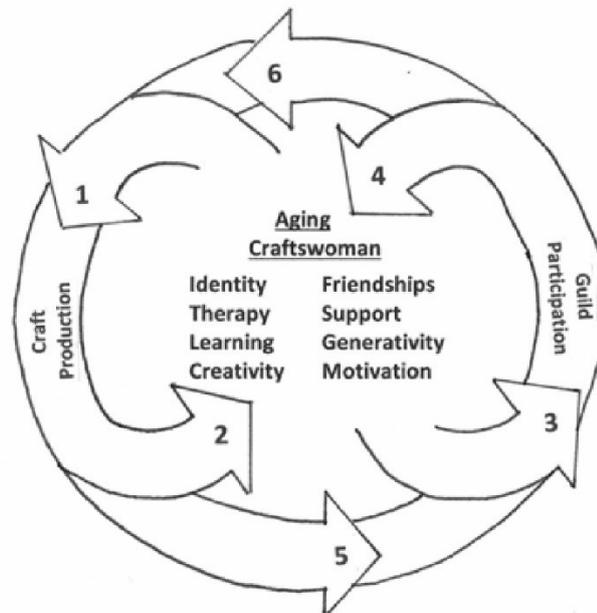
Contrarily, Davis’ (1990) historical account of quilting in 19<sup>th</sup> century North America, contended the informal structure of quilting bees provided women an opportunity to “subtly circumvent restrictive domestic roles” (p. 8). The collective space became a place for “female rebellion” and “subversion” to fulfil essential needs of personal freedom, achievement, power, and social affiliations usually only available in the male-dominated public world. Indeed, American activist Susan B. Anthony made her first women’s suffrage speech at a church quilting bee (Showalter, 1991). As a consequence, Hawkins (1993) described quilting bees as the “female equivalent of [political] ward meetings” (pp. 771-772). Moreover, the quilt has been used as an expression of resistance and social activism. Pictorial representations continue to provide a “safe” way to convey rebellious images, depicting changes to stereotypical roles of feminine domesticity, aptitudes and ambitions (Pershing, 1993).

Torsney and Elsley (1994) dismissed the notion that because quilting is mostly woman-centred, quilting communities were spheres of “non-hierarchical sharing” (p. ix). They perceived contemporary quilt guilds as places where power and authority operated, to fulfil personal or institutional requirements. However, Wall and Stasz (2010) found in their quilt study “distinctly female methods of interacting”, with the nature of conversations emphasising “feminine understanding and performance of intuition, empathy, authenticity, and reciprocity” (p. 367). Asking for help when learning a technical skill, created a space for teaching to occur, continuing the traditional passing of knowledge fostered by a mostly female lineage.

In women-only company, “having fun together”, talk, intimacy and laughter are prime features of their friendships (Green, 1998). The culture of sharing – exchange and support – is basic to women’s ideas of friendship (Coates, 1996). These repeated reciprocal interactions were recognised by Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (2001), who developed a model of North American textile handcraft guild membership to depict connections between the individual craftswoman, craft production and guild participation (see Figure 2.3). Its cyclic nature draws attention to the following features:

Women chose to make textile handcrafts, recognising the affective and cognitive components of craft production (Arrow #1).

- Through the craft process they were able to experience identity formation, relaxation and aesthetic appreciation (Arrow #2).
- Craftswomen were motivated to join a guild because of the interaction afforded by the organisation (Arrow #3).
- Additional benefits of friendship and support encouraged further craft production (Arrow #4).
- Increased levels of craft production intensified affective benefits gained from the guild, providing impetus for increased guild participation (Arrow #5).
- Guild support reinforced women’s commitment to their craft (Arrow #6).



**Key**

- Arrow #1: Motivation to participate in craft production
- Arrow #2: Outcomes from craft production
- Arrow #3: Motivation to participate in guild
- Arrow #4: Outcomes from guild participation
- Arrow #5: Craft fuels guild participation
- Arrow #6: Guild fuels craft production

*Figure 2.3* “Textile Handcraft Guild Membership” model, illustrating the cyclic nature (and relationship) of communal participation and craft production. From “Textile handcraft guild participation: A conduit to successful aging,” by S. Schofield-Tomschin & M.A. Littrell, 2001, *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 19(2), 49. Copyright 2001 by SAGE. Reprinted with permission.

Of particular relevance to the present study, was their finding that “the more active the women became, and the more support they received, the more responsibility they felt to influence the experiences of other guild members” (p. 49). While there appears to be varying forms of community membership, engagement in craft activities can lead to increased participation and access to communal resources of support, along with a change in relational roles to other members.

**2.3.6 Social relationships**

Friendships are built through actively participating in social relationships, as women seek opportunities to learn, inspire and share what they know. During shared quilting experiences common bonds form (Stalp, 2007); companionship develops (Gibson, Ashton-Shaeffer, Green, & Autry, 2003); and friendships deepen (Cheek & Piercy, 2004, 2008; Piercy & Cheek, 2004). Quilting in collective settings contributes to women’s individual development by providing a sense of purpose, enhancing self-esteem,

encouraging self-acceptance, and identifying her place in the world (Burt & Atkinson, 2012; Green, 1998; Johnson & Wilson, 2005; Piercy & Cheek, 2004). Through participation, women learn not only about themselves for personal growth, but also the craft as a means of creative expression (Cheek & Piercy, 2004).

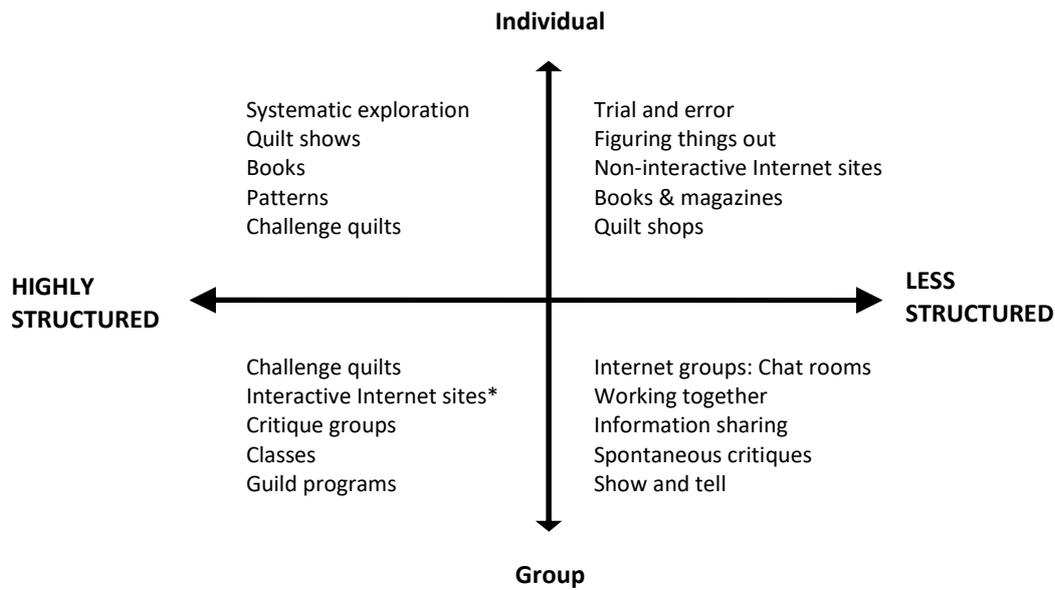
During interaction with other members women received validation for their craft, as well as experienced a sense of belonging (Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001). But primarily, Dickie (2004) argued, individuals had to “find right groups, right level of experts for the sort of quilter they want to be . . . where people go to share the doing” (p. 56). Within the arena of a community, shared common interests, values and traditions occurred which supported engagement in creative endeavours. Similarly, Williams (1991) asserted, “quilting is an act which integrates its maker with the community and values she has chosen” (p. 137). Group or guild participation carries various social meanings, recognised by quilters as supportive networks for personal development, creativity, friendship and generativity (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007).

The sharing of craft knowledge through social networks created a learning environment in which one’s identity as a quiltmaker was “enhanced by social systems” (Dickie, 2003). Textile handcraft communities provide opportunities to participate in *learning* activities, both formal and informal. Formal approaches were associated with institutionalised instructional methods, such as workshops and seminars; while informal processes seemed to be more casual arrangements through social interactions (Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001). There are challenges in mastering new techniques (Cooper & Allen, 1999), maintaining skills (Burt & Atkinson, 2012), and “searching” for knowledge (Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001) which keep “quilters mentally keen” (Cheek & Piercy, 2004, p. 333). Johnson and Wilson (2005) perceived the learning *and* teaching of textile skills as helping to build and maintain social relationships within the community, commenting “this ability to share and teach is key to understanding that the sharing of gifts – in this case, both material gifts of needlework and the gift of knowledge – is the yardstick by which happiness is measured” (p. 127).

However, a concern was regularly raised about the issue of generativity – how to guide and nurture the next generation of quilters, transmitting quilting knowledge to continue

quiltmaking traditions (e.g., Piercy & Cheek, 2004; Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001; Stalp, 2007). Teaching required the quilters to contribute their time and talent, in order to “transmit cultural lore” (Cheek & Piercy, 2004). Having the ability to teach younger quilters, increased the older quilters’ status and respect, and preserved traditional ways of doing quiltmaking. However, researchers (e.g., Johnson & Wilson, 2005; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Stalp, 2007) also recognised that women’s experience and skill to teach did not appear to be related to their age. Some communities established less structured mentoring processes, whereby more skilled craftswomen purposefully positioned themselves around the meeting room to support others (Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001). Learning and teaching quiltmaking appeared to be a social process of cultural (re)production leaving behind a legacy for future generations of quilters.

By inference, learning is embedded in quilters’ social relations, situated in organised and unplanned activities of both individuals and the quilting community. In her study of North American quilting guilds, Dickie (2003) observed “for the most part aesthetic [quilting] knowledge seemed to grow out of informal processes” (p. 125). The nature of collective processes and experiences in the activity of quiltmaking demonstrated that “learning was more or less structured, and more or less social, but constantly present” (p. 128). Using the learning dimensions of highly structured and less structured, Dickie plotted examples of individual and group quilting activities (see Figure 2.4). Processes of individual learning ranged from systematic exploration of a quilt-related topic to the trial and error approach; while group learning varied from planned educational programmes to spontaneously working together.



\* Internet quilting groups may engage in workshops during a specific time, with all participants on-line.

Figure 2.4 Ways of learning, with examples of learning activities in North American quilt guilds. From "The role of learning in quilt making," by V.A. Dickie, 2003, *Journal of Occupational Science*, 10(3), 123. Copyright 2003 by Taylor and Francis. Reprinted with permission.

As a result, Dickie classified eight clusters of learning: how to make a specific quilt; how to use tools; quilt history; aesthetics; how to make any quilt; being a member; quilt identity; and stretching oneself. There is a "connection between the individual and the social context of quilting" (p. 128). The community, and activities surrounding quilting, become a social space, "in which women interact inter- and intra-generationally . . . in these spaces women learn about the physical mechanics of quilting and pass along their knowledge to other women" (Stalp, 2007, p. 131). In this social context quilters' work was accepted, no matter the level of quilting expertise (Dickie, 2011). However, quilting has rules necessitating following patterns, diagrams and instructions to get it right. Consequently, Dickie (2004) considered some communities might be too restrictive to allow for individual creativity, with the added presence of "quilt police". Nonetheless, she claimed that while the "initial doing" for novice quilters may be more mechanical than creative, "having structure, the structure of rules and patterns and the structure of community, is the basis for deviance, for innovation, for creativity" (p. 56). But, such creativity requires extra concentrated efforts and skills. It seemed that binding themselves to others through their membership, resulted in solidarity of a shared ideology, with social relationships shaping the women's learning and teaching.

## 2.4 Aotearoa New Zealand Quilting Tradition

The focus turns to the specific social-historical context of quiltmaking in Aotearoa New Zealand. Historical knowledge reveals participatory characteristics of cultural practices, and the connection of these practices to particular places of quiltmaking origin. In addition, it demonstrates how New Zealand quilters and quilt culture (simultaneously, past and present) have preserved ways of knowing, while adapting to changing social, political and economic conditions.

Patchwork quilts were brought out, or made on the voyage, to Aotearoa New Zealand when European settlement began in the 1800s. The role of past experience, shaping social practice of historical communities, indicated learning took place alongside more experienced and supportive peers and adults.<sup>14</sup> In 19<sup>th</sup> century Aotearoa New Zealand individuals used initiative and “made do” with access to available community resources and activities. A family quilt in these times was a treasured item. For example, used as an improvised backdrop in a family portrait (see Figure 2.5), indicated that the lady of the house wanted her quilt recorded, as much as her children’s image (Finley, 2012).

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<sup>14</sup> Providing a historical perspective complements contemporary understanding of quilt cultures as historically produced repertoires of practice (Flores, Urrieta, Chamoux, Lorente Fernández, & López, 2015).



*Figure 2.5* Family portrait of two unidentified girls with patchwork quilt [ca.1860-1880]. Photographer unknown. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand [Reference: PA2-2454].

With an emigration scheme to create a “Better Britain . . . a Britain of the South” (King, 2003, p. 152), traditional English designs continued to be pieced, particularly hexagon quilts. Consistent with mosaic paper pieced quilts, many were two layered and had no hand quilting (Fitz Gerald, 2003). Quilts and quilting had a role in establishing individual, family and community identities in a newly formed society. For instance, quilts were stitched for: fundraising purposes, particularly to aid local churches (e.g., “Collingwood,” 1876; “Patchwork Extraordinary,” 1890); the provision of comfort to hospital patients and prisoners (e.g., “Latest Telegrams,” 1873; “Meetings of Societies,” 1885); as well as to display the “neatness of hand” and sewing accuracy at Home Industry exhibitions, which exemplified English “refinement” found in Aotearoa New Zealand homes (e.g., “Home Industries,” 1889). Some children continued to learn quilting from female relatives (e.g., “Letters from Little Folks,” 1890), but others were also taught “fancy sewing” under the school mistress’s charge, including native schools<sup>15</sup> (e.g., “Lawrence Grammar School,” 1873; “The Māori Meeting,” 1874). Ways

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<sup>15</sup> Schools established for the education of Māori children (1867-1969) (Calman, 2012).

of knowing, and ways of being a member in their community, were learned through a wide range of practices and relationships.

In households which had to be self-sufficient, making do with what was obtainable while attending to the family's immediate needs, utilitarian quilts were also constructed. The absence of cloth manufacturing, importation of sewing machines, and readily available woollen blankets, affected the gendered production of quilts (Wanigasekera, 2010). Ingenuity was necessary: quilts were lined with old blankets and stuffed with worn jerseys (Nicholson, 1998), or clothing cut up by children as an evening activity (Drummond & Drummond, 1967). New Zealand textile collector McLeod (2005), who sought simpler quilts stated, "Although some are quite crudely made, I see them as displaying an everyday, serendipitous creativity" (p. 220). Photographs of patchwork quilts within a home setting, or *whare*,<sup>16</sup> are relatively rare, but demonstrate efforts made to create a comfortable environment (for example see Figure 2.6).



Figure 2.6 Gum digger's *whare* with patchwork quilt and cushions covering the bed, while walls are decorated with pictures cut from newspapers and magazines [ca. 1890s]. Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, New Zealand [Record ID: 7-A15810].

Nonetheless, Aotearoa New Zealand continued to be strongly influenced by British "fads" and fashions of quilting. Newspaper and magazine articles initially provided advice, patterns, news and exhibition reviews about patchwork and quilting, from the "homeland". Such printed sources were the equivalent of "bush telegraphs" for New

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<sup>16</sup> Māori word for house, dwelling, hut, residence, or habitation.

Zealand housewives, offering a wealth of knowledge, signifying their “willingness to pass on what they knew” (Walsh, 2011, p. 26). While colonial women kept up-to-date with British trends, subtle differences began to appear, for instance stitched in the corners of a crazy quilt were iconic Dunedin buildings (“The South Seas,” 1889). Antipodean influences also merged, with sharing of quilting knowledge between New Zealand and Australia. A classic example were signature quilts, which provided messages of comfort and hope for “our boys” serving overseas in the two World Wars. The importance of the quilt, featured in Figure 2.7, is denoted by the fact the then Prime Minister took it to a hospital in England, where some New Zealand soldiers were convalescing (“A Christmas Present,” 1918). The photograph caption indicates a specific quilting practice – worked from an individual’s design and communally stitched – yet, such sociocultural activities, considered women’s work, were seldom reported. Cultural changes demonstrated the nurturing of a national identity.



Figure 2.7 New Zealand Red Cross workers’ quilt, with the quilt scheme worked from a plan made by Mrs J.T.M. Hornsby (*The Auckland Weekly News*, 1918, December 26). Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, New Zealand [Record ID: AWNS-19181226-36-4].

The formation of voluntary women’s organisations fulfilled various social, welfare and political agendas. These groups promoted self-help and self-improvement through offering cultural activities in informal “circles” (Else, 1993), such as the Lyceum Club stitchery circle learning Italian quilting (“Made by Candlelight,” 1939); and the New Zealand Women’s Institute aim to raise sewing standards, through such events as making a collective quilt for the National Federation Conference competition

("Women's Institutes," 1941, July 16, August 20, September 17). Both examples, suggest an individual initiated social action for a communal quilting activity or project. These informal groups were social spaces, settings beyond the home, where sharing of quilting knowledge took place.

In post-war years, interest in the textile handcraft waned, until the North American quiltmaking revival of the 1970s. Making quilts, in the American way, became tremendously popular worldwide. New Zealand women inquired where they could take lessons to learn patchwork and quilting, how to start a quilt club, or find quilting groups (e.g., Fitz Gerald, 1985; "Sharing," 1984). A group of enthusiastic New Zealand quilters travelled to San Francisco to attend a quilting symposium in 1984. On their return "some went on to help establish groups and guilds in their home towns, to teach and further spread their knowledge" (Cuthbert, 1988, p. 20). Fundraising commenced to organise Aotearoa New Zealand's first symposium, with the underlying agenda to develop a body of experienced teachers (Cuthbert, 1984). Visiting North American tutors, leaders in contemporary quilting, toured the country sharing their knowledge and techniques, breaking the bondage of English paper piecing.<sup>17</sup>

Today, "the activity of quiltmaking involves hundreds of women, plus a smaller number of men, and encompasses a broad range of practitioners" (Wanigasekera, 2010, p. 269). There are different types of quilting communities: small informal gatherings<sup>18</sup>; formal guilds<sup>19</sup>; online collectives<sup>20</sup>; cultural groups<sup>21</sup>; and specialist organisations<sup>22</sup>. Solitary quilters do not seem to be the norm, rather Dolan (1991) noted "the willingness to share ideas and skills appears to be unique to this art, and creates a warmth and friendship highly regarded amongst our quiltmakers" (p. 4). A biennial National Quilt Symposium, publication of the *New Zealand Quilter* magazine, the formation of Aotearoa Quilters (National Association of New Zealand Quilters), plus access to a range of quilting products and services, have combined to raise the profile of quiltmaking. The isolation

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<sup>17</sup> "This technique involves the hand sewing of fabric pieces around paper shapes that have been carefully cut to the exact size required" (Gero & Somerville, 2016, p. 42).

<sup>18</sup> Meet in each other's homes.

<sup>19</sup> Meetings are held in community or church halls.

<sup>20</sup> Examples include Southern Cross Quilters, Kiwiquilters, and the Modern Quilt Guild.

<sup>21</sup> Pasifika women meet in craft groups to continue their tradition of making Polynesian quilts.

<sup>22</sup> Organisations which have specific purposes for quilts, such as Loved 4 Life™ and Prayer Quilt Ministry.

of the country is reflected in the quilts, displaying a diverse range of styles, innovation and “bright, clean colours” (Dolan, 1991, p. 4). From British origins and North American traditions, together with Pasifika styles and Māori culture, contemporary New Zealand quilters “reinterpret and build on this history and draw on the influences around them” (Wanigasekera, 2010, p. 269).

## 2.5 Academic Quilt Studies of Aotearoa New Zealand

Scholarly studies examine quilting practices in Aotearoa New Zealand which have re-invested in old traditions and, being situated in the South Pacific, have crafted new traditions of textile production. Despite the centrality of needlework in women’s cultural activities, quiltmaking has received comparatively little academic attention.

In examining the evolution of Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultural traditions, the ordinary everyday richness of *Pākehā*<sup>23</sup> socio-historical activities, like quiltmaking, are often overlooked (Dalley & Labrum, 2000). Furthermore, in contrast to Pasifika cultures, it appears few Māori women make patchwork, preferring to develop the art and craft of traditional flax weaving. Nonetheless, the influence of Māori culture is evident in New Zealand quilts, with Wanigasekera (2010) affirming, “many New Zealand quilters draw on their heritage and recent history in a way that is unique to their country” (p. 274). The emergence of stylised Māori design motifs and imagery, combined with European textiles, are evidence of distinctively unique quilt styles.

The quilt often becomes a “canvas” to celebrate Aotearoa New Zealand’s society and identity, as well as present truths, myths, and discomfort (Wanigasekera, 2010). To inform and promote discussion about domestic violence, Graham and Stalker (2007) chose the quilt as a “teaching tool”. A national quilt challenge was organised but, during presentations to quilting groups, the researchers found “Kiwi quilters were reluctant to engage in a difficult discourse” (p. 39). While this teaching and learning approach has potential, it takes “collective commitment and social action” (p. 46) to stimulate social change. By comparison, Doyle (1998) argued “women talk *through* their quilts as they work on them, taking the intensity out of a face to face conversation” (p. 119). The

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<sup>23</sup> Māori word for New Zealander of European descent.

quilting community then becomes a safe, supportive environment in which to share their experiences, news and views, whether it be quilting knowledge or a family problem. The sociocultural activity of quilting thereby becomes a focus for the construction of new meanings, around individual and collective quilting activities.

While investigating the status of quilts as art objects, Wanigasekera (2006) interviewed quiltmakers, from which three themes emerged about how they learned to quilt: a family tradition; taught by North American tutors who came to Aotearoa New Zealand; or sewing was considered a “natural” process. These findings reflect the review of primary sources and ephemera where skills were passed on or taught. However, the women failed to recognise mastery of a sewing practice gained by prolonged social interaction with family members, or needleworkers, which embed the cultural practice (Collins, 2001).

Textile crafts are frequently dismissed as “ladies work”. Stalker (2005) acknowledged that textile crafts, such as quilting, provided women with a space to express themselves “creatively, emotionally and intellectually” (p. 174). But, she contended there were strong traditional rules which surround and govern textile crafts. Since these “fabric craft rules are extensive and detailed, they require continuous learning and teaching . . . the skills and knowledge are complex, [so] there is seldom one ‘expert’ teacher” (p. 177). Consequently, collaborative and collective learning is required.

Quilting becomes an important part of a woman’s life, demanding attention, time and money. However, Doyle (1998) argued quilters had to negotiate time and space around family commitments and responsibilities. While the prime concern of feminine culture is on developing women’s nurturing role, their network of friends within the quilting community enabled them to support each other to pursue their craft “addiction”. In addition, “often feeling invisible as the efforts they put into the family and home ‘disappear’, quilters produce material evidence of their existence, resisting being overlooked” (p. 124). Friendship was a binding factor, and alongside inspiration, was considered the most beneficial aspect of the quilting group.

Transnational peoples, whose homelands are scattered in the Pacific Ocean, have adapted quilting traditions to maintain their Pasifika identity and kinship gifting

obligations in Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, Herda (2011) noted a new practice of Cook Island women making “crib-sized *tivaevae*”.<sup>24</sup> Quilt designs and stitching techniques of the Austral Islands, Society Islands and Cook Islands share similar Eastern Polynesian quilting aesthetics. Their quiltmaking history extends back in time, but there are anomalies, for example:

Many writers, as well as *tivaevae* makers themselves, assume that the first Protestant mission introduced quilting upon their arrival in the Cook Islands sometime in the nineteenth century. However, no supporting evidence exists for this claim . . . the London Missionary Society women were not quilters, nor do the missionary journals record efforts to teach women to quilt. (Herda, 2011, p. 64)

Understanding the ways Pasifika women make *tivaevae* in Aotearoa New Zealand adds to the complexity of quilting culture. The focus of Horan’s (2013) anthropological study was on a Cook Island *va’inetini*<sup>25</sup> based in Auckland. In contrast to using their traditional sewing techniques, the quilters were taught to stitch machine-made *tivaevae taorei*,<sup>26</sup> speeding up the production process. On completion, the *va’inetini* prepared a display of their *tivaevae* in Wellington, for the Porirua Cook Island community and invited *papa’ā*<sup>27</sup> quilters. Through sharing their *tivaevae* with different quilting communities, collective knowledge extended beyond learning practical skills to respectfully engaging with transcultural traditions.

## 2.6 Summary

This review familiarised the reader about the historical-cultural background to quiltmaking. Using a thematic approach, literature from interdisciplinary fields was examined around the conceptualisation of learning and teaching processes associated with quilting communities. The review revealed an oral tradition of passing on knowledge from generation to generation, considered a communal folk process. There

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<sup>24</sup> *Tivaevae*, *tīfaifai* and *tivaivai* are words, from different dialects spoken in South Pacific region, which refer to a Polynesian quilt. These are either appliquéd or pieced; consist of two layers; and remain un-quilted.

<sup>25</sup> Cook Island Māori word for women’s craft group.

<sup>26</sup> Cook Island Māori phrase for pieced bedspreads made from small pieces of coloured fabric (triangles, diamonds or squares) to create an effective pattern.

<sup>27</sup> Cook Island Māori word for white person, generally of European descent.

was regular reference to quilting knowledge being transmitted or transferred with shared information absorbed by recipients. Nonetheless, the review provided evidence of transcultural influences, across borders and over time, where quilt styles and quilt cultures were introduced, as well as modified. Furthermore, the literature indicated that the central feature of social practice was not an isolated remnant of past quilting experiences. Rather inherent cultural values, of long-standing duration, continued to manifest themselves in contemporary quilting communities.

Although quilting was primarily a gendered leisure activity, the literature review also identified that this “needlework” held different meanings and purposes. Current research, across interdisciplinary fields, placed an emphasis on feminine socialisation practices and identity formation. As reported in this review, reciprocal relationships were critical to the development of friendships and information exchange, highlighting the existence of communal collaboration. However, writers presented various perspectives about the role of the individual quilter and quilting community in quilting practices. To add to the complexity, learning appeared to be ubiquitous in quilting activities of communal practices. Yet, teaching was mainly associated with mentoring through intergenerational quilting and workshops, leaving behind a legacy for future generations.

Consequently, Chapter 3 explores the theoretical concepts of learning and teaching in everyday settings. The chapter’s structure is guided by the understanding that quilt cultures are historically produced repertoires of practice; learning is embedded in the social and cultural contexts of the quilting community; and mastery of knowledge occurs through participation in the communal activity of quilting.



## CHAPTER 3

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### LITERATURE REVIEW II

#### Everyday Learning and Teaching

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What are alternative ways to look at learning as a part of everyday life and everyday life as in part a matter of learning? If learning isn't a movement away from the ordinary social existence, perhaps it is movement more deeply into and through social existence. (Lave, 2008a, p. 13)

Given the existing research on quilts and quiltmaking, understanding the phenomenon of learning and teaching from an educational perspective proved problematic in moving towards a theoretical stance. Quilt culture had traditional values, beliefs and assumptions which were transferred from one generation to the next. It appeared that socialisation processes ensured everyday learning was embedded in quilting activities, where knowledge was "passed on". Paradoxically, teaching seemed to have a theoretical framework based on Westernised formal schooling.

This chapter begins by defining informal learning, and describes search strategies used to source secondary material related to everyday learning and teaching. In order to understand the traditional belief of passing on knowledge through processes of transmission and acquisition, a folk theory of mind is examined. Craft production, like quiltmaking, dates back thousands of years; therefore, purposely selected historical perspectives of learning and teaching frameworks, such as traditional craft apprenticeship, are explored. This chronological trajectory leads to the understanding of, and applicability to, sociocultural theory. Contemporary apprenticeship learning models, based on participatory approaches, are considered with regards to quilting communities. Social and cultural processes of learning and development are critiqued. The transformation of participation, practices and knowledge advancement are contemplated, in relation to a communal quiltmaking context. Key points are highlighted in the chapter's summary.

### 3.1 Literature Review Methods

Informal learning has a marginal place in the research literature. The first step was to establish what “informal” learning is. There was an abundance of definitional discussion about informal learning (e.g., Coffield, 2000; Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2003; Hager, 2012; Hager & Halliday, 2006; Hodkinson, 2010; Lave, 2011; Livingstone, 2001, 2002, 2006; Schugurensky, 2000; Straka, 2009; Tough, 1978). Yet, there was an absence of an agreed definition of the term. The main tendency was a typology, whereby informal learning was conceived as a “residual category that included all learning that fell outside of formal and non-formal education systems” (Duguid, Mündel, & Schugurensky, 2013, p. 24). Without a set curriculum, objectives to identify or learning outcomes to evaluate, informal learning was positioned either as a dichotomy or on a continuum, with formal education being its polar opposite (Duguid et al., 2013; Rogoff, 2014). But in community settings there are often varying degrees of formality and informality.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, in the present study, informal learning is interchangeable with *everyday* learning (and teaching).

The second step was an electronic search for educational studies focused on informal learning. The review of literature supported Lave’s (2008a) claim that informal learning remains mostly unexamined, under-researched, and untheorised. A contributing factor to this phenomenon is due to informal learning being more difficult to uncover in less structured community settings, such as quilting groups. The majority of studies were centred on specific areas of concern, within the context of:

- *Early childhood experiences* e.g., play (Fleer, 2014); language development (Tayler, 2015); home literacy (Payne, Whitehurst, & Angell, 1994).
- *Workplace learning* e.g., social capital (Werquin, 2010); performance improvement (Carliner, 2012); task performance (Eraut, 2004).
- *Adult and community education* e.g., lifelong learning (Dymock, 2007); self-directed learning (Knowles, 1980); social action (Foley, 1999).

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<sup>28</sup> For instance, quilt studies showed that quilters attended informal gatherings, as well as more formal workshops and lectures.

- *Out-of-school learning* e.g., museum visit (Ash & Wells, 2006); skateboard park (Ma & Munter, 2014); Internet cafe (Beavis, Nixon, & Atkinson, 2005).

Consequently, for the purposes of the current study, keywords were further developed, based on learning and teaching with regards to conceptual understandings emanating from quilt-related studies reviewed in Chapter 2. For example, a focus on “generativity” of teaching quilting traditions initiated a review of folk theory processes. Historical perspectives of learning and teaching frameworks, including traditional apprenticeships, led to contemporary sociocultural theoretical viewpoints. The sociocultural activity of quiltmaking drew on a range of participation-based approaches to assist with synthesising the literature, in relation to quilt culture. Since there was evidence of changes or adaptations to quilting practices and quilt styles, innovative knowledge creation became another trajectory of learning to review.

### **3.2 Folk Theory of Mind**

Every culture, such as a quilt culture, holds deeply embedded cultural beliefs about how people learn and develop, and what should or should not be learned. These theories, known as folk theories or folk psychology, exist implicitly rather than explicitly in the structure of a (quilt) culture (Lee & Walsh, 2004). As Bruner (1990) explained, “folk psychology . . . is a culture’s account of what makes human beings tick. It includes a theory of mind, one’s own and others’, a theory of motivation, and the rest” (p. 13). Folk theories are rooted in direct experience, where skills are learned by doing. People use these theories, since they have an “aura of certainty” (Bereiter, 2002, p. 8), to make sense of activities and plan actions in their daily lives. The central premise, of this commonsense approach, is that quilters’ behaviour is determined, and accounted for, by their beliefs and desires.

Accordingly, a “folk theory of mind” views the mind as a container where knowledge is implanted, repeatedly depicted in quilt studies as knowledge that is “absorbed” and “passed on”.<sup>29</sup> From folk psychology flows folk pedagogy; subsequently, the acquisition

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<sup>29</sup> For example, a “folk theory” perspective was reported in quilt research by Küchler and Eimke (2010) that “someone’s memory was the only container from which [craft] knowledge could be passed on to a

metaphor of learning is understood as a process of transferring or transmitting knowledge to fill the container (Sfard, 1998). In addition, Bruner (1990) noted:

Folk psychology, though it changes, does not get displaced by scientific paradigms. For it deals with the nature, causes, and consequences of those intentional states – beliefs, desires, intentions, commitments – the most scientific psychology dismisses in its effort to explain human action from a point of view that is outside human subjectivity. . . . So folk psychology continues to dominate the transactions of everyday life. (p. 14)

Cultures, such as quilting, that appear to rely on imitative folk psychology and folk pedagogy, are labelled “traditional” (Bruner, 1996). Some studies of quilting traditions (e.g., Cerny et al., 1993) highlight the need to fill the container with the “right things”, in order to create quilter identities and quilts within the safety of knowing what was expected. But Bruner (1996) suggested, there was more to a traditional culture, than a “simple theory of imitative learning” (p. 54). Moreover, Bereiter (2002) argued that although a traditional craft, like quilting, has specialised knowledge, the notion of commonsense psychology falls short when participants need to adapt or innovate new (quilting) practices or (quilt) products. But in theorising about the phenomenon of communal practices, Bruner (1996) cautioned, “you had better take into account the folk theories that those engaged in teaching and learning already have” (p. 46). Heeding such advice is imperative, since the introduction of a different pedagogical viewpoint by a researcher, would have to compete with, replace, or modify the quilters’ folk theories.

### **3.3 Learning and Teaching Frameworks: Selected Historical Perspectives**

The existence of craft workshops has been traced from six thousand years ago in Mesopotamia (Sennett, 2012). As a cultural site, workshops from ancient times onwards required skilful co-operation in the production of craft objects. For Aristotle (trans. 1976) *technē* (craft practice) was pragmatic and context-dependent: “every art is concerned with bringing something into being, and the practice of an art is the study of how to bring into being something that is capable of being or not of being” (I140a1-23). The selection of historical learning and teaching frameworks is based on the relevance

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future generation” (p. 58), since writing and books were unavailable in the Cook Islands before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

to past quiltmaking practices. Therefore, the craft traditions of Aristotelian times, apprenticeship, guilds, and family cottage industry are initially reviewed. The theoretical frameworks of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky are then examined, since they had an impact on how learning in everyday situations, like quiltmaking, was perceived.

Common threads exist linking each framework: learning and development occurred through experiences; active engagement; support and/or challenge of companions who varied in skill and status; and involved some form of internalisation of (quilting) knowledge, implying external knowledge was passed (intact) from outside to inside of the quilter.

### **3.3.1 Aristotle: Practical wisdom**

Aristotle's (384-322 BC) classical theory of learning contended that knowledge was not an end in itself, but the means to an end. He contemplated real life happenings in context, before applying theoretical principles to experiences. Most notable was Aristotle's (trans. 1976) perspective, "anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing it" (II03a14-b1); which by logic, indicates people become quilters by stitching quilts. In addition, such learning was complemented by reasoning, involving teaching the "causes or means" (II03b1-25) for bringing about excellence. There was recognition that "deliberation" (III2b5-26) with others was part of the process, and a person needed to be able to act on decisions made. Within the sphere of experience, Aristotle identified sharing and practice as significant factors to foster growth in *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) learned through family, community and friendship (Stonehouse, Allison, & Carr, 2011). Aristotelian notions of praxis and process have relevance to the present study since they were considered major elements in the reformulation of informal learning, founded on more recent sociocultural theory (Jeffs & Smith, 2005; Smith, 2001).

### **3.3.2 Craft apprenticeship**

Traditional apprenticeship was, for centuries, the predominant way for craft skills, knowledge and values to be learned. Each craft workshop was a cultural site with elaborate social rituals to fulfil mutual obligations between master and apprentice (Sennett, 2012). Apprentices learned their craft from observing masters during the

process of carrying out specific procedures to accomplish complex tasks (Nielsen, 2010). Likewise, as the apprentice's practice was observable, the master would make comment, and working together they refined the novice's craft skills and performance (Sawyer & Greeno, 2009). Although, modelling is the basis of apprenticeship, Bruner (1996) noted that demonstration was not enough to learn "how to"; rather apprentices required a "combination of practice and conceptual explanation" (p. 54) to develop flexible craft skills. Within this system of tutelage novices learned at their own rate, became more experienced and were given greater responsibility until they became experts (Brown & Palincsar, 1989). Historical craft apprenticeships are often cited as the first exemplars of informal learning, labelled commonsense wisdom (e.g., Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave, 2011; Marsick, 2009).

### 3.3.3 Traditional craft guilds

In a medieval craft guild there was a formal contract between master and apprentice to train in a craft, such as quilting. Guild membership was dominated by male professionals, and some guilds explicitly excluded women (Epstein & Prak, 2008). Traditional craft guilds have been viewed negatively by some historians. It was alleged these guilds inhibited innovation through their strict rules for quality standards, secrecy of inherited know-how, and the placement of barriers between trades (Pérez, 2008). For instance, antique textile scholar Moonen (2010) noted the Parisian guild of quilters had strict regulations about the quilt size, material to be used, sewing of running stitches,<sup>30</sup> and no other embellishments were permitted. Nonetheless, it is now generally accepted that there were innovations, both in the craft process and product. "The source of these innovations and of their transfer and adoption" were assumed to have been "primarily the organisation of the production process and the training of the (skilled) workforce" (Epstein & Prak, 2008, p. 5). But Pérez (2008) argued, technical innovation was due to three factors: a competitive atmosphere to make profits; artisans belonging to several guilds, thus combining different skills and networks of expertise; and with labour mobility co-operation was required. It appeared innovation was a collective activity, as indirectly evidenced through the Bruges *cultstickers* guild which joined the mattress

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<sup>30</sup> For example, "ten stitches per thumb, but not worked closely together (to save silk thread)" (Moonen, 2010, p. 16).

stitchers, doublet stitchers and embroidery workers in 1302 (Moonen, 2010). Bodies of craft knowledge were passed on, “liberally sprinkled with socialisation” (Marsick, 2009, p. 265), through social interaction and networks. Communities of craftsmen provided a site for the transmission of skills.

### **3.3.4 Family cottage industry**

An alternative to guild-based apprenticeships was the family, who provided a setting, where children could experience craft production through watching and assisting their parents at home. In particular, peasant households of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries turned to cottage industries, for the welfare of their families and to expand their properties for future generations (Rudolph, 1992). Consequently, couples were permitted to marry earlier, have more children, and were encouraged to retain their services during adolescence through to adulthood (Houston & Snell, 1984; Mendels, 1972). Every household or cluster of households in a particular setting, or region, developed a unique blend of skills especially in the production of textile handicrafts, such as quilting<sup>31</sup> (Mendels, 1972; Rudolph, 1992). Knowledge sharing seemed to be the social norm, but there was difficulty in articulating the mystery of the craft: tacit knowledge had to be transferred from person to person. Epstein and Prak (2008) contended, “knowledge of how to make things – and make them well – was experience-based” (p. 5), rather than through explicit instruction. Learning was embedded in practical social contexts, with family structure, labour requirements and household strategies organised to accomplish meaningful real-world tasks (Rudolph, 1992).

The emphasis on everyday learning and teaching in traditional apprenticeships and household settings changed, with the introduction of mandatory school enrolment. The scholastic approach to education was “characterised by a narrow concern for book learning and formal rules excluding knowledge or experience of practical experiences” (Nielsen, 2010, p. 469). Early 20<sup>th</sup> century theorists Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky become part of this pedagogical discussion, to argue there is a relationship between mind and environment, or context. While their theories offered groundbreaking insights into the

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<sup>31</sup> For instance, according to a diary written by Baptist Noel Turner (1739-1826), the whole neighbourhood of the Bedford School Estate quilted, with proceeds from the Duke’s estate funding the school and given as alms to the poor (Smith, 2010).

nature of children's learning and thinking in educational settings, they have also had a profound influence on contemporary views of adults' learning in everyday situations.

### **3.3.5 Dewey: Experience and environment**

American pragmatist and philosopher, Dewey (1859-1952), advocated that the key component for learning and development was the quality and continuity of experiences. The proposed theory of learning from experience introduced inseparable concepts of *interaction* and *situation*, particularly as experience involved sources outside an individual. He noted that development occurred "under the influence of social stimuli" (Dewey, 1910, p. 32). Since individuals live in a series of everyday situations, and a folk art, such as quilting, is an activity of learning by doing, a conceptualisation of experience becomes important (Elkjaer, 2009; Field, 2012; Laginder & Stenøien, 2011). Dewey (1938/1963) articulated that "an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment" (p. 43). As such (quilting) knowledge and skills learned in one situation would become "an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which followed" (p. 44). Consequently, (quilting) experiences would require the quilter to reflect on what had happened to *extract* meaning for future intellectual organisation (Dewey, 1973). While the term "experience" was at the "heart of Dewey's educational thinking" (Elkjaer, 2009, p. 74), it has not been well understood by educational research, and is often confused with emerging experiential learning approaches.

A significant body of literature explores contemporary theories of experiential learning (e.g., Davies, 2008; Jarvis, 2009, 2012; Kolb, 1984; Miettinen, 2000; Oxendine, Robinson, & Wilson, 2010). These conceptual ideas are associated with adult education and lifelong learning frameworks, portraying the generation of knowledge through a cyclic transformation of experience. Experiential processes tend to focus on individualism (Field, 2012); have prescriptive phases, indicating a uni-directional sequential movement (Engeström & Sannino, 2012); and overlook the issue that people essentially learn *in* experiences, not *from* them (Fenwick, 2000). While there is no debate about the importance of quiltmakers' experiences in learning, I had to pursue further theoretical perspectives to understand the complexity of everyday learning and teaching.

### 3.3.6 Piaget: Cognitive development

The work of Piaget (1896-1980) significantly influenced the way learning has been understood in the Western world, through his *universal* stage development theory of cognition. He examined how children and adolescents constructed cognitive thinking through exploring their environment. Piaget's principal work (e.g., 1926/1959, 1950/2001, 1967/1971) focused on the functioning of the mind to describe how knowledge was actively constructed internally. From this *constructivist* view of learning the individual used internal processes to integrate new experiences into existing structures to make sense of her world; as well as create or modify structures, to fit experiences into what was already known. While Piaget's focus was on the individual's development, as a precursor to learning, he acknowledged the influence of social experiences, stating "human intelligence develops in the individual in terms of social interactions [which are] too often disregarded" (1967/1971, pp. 224-225). Based on this premise, new information presented by peers created cognitive disequilibrium between what was known and the availability of information in the environment. This conflict fostered realisation that divergent viewpoints were held by different people which may be equally valid, thus widening an individual's own perspective (Ormond, 2012). Piaget's contribution to understanding development and learning brings to the fore that quilters are *active learners*, not passive recipients of quilting knowledge.

There has been much controversy about Piaget's Western ideas of stages in cognitive development and learning. For instance, Neo-Piagetian theoretical perspectives contend that not all adults are capable of abstract thinking, and advise teachers "it is safer to start by using the adult learner's personal practical experiences" (Sutherland, 1999, p. 293). But, more importantly for the present study, opponents argued that Piaget's experimental research approach had identified "abstract, *decontextualised* cognitive attributes" (Tennant, 2012, p. 80) with little regard to the influence of social and cultural aspects. Cross-cultural psychologists and social anthropologists (e.g., Cole & Scribner, 1974; Lave, 1977, 1982; Scribner & Cole, 1973) became concerned with theories of cognition focused solely on the functioning of the mind. Furthermore, being a much favoured theoretical framework, learning had become explicitly linked to teaching, and both were associated with schools (Nunes, 2010). Effectively, everyday

learning was considered of little relevance, with schools viewed as “normally the best way for people to learn” (Hodkinson, 2010, p. 42). However, Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, and Unwin (2005) contended that “learning as a discrete cognitive process” (p. 50) did not explain how learning occurred in the lived-in world away from places of formal education.

Continuing discrepancies of performances in experimental cognitive tests and everyday intellectual activities remained a puzzle. A shift was needed “toward a more inclusive understanding of cognition as it operated through engagement in everyday life” (Tennant, 2012, p. 80). Alternative ways were sought to establish a connection between individual development and cultural processes (Rogoff, 1992, 2003). As a consequence, Cole and Scribner (1974) proposed Vygotsky’s cultural-historical view of developmental psychology for further exploration. Likewise, Lave (1982) supported the call for greater understanding about the social nature of learning, thinking, and knowledge in everyday situations. She, too, recommended that the “work of Vygotsky (e.g., 1978) and extension of other context-based developmental theory such as that of Leont’ev . . . were worth pursuing” (p. 186).

### **3.3.7 Vygotsky: Sociocultural-historical approach**

The central theme of Vygotsky’s (1896-1934) research was that the human mind developed and transformed through social experiences. Vygotsky, and his Russian colleagues, emphasised the interdependence of individual *and* social processes in the co-construction of knowledge (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). His revolutionary ideas were formulated on the basis that human activities took place in cultural contexts, mediated by language and other symbol systems, and were dependent on the historical development of a community (Cole, 1996; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Luria, 1976). Through studying “relationships between the sociocultural and sociohistorical development of human activities and societies [such as a quilting community] on the one hand, and, on the other what these transformations imply for learning and development of individuals” (Säljö, 2010, p. 498), the distinguishing, yet contradictory, feature was that the individual constructed the social while at the same time was being constructed by the social (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Theoretical premises, described in Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) writing have relevance to the current study in the following three ways:

- Firstly, processes for the cultural development of practical quilting knowledge and skills are represented by an external activity which becomes internalised; initially on a social level *between* quilters, then on an individual level *inside* the quilter. "The process being transformed continues to exist and to change . . . for a long time before definitely turning inward" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57) as a form of "inner speech". This internal plane of verbal thinking mediates the relationship between thought and word (Vygotsky, 1987). Thus, demonstrating that individuals' psychological functions and processes are grounded in their everyday quilting activities (Cole, 1996).
- Secondly, quilters come to "know" within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Within a ZPD activity learning and development is regarded as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Subsequently, the social activity consists of constructing knowledge, *as well as* actively creating a comfortable learning environment (Holzman, 2010).
- Thirdly, activities are mediated by cultural tools and artefacts of the quilting community. "In addition to using and making tools, [quilters] arrange for the rediscovery of the already-created tools in each succeeding generation" (Cole, 1996, p. 109). The nature of a quilting activity is, therefore, historically constituted with quilting tools and material artefacts being carried from the past into the present. But for Vygotsky, language was the key mechanism for mediating what was happening in the community. At both collective and individual levels, it is considered the "link between people in interactive settings, and as a tool for thinking" (Säljö, 2010, p. 499).

The historically created and culturally elaborated dimensions of a quilting community are, therefore, reflected in quilters' social processes of knowing. However, like most historical frameworks of learning and teaching, Vygotsky also assumed development

was fixed, moving towards a predestined and knowable endpoint of human capacity (Rogoff, 2011a). Subsequently, contemporary sociocultural theorists found it necessary to reconsider commonly held views of development, and offer alternative perspectives to advance understanding about everyday learning and teaching.

### **3.4 Contemporary Sociocultural Theoretical Perspectives in Community Settings**

Sociocultural perspectives view human activities as situated in a cultural context where learning is embedded in an ongoing process of participation or social practice. A family of sociocultural approaches has emerged, including: situated learning, cultural psychology, social constructivism, activity theory, cultural-historical activity theory, sociocultural-activity theory, and cultural-historical theory. While the folk theory of mind was a one-sided model of transmitting, or acquiring, knowledge from provider to recipient, a participation-based approach considers knowing lies in the relationships among people within culturally and historically organised activity systems, like quilting communities (Engeström, 2009; Lave, 1993; Rogoff, 1997). Therefore, “much learning is informal – simply an integral part of everyday activity” (Hodkinson & MacLeod, 2010, p. 175); whereby the apparent “unstructured and organic quality” (Golding et al., 2009, p. 53) of everyday learning, creates a hallmark of naturalness (Marsick, 2009).

The perception of informal learning continues to be contestable and subject to debate. Even though, over thirty years ago, researchers acknowledged the richness and complexity of idiosyncratic practices involving informal processes of “just plain folks” everyday activities (e.g., Brown et al., 1989; Greenfield & Lave, 1982; Rogoff & Lave, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1978), the everyday ways in which people learn are still considered less conceptual, or intellectual, than formal education (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). A social and cultural paradigm shift is required to make sense of everyday learning and teaching. The renewed focus on apprenticeship learning depicts characteristics of traditional quiltmaking practices. For example, Rogoff (1990) presented the analogy: “The model provided by apprenticeship is one of active learners in a community of people who support, challenge, and guide novices as they increasingly participate in skilled, valued sociocultural activity” (p. 39).

Consequently, re-conceptualised sociocultural models of apprenticeship learning serve as useful theoretical resources in studying learning and teaching in communal quilting settings. For the purpose of the current study, founded on cultural-historical quilting practices of the past, the decision was made to explore various models' applicability, and build upon the dynamics of learning processes presented, in relation to a contemporary quilting community.

#### **3.4.1 The nature of everyday learning**

The situated nature of quilting knowledge draws attention to the social activity, context and culture of communal quilting. An investigation of apprenticeship learning was a stimulus for Lave and Wenger (1991) to develop a theoretical perspective of situated learning as social practice. By studying five types of apprenticeship (Liberian tailors, Yucatec midwives, naval quartermasters, meat cutters, and nondrinking alcoholics) the researchers facilitated a conceptual shift from the traditional view of apprenticeship training, introducing new dimensions of "communities of practice" and "legitimate peripheral participation". A community of practice is a collaborative term, emphasising relationships among quilters, quilting activity and quilting context, which develop over time. Since learning is perceived as "an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35), then it logically follows that participation in social communities of practice, such as quilting, involves learning. Characteristic of learning in communities of practice is the centripetal movement of a newcomer (for instance, novice quilter), who participates in various peripheral roles, alongside more experienced quilters, in the quilting practice; and increases her participation as she learns to become a full member of the quilting community. The emphasis is on the development of "knowledgeable identities" as quilters, and the production of the quilters' community of practice, encompassing its cultural-historical traditions. Therefore, learning is about participation in communities of practitioners "both as a person participating and as a practice participated in" (Lave, 2008b, p. 286). From Lave and Wenger's (1991) perspective, apprenticeship learning is a process of *changing* practice with the mastery of knowledge and skills, as well as becoming part of the community's culture.

A series of seminal investigations on Vai and Gola tailors, by Lave (2011), provided an exemplar of craft apprenticeship as a form of informal learning. Although there was no apparent curriculum for teaching apprentices to become masters, she identified sequential arrangements encased within learning segments which were not coincidental. Learning through legitimate peripheral participation, newcomers were able to engage in the tailoring process by watching, questioning and emulating what more skilled apprentices were doing. Co-operation was required between participants for the production of garments, with apprentices gradually moving towards working on more central and important tasks in the tailoring practice, in order to become fully legitimate members of the community. Lave and Wenger (1991) contended, that decentralising common notions of master-apprentice and pedagogy “leads to an understanding that mastery resides not in the master but in the organisation of the community of practice of which the master is part”, and redirects focus “onto the intricate structuring of a community’s learning resources” (p. 94). Subsequently, Lave (2011) asserted apprenticeship learning was more than just “everyday ‘hanging out’ in tailor shops” (p. 48), and knowing technical skills.

Close examination of the sociocultural context, where learning occurs within a community of practice, revealed tensions and contradictions. Of particular concern, was that novice (quilters) may feel constrained by members who are full participants, since they have more significant roles and positions of power within the community (Elkjaer, 2009; Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006; Roberts, 2006). Additionally, newcomers threaten to transform knowledge and practice, creating unease about continuity of the community and possible displacement of older members (Fuller et al., 2005). Moreover, there remains uncertainty about the relationship between the individual and collective in the meaning-making process (Murphy & McCormick, 2008). There is no discussion about how new knowledge is produced, or ways members transform practice (Edwards, 2005; Roberts, 2006). Indeed, Elkjaer (2009) argued learning was little more than a form of socialisation and adaptation to the community’s practice. Knowledge distribution is surmised to be limited: “packed rather tightly within local containers” (Leander, Phillips, Taylor, Nesper, & Lewis, 2010, p. 335) with participants’ action regarded as being contained or constrained within social geographies (Hargreaves, 2002). Since a quilting

community is steeped in a localised tradition, Edwards (2005) and Elkjaer (2009) argued that such a community is contained within a specific time and space, with knowledge recycled. Yet, Kostogriz (2006) asserted dynamic social spaces where natural processes occur, cannot be conceptualised as “absolute containers” (p. 176). Nonetheless, Cox (2005) and Roberts (2006) contended that while the community of practice may support incremental knowledge accumulation, it is basically static with only gradual change through the generations.

In a study of Central Slovak lace-makers, Makovicky (2010) highlighted further issues about knowledge construction within lace-making communities. Since the craft dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, each community of practice had its own history and customs, with individual members also possessing “quite different knowledge-making practices based on divergent conceptions of what constitutes legitimate craft knowledge, how this knowledge is related to practice, and how it is best put to use” (p. 85). In addition, there was tension between lace-making activities in the city and those situated in villages. Urban lace-makers perceived the selling of notated patterns, which codified local designs, as a carrier of knowledge to revive and conserve a dying art. In contrast, village women felt this action disrespected the legacy of collective knowledge passed down through the generations. Consequently, their craft knowledge was protected within the community of practice to ensure there was no sharing, teaching or supplying of designs to “outsiders”. Conflicting perspectives reflect diverse cultural-historical values of craft communities.

The contextualisation of apprenticeship learning implied development occurred as quilters transformed their participation in sociocultural activities of the quilting community. This conjecture led Rogoff (1998) to inquire how people’s participation changed from “being relatively legitimate peripheral participation, observing and carrying out secondary roles, to assuming various responsible roles in the management or transformation of such activities” (p. 695). Apprenticeship learning is often associated with workplace training; however, Rogoff and her research colleagues have examined mainly children’s learning as it occurs through “intent participation” within Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas (e.g., Rogoff, Paradise, Mejia-Arauz, Correa-Chavez, & Angelillo, 2003; Rogoff, Moore, Najafi, Dexter, Correa-Chavez, & Solis, 2007).

These researchers explored transformation patterns of participation which, while metaphorically resembling master-apprentice relationships, differed significantly from the traditional apprenticeship approach. Learning in community endeavours had a “more flexibly defined interactional and collective organisation in which learner and expert can sometimes interchange their roles” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 104). An *integral* part of the everyday activities, that take place in family and community, was learning by observing *and* pitching in (Rogoff, 2014). Observation was an active process with participants taking responsibility for contributing to events, forming elaborate cultural practices. Mutual involvement occurred through guided participation as they communicated and co-ordinated efforts during culturally valued activities (Rogoff, 1994, 1995).

Research continues to refine the coherence and generality of this learning approach, referred to as “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” (LOPI) (Rogoff, 2014). Using naturalistic settings, there is a particular focus on participation in cultural practices where learning occurs without being taught (Rogoff, 2011b, 2012a, 2014). For instance, during interviews with mothers about children’s learning, Rogoff (2012b) asked questions such as “How do you teach your daughters to weave?” She was puzzled by the replies: “I don’t teach them to weave, they learn” (p. 234). Research fieldwork revealed cultural practices organised learning in ways which supported keen observation, using initiative to contribute responsibly, and involvement in shared efforts. Although research exemplars have mainly focused on communities with little experience of Western schooling, LOPI can also be located in community settings where learners have an opportunity to “directly perceive the connection and relevance of what is being learned, both in terms of the immediate activity as well as in terms of the life of the community as a whole” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 126). For example, a descriptive account of how an automotive mechanic and blacksmith learned skills from his father, then subsequently taught them to other children in the family and neighbourhood, demonstrates the holistically integrated and emergent nature of this way of learning (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009).

The LOPI model can be potentially applied to any domain of learning, including communities of quiltmakers (B. Rogoff, personal communication, March 12, 2015). The

theoretical framework, see Figure 3.1(a), is a multi-faceted structure featuring: community organisation of learning; motive; collaborative practices; transforming participation; attentiveness, contribution and guidance; communication; and assessment. Moreover, Rogoff, Mejía-Arauz, and Correa-Chávez (2015) contended that the LOPI approach appeared to have been central for centuries in Indigenous American communities. I argue LOPI presents similar characteristics to quilting communities, evident in quilt studies (e.g., Clark, 1988; FitzRandolph & Fletcher, 1972; Stalp, 2007) and archival ephemera documentation. To illustrate the potential applicability to the LOPI model, I have modified the original LOPI prism, shown in Figure 3.1(b), by using the terms “quilting community”, “quilting” and “quilter”. But the extent to which quilting community practices relate to LOPI may vary across the seven facets. While Rogoff (2014) maintained that integrated facets of LOPI may differ, according to resilience across generations and places, they appeared to fit with broader patterns of cultural-historical quilting practices. For example, collaborative practices (facet 3) of quilting seem to vary across generations and with migration to Aotearoa New Zealand, whereas quilters’ eagerness to belong and contribute as valued members of a quilting group (facet 2) looks to be fairly resilient. Such variations in the persistence of quilting practices within Aotearoa New Zealand indicates the involvement of historical processes in stable, or shifting, cultural practices of worldwide trends in quilting.

(a)



(b)

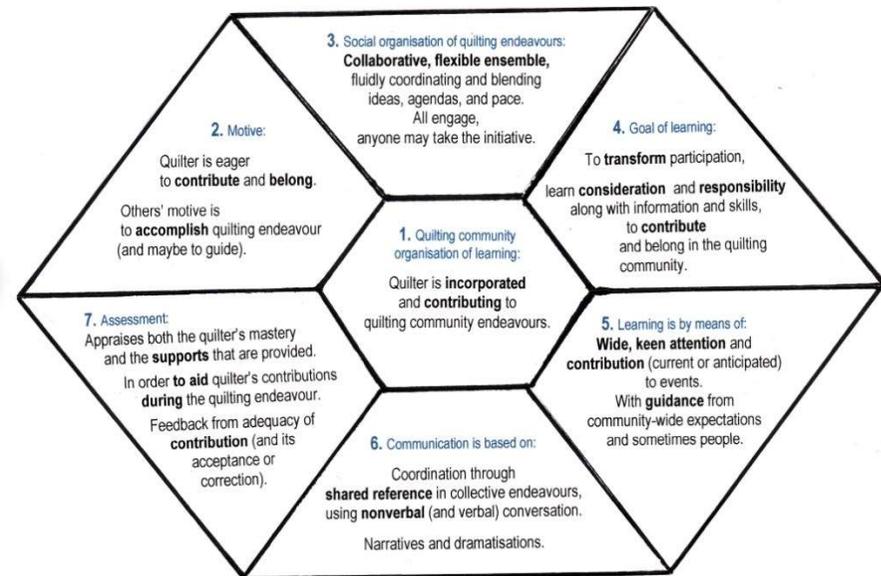


Figure 3.1 “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” model where (a) prism defines features (facets) of LOPI theoretical framework (Rogoff, 2014), and (b) my modifications to the prism indicate potential applicability to a community of quiltmakers. Adapted by permission from the prism copyrighted by B. Rogoff, 2014, appearing in B. Rogoff (2014) “Learning by Observing and Pitching In to Family and Community Endeavors: An Orientation,” *Human Development*, 57(2–3), 73.

This review of literature indicates that conceiving apprenticeship merely in terms of “learning by doing” provides an unsatisfactory account of the everyday way participation is organised for learning to occur. The everydayness of the tradition of learning through observing, social interaction and cultural experience is often taken for granted. However, any time people engage “in doing things in which their ongoing activities are interdependent, learning is part of their changing participation in changing practices” (Lave, 1996, p. 150). Therefore, drawing on Rogoff, Matusov, and White’s (1996) perspective, it would seem quilters’ learning and development occurs when they participate in the sociocultural activities of their quilting community, transforming their understanding, roles, and responsibilities during their active engagement. Nonetheless, an underlying difficulty remains: the praxis and process of informal learning usually make it invisible, since it is a ubiquitous element embedded in the community context. Subsequently, to comprehend (and analyse) communal quiltmaking *in situ* necessitates having a theoretical conception of the socially, culturally and historically ongoing systems of quilting activity.

#### **3.4.2 Social processes and cultural practices of everyday learning**

In order to focus on key sociocultural contributions that underpin everyday learning, the following review of literature is presented under four broad categories: affective relationships; watching, listening, and attending; guided participation; and contextualised talk. Researchers have studied the social processes which enhance learning, but these need to be understood from a cultural perspective to advance knowledge about informal learning (Gauvain, 2005). In the present study, culture is interpreted as ways of life (Rogoff, 2016). Social, cognitive, emotional and physical aspects are culturally grounded in community life, and crucial to everyday learning. Based on Paradise and Rogoff’s (2009) participatory viewpoint, quilting knowledge and skills learned are integrated into the quilter’s leisure activity, along with the development of attitudes and dispositions that allow her to generate flexible quilting practices and applications of quilting knowledge.

### **3.4.2.1 Affective relationships**

The review of quilt studies showed friendships were considered of equal importance to learning in quilting communities.<sup>32</sup> However, the affective dimension of joint activity has largely been ignored in learning-teaching contexts (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Wells, 2007). Vygotsky (1987) noted the key role of affect in thinking and action, when he wrote: “Thought has its origins in the motivating sphere of consciousness, a sphere that includes our inclinations and needs, our interests and impulses, and our affect and emotion” (p. 282). Central to informal learning is having a sense of belonging to the quilting community, or the desire to belong as a participant. Sharing of everyday happenings implies “a personal emotional experience and attraction to the activity and the social setting in which it takes place” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 130). The development of quality relationships is essential for encouraging quilters to take risks, contribute new ideas, provide feedback, and gain confidence (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Wells & Claxton, 2002).

For Vygotsky (1994) the “emotional experience [*perezhivanie*]” (p. 339) of social interactions is fundamental to support creative collaboration and the mutual appropriation of knowledge. Community members can draw on their “mutuality as well as their differences in knowledge, working styles, and temperament” (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002, p. 52). Friendships become a binding factor within a caring environment, where participants are sensitive to each others’ needs, with reciprocal emotional support given. A common interest and commitment to shared endeavours engenders emotional involvement, and motivation (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009).

In addition, the physical venue of communal activities creates an atmosphere of belonging. Flexibility in how the meeting place is prepared, such as arrangement of furniture and activity areas, inspires a comfortable feeling of warmth and security, and freedom to move between social spaces (Silberman-Keller, 2006). The neighbourhood locality also puts participants at ease, where like-minded people meet for leisure activities (Delamont, 2005). Participants consider the venue as an alternative home where a family model can be re-constructed, developing distinctive patterns of familial

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<sup>32</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.6, for details about social relationships.

relationships (Silberman-Keller, 2003). Stable, long lasting friendships are nurtured in such places, colloquially referred to as “a home away from home”.<sup>33</sup>

### **3.4.2.2 *Watching, listening, and attending***

A defining feature of everyday learning is observation which is complex and culturally situated. Observation is a universal learning strategy and is not age-specific (Froerer, 2012; Gaskins & Paradise, 2010; Rogoff et al., 2007). Learning through observation in daily life “typically occurs in familiar contexts in which one person performs an activity while another person, who knows less, watches them do it” (Gaskins & Paradise, 2010, p. 85). Social observation provides information about the task, models of other people’s problem solving strategies, influences future actions, and leads to improvement of an individual’s skills (Gauvain, 2005). Sometimes a partner may encourage observation through verbal means, for instance “I’ll show you”, or by using nonverbal cues, such as deliberately repeating a demonstration at a slower pace (Atkinson, Delamont, & Housley, 2008). Routines may be orchestrated with choreographies of events to deliberately direct participants’ attention to exact an active orientation of learning (Tulbert & Goodwin, 2013). However, learning through observation is not restricted to imitating a task, reproducing behaviour or attaining the same goal. Rather, it is an “active, constructive process that embodies information about culture in its content, form, and goals for action” (Gauvain, 2005, p. 19).

Cultural values and routine practices convey strategies for learning and instruction, which participants watch and listen to, in anticipation of contributing to the shared endeavour (Rogoff, 2014). Through wide, keen attention social behaviours practiced by the community become known. Attention can be both intense concentration directed toward an activity, or wide angled and open, distributed across the setting (Gaskins & Paradise, 2010; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Even when participants do not show an intentional observation, there is a “peripheral awareness” (Gaskins & Paradise, 2010) or “generalised awareness” (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). As Downey (2007) indicated, “the sideways glance shaped knowledge, in part, by filtering out certain types of extraneous information” (p. 228) forming distinctive scanning patterns. The legitimate peripheral

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<sup>33</sup> A place where one is as happy, relaxed, or comfortable as in one's own home.

participation process involves sustained, but non-intrusive, contact with person(s) engaged in the activity which is the focus of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Communal practices organise cultural patterns of temporal order and spatial arrangements which support social interaction. There is a temporal flow of activities and practices, with the rhythms of social life regulating everyday routines (Atkinson et al., 2008). Changes to the temporal order, or flow, draw the attention of the participants. For example, Silberman-Keller (2006) noted that the rhythm could be altered through some incident, or event, which triggered others' interest causing a "flash" of short-term activities. Additionally, Kostogriz (2006) claimed that "to be in space is not just to be situated somewhere, but rather is to participate in distinct cultural-semiotic activities" (p. 177). Therefore, by choosing to watch, listen and attend to the interactional situation of an activity, the participant becomes incorporated into the activity.

#### **3.4.2.3 Guided participation**

Post-Vygotskian theories have extended the original zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept to include everyday interactions, which are not purposively designed for learning and teaching. Rather, ZPD becomes a means to increase participation in social practices with "those who are knowledgeable involving themselves by collaborating with the learner, by guiding and showing as they engage together in the activity" (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 114). This perspective emphasises quilters' participation in activities with guidance from more experienced quilters who provide suggestions, hints and demonstrations on how to handle quilting tools and the skills required. Hence, the less skilled individual is "not merely a naive actor who follows instructions or prompts" (Gauvain, 2005, p. 24); rather, she is a full participant whose contributions are defined by her current understanding. Consequently, the focus of the ZPD is on the development of the collective (Sannino & Ellis, 2014). Both participation and guidance are, therefore, mutual efforts of the quilters whereby skills and knowledge are appropriated from their involvement in the shared activity (Rogoff, 1991).

Situated in an informal context, the role of expert is different compared to the teacher role in institutionalised education settings (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). *Expertise* is a relative term; while the expert is more skilled than the novice, and can visualise the

organisation of skills required, she is also still continuing her own development (Rogoff, 1991). Moreover, Hager (2012) noted participants can easily identify those with superior skills in everyday activities but they are often unable to articulate the underpinnings of such expert performance. While intentional efforts are made to have information available to others in the community, participants become competent largely through using their own initiative to actively procure knowledge (Gauvain, 2005; Lancy & Grove, 2010; Rogoff, 2014).

Guided acquisition of cultural practices occurring in social situations provide “opportunities to learn how more experienced partners understand a problem, what knowledge and skills are useful for solving that problem” (Gauvain, 2005, p. 25), as well as experience with cultural tools – both symbolic and material. Learning *how* to guide others, in acquiring cultural knowledge, occurs in activity settings that are situated in cultural places (Maynard, 2004). Maynard and Greenfield (2006) conceptualised this system of socialisation as cultural teaching which concentrated on “rituals, routines, cultural practices, and socialisation agents that support cultural learning” (p. 139). However, few studies have focused on development of cultural teaching even though “teaching, and not just learning, develops” (p. 158) during everyday activities. The present study aims to examine this knowledge gap, especially since quilt studies indicated the significance of mentoring, usually by older members, through intergenerational quilting and workshops.

Patterns of guided participation differ in various models of cultural learning and teaching. For example, in Maynard and Greenfield’s (2005) Zinacantec community study of teaching weaving skills, the learning process involved highly scaffolded interactions to provide assistance for learners to perform a task.<sup>34</sup> In contrast, Paradise and de Haan (2009) noticed tacit role reciprocity, during a study of a Mazahua community, where participants’ roles alternated, between actively doing a task and supporting another, during ongoing interactions. Although both of these studies focused on adult-child interrelationships for learning, the research is relevant to a quilting setting, since

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<sup>34</sup> Scaffolding consists of an expert breaking down a task, which is beyond the learner’s capacity, into doable parts to successfully accomplish the task (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

the findings showed that participants were familiar with each other, skills were orally transmitted, and craft production demonstrations were given as necessary. While collective learning-teaching is an important dimension within everyday settings, it remains the least researched aspect of *adults'* informal learning (Livingstone, 2006).

#### **3.4.2.4 Contextualised talk**

Many researchers considered language was the principal mode of meaning-making, with verbal talk being regarded as necessary for working together (e.g., Mercer & Howe, 2012; Säljö, 2010; Wells, 2007, 2009; Wertsch, 2010). During collaboration, people engage in co-ordinated efforts to construct common knowledge, where they not only interact but also interthink in order to know together (Mercer & Howe, 2012; Wells, 1999, 2007). Collective thinking, learning and development most often take place through face-to-face discussions (Wells, 2009). During dialogical exchanges, a person may be involved in more than one conversation, aware of other ongoing events, attending to more than one response, reasoning about other perspectives, following conversation sequencing and actions, while simultaneously considering one's own contribution (Wells, 2000). From this perspective, language is ascertained to be central for knowledge building, forming a connection between an individual quilter and a community of quilters.

Everyday learning is based on observation and participation in shared endeavours, with speech supporting the activity (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Verbal comments that guide and direct are interspersed with the activity, encouraging keen attention to the task at hand. Such contextualised talk can only happen during the activity and not as some abstract discussion in the absence of the activity (Maynard & Greenfield, 2006). Furthermore, Lave and Wenger (1991) contended there was a distinction between *talking within* and *talking about* a communal practice. Talking within, included conversations where information is exchanged; whereas talking about, consisted of storytelling and community folklore. Both forms of talk have specific functions: "engaging, focusing, and shifting attention, bringing about co-ordination, etc, on the one hand; and supporting communal forms of memory and reflection, as well as signalling

membership, on the other hand” (p. 109). Conversations and narratives support quilters in learning *to* talk as legitimate participants of the quilting community.

Conversations are socially dynamic, changing as information is added, challenged and reworked with participants’ contributions (Gauvain, 2005). Intentions behind actions are often revealed during sharing information necessary for the task. Some studies (e.g., Paradise & Rogoff, 2009; Rogoff, 2014) indicated that talk tended to be brief, mindfully used, in conjunction with other forms of communication. The implication is that in a quilting context both spoken and nonverbal pointers are given by an experienced quilter to a learner to explain, or draw distinctions, about the ongoing quilting process. Maynard and Greenfield (2005) noted interactions, combining speech with an action or gesture, declined among more experienced learners. Instead, using a single motion, such as pointing, was sufficient to convey meaning. Depending on a learner’s skill level and difficulty of task, scaffolding was adjusted accordingly.

Narratives, a way to remember and communicate memories, are frequently used in everyday conversations. Stories become tools for storing and retrieving information; contextualising and reinterpreting ideas; diagnostically solving problems and guiding appropriate action; fashioning an identity; and displaying membership of a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2014). The context of narratives conveys much about the community and its cultural values (Gauvain, 2005). For example, in an effort to develop rapport with quilting group members, Wall and Stasz (2010) found storytelling afforded a newcomer legitimacy among the quilters. As important as it was to learn how to quilt, the newcomer was gradually incorporated into the group by “becoming a more active participant in the conversations and stories that took place during the quilting time” (p. 365). Conversations and shared narratives encourage the development of social relationships, communication skills, individual and community cultural identity, and collective knowledge building (Gauvain, 2005).

### **3.5 Toward Collaborative Knowledge Creation**

Mutual appropriation of quilting knowledge, in responsive learning-teaching situations, is problematic. Since knowledge is not given, but “actively constructed, interpreted and represented” (Billet, 1998, p. 30) by individual quilters, learning becomes a gradual

appropriation of community tools, practices and roles through guided participation (Sawyer & Greeno, 2009). However, a Vygotskian perspective depicts learning and development as a hierarchical ordering of concept formation, with vertical movement from spontaneous everyday practice of “just plain folks” to schooled scientific thinking of “professional experts” (Engeström, 2001; Lave, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). Subsequently, in Western culture, learning is often viewed as “movement away from the ordinary and mundane knowledgeable of some everyday life” (Lave, 2008a, p. 3) to achieve higher knowledge. Yet, quilters (characterised as “just plain folks”) regularly display expertise in their ordinary everyday activity of quilting.

### **3.5.1 The nature of craft knowledge**

Much of everyday craft knowing involves tacit knowledge. Thinking becomes unconscious and implicit, part of the quilting practice, an intuitive source of cultural meaning. Everyday knowledge intertwines routines and content in comfortable practical activities, hence it becomes characterised as “silent knowledge” (Hedegaard, 2008). There is no intentional transmission of tacit knowledge, rather it is on display (Duguid, 2008). Practitioners are often unable to articulate this knowledge, or may not feel the need to explain (Hutchins, 1995; Schugurensky, 2006).<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, Engeström (2007) contended it is this “*subterranean* learning that blazes cognitive trails . . . embodied and lived but unnoticeable” (p. 24). Moreover, Gourlay (2006) asserted that certain tacit knowledge could not be made explicit. Craftwork thinking has been described as intuitive, motivated by working with one’s hands, to develop expertise through lots of practice and guided by skilful tutors (Cross, 2011; Stevens, 2011). Consequently, it would appear to be a matter of immersion in the quilting context, with exposure to examples of expert quilters’ work, which encourages recognition of varying forms of embodied competence.

Quilt culture has its own unique set of socially situated activities and practices. Smith (1994) believed that by paying particular attention to the tacit dimension, sense could be made of what was happening in activities, as well as the role of intuition in practices.

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<sup>35</sup> In an explanation of tacit knowledge Polanyi (1966/1983) emphasised “we can know more than we can tell” (p. 4).

According to Thomas and Brown (2011), both the mind and senses are always learning, with vast amounts of tacit knowledge being appropriated as individuals attend to the activity at hand. As a result, most informal learning is commonly viewed as unconscious, incidental or accidental; leading to the presumption it occurs in a disorganised and diffused manner (Schugurensky, 2006). But Wells (1999) argued, such acts of knowing have “little or no meaning outside a community of whose activities they form a part and to which they make a significant contribution” (p. 79). For example, Marchand’s (2007) study of brick carving revealed masons’ dialogue was minimised to utterances and brief statements, with a prominence of non-verbal communication embodied in actions. To understand the systematicity of tacit knowledge requires familiarity with practices involved (González, Andrade, Civil, & Moll, 2005). For instance, nuances noticed during social interactions may, or may not, have cultural significance for craft workers. Consequently, there may be difficulty in eliciting quilters’ knowledge about their everyday quilting practice.

### **3.5.2 Community funds of knowledge**

An aim of community knowledge is to produce quilting knowledge of value to other quilters. But quilters belong to an assortment of communities of practice where “systems of living knowledge” (Moll, Tapia, & Whitmore, 1993, p. 159) are formed and transformed. Contributions made by members to any community “will be affected by the other communities to which they belong . . . bringing different forms of expertise and different perspectives” (Wells, 2009, p. 293) to the activity. People move between social worlds, across boundaries and borders, sharing funds of knowledge (Gutiérrez, Larson, Enciso, & Ryan, 2007; Moll et al., 1993). Effectively, a quilting community becomes “positioned in a *nexus of relations*” (Leander et al., 2010, p. 336), with boundaries being a source of learning as much as its core practices (Wenger, 2009). Kostogriz (2006) suggested social networks bring an “element of thirdness” (p. 184) to a “multivoiced contact zone” (p. 188); placing an emphasis on dialogical learning to bridge different activity systems (Engeström, 2007). This horizontal, or sideways, form of learning expands the vertical dimension embedded in Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD. Boundary crossing requires the co-configuration, and incorporation, of a horizontal dimension in developmental zones (Engeström, 1996). For instance, Stevens (2011) noted craft

communities were currently at a generational crossroads, since object makers of domestic creativity integrate information technologies into their craft practice providing access to a wider, global community.<sup>36</sup> Inevitably, knowledge advancement entails distribution of expertise within *and* between communities (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2010).

Quilters share a basic knowledge of needlework, allowing members to work together in the quilting community. They develop a toolkit – repertoires of practice – over time, space, and history (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). While there is variability and change across communities, patterns of cultural practices form constellations of common practices and tools (Rogoff, Najafi, & Mejia-Arauz, 2014). Duguid (2008) argued that such networks of practice enable members to appropriate global knowledge (about sewing), and re-embed it in their locally acquired practice of know-how. For example, González et al. (2005) studied a group of mothers attending a sewing class, to make connections between household knowledge and community mathematical practices. While the informal practice of designing and constructing the dress pattern appeared idiosyncratic, such as measurement calculation methods, the repetitive “ahs” demonstrated the women’s grasp of the tutor’s explanations. Systematicity of the mothers’ knowledge was based on their familiarity with the sewing practice, where community funds of mathematical knowledge were embedded in social meaning and sewing activity. Access to this knowledge was socially mediated through more knowledgeable others. Creating a zone of development depends not only on the community’s accumulated funds of knowledge, but also on the transformation of that knowledge into a meaningful activity through collaborative efforts.

### **3.5.3 Knowledge co-construction**

A process of knowledge co-construction takes place when quilters (both novice and experienced) participate in shared quilting endeavours. This joint participation entails co-ordinated efforts, using effective problem solving and decision-making strategies, alongside the utilisation of resources (Mercer & Howe, 2012). The ways in which a community explores existing quilting knowledge, and the latest information on

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<sup>36</sup> The issue of technology’s impact was also raised in folklore studies (see Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.4).

quiltmaking, is made visible through its practice. From a participatory perspective, shared cultural practices of meaning-making, or knowing, places an emphasis on participants' social interaction and learning from joint activities (Hakkarainen, Paavola, Kangas, & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, 2013). Nonetheless, it remains unclear how quiltmaking activities, context, and culture shape the co-construction of knowledge.

To construct common knowledge necessitates a quilting community has a culture of collaboration. That being the case, community members should have joint commitment to a common goal and purpose, with individuals contributing expertise to build on prior ideas and negotiate meanings, in their shared endeavours (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2010; Rogoff, 1990, 1998; Wells, 2002). Although knowledge construction ought to be meaningful and involve collaborative efforts, Billett (1998) argued appropriation was a negotiated and transformative process, which included contestation of ideas. Accordingly, participants may trial and disagree about suggestions made, leading to possible renegotiation of meaning and way of doing things (González et al., 2005). Furthermore, while co-constructing knowledge to make new, or renegotiated, meanings is essential to participatory practices, theoretical frameworks need to account for the different types of knowledge constructed, and how individuals use them in their goal-directed activities (Rogoff, 1995). Subsequently, Wells and Claxton (2002) recommended examining the (quilting) community's inherited practices *and* cultural artefacts which serve as tools to achieve quilters' goals. Even though Wells (2007) proposed artefacts may potentially mediate communication, collaboration, and joint problem solving; Wertsch (2010) questioned whether these cultural tools were accessed in equal ways by participants as they (re)created knowledge of the community.

Debate continues about the assumed fixed roles of expert and novice in dialogical relationships. In studies of weaving (e.g., Maynard, 2002; Maynard & Greenfield, 2003, 2005; Nash, 1958) children were initiated into adult work activities through apprenticeship learning, where the instructional role was assumed by a master weaver who guided the progress of a novice, either implicitly or explicitly. Conversely, Lave (2011) noticed in tailor shops there were more "humans as resources" than learners; since novices watched, queried and followed what skilled apprentices were doing when sewing, rather than observe the master. Similarly, Wells (2002) claimed there did not

have to be a clear difference in expertise between participants to learn with and from each other. Furthermore, Frankel (2012) noted that even when a relationship of expert-novice was clearly defined, exchanges were still of a reciprocal nature. Accordingly, Valsiner (2000) argued there were no restrictive social role boundaries, rather they depended on the idiosyncratic ways participants co-constructed “local know-how and skills” (p. 251). Thus, the biggest challenge is recognising the multi-directionality of learning in creative zones of development (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). It would appear a focus on the interaction between quilters, “the act of learning engagement itself” (Falk, 2007, p. 7), is crucial to ascertain relational roles within a quilting community.

Participation-based approaches focus on understanding how knowledge and practices are passed on from each generation in quilting cultures. Knowledge co-construction is patterned by the (quilting) community’s “social and cultural circumstances in which knowledge is experienced and mutually transformed” (Billett, 1998, p. 26). While learning may be seen as a personal matter of achieving understanding through joint participation, collective knowledge is also enhanced through contributions made by individuals (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2010). However, Edwards (2005) contended that learning to become a member of a (quilting) community, working with existing practices, as well as supporting increasing complex forms of engagement, presents a conservative model of apprenticeship learning. Studies of everyday contexts frequently depict communities of practice as stable entities focused on socialisation and mastery of expertise, without investigating how innovative knowledge practices are intentionally framed (Tuomi-Grohn & Engeström, 2003). Nevertheless, quilting traditions, viewed in historical and cultural contexts, have encountered progressive changes of quilt styles and practice over the centuries.<sup>37</sup> While attention remains centred predominantly on prevailing cultural practices, little heed is given to deliberate changes of (quilters’) social organisation, or to the development of new textile artefacts through sustained collective processes (Hakkarainen, 2008).

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<sup>37</sup> For historical examples, refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

### 3.5.4 Innovative knowledge communities

Processes of knowledge advancement present a challenge to quilt cultures. While the folk theory of mind and participation-based approaches are valuable learning frameworks, neither adequately explains the “collaborative, systematic development of common objects of activity” (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005a, p. 536). Learning theories of innovative knowledge communities concentrate on the deliberate transformation of cultural practices and advancement of new knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

Building on Vygotsky’s theoretical tenets, different learning models potentially provide clarification about the organisation and mediated processes of collective creativity within quilting communities. For instance, Engeström (2009) developed the “expansive learning cycle” to analyse creation of a new activity system by reflecting on a community’s existing structure and its contradictions, which became the source of change and development. Meanwhile, Fenwick (2006) claimed the nature of innovation might be conceptualised as “flying and grounding”, where groups blend the uncertainty of improvisation with the stability of their collective repertoires of practice. However, Sawyer (2012) noted “collaborative emergence” could occur from individual creative acts and engagement in conversations, building on novel contributions to develop group creativity. Similarly, Fischer (2014) maintained new ideas came from “cultures of participation” in which individuals’ contributions exemplified diversity of ideas, independent opinions, decentralised local knowledge, along with an aggregation of collective decisions. Moreover, Glaveanu (2010) suggested creativity was an act of “cultural participation”, because collaborative and social interactions involved engagement with cultural artefacts to produce new cultural resources.

Additionally, Paavola, Lipponen, and Hakkarainen (2004) examined different learning frameworks, establishing common characteristics of innovative processes. They suggested knowledge creation models presented a “triological” approach to learning, with the primary focus on interaction *through* specific objects (or artefacts) of activity being systematically developed, rather than only on interaction between people.

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<sup>38</sup> These processes were of particular relevance, since one quilting group in the present study intended to transform their quilting practice, including the deliberate advancement of design knowledge.

Subsequently, Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005a, 2009) proposed a generic model of triological learning, drawing attention to jointly developed “objects” of knowledge artefacts, processes, and/or practices (see Figure 3.2). Triological learning consists of three basic elements: (i) individual subjects, (ii) who develop something together with others as a learning community, (iii) for some subsequent “authentic” use of the objects. Common objects of activity are developed through producing and versioning (or modifying) concrete things together, not just by imitating what others are doing (S. Paavola, personal communication, March 18, 2015).

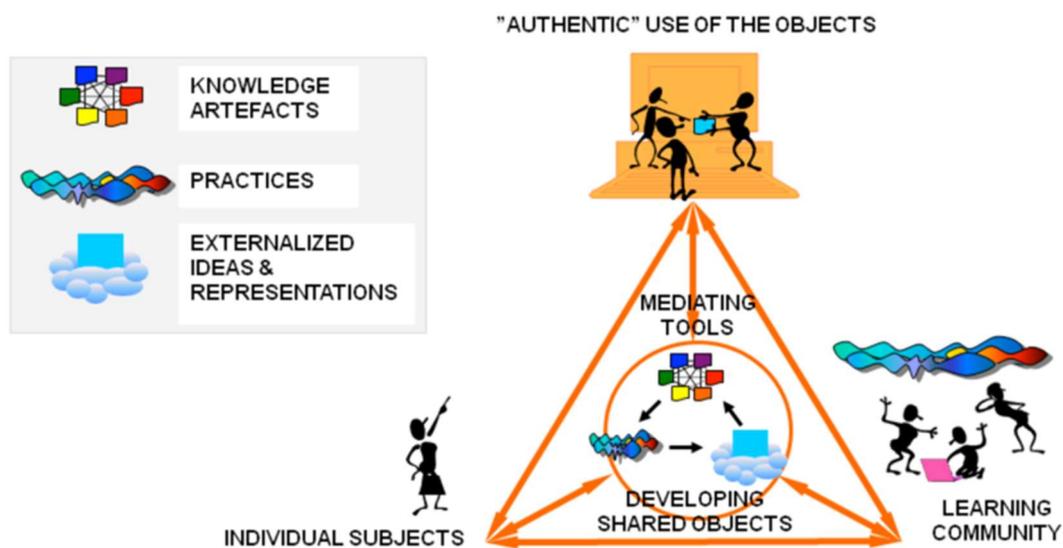


Figure 3.2 The triological approach to learning presenting some of the basic elements of it. From “From meaning making to joint construction of knowledge practices and artefacts: A triological approach to CSCL” by S. Paavola & K. Hakkarainen, p. 84. In C. O’Malley, P. Suthers, P. Reimann, & A. Dimitracopoulou (Eds.), *Computer Supported Collaborative Learning Practices: CSCL2009 Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 2). Copyright 2009 by International Society of the Learning Sciences, Rhodes. Reprinted with permission.

The materiality of shared objects is an important aspect, forming a connection to quilting and quilts. Since the purpose is to create something new, the activity of designing quilts can be seen as an object-oriented process of knowledge creation. This collective creation of knowledge involves social and emotional processes: participants have to be prepared to take risks, step into the unknown, engage in improvisational efforts, and stretch personal capacities in the pursuit of novel ideas (Paavola et al., 2004;

Hakkarainen et al., 2013).<sup>39</sup> In such communities, new forms of activity are literally learned as they are being created (Engeström, 2001). In other words, at the same time as a new object or concept is being constructed, quilters would be using these innovations in their quilting practice. Subsequently, part of the challenge for models of innovative community learning is comprehending how tacit knowledge, or knowledge embedded in social practice, is transformed to an explicit form which is both meaningful and accessible to other participants (Batatia, Hakkarainen, & Mørch, 2012; Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005b). These kinds of processes, which typify the dialogical approach, have not yet been investigated in an everyday context, such as quilting communities (S. Paavola, personal communication, March 18, 2015).

The synthesis of new knowledge and cultural transformations require extra effort by communities. From a knowledge creation perspective, Hakkarainen (2008) reported that this “learning is seen as analogous to innovative inquiry through which new ideas, tools and practices are created, and the knowledge being developed is significantly enriched or changed during the process” (p. 4). The majority of studies undertaken have focused on creating technology-enhanced learning and knowledge practices (e.g., Paavola, Engeström, & Hakkarainen, 2012). For instance, research of an elementary students' collaborative lamp design project drew attention to the knowledge creation aspects of designing (Kangas, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, & Hakkarainen, 2007, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). The project was driven by student-generated questions, as they considered the developmental potential of lamp design ideas and constructed them into physical artefacts, with explanations shared among the participants. The “Learning by Collaborative Designing” (LCD) model (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, Viilo, & Hakkarainen, 2010) which was developed to facilitate inquiry processes of design learning, guided the lamp design project (see Figure 3.3).

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<sup>39</sup> For instance, recognising the innovation of early quilt designs, Schmidt (2014) suggested that today's quiltmakers should experiment, be open to opportunities in mistakes made, and use their own intuition, trusting instinct.

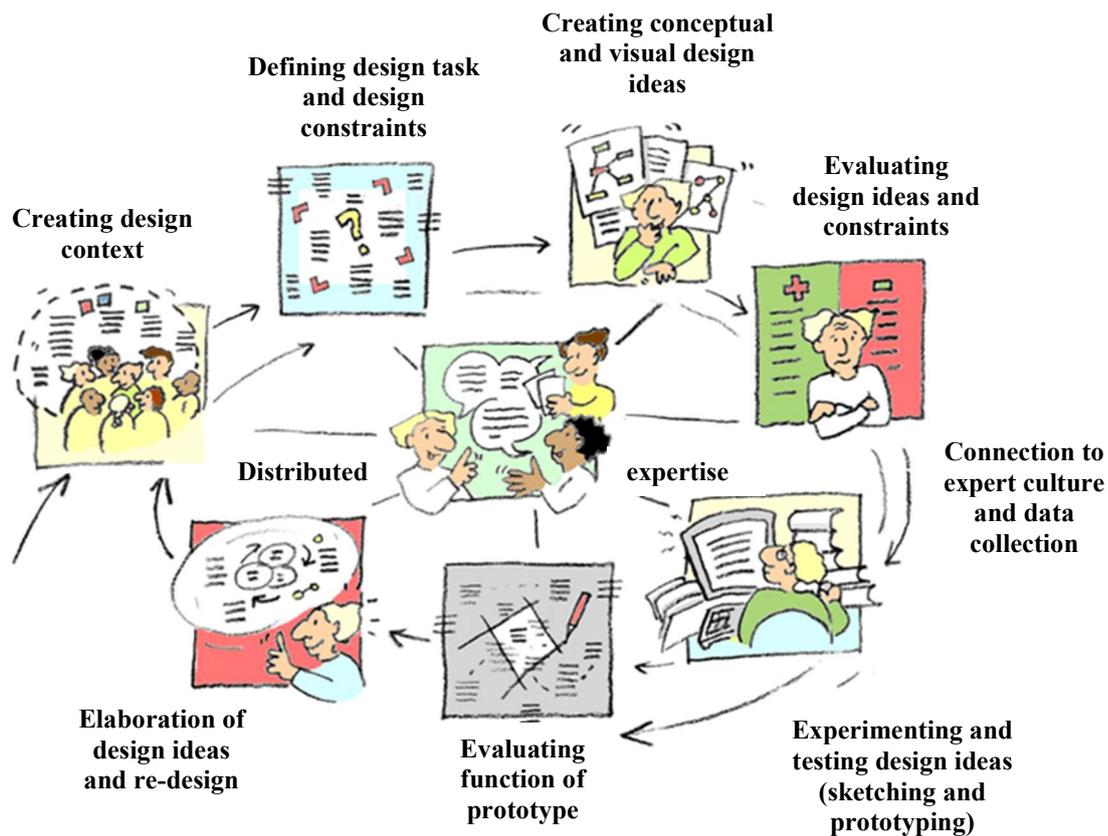


Figure 3.3 Features of “Learning by Collaborative Designing” model may be potentially applied to inquiry processes of design learning in a community of quiltmakers. From “Learning by Collaborative Designing: Technology-Enhanced Knowledge Practices,” by P. Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, M. Viilo, and K. Hakkarainen, 2010, *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 20, 113. Copyright 2010 by SpringerLink Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

The design-based inquiry process highlighted complexities in facilitating design learning and thinking, which may have corresponding significance to understanding the collective activity of quilt designing. The central LCD features of this particular knowledge-creation model, present implications for a quilting community: the role of distributed expertise; emphasis on open-ended design tasks; sharing participants’ ideas through social interaction; as well as integration of conceptual artefacts with materially embodied hands-on activities. However, a difficulty arises in quilting community settings, since theorising of informal learning processes tend not to be discussed in terms of specified sequences, events or actions. Furthermore, characteristics and patterning of learning and knowing tend to be invisible in everyday contexts (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). Nonetheless, evidence emerging from this triological approach demonstrates learning and collaborative knowledge creation are subsumed in social practice, as well as mediated through shared objects. It would appear that quilting

activities, classified as either participatory or knowledge creation, are in many ways overlapping.

### **3.6 Summary**

Everyday learning and teaching is a complex phenomenon. This complexity is due not only to the ubiquitous nature of social and cultural processes, but also to the often unquestioned way “just plain folk” learning is perceived in everyday activities. Theories about formal education had a significant influence on how ways of learning are perceived. There is a need to have a theory that explains how learning and thinking skills occur in everyday leisure activities, such as communal quilting.

A folk theory of mind, rooted in direct experience, “is so intricately woven into the social fabric that there is no telling what would be left if we tried to remove it” (Bereiter, 2002, p. 10). Selected historical frameworks of learning and teaching, with relevance to the present study, contain major elements of praxis and process which are also found in more recent sociocultural theories of learning. Participatory learning perspectives where quilters jointly construct knowledge in quilting activities, with more knowledgeable others, transforming patterns of participation, were examined. These contemporary theories of learning share features of traditional apprenticeships, but have expanded frameworks to include such concepts as: legitimate peripheral participation, communities of practice, and guided participation. Since the cultural-historical tradition of quilting entails enculturation into quilting practices through activity and social interaction, inspirational models such as “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” (LOPI) (Rogoff, 2014) have potential significance for the investigation of a quilting community.

Current research on learning indicates participants have multi-faceted roles within creative zones of development. Community funds of knowledge, accessed within and between communities of practice, are transformed into meaningful quilting activity. Additionally, a dialogical approach to learning depicts innovative knowledge communities as deliberately advancing knowledge, and transforming practice, *through* specific objects of activity (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005a). Although processes of knowledge creation have not been explored in everyday contexts, innovative inquiry

models, for instance “Learning by Collaborative Designing” (LCD) (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2010), offer frameworks of knowledge building for consideration, and possible adaptation, in relation to a quilting community setting.

## CHAPTER 4

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### METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

#### Learning from the Inside-Out: Apprenticing with Quilters

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“Colloquially, a research design is *a logical plan for getting from here to there*, where *here* may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions” (Yin, 2014, p. 28).

Initially, the intention was to embody a linear research progression of choosing a methodology, collecting data, analysing data and writing up findings (St. Pierre, 1997). But, as Stalp (2007) pointed out, “understanding the native wisdom present within local communities of quilters can be time consuming, labour intensive, and theoretically challenging” (p. 28). Although research design literature details a step-wise approach to planning, execution, and reporting of the research process, it is also counterbalanced by the reality of the research site. For example, Wolcott (2005) advised, “systematic approaches to fieldwork demonstrate conformity through adherence to established procedures, but that is not to suggest that artists – or fieldworkers – are ever completely free to do their own thing” (p. 24).

This chapter leads the reader through the decision-making steps, and aligned reasoning, which took place as I explored methodological approaches *and* research methods for the present study. Using a storied-approach, I explain how the research question arose, and describe the need to revise guiding questions during the progression of this study. An orientation of the study is presented, from pragmatic exploration of the proposed research to conceptualisation of research building blocks, demonstrating the spiralling nature of research. Informed by research undertaken in the area of informal learning, the theoretical perspectives of qualitative research and ethnography are examined, with a particular emphasis on the centrality of reflexivity. The research methods of experiencing, enquiring, and examining are discussed, in relation to the two quilting

groups. The choice to use a multi-site case study approach is explained. Bringing the reader into the field, I describe the participant recruitment process, and introduce “the quilters” from the two research sites. The ethics of working with participants of the quilting community are considered. The challenge of sorting, and reporting a huge corpus of data is recounted. Finally, the trustworthiness of findings from this naturalistic inquiry is discussed.

The major steps between Yin’s (2014) *here* and *there*, in actuality, evolved as a crazy-patched quilt of logical sequencing and idiosyncratic tangents. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) compared the research approach to “the quilter who stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together” (p. 4). During the research process I continually cross-referenced theoretical literature, and re-evaluated procedural stages in practice, resembling hooks’ (1990) description of her grandmother’s quilt: “though originally handsewn, it has been ‘gone over’ on the sewing machine so that it would better endure prolonged everyday use” (p. 121). Therefore, with an Aristotelian attitude of “learn by doing”, coupled with Lave’s (2011) notion “we are all apprentices”, I chronicle my story of “mucking around the methodologies and ethics of inquiry” (Clark, Brody, Dillon, Hart, & Heimlich, 2007, p. 110) disseminating the *seam ripper* moments which occurred on my research path. As a consequence, my researcher apprenticeship became two-fold: research *on* learning and research *as* learning.

#### **4.1 Research Questions**

The development of the research question and revised guiding questions arose from exploratory investigation, reading, and fieldwork as the study progressed. Being a quilter, I wondered how I had learned to be a master quilter and became intrigued with the nature of teaching and learning within the context of a community of quilters.<sup>40</sup> The more I read about “informal” learning theory and quilt studies, the more I realised learning had a central role in quilting, but where was the teaching component? It did not seem to make sense to negate teaching from this investigation. Subsequently, the overarching research question was framed:

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<sup>40</sup> Initially, I referred to this social and cultural phenomenon within the quilting community as *teaching* and learning, reflective of my formal learning experiences in Western educational institutions.

*How do learning and teaching of patchwork and quilting occur within the communal activity of quiltmaking?*

In the early stages of the current study, my attention was on quilters who made community (or charity) quilts.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, the evolving guiding questions were still relevant since quilt studies demonstrated that quilt cultures involved processes of socialisation, and knowledge development.<sup>42</sup> Quilting groups formed communities of practice, whereby they “shared a concern or a passion for something they do and learned to do it better as they interacted regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, para. 4). Inspired by Clark’s (2010) “Mosaic Approach”, I originally considered the inclusion of cameras for quilters to express themselves using a visual medium to explore meanings, such as inspirational sources of quiltmaking, to share with their peers, family members, and myself (as researcher). This process would “construct a composite picture or mosaic” (p. 117) of the participants’ everyday quilting activities. As a consequence, the initial guiding questions were founded on an explicit means of recognising knowledge building:

- Who are the participants and why do they participate?
- What is their knowledge of patchwork and quilting?
- Where does knowledge of patchwork and quilting come from?
- How is their knowing communally used/developed/created in the activity of quiltmaking?

This pattern of questioning followed the conventional procedure of arising from the literature review.

However, the quilters were content to be part of the research study, as long as they did not have to do anything. This preference was understandable because quiltmaking was their leisure activity. Becoming immersed in the field of study as an expert quilt practitioner, further questions arose, partly from my fieldwork experience and prior wonderings about communal quilting, and partly from the literature. I had to acknowledge how narrow my perspective of learning-teaching had been; in particular, I

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<sup>41</sup> Refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.2, for pragmatic decision-making and justification.

<sup>42</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.3, for leisure activity examples.

had underestimated the impact of the quilters' embodied interactions, as well as how tools and material artefacts mediated cultural information, within the quilting community.<sup>43</sup> While I addressed the issue of tacit knowledge in the literature review,<sup>44</sup> abstract theoretical constructs of multiple modes for meaning-making are introduced and discussed in Chapter 7, supplemented by additional literature. The reformulation of guiding questions allowed gathered data to be reinterpreted in more meaningful ways. Although the overarching research question remained the same, the guiding questions were revised to:

- What are the collaborative processes of the quilting practice?
- What multimodal dimensions contribute to quilters' co-construction of knowledge?

The new guiding questions did not change the actual data, or research events, rather they re-positioned the critical examination of how learning and teaching could be understood, and was enacted within the quilting community.

## 4.2 Orienting this Study

I began the present study in 2011 with an idea to investigate the nature of learning and teaching in quilting groups and guilds, which primarily specialised in stitching community (or charity) quilts. I originally conceived my research enterprise as a *theory-before-research model*, diagrammed as follows (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 25):

Idea → Theory → Design → Data Collection → Analysis → Findings

A preliminary exploration was instigated to establish the boundaries of my research proposal, through contacting and visiting a variety of quilting communities.<sup>45</sup> Social networking initiated a “snowball” effect where host members recommended a further group, which resulted in travelling to four provincial regions. (See Appendix A for

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<sup>43</sup> I wish to acknowledge the research work of Kaiju Kangas (2014) which provided an invaluable insight into my fieldwork observations.

<sup>44</sup> Refer to Chapter 3, subsection 3.5.1, which reviews the nature of craft knowledge.

<sup>45</sup> In compliance with ethical research guidelines, a Low Risk Notification was issued by Massey University for this exploratory phase of the investigation. The purpose was to find contacts and potential sources of primary and secondary data, in order to establish the parameters of this study.

preliminary exploration of Aotearoa New Zealand’s quilting community.) A pragmatic decision was made to eliminate the parameter of charity quiltmaking groups, since they were located in districts necessitating extensive travel and accommodation, which was financially and physically unviable. Although I had started with an idea, and embarked on reading related literature, this idea had to be reconsidered. With every two steps forward, I seemed to take a step or three backwards before proceeding. Berg and Lune (2012) described this movement as a “spiralling research approach”, where I was “spiralling forward, but never actually leaving any stage behind completely” (p. 25) (see Figure 4.1). With the fluidity of this spiralling approach, my refined idea developed into a research question providing a focus for the current study. As already noted, guiding questions continued to shift, change, and take form as the research process unfolded.

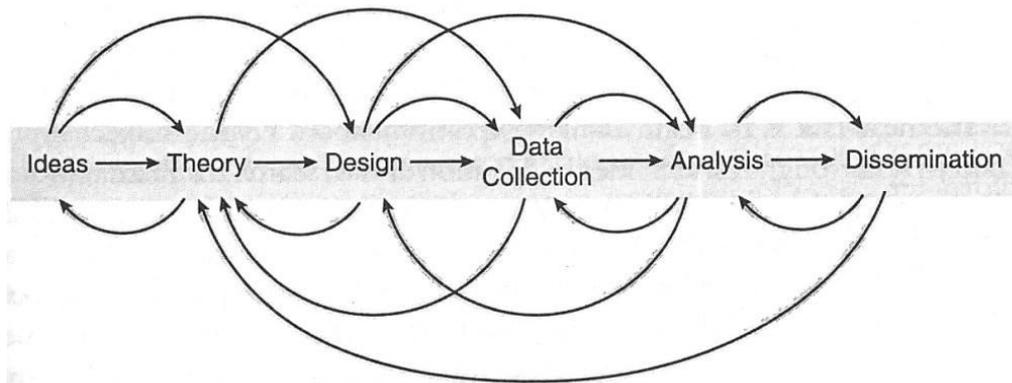


Figure 4.1 The spiralling research approach is the action plan for how this study will be conducted. From B.L. Berg and H. Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (8th ed.), copyright 2012, p. 25. Reprinted with permission of Pearson Education, Inc., New York, NY.

The building blocks for this research design were connected to one another, with an interrelationship between the elements of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods (see Figure 4.2). While appearing prescriptive, Grix (2004) contended the directional relationship of research building blocks logically lead the researcher to adopt a certain methodology approach and methods which are underpinned by, and reflect, her ontological and epistemological assumptions. In practice, the research design process had to be flexible, requiring creativity and adaptability due to the contextual unpredictability of the two quilting groups. Indeed, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued, “the design of a naturalistic inquiry *cannot* be given in advance; it must emerge, develop, unfold” (p. 225).

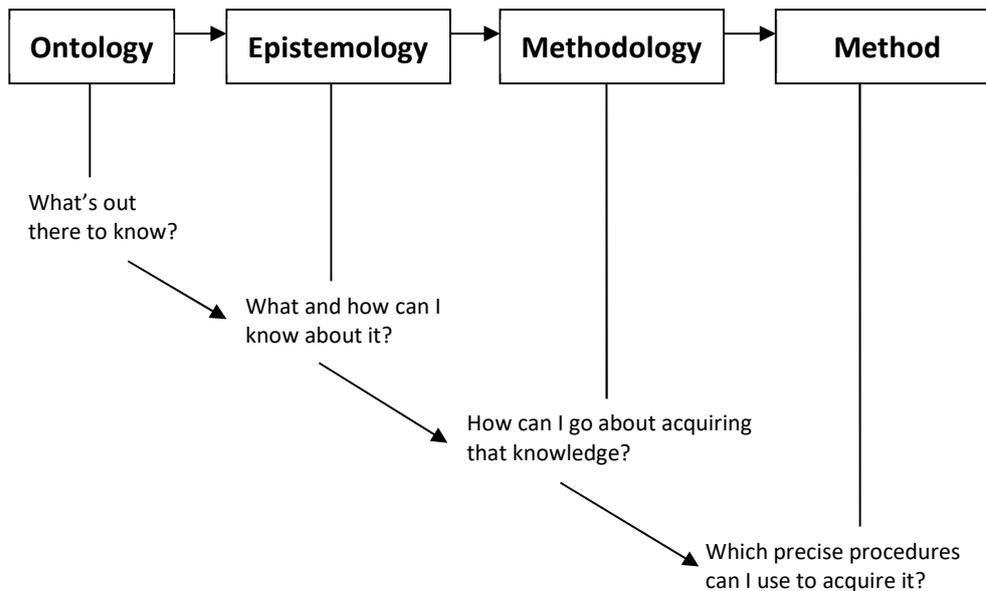


Figure 4.2 The interrelationship between the building blocks of research. From J. Grix, *The foundations of research*, copyright 2004, p. 66. Adapted with permission of Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, UK.

### 4.3 Philosophical Assumptions

My philosophical view of the world affected the research process used in the present study. While guided by formal theoretical research tenets, the starting point for this research design process was my personal practical theories (PPTs). As Cornett (1995) explained, these research PPTs are *personal* in that they reflect my life experience in everyday activities; *practical* in that they reflect my experience as a novice researcher; and they are *theories*, since systematic belief structures guide my decision making. Although I did not realise it at the time, my research PPTs were symbolically embedded in a quilting activity I undertook during the first six months of the current study. Figure 4.3 illustrates some of the PPTs implicitly represented by the material artefact and activity:

- PPT1 – Research design is complex, idiosyncratic and unfolds during the process.
- PPT2 – The foundational fabric of research study is the social-cultural-historical context.
- PPT3 – Piecing together the process requires the researcher to be reflective.
- PPT4 – Quilting lines depict (a) research requires close examination of issues arising; (b) research provides a different slant to the phenomenon

being explored; and (c) research considers the flexibility of conceptual frameworks and models.

- PPT5 – During research relationships are developed, bringing different perspectives and knowledge sharing, but some pieces of the jigsaw puzzle remain unknown.



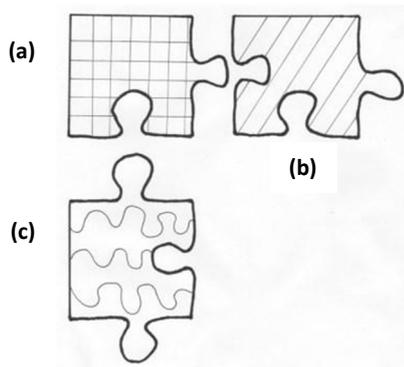
**PPT1: Designing**



**PPT2: Foundation fabric**



**PPT3: Piecing**



**PPT4: Quilting**



**PPT5: Researcher's jigsaw quilt**

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*Figure 4.3 Personal practical theories (PPTs) embedded in the quilting activity. Personal Photographs (28.07.11).*

The PPTs assisted with clarifying the interrelationship between what I thought could be researched (my ontological position) and what I knew about it (my epistemological position), linking them to the way I would acquire that knowledge (my methodological approach).

Ontology is concerned with the theory of being, becoming or existence (Holloway, 1997). How I see myself in relation to others, the world and my place in it, is shaped by family, community, education, and work experience. Embracing what I do not know, I continue to devise better questions about unknowns, learning through active

engagement *within* the world (Thomas & Brown, 2011). Divergent viewpoints of the world are encountered through my interactions with other people, their cultural artefacts and tools, situated in a variety of environmental contexts (Grix, 2004). Consequently, in the current research the nature of reality was seen as multiple, since each participant viewed her quilting experience differently. The researcher's role was to ascertain how quilters perceive their learning experiences within the community.

Epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge, in particular the relationship between knower and what can be known. Communities of practice, informed by historical knowledge, determine what counts as acceptable ways of knowing and develop a shared understanding (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). My epistemological perspective views knowledge as being subsumed within ongoing cultural practice; generated and developed through social interactions. By being immersed in the quilting community's activities and practice, I came to "know what they know" and their "ways of knowing"; using firsthand information gathered from, and jointly constructed with, the quilters (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013).

Reviewing previous thinking and research in literature built on my PPTs, and philosophical assumptions, to assist with shaping the present study's methodological approach (Merriam, 2009).

#### **4.4 Research in the Area of Informal Learning**

Research in the area of informal learning, and specifically, community-based settings traditionally has its roots in anthropological and sociological research methodological approaches. For example, Pelissier (1991) articulated that within daily life activities:

Learning and teaching are fundamental, implicitly or explicitly, to human adaptation, socialization, culture change, and at the broadest level, the production and reproduction of culture and society . . . to encompass a range of possible forms, contents, and contexts, then, teaching and learning – the social processes involved in constructing, acquiring, and transforming knowledge – lie at the heart of anthropology. (p. 75)

Instead of using traditional scientific models, anthropologists preferred naturalistic approaches for research of "primitive" cultures, while sociologists went into "the field"

such as a North American city to study the impact of urbanisation on marginalised people (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013). But soon, other research agendas developed, for instance cross-cultural studies challenged Western psychologists' claims about formal and informal education (e.g., Greenfield & Lave, 1982; Lave, 1977; Scribner & Cole, 1973). More recently, using a broader concept of culture as a group's way of life (e.g., Wolcott, 2010), a diversity of cultural groups have been studied using anthropological field methods, for instance taiko drummers (Powell, 2006), skateboarders (Petroni, 2010), *capoeiristas*<sup>46</sup> (Atkinson et al., 2008). Such investigations repeatedly documented that learning occurred through observation and participation in everyday life (Froerer, 2012). Anthropological practices had implications for the current study, which led me to rethink possibilities of methodology and methods of research. Already I was showing signs of being "an apprentice to one's own changing practice" (Lave, 2011, p. 2).

However, critical reading of research accounts also revealed "the interpretation of activities in varying cultural communities requires understanding the local meaning and purpose of the activities observed and how the immediate observations fit into broader cultural activity" (Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, & Mosier, 1993, p. 19). For instance, Petroni (2010) observed skaters accidentally colliding or deliberately interfering with each other's skating, known as "snaking". Although sometimes painful and seemingly, at times, cruel, the less experienced skaters learned how to use the park properly. Therefore, for the current study I would have to gather and interpret data in ways that fitted with the quiltmakers' local practices and understandings. The methodological approach would need to allow me to report on different perspectives, collaborate with participants, and ascertain specific contextual details concerning the community; while continually revising questions based on experiences encountered in the quilters' communal setting.

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<sup>46</sup> Brazilian dance and martial art.

## 4.5 Qualitative Research

“I think metaphorically of qualitative research as an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colours, different textures, and various blends of material. The fabric is not explained easily or simply” (Creswell, 2013, p. 42).

Written accounts of interpretive, naturalistic research in the area of informal learning are qualitative in nature. The studies took place in their real-world setting, as a situated activity, rather than in a laboratory; and whatever was being observed and investigated was allowed to happen naturally (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2013) noted that in this research field many individuals, from different disciplines with different perspectives, have adopted qualitative approaches to explore a particular problem, issue, or phenomenon. Nonetheless, qualitative researchers are interested in making sense of, or interpreting, phenomena in terms of what meaning people have constructed about their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Similarly, I was interested in understanding how quilters make sense of their quilting activities and the experiences they have in the quilting community. It became apparent that my philosophical assumptions were embedded within an interpretive framework used in qualitative research.

The characteristics of qualitative research bestow further legitimacy for employing it as a scholarly inquiry approach for the present study. Creswell (2013, pp. 45-47) identified eight common characteristics for conducting a naturalistic inquiry (but reminded the reader they do not represent a definitive set of elements): natural setting; researcher as key instrument; multiple methods; complex reasoning skills; participants’ meanings; emergent design; reflexivity; and holistic account. These characteristics draw attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry, the focus on learning quilters’ meaning and perspectives, and the presence (or reflexivity) of the researcher in richly descriptive accounts presented about this investigation. Methods common to qualitative research extend from three types of data collection: firstly, in-depth, open-ended interviews; secondly, direct observation; and thirdly, document analysis (Patton, 2002). Subsequently, the integrity, sensitivity, and methodological skill of the researcher affect the quality of qualitative data.

The present study sought to make sense of the social and cultural phenomenon of learning and teaching, in relation to quiltmakers. Therefore, a qualitative approach was selected to examine this phenomenon. Moreover, Stebbins (2011) stressed that researchers of leisure studies would better understand leisure experiences, such as quilting, through their social-cultural-historical context. Ironically, he also stated an expansion into other disciplines and practices, for instance education, would allow the leisure field to “look less like a patchwork quilt and more like a fine landscape painting” (p. 9). The “unabashedly messy aspects” (Clark et al., 2007, p. 110) of research processes made visible through studies, such as the current study, should encourage active discussion between disciplinary fields.

#### **4.5.1 Ethnography**

The current study is based on ethnographic methodology. When selecting the research approach, Creswell (2013) recommended consideration be given to the outcome, that is what I was attempting to accomplish. The exploration, description and interpretation of a culture-sharing quilting community, to determine patterns of learning and teaching, was a major deciding factor. This choice was made after gaining a thorough understanding of alternative qualitative research strategies. For instance, the purpose of grounded theory was to generate a theory, which emerged from the data, to explain a process, action or interaction (Creswell, 2012; Punch, 2009). However, some ethnographic studies on informal learning had developed conceptual frameworks and models, for example “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” (Rogoff, 2014), which had potential applicability to the quilting community. In addition, I realised some research strategies, such as narrative inquiry and phenomenology, relied on participants to tell their individual story or report their perception; but quilt studies’ findings showed quilters often described learning-teaching simply as “passing on knowledge” or “sharing knowledge”. Furthermore, Powell (2006) noted:

The sociocultural knowledge that affects behaviour, communication, meaning-making and values, for example is largely implicit, tacitly known to those within a particular social system; yet at the same time, people are often either unaware or have a vague sense of such knowledge. (p. 37)

Consequently, understanding the ways in which quilt culture, including language, nuances and quilting knowledge, were embedded in the quiltmakers' social organisation of learning, required immersion in their shared practice.

Ethnography is central to anthropology and sociology to document distinctive ways of life, values and beliefs, providing a descriptive account of a culture or community. Carrying out such work, calls for the integration of "firsthand empirical investigation and the theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organisation and culture" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 1). Subsequently, ethnography requires a dual perspective: "understanding the insiders points of view to grasp the logic of their actions, but stepping back to take the outsiders distance perspective that makes visible what insiders would otherwise take for granted" (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 290). Ethnography is *both* a process and a product (Fetterman, 2010; Lave, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Wolcott, 2008). However, being a product of my own culture, I cannot be totally neutral but I could be objective (Creswell, 2013; Wolcott, 2010).

The methodology called for studying "the other"; but, unlike some ethnographers who sought to make the strange familiar, I had to make the familiar strange (Wolcott, 2010). Being a quilter, I had to suspend my own taken-for-granted categories of thought and action, and render the quilting world strange by recognising it for what it was: "conventional and culturally shaped, socially shared, skilfully accomplished, and semiotically complex" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 33). However, Powell (2006) questioned whether an ethnographer "on the side" could really understand what she was seeing. The experience of participating was viewed significantly different to that of watching, but as Wolcott (2008) advocated, there was no substitute for being there and doing it; yet cautioned that gaining full knowledge of what was going on in the (quilting) community would not be possible.

Ethnography does not take place in a material vacuum. While there was a focus on (quilters') participation, background features of place and space are also endowed with significance (Atkinson et al., 2008; Rogoff, 2011b). These features are culturally shaped, reflecting social-historical conventions, and have an effect on quilters' socially organised activities, so they cannot be taken for granted (Atkinson, 2015). Likewise,

communication is not a transparent medium. Quilting vocabulary, or “folk terms”, is a cultural category having its own intrinsic properties (McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005). For example, narratives, conversations, and public performances such as Show and Tell, have their own structure and purpose within the quilting context. I was a learner, along with everyone else engaged in quiltmaking activities, positioned *within* the text of this ethnography.

#### **4.5.2 Researcher’s reflexive approach**

A criticism of naturalism, such as ethnographic studies, is the reflexive nature of social research. It is argued qualitative researchers fail to take into account that they are part of the social world being studied (Hammersley, 2010). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) noted this contention frequently led to questioning how the effects of the researcher on the data could be eliminated. In contrast, they recognised the realism of this situation stating, “we cannot avoid relying on ‘common-sense’ knowledge, nor, often, can we avoid having an effect on the social phenomena we study” (p. 15). The best action I could take was to describe how things were, and not how I perceived them to be, or how I would like them to be. The crux of the reflexivity challenge was how to interpret and understand my own perspective, while simultaneously understanding the quilters’ perspectives. In fact, I often felt that the activities of this ethnography – data collection, analysis, and interpretation – all happened at once. St. Pierre (1997) suggested I must “learn to live in the middle of things [and] become adept at making do with the messiness” (p. 176). To cope with the “complex and messy problem” called research, and make decisions that did not “fit textbook descriptions nor conform to an alternative model” (Staw, 1981, p. 229), a reflective journal (RJ) became an essential tool.

This journal was kept throughout the research process. The decision was made at the beginning of this study after reading Gray’s (2004) article, when I pencilled an annotation about the possibility of using a self-reflective journal, just as she had done: “to explore my presuppositions, assumptions, and biases in an effort to let the participants’ meanings predominate” (p. 22). Applying Gerstl-Pepin and Patrizio’s (2009) metaphor of reflexivity, I conceptualised my reflective journal as the “Hogwarts Pensieve”, a magical instrument featured in the series of Harry Potter books: “One

simply siphons the excess thoughts from one's mind, pours them into the basin, and examines them at one's leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form" (Rowling, 2000, p. 519).

The Pensieve idea supported my "development of reflexivity by providing a space for metacognitive reflection on the research process, and creating an opportunity to engage others in the interpretation of data" (Gerstl-Pepin & Patrizio, 2009, p. 299). Investigating the cultural forms and social patterns of the quilters' world required commitment to reflexivity during exploratory *and* documentary phases of the research process (Atkinson, 2015), as exemplified by the journal entry:

*As I review quilt studies I find myself questioning community quilts being made for a 'charitable cause' since some do not seem to fit into this definition e.g., Prayer Quilts. In some instances (e.g., gifted to grieving family member or sibling of cancer child) is it more an act of compassion...? Revisit definition especially with regards to the term 'charitable'. (10.03.11/RJ)<sup>47</sup>*

In summary, the methodological approach for this research enfolded my philosophical assumptions in an interpretive framework. In the present study, "social reality is regarded as the product of its inhabitants; it is a world that is interpreted by the meanings participants produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together" (Blaikie, 2010, p. 99). Being a qualitative researcher, my interest lay in understanding how quilters interpreted their quilting experiences, how they socially constructed their quilt culture, and what meaning they attributed to their experiences. Therefore, my role was to address the interactional processes among the individuals, focusing on the specific contexts in which the quilters stitched together in order to "understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). Mindful that any interpretation I made was shaped by my own experiences and background, the use of a Pensieve (in the form of a reflective journal) was a vital tool. To make sense of the quilters' world, my intent was to "identify patterns, or infer patterns from what one has observed, [since this] is what ethnographers do" (Wolcott,

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<sup>47</sup> Refer to Table 4.1 for an explanation of data source coding.

2008, p. 245). The focus now turns to a more detailed examination of the methods used for data collection and analysis.

## 4.6 Methods

Armed with my fieldwork notebook and sewing kit, I entered the quilters' meeting venues. Initially, research participants helpfully asked, "What do you want to know?" while other quilters suspiciously inquired, "What are you writing?" To be quite honest, I really did not know. I felt overwhelmed as I became further immersed in fieldwork. For instance, at first I noted "*the sharing of knowledge zigzagged across the tables, like 'snap fires', which then dissipated – seemingly vanishing*" (17.04.13/RJ). I learned to re-position myself so I could view the collective in action, but then "*I missed how three quilters, sitting next to me, managed to create three different thread holders using the same pattern*" (3.05.13/RJ). Becoming further immersed in the quilting community, I experienced researcher and quilter activities simultaneously: "*It's kind of like being schizophrenic – split personality... No wonder I become mentally and emotionally exhausted from my participant observer role*" (26.07.13/RJ). This comment was reflective of the intense participant approach I adopted during the research.

However, Wolcott (2008) emphasised "ethnography as *mindwork*, is not merely a set of techniques for *looking*, but a particular *way of seeing*" (p. 46). For the current study, the practicality of ethnographic fieldwork, grounded in theory, became a developmental and interactive process. I made the decision to structure my fieldwork more logically, tentatively planning personal goals for each quilting session, such as: "*To develop an understanding of quilters' interpretation of Challenge Quilts*" (21.08.11/KQO). The process required flexibility, with research methods emerging, as knowledge was co-constructed with quilters, enabling their reality to be interpreted as accurately as possible. The stereotypical categories, associated with methods, were re-labelled using Wolcott's (2008) suggestion of *experiencing*, *enquiring*, and *examining*, in recognition of the everyday nature of fieldwork itself.

### 4.6.1 Experiencing

*Experiencing* draws attention to what is accomplished through participant observation (Wolcott, 2008). Founded on personal experience, in the naturally occurring events of

the quiltmakers' context, I aimed to be a participant where I quilted along with the group, while at the same time quilters knew of my researcher's role to observe their activities. In reality, the practical fieldwork meant modes and intensity of participation had to be versatile and contingent with the idiosyncratic nature of the quilters' practice (Atkinson, 2015; Merriam, 2009). Participation necessitated engaging with the community's rhythms, material circumstances, spatial arrangements, and interactional rituals. Observation required attentiveness to the "multiplicity of actions – both spoken and unspoken – and of social actors, material culture, spatial and temporal arrangements that together constituted the field" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 40). I sketched cartoon-like illustrations of various interactive situations to ascertain the embodied aspects of quilters' learning and teaching.<sup>48</sup> Correspondingly, Koskinen, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, and Hakkarainen (2015) argued that the "associated [illustrated] figures highlighted the essential embodied hints and signs in the actions, which can be difficult or even impossible to verbalise or to describe" (p. 69).

In addition, experiencing included a sensory exploration of the quiltmakers' world to assist in making systematic sense of it. Information came directly through all senses. I was confronted with a soundscape of quilters chatting, sewing machines whirring, fabric swishing, magazine pages turning, and cups clinking. Along with other things, such as the smell of a hot iron, the feel of batting types, and the taste of homemade baking, I became more sensitive to the physical environment and material objects. I developed a methodical approach of thinking and recording, transforming participant observation into a form of theorised activity. Decisions were made in the field about what to observe, where, when and how often, such as purposively viewing quilters-in-action as they worked individually, with others in a small group, as well as in communally organised activities. Consequently, my personal experience of the quilting community context encompassed "looking and listening, from the subtleties of body language to the organisation of cultural space" (Wolcott, 2008, p. 49).

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<sup>48</sup> A selection of these cartoon-like illustrations is used in Chapter 7 to depict the actions of the quilters, providing an informative source of evidence about the nature of quilting knowledge.

#### 4.6.2 Enquiring

*Enquiring* required taking an active role in *asking* about what was going on in quilting activities. This action set enquiring apart from experiencing as a way of knowing. Rather than being a passive observer, interview strategies provided a different approach to fieldwork. “This activity is so integral as a complement to participant observation that it is often subsumed as an aspect of it” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 54), such as casual conversations which were a key source of information. One dilemma, I faced, was knowing when to intrude during a conversation, with my researcher’s agenda of seeking further particulars, or whether to remain silent hoping details would eventually be revealed in a natural way. Conversations were also seamlessly intertwined with nonverbal, embodied interactions (Koschmann, 2013; Nikander & Vehvilainen, 2010). Indeed, clues gathered from my reading of situations, such as body movements or stance, and intensity of conversation, indicated appropriateness for joining conversations. As research progressed participants regularly approached me with unsolicited information, often in the form of narratives, about their quilting experiences. These stories were part of the quilters’ lives, “couched in culturally shared terms” (Atkinson, 2015, p. 45), further establishing what counted as communal knowledge.

Formal interviewing went “beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in everyday conversations” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 5), and became a semi-structured form of questioning and listening. Two types of interviews were selected and conducted for specific purposes: firstly, oral history interviews to seek an expansive and reflective account of each quilting group’s past (Shopes, 2011); and secondly, individual interviews to obtain a detailed description of quilter’s personal perspectives and cultural knowledge of quiltmaking (McCurdy et al., 2005). Conscious of not imposing my values on the interviews, phrasing of questions was open-ended. (See Appendix B for historical and individual interview question guide sheets.) Framed by the broad set of questions, dialogue shaped the historical interviews, with founding members reliving and retelling their stories, in response to queries made during the sharing of memories (Shopes, 2011). The individual interviews were literally an *inter-view*, whereby understanding was co-constructed between myself and the quilter through an inter-change of views, to elicit and interpret quilters’ meanings (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Culture and

personality affected the manner in which I went about enquiring, even influencing the way I asked questions, posed problems, devised strategies (both spontaneous or planned), and made decisions (either consciously or unconsciously).

#### **4.6.3 Examining**

*Examining* entailed “sifting through what had been produced, or left by others, in times past” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 62). This activity was stimulated by quilters when, recognising the potential for educational research within their quilting community, unexpectedly presented documents, as possible sources of information. For example, during a historical interview archival records were re-discovered: inaugural meeting minutes, annual reports, correspondence, and a scrapbook. The latter drew much interest from quilters: long-standing members shared personal narratives, with multiple meanings aired; while others listened, having no or little prior knowledge about the group’s past experiences (Schwartz, 1989). These archival documents had a place in the lives and routines of the quilters (Merriam, 2009; Rapley & Jenkins, 2010). Both personal and public records shared, such as a textile art journal and popular quilting websites, portrayed the values and beliefs held by participants. Documents were also a seen-but-unnoticed part of the quilters’ practice; an active agent in their interactional and organisational lives (Rapley & Jenkins, 2010). For instance, social interactions occurred with, and around, quilt patterns; while quilting newsletters played a role in the organisation of the community.

Additionally, visual and material artefacts had cultural significance within the quilting groups. A photograph album of family quilts and an inherited box of hexagon fabric pieces were representative of quilters’ treasures. Photographs, digital images and drawings encouraged participants to share narratives and conceptual ideas of visualisations (Creswell, 2012). Similarly, quilters’ knowledge and cultural values were explored through their collection of quilts, fabric, and stitching samples. Objects of material culture were “not merely passive carriers of social relations (as in the gift or other ceremonial exchanges)” (Atkinson, 2015, p. 49), but were also an embodiment of its maker and her aspirations. Examining the quilters’ seemingly, ordinary and everyday

items provided material evidence of unique insights absent from written records (Lemire, 2009).

## **4.7 Multi-Site Case Study**

I chose to use a multi-site case study approach to investigate multiple forms, and dimensions, of learning and teaching quiltmaking. In accordance with Stake's (2006) viewpoint, multi-site case study was not a methodology or a research method, but a choice of what was to be studied. This decision was made after the preliminary exploration revealed, firstly, variance among collective quiltmaking activities and practices; and secondly, while quilters regarded learning as an important aspect, they did not have systematic ways of talking about this familiar experience. By illuminating quilters' experiences, activities and practices in more than one setting, a wider understanding of the social and cultural phenomenon could be gained.

Bounded by time and place, the quilting groups were chosen to identify within-site patterns and cross-site syntheses, about everyday learning and teaching (Bishop, 2010). Being realistic, participation was restricted to two quilting groups, with the selection process determined by inviting local groups which had an open membership, proffering a multi-dimensional structure. The ethnographic multi-site case study was not a design for comparing individual cases. Instead, respect and curiosity for culturally different perceptions required an empathic representation of local quilting practices and settings (Stake, 2006). Indeed, part of the ethic was to avoid rendering a stereotypical account of quilting groups and its members (Fetterman, 2010). Consequently, such a comparison was out of place; rather, the focus was on capturing the complexity of learning and teaching during the communal leisure activity.

### **4.7.1 Entry to field**

I was excited about the potential of investigating local quilting groups which engaged in a variety of activities.<sup>49</sup> However, I was conscious of Stalp's (2007) study which detailed the difficulty in gaining access to North American quilting groups. Even though she was

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<sup>49</sup> In compliance with ethical research guidelines, a Low Risk Notification was issued by Massey University for the recruitment of participants and collection of research data from them.

a quilter, entry was denied *because* of her researcher role which aroused suspicion. Doing quilt research close to home, Stalp described the experience as “tripping through the tulips” (p. 27). Consequently, I felt apprehensive in gaining the confidence and permission of quilting group gatekeepers, who were in a position to provide initial approval of the proposed research activity (Merriam, 2009). It was one thing for Aotearoa New Zealand quilters to assist during a preliminary exploration, but quite another to make a commitment to participate in an investigative study.

My proposal, outlining the research investigation, was discussed separately with the group co-ordinators of Kōmako Quilters (KQ)<sup>50</sup> and Manumea Quilters (MQ).<sup>51</sup> Despite my concern, they were delighted at the prospect of being involved; approval was given by KQ committee members and MQ senior members to approach their respective groups with an invitation to participate in the research study. An oral presentation was given to each group, supported by a pamphlet (see Appendix C) stating the main points, with questions encouraged. Each quilter was then offered a detailed Information Sheet (see Appendix D), and Consent Form (see Appendix E). Even though further time was given to consider participation, nearly all the quilters present signed the Consent Forms. Indeed, some asked to take information packs for friends who were absent from the quilting session.

#### **4.7.2 The participants**

For this multi-site case study, the two quilting groups were located in the same provincial region but situated in different districts. Each quilting group studied was a complex entity located in its own setting, with its unique social context and cultural-historical background. In addition to eliciting site-specific findings, the cross-site syntheses captured the complexity of the learning and teaching phenomenon.

##### **4.7.2.1 Kōmako Quilters**

Kōmako Quilters (KQ) was a division of a large quilting organisation, which comprised of three divisions. While KQ met each Wednesday from 10am to 2pm, the second division held a weekly evening gathering, while the third division met monthly at the weekend.

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<sup>50</sup> Pseudonym.

<sup>51</sup> Pseudonym.

Of the 40 KQ members, 32 volunteered to participate in this research study. The participants' ages ranged from 40 to 80+ year olds; their length of membership varied from three months to thirty years. Being a leisure activity, weekly attendance fluctuated from 27 to 39, with an average gathering of 31 quilters. The physical space became confined when all quilters arrived which affected the group's activities and practice, for example, only hand stitching occurred since there was no room for sewing machines. Sewing Weekends, held quarterly throughout the year, were open to all three divisions, with the majority of attendees being my research participants. An adjacent building was transformed into a quilting space, and depicted a different practice with mainly sewing machines used.

At the quilting organisation's annual general meeting Office Bearers and a committee were elected, and the yearly membership subscription decided. A bi-monthly newsletter was published which kept members informed of relevant quilting happenings. In addition, an annual exhibition was held in the village function centre, and support given to a local floral exhibition with a display of themed quilts. Due to public interest KQ ran a seven-week beginners' course at the commencement of the year.

Following the bequest of a homestead, outbuildings and parcel of land to the district, a cultural centre was created to provide community facilities for arts, crafts and other leisure pursuits. In 1983 an advertisement placed in the local newspaper, inviting people interested in patchwork to attend a meeting in the "old stables" at the cultural centre, resulted in the formation of KQ. None were experienced quilters but some had attended a night class, so outside tutors were brought in to get the group started. A committee was elected and six months later an interim report presented. That report identified three requirements for the future: (i) to help committee members with duties; (ii) the need for tutoring; and (iii) a suitable programme to combine the interests of all (24.07.13/KQDOC).<sup>52</sup> The cultural-historical significance of those key points has continued to thread its way through the quilters' practice.

KQ met in the drawing room of the homestead. While the original ambience was retained, electric heaters replaced the large fireplaces to warm the room. To

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<sup>52</sup> Refer to Table 4.1 for an explanation of data source coding.

supplement two large permanent tables, trestle tables, stored in a backroom, were arranged by the quilters in a U-shape. A nearby small building stored quilting resources, including library books and equipment which could be borrowed by members. This popular space was also utilised by KQ to layer quilts on the large table, utilising available tools such as masking tape and bulldog clips.

#### **4.7.2.2 *Manumea Quilters***

Manumea Quilters (MQ) was part of a quilting collective, comprising of two divisions. MQ met each Friday from 1pm to 4pm, while the second division held a weekly evening gathering. Of the 42 MQ members, 34 volunteered to participate in this research study. The participants' ages ranged from late 30s to 80+ year olds, and their length of membership varied from less than twelve months to thirty years. MQ had a transient membership with attendance fluctuating from 16 to 42, with an average gathering of 32 quilters. There was an eclectic mix of skills, techniques, and quilting styles with both hand stitching and sewing machines in use.

The decision made at the quilting collective's inaugural meeting not to elect a formal committee has remained unchanged. While first impressions indicated there was no group structure due to MQ's informal approach, members had unspoken roles and responsibilities, even though some were not consciously aware of their social actions and behaviour. Coincidentally, due to waning interest and falling weekly attendance, senior members initiated a new practice at the beginning of the current study. As a result, the room layout was altered and new activities introduced, including a Workday held on the first Friday of each month from 10am to 9pm. A casual, user-pays, system operated, with payment made for attending each session.

A refurbished Parish hall with high ceilings created a contemporary open meeting space. Tables and chairs stored at the back of the hall were set up by the quilters, with a different configuration each week. Tables for hand stitching were positioned by windows to provide good light. Electrical power outlets allowed sewing machines to be used within the facility. For the purpose of layering quilts, tables were pushed together to accommodate the required size; and a line for hanging quilts was permanently attached to three walls. An allocated cupboard in the storage room contained donated

quilting tools and equipment, along with the regional quilting library book boxes. The platform stage provided an area to showcase quilt tops, display library books, and material items/resources which individuals gave away, for example, batting, fabric, magazines, and patterns.

The formation of MQ emerged from a cluster of women who had attended patchwork classes at the local Community College in the 1980s. While they had learned the basic techniques of hand stitching, in particular the English method of paper piecing, they did not discover it was possible to use a sewing machine to make quilts until the class visited a quilting group in another province. Consequently, five members decided it was time to leave the class and set up a group. Initially, the quilters met weekly in each other's homes but, when hostess duties became onerous, one of the women arranged for their weekly gatherings to be held at the Parish. Attracting new members was by word-of-mouth. MQ's oral history has not been recorded; in fact, no documentation was held by the group since such action was considered "committee work".

#### ***4.7.2.3 The quilting community context***

The similarities and differences, already noted about the participants, generated breadth and depth to the current study. But, I was faced with a problem: at the second quilting session there were new faces, and absent quilters who had attended the previous week. Being a recreational pursuit, there was no guarantee the same quilters would attend each week, or be working on the same quilting project. With the coming and going of quilters, and signed consent forms continually being handed over, I considered how best to distinguish who the research participants were. With permission from co-ordinators, I moved around the group with a basket from which quilters chose a button, as an unobtrusive token, to identify their participation in this research. This active enterprise also provided an opportunity to meet and talk with each individual, establishing a rapport with group members. I had expected the button to be placed in a visible position on the table, but the participants had other ideas. For example, buttons were creatively attached to sewing bags and kits; and used to produce novel brooches, pincushions, and sewing basket ornaments (see Figure 4.4). The material artefacts raised my awareness of the range of skills, techniques and craft interests within the group.



Figure 4.4 Button token to identify research participants with creative ideas emerging.

Left to right: Sewing bag decoration; garment brooch; felted wool ornament on sewing basket; tied with ribbon to sewing machine thread guide.

Photograph Permission (14.06.13/VMA and 19.06.13/VMA).

It took a further three months to decipher each group's activity system structure. Drawing diagrams, accompanied by descriptive commentary, provided an invaluable foundation to ascertain cultural patterns, recognise changes, and reveal quilters' relationships. For instance, tracking movements of leadership roles demonstrated their adept ability to multi-task, while supporting individual and collective quilting projects. (See Appendix F for tracking of co-ordinator's movement example.) Likewise, sociograms captured snapshots of quilters' positioning, movements and interactions over timed intervals. (See Appendix G for sociogram examples.) In addition, I tracked my own movements, which not only allowed me to view quilting activities from a different perspective, but also to monitor my contributions, interactions, and positioning during fieldwork. (See Appendix H for tracking researcher's movement example.) Becoming incorporated within the quilters' community of practice, I was able to bring into focus individual contributions, while perceptive of quilters co-ordinating and engaging in "socioculturally structured collective activity" (Rogoff, 1995, p. 146), as exemplified by the reflective comment:

*I know other things are happening outside this cluster of quilt-talk...  
Subconsciously, I am aware of a shift of tempo – gathering up speed, changing,  
merging but then flowing back into a rhythmic pattern – an ebb and flow.  
Although the system appears chaotic, it's not; there's purpose, and a sense of  
calmness. (26.07.13/RJ)*

To identify the overall structure of the multi-site quilting community context, Engeström's (2009) activity system model (second generation) was applied (see Figure 4.5). Individual and cluster interactions were embedded in the collective activity with additional elements of rules, community, and division of labour.

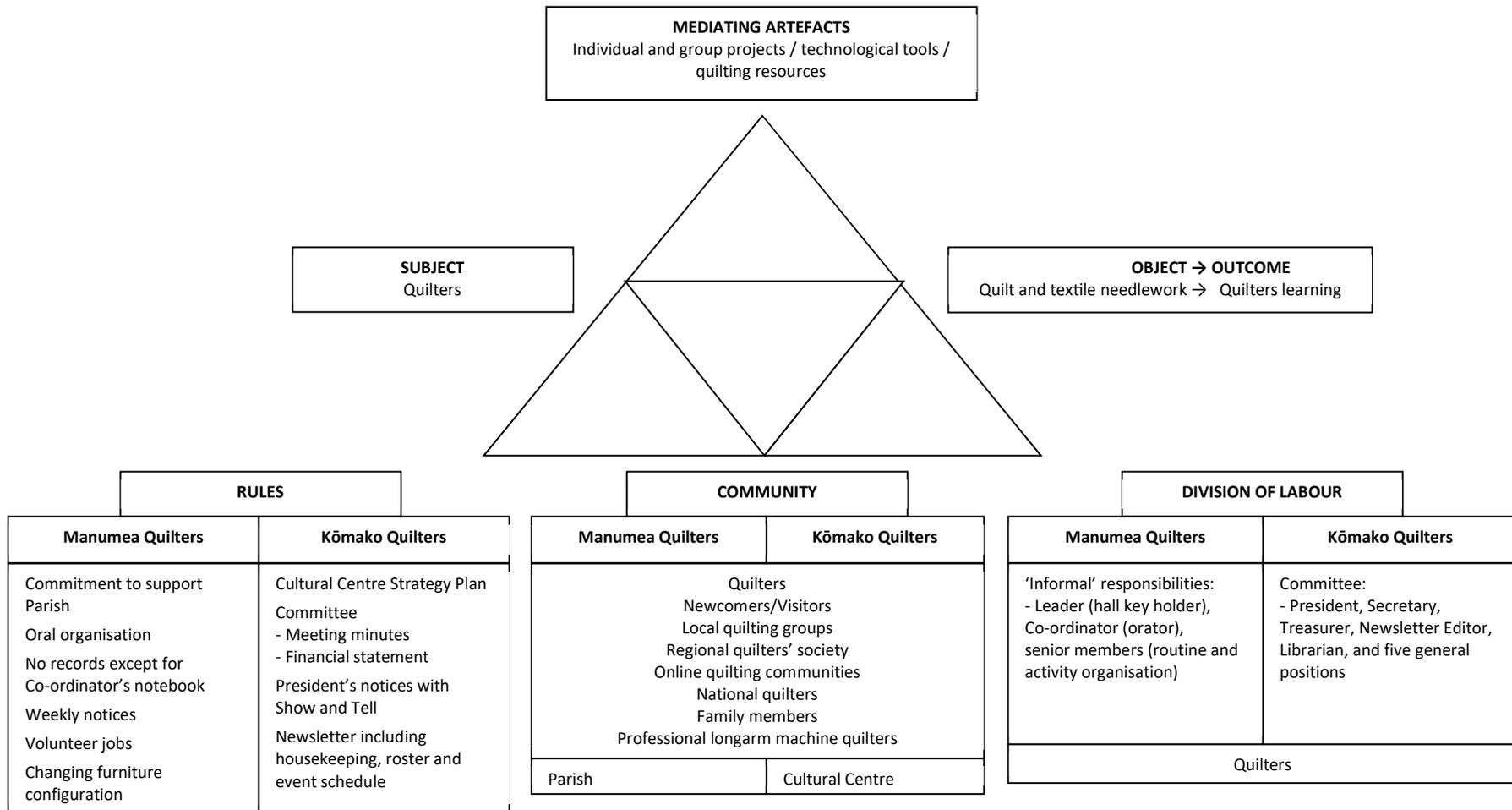


Figure 4.5 The activity system structure within the multi-site quilting community context. From “Expansive learning: Toward an activity-theoretical reconceptualisation” by Y. Engeström in K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning: Learning theorists in their own words*, copyright 2009, p. 55. Adapted with permission of Routledge (UK) Books.

### **4.7.3 Ethical considerations and principles**

Since this project was evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk, it was not reviewed by one of Massey University's Human Ethics Committees. Consequently, I assumed moral responsibility for considering ethical concerns at each stage of the research design, and in all of the research methods. Although I wanted to represent the everyday life of the quilting community in its full complexity, such aspirations required due regard for the quilting community's rationality of social organisation and action, and respect for the quilters involved (Atkinson, 2015). To ensure research participants were treated with respect, fully informed, and not harmed by the research process, it was important to address some key ethical principles.

#### ***4.7.3.1 Informed and voluntary consent***

Informed consent ensured participants were given sufficient information to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. Knowing the purpose; what was involved; my background as the researcher; the individual right to withdraw; and issues about confidentiality and anonymity drew on principles of individualism, free will and self-determination (Cohen et al., 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Creativity and sensitivity were required in communicating information to the quilting groups. To ensure inclusive participation a pamphlet, along with an Information Sheet, were distributed during my oral presentation. The pamphlet represented the everyday way information was commonly shared in the community through mass media. Due to the dynamic nature of the quilting groups, not all members were in attendance at the oral presentation, therefore I repeated the procedure with individuals and pairs of quilters over the next two sessions.

From details provided in the initial presentation, Information Sheet and pamphlet, participants were aware it was not assumed consent had automatic transference from one situation to the next. After Consent Forms had been signed, dated and returned by quilters, an additional need for consent emerged. In discussion with group leaders, and having established rapport with research participants, it was deemed appropriate to accept verbal consent to take part in interviews (oral history and individual); and

permission to take photographs. Informed consent was an on-going process with names of research participants and dates of verbal permission recorded.

Ethical issues arose from the research method of participant observation centred on the principle of respect for persons. In developing a rapport with quilters, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) realised participants were inclined to forget research was taking place, even when it was made explicit. Consequently, during quilting sessions I wore a name badge identifying my role, which was not conspicuous since members also wore name badges. Nevertheless, I was diligent about verbal renegotiation and confirmation of participants' agreement to observe their practice. This consideration ensured I did not overstep unspoken boundaries with quilters, never assuming I had direct rights to access information.

#### ***4.7.3.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity***

Ethnography required in-depth investigation but needed to be kept in proportion, ensuring quilters' privacy was respected (Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2014). The notion of privacy became complex because there was a fine distinction between what was public or private in the quiltmaking settings (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). For instance, quilters talked in loud and soft tones while they stitched together in pairs and clusters. Contentions arose about how public observed behaviour was, or whether it bordered on spying (Merriam, 2009). In addition, Hammersley and Traianou (2012) recognised "the sorts of information that are deemed personal or private varied across cultures and contexts" (p. 99). Nonetheless, the shift and transparency of these boundaries could also alter within a short period of time (Stake, 2010). While zones of privacy may be similar, it was necessary to presume for each quilter it was different and changing. In the present study, privacy was relative, and situational. Furthermore, roles of non-participants were sometimes relevant to the quilting activity. To overcome this dilemma, I viewed the situation on a "community plane", focusing on the quilters' co-ordinated engagement in the culturally organised activity (Rogoff, 1997).

There was an obligation to protect confidentiality and maintain anonymity, ensuring research participants were not compromised. An ethical approach meant "not disclosing who had taken part, and not reporting what they said in ways that could identify them

or be attributed to them” (Webster et al., 2014, p. 96). Pseudonyms were used for quilting groups and participants to report findings. A confidentiality agreement was signed by the transcriber of the audio-recorded interviews. To avoid accidental breaches of confidentiality, data collected was rendered unidentifiable. Names written on documents, such as quilter’s patchwork patterns, were masked. Photographs did not include participants (or non-participants), and images of cultural artefacts which could expose identity were cropped. Recorded data was coded for filing and storage purposes. Table 4.1 details the data source coding explaining the shorthand codes (abbreviations) which appear in the text. All data was stored and locked in a secure location. As the researcher, I took responsibility to act in ways that were ethically appropriate, ensuring safeguards were in place, to protect the interests and values of the quilters.

Table 4.1 Data Source Coding

Data Source	Code	Description
<b>Kōmako Quilters</b>	KQ	Quilting group pseudonym (Research Site 1)
<b>Manumea Quilters</b>	MQ	Quilting group pseudonym (Research Site 2)
<b>Observation (O) of individual, cluster or collective</b>	17.04.13/KQO	Observation date / quilting group pseudonym / observation
<b>Conversation (CON) with quilter(s)</b>	26.07.13/MQCON	Conversation date / quilting group pseudonym / conversation
<b>Interview (I) with individual quilter</b>	16.08.13/MQI3	Interview date / quilting group pseudonym / individual interview / identity number
<b>Oral historical interview (HI) with foundation members</b>	24.07.13/KQHI1	Oral history interview date / quilting group pseudonym / history interview / identity number
<b>Document (DOC)</b>	17.07.13/KQDOC	Collection date / quilting group pseudonym / document
<b>Visual or material artefact (VMA) including photographs and textile items</b>	17.08.13/VMA	Date sighted or photograph taken / visual or material artefact
<b>Reflective journal (RJ) containing researcher’s written comments, decision-making and reflections</b>	10.08.13/RJ	Entry date / reflective journal

Although the nature of harm was minimal, no more than was normally encountered in daily life, anticipating what might happen and ways of responding to the unexpected,

necessitated developing an ethical conscience, always considering the quilters' interests first in any decision-making (Webster et al., 2014).

#### **4.7.4 Overview of present study**

The development of the research design moved from general to specific, as the study became more tightly focused. From a trajectory of hunches and tentative musings, a deliberate and systematic approach emerged. During fieldwork I attended 47 weekly quilting sessions; 5 Workdays and 3 Sewing Weekends. In collaboration with group coordinators, arrangements were made to conduct 2 oral history interviews (shared by a pair of long-standing members from each quilting group), and 10 individual interviews (involving a purposive selection of quilters to represent a cross-section of quilting experience and membership duration). Interviews were held either on site or, by request, at an interviewee's home. In addition, an invitation was extended and accepted to observe, and assist, in setting up a group quilt exhibition. I also joined combined quilting groups' attendance at several regional events: meetings, fundraiser, exhibition, and retreat; as well as being present at the National Quilt Symposium. Fieldnotes were immediately written up following quilting sessions and events attended. Effectively, one hour of field observations took three hours to type up; reflexivity notes were recorded; and preparation of quilting projects was required, ready to hand stitch at fieldwork sessions. An overview of the present study is summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Overview of Study

<b>OVERVIEW OF STUDY: Quilting Community (A multi-site case study)</b>				
	<b>Kōmako Quilters (Site 1)</b>		<b>Manumea Quilters (Site 2)</b>	
<b>Intent of research</b>	Within the community of quilters, identify how learning and teaching of patchwork and quilting occurred through investigating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative processes of the quilting practice</li> <li>• Multimodal dimensions which contribute to quilters' co-construction of knowledge</li> </ul>			
<b>Research paradigm</b>	<i>Interpretive</i> : Multiple realities were socially constructed which are represented by both the participants' and researcher's voice			
<b>Methodology</b>	Ethnography			
<b>Methods</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Type</b>
<b>Experiencing</b>	25	<b>Participant observations</b> <i>Weekly Sessions</i> : The average length of time for each observation ranged between 3-4 hours	22	<b>Participant observations</b> <i>Weekly Sessions</i> : The average length of time for each observation was 3 hours
	3	<i>Sewing Weekends</i> : Observation held over Saturday and Sunday ranged between 2-7 hours	5	<i>Workdays</i> : Observation held over day/night session with average length of time 10 hours
	1	<i>Exhibition Set-Up</i> : Committee members prepared annual quilt display took 5 hours	1	<i>Combined Craft Display</i> : Viewed material artefact display for 1 hour
	1	<i>Exhibition Follow-Up</i> : Viewed material artefact display and challenge for 1 hour		
	1	<i>Combined Exhibition</i> : Viewed material artefact display for 1 hour		
	<b>Enquiring</b>	5	<b>Individual interviews</b> In-depth and semi-structured with average time of 47 minutes (Range 31 to 57 minutes)	5
1		<b>Oral history interview</b> Semi-structured and open-ended (pair) with interview time of 33 minutes	1	<b>Oral history interview</b> Semi-structured and open-ended (pair) with interview time of 52 minutes
		<b>Conversations</b> Continuous throughout the fieldwork		<b>Conversations</b> Continuous throughout the fieldwork

<b>Examining</b>		<p><b>Documents</b> Recorded and collated collection</p> <p><b>Visual and material artefacts</b> Recorded and documented collection</p>		<p><b>Documents</b> Recorded and collated collection</p> <p><b>Visual and material artefacts</b> Recorded and documented collection</p>
<b>Reflexivity</b>		<p><b>Researcher's reflective journal</b> Recorded and documented progressive personal account</p>		
	<p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p><b>Communal activities involving both quilting groups</b></p> <p><i>Regional meetings:</i> Hosted by various quilting groups; length of time for each observation ranged between 3-4 hours</p> <p><i>Regional fundraiser:</i> Organised by rural quilting group with 4 hours of observation</p> <p><i>Regional exhibition:</i> Quilting groups volunteered to assist with welcoming visitors held over week; observation and material artefact documentation 1 hour</p> <p><i>Residential retreat:</i> Five-day quilting retreat; attended one day with 8 hours of observation</p> <p><i>National Quilt Symposium:</i> Six-day fabric art festival held in another province; attended one day with 9 hours of observation</p>		
<b>Participants</b>	<p>Quilters n=32 Age range (Years): 40s to 80s</p>		<p>Quilters n=34 Age range (Years): 30s to 80s</p>	
<b>Setting of study</b>	<p>Homestead and small outbuilding: weekly sessions. Large outbuilding: sewing weekends. Small outbuilding: interviews. Quilter's home: interviews. Community and function centres: exhibitions.</p>		<p>Parish hall: weekly sessions, workdays and craft display. Church vestibule: interviews. Quilter's home: interviews.</p>	
	<p>Regional and national activities held in a variety of contexts: Community hall, village function centre, rural golf club, parish hall, community centre, rural retreat venue, secondary high school hall, and convention centre</p>			
<b>Length of study</b>	<p>April - November 2013</p>		<p>April - November 2013</p>	

#### 4.7.5 Exit from field

Exiting the field was more difficult than gaining entry. Fieldwork embodied an intellectual, physical, and emotional commitment to the lives of the quilters, with reciprocal relationships formed. Having saturated the data, consideration was given to withdrawal from the research quilting group sites, bringing closure to that phase of the

research process. My intention was discussed with the co-ordinators, and I began to “ease out of the field by coming less frequently and then eventually stopping all together” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 116). This progression signalled to the quilters that fieldwork was finishing. They variously demonstrated their appreciation of participation in the study, summed up in a quilter’s emailed message: “*Best wishes to you ... and we did get much pleasure from sharing our quilting dreams!*” (29.09.13/RJ).

#### 4.8 Data Analysis

The next challenge was how to sort out the huge corpus of data, and report findings in a manageable way (Wolcott, 2005). I felt empathy with Marshall and Rossman’s (2016) “eccentric and tormented artist” as I brought order and structure to the “messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating” (p. 214) data analysis process. However, I reminded myself that making sense of the quilters’ experiences had been a continuing unfolding process during the entire research. Similar to the experiences of Cornett (1995) and Mellor (2001), the main elements of this integrated process were: personal practical theories (PPTs), external influences, data, ideas, exploration, writing, and reflexivity (see Figure 4.6).

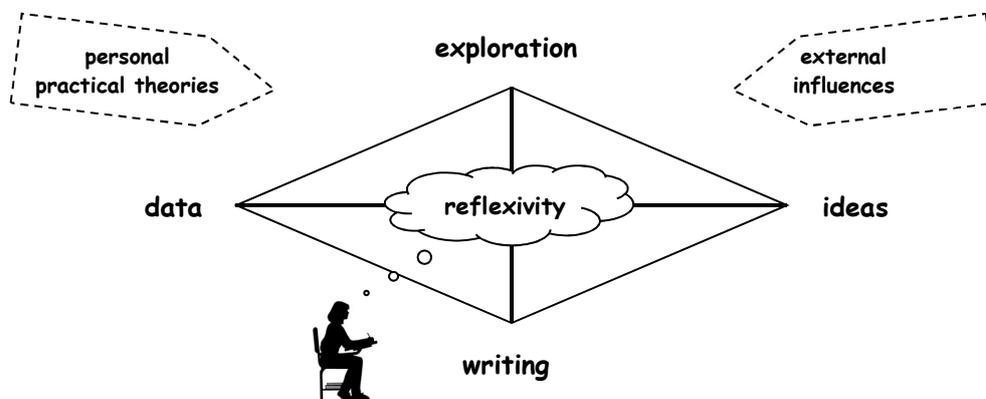


Figure 4.6 Main elements of “making sense” during the integrated research process. From “Messy method: The unfolding story” by N. Mellor, 2001, *Educational Action Research*, 9(3), 470. Copyright 2001 by Taylor and Francis. Adapted with permission.

*Personal practical theories* were used as a means to filter information, reducing ambiguity, and together with formal theory, recast intriguing or surprising observations of quilters to a more generalised perspective (Cornett, 1995; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). *External influences* affected, to some extent, how the current study was conducted, such as personal communication with theorists, and practical advice from

family members. However, working within everyday community practices I did not have an academic critical friend with whom I could talk over my logical inferences and interpretations, to ensure they made sense to someone else (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). *Data* became stepping stones, “clues to mark the path” (Mellor, 2001, p. 470), in the flow of quilters’ everyday events. *Ideas* were generated from recurring data, as well as shifting and uncertain elements, forming a pool of suppositions. *Exploration* of data and ideas ranged from drawing conceptual mind-maps (making visual connections) to simply taking a walk along the beach (an incubation time of mulling over thoughts). *Writing* is “never too early” (Wolcott, 2008, p. 257), because recording first impressions, pencilling memos, or preparing a first draft “lend shape and form – meaning – to the mountains of raw data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 230). *Reflexivity* had a central role in this research, critically exploring what I knew, but more importantly what I did not know, including my unawareness and consequences of not knowing (Raven, 2006).

The immersion-crystallisation style of analysing data relied heavily on my intuitive and interpretive capabilities (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). This emergent intuitive strategy resembled Mellor’s (2001) approach to “work without rules, to find my own rules of analysis . . . running the risk of re-inventing the wheel (although my hunch was that I might in fact end up with a different type of wheel)” (p. 467). Despite completing an online training course in “NVivo”,<sup>53</sup> I felt more comfortable using a computer-aided coding approach with everyday software.<sup>54</sup>

Although a spreadsheet programme is designed for numeric data, I used it to sort codes and label analytic themes. Each quilting group’s fieldnotes (including visual/material artefact commentaries) and interview transcripts were copied and pasted into separate spreadsheets. This action was taken in order to determine patterns within each research site, before merging data to discern commonalities and irregularities across the sites. Initial coding activities required data be read and coded several times to refine my concepts. Coding was a “circular reflexive process” in order to “open up meaning in the data” (Tracy, 2013, p. 189).

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<sup>53</sup> Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software.

<sup>54</sup> Microsoft Word and Excel.

Typically, the gathered data was coded in small segments of written text, for instance each quilting session was segregated into episodes (noting any prior and/or subsequent connected learning sequences), and colour coded in relation to specific ideas. Most episodes had multiple codes connected to them because they referred to various features. The coding excerpt in Table 4.3 displays fieldnotes of two episodes observed during the sixth quilting session at Manumea Quilters. The first episode documented the sharing of Jem's experimental stitching techniques; while the second recorded Kasey's problem solving as she decided how to construct quilt borders. Text was coloured to correspond with colour codes, highlighting emerging concepts. Each episode was also tentatively classified whether it was emblematic of one, or all, of the key aspects of the research guiding questions, that is:

- What are the collaborative processes<sup>1</sup> of the quilting practice<sup>2</sup>?
- What multimodal dimensions<sup>3</sup> contribute to quilters' co-construction of knowledge<sup>4</sup>?

Table 4.3 Data Coding Excerpt

SN	PG	MQ EPISODE	RQ	CODES
6	2	<b>Jem unfolds her contemporary needle-turn appliqué quilt, and quilters gather round intrigued to see it finished.</b> She worked extensively on the top during last week's Workday - participants question her novel techniques (e.g., twin-needling), and discuss the top's construction method. Jem holds the quilt up to display its full length for quilters to take a closer look at the stitching. She explains master quilter's (Anita) advice to insert pellon under centre yellow square so seam allowances don't show. Refer to 3.05.13 fieldnotes.	1,4	<b>observes events;</b> experimentation; <b>verbal;</b> mediating artefact (textile); <b>guided participation</b>
6	3	<b>Kasey begins to problem solve how to do the borders to complete the quilt top.</b> She shares her thoughts with Gemma who is cutting batik strips. <b>She describes the steps taken so far. Sitting close-by Rita and Kate listen in, then turn to the quilt, with questioning looks.</b> Kasey points to the border then traces finger along the edge of the quilt. <b>She compares her quilt to two photographs, indicating her preference of the quilt with three borders.</b> Connected sequence.	3	<b>problem solving;</b> verbal; <b>third party attention;</b> nonverbal; <b>gestures;</b> technology

**KEY:**

**SN** = Session number

**PG** = Page Number (fieldwork journal)

**MQ** = Manumea Quilters

**RQ** = Research guiding question classification

Interview transcripts brought further insights from personal and historical perspectives. Printing hard copies, I marked up the text by writing notes in the margin; highlighting key words and phrases; and notating arrows, stars, question and/or exclamation marks. Another spreadsheet was created for transcripts, with similarly coded chunks of data subsequently grouped together on separate sheets. Individual quilters' interpretation provided additional meaning and coherence, leading to the creation and merging of categories from fieldnotes and transcripts (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). A codebook was created, listing fourteen categories and associated codes with a brief definition and representative example. (See Appendix I for codebook excerpt.)

To verify the relevance of categories, a frequency tally count was made of codes, resulting in further refinement of categories, and development of broader themes. I

considered potential themes evaluating their significance, in terms of correlation to question classifications, for instance repeated occurrence of “familial relationships” appeared in identified “quilting practice” episodes. Although such conjectures were not founded on a quantitative analysis, they allowed embedded features to be extracted from the data, including an ephemeral “ah-ha” moment when recognising the significance of material artefacts. This discovery made me re-examine the role of visual and material artefacts, attaching annotated “Post-it” stickers to written commentaries, for the purpose of cross-referencing coding.

In relation to presenting the data, themes provided a framework to describe the multiple forms, not only social but also material and embodied interactions, through which quilters’ learning and teaching were enacted (Atkinson, 2015). Due to the nature of the data, I chose to structure the data chapters in relation to the research guiding questions, and continued to use a storied approach. Vignettes were purposefully constructed, by collecting and piecing together thematic patterns, to exemplify key claims or arguments (Tracy, 2013). Creating these vignettes of quilters’ experiences, allowed the overall aim of the present study and research guiding questions to be explored, telling the quilters’ stories within a narrative.

## **4.9 Trustworthiness**

Within the framework of my naturalistic inquiry, strategies were needed to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. Appropriate steps were taken to generate data from the multi-site case study that were “meaningful, trackable, verifiable, and grounded in the real-life situations” of the quilting groups (Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p. 380). In pursuit of trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These four criteria were addressed to validate accountability, rigour and quality of this ethnographic study.

### **4.9.1 Credibility**

Credibility deals with the question of how research findings of the phenomenon investigated matched the quilters’ reality (Merriam, 2009). Prolonged engagement at the two quilting research sites over a sustained period of eight months, provided time to overcome distortions introduced by my presence, reveal my own and participants’

perceptions, and identify salient characteristics of the quilting groups' context and setting. The adoption of well-established research methods, particularly participant observation, enabled recognition of emerging features, and elimination of those which were irrelevant. Triangulation of multiple methods and data sources, incorporating different theories, allowed data to be cross-referenced for interpretation purposes. These interpretations were verified by quilters from whom information was collected. Moreover, clarification of learning models was directly sought, through personal communication with theorists; and feedback received from a national conference presentation (Costume and Textile Association of New Zealand, July 21, 2012).

#### **4.9.2 Transferability**

Transferability is "concerned with the extent to which findings of this study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223). Thick description of the phenomenon allows readers to have an understanding of everyday learning and teaching within the quilting community, enabling them to compare instances described in my findings with those emerging from a similar context, or questions of practice (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Shenton, 2004). Since research sites to which transferability might be sought are unknown to me, judgements about this matter lie with the person(s) seeking to make the application elsewhere (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### **4.9.3 Dependability**

Dependability, addressing the issue of reliability, was problematic since my interpretive framework assumed the quilters' world is always being socially constructed (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My understanding of the quiltmakers' social organisation and cultural practices was increasingly refined during the research process. Transformation of participation, as a way of thinking about learning and development, also applied to my role as researcher (Rogoff et al., 1996). Flexible fieldwork, plus evolving research methods in collaboration with quilters, including revision of research guiding questions, evidenced this paradigm shift. Overlapping methods, such as participant observation and conversations, produced complementary results. Co-construction of knowledge with quilters, coupled with reflexivity, influenced methodological steps; my reflective journal recorded research design decisions and the rationale behind them, for example:

*Follow-up with leaders about possible interview(s): individual experiences/group history (?) These would round out background details, giving a contemporary voice to both the past and everyday practice of the community of quilters. (3.07.13/RJ)*

#### **4.9.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability centred on the ways my qualitative research could “parallel the traditional concept of objectivity” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 262). Logical inferences and interpretations were based on the quilters’ experiences and perceptions. The role of triangulation promoted such confirmability, rather than my predispositions, biases and characteristics (Shenton, 2004). Implicit assumptions and questions stimulated further exploration. Furthermore, my data analysis used, but was not limited by, the literature reviewed, since a purposeful examination of alternative explanations revealed that additional literature had to be considered.

#### **4.10 Summary**

The overall purpose of Chapter 4 has been to present the research design of this study. Essentially, the chapter consisted of two parts: firstly, the methodology’s theoretical framework; and secondly, research methods employed in the study. The untidy realities of developing these theoretical and practical approaches were revealed. Informed decision-making, regarding methodology, methods, and data analysis, exposed “hidden assumptions, limitations, blind spots and silences” (Raven, 2006, p. 560). While the central research question to explore the phenomenon of learning and teaching patchwork and quilting as a communal activity did not change, the guiding questions were revised during my immersion in the field. The spiralling research approach demonstrated the need for flexibility as I adopted particular methodology and methods, underpinned by my philosophical assumptions.

The theoretical paradigm, regarding methodology, was grounded in an interpretive framework. Guided by interdisciplinary research studies undertaken in the area of informal learning, indicating a preference for a naturalistic approach, the nature of qualitative research was examined. The current study is based on ethnography, seeking to understand the lived experience of the quilters from their perspective. Critical

reflexive engagement and deliberations were central to this study, leading to informed decision-making and justification of the research design as a whole.

The actual conduct of the ethnographic research embraced multiple data collection methods. I applied Wolcott's (2008) "guidelines for looking" by using the three categories of experiencing, enquiring, and examining as data gathering techniques. In addition, I chose to investigate the learning and teaching phenomenon through a multi-site case study. A descriptive account of the two quilting groups in their respective settings, disclosed the activity system structure within the multi-site quilting community context. Ethical considerations were scrutinised, aligned with ethical principles and researcher responsibilities. Data analysis tools and methods were explained. Finally, issues of trustworthiness were addressed to validate the quality of the present study.



## CHAPTER 5

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### ETHNOGRAPHIC FINDINGS I

#### Quilt Culture

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“It's a lovely whānau group here. I love them, they feel like family”  
(23.08.13/MQ14).

A comprehensive view of the multi-layered complexity of learning and teaching in a quilting community is presented in the two data chapters. Individually, each chapter focuses on a particular guiding question:

- Chapter 5 explores: What are the collaborative processes of the quilting practice?
- Chapter 6 examines: What multimodal dimensions contribute to quilters' co-construction of knowledge?

Collectively, the data presentation chapters demonstrate that key findings are essentially interwoven, whereby the ubiquitous nature of quilters' learning and teaching becomes embedded within their communal activity of quiltmaking.

At the heart of this chapter is the understanding that constructs of quilt culture reflect a complex mix of relationships, past and present experiences, rituals, expectations and goals. The chapter is organised into three sections which together contribute to our knowledge of the quilters' participation in their community of practice. The first section describes the sewing backgrounds of ten participants to give the reader an appreciation of the quilters' individuality and influences which impact on their quilting enterprises. The second section explores the social organisation for quilters' socialisation within cultural repertoires of practice: motives, sense of belonging, as well as roles and responsibilities. The third section examines the multi-party interactions that occur in the quilting community, uncovering cultural patterns of how quilters' contribute and collaborate in co-ordinated ways: mutual reciprocation, guided participation, modelling

and demonstration. A vignette, featuring an assemblage of elements to be discussed, precedes the second and third sections. The chapter concludes with a summary drawing the threads of each section together.

## 5.1 Sewing Backgrounds

Past experiences of quilters' sewing pursuits shape individual quilting practice. Stories are drawn from interviews with ten participants,<sup>55</sup> illustrating their introduction to sewing, how they learned to quilt, and came to join the quilting group. The first three interviewees began sewing at school, but with limited success, yet their pathway to quilting represent diverse experiences.

### 5.1.1 Nola



*The beginning of my sewing was traumatic at Primary School – hand sewing. I'm left handed and my stitches sloped the wrong way. I used to get the strap for it and then my mother started doing a few stitches each week, and I'd sit there and pretend to be sewing. (9.08.13/MQ11)*

Sewing was a compulsory subject in the first year at high school, and it took a “*whole year to make a petticoat*” (9.08.13/MQ11). It was not until Nola married and had children, that it became a necessity to purchase a sewing machine to make clothes for the family. There was a void in her life when Nola's husband passed away and her grown-up children left home. Reading a newspaper advertisement, she and a friend attended a night class to learn quilting at the local high school. The first project was a sampler quilt, interspersed with making small patchwork items, such as a pincushion. The two women became known as the “Workshop Queens”, enjoying attending various patchwork classes around the city, as well as joining a metropolitan quilting group. Moving to a provincial district, Nola met two quilters at a local quilt shop, who suggested joining MQ. Even though Nola is now in her eighties memories of her schooling days remain:

*I don't share my own work as much as some of the girls share theirs. I never put a quilt together here. I always crawl around my floor at home. I choose my colours and do it my way. It's got a lot to do with being left-handed, and my*

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<sup>55</sup> Pseudonyms are used for quilters' names.

*experiences as a young girl. It was quite a difficulty for me to sit, and have somebody watch me sew when I first joined here. I don't like that. I don't like seeing my left hand. (9.08.13/MQ11)*

### 5.1.2 Nina



*"...Did sewing at Intermediate School, failed miserably. Couldn't sew a straight line to save myself" (16.08.13/MQ13).*

Due to a health condition Nina was regularly admitted to hospital, and to stop becoming bored sitting in bed, she began hand sewing teddy bears. While Nina then undertook a commercial sewing course, her passion continued for home craft, such as cross-stitch. There was also a family tradition of stitching quilts:

*I've always loved looking at my granny's quilts. Mum's got quilts. Granny always had her quilts on couches, so there's always been quilts around to see. I remember, as a young child, Mum having a big quilt frame, and standing or sitting next to her, watching her hand quilt. It was a hexagon quilt, a big queen size quilt. My cat would be curled up on it. These are my earliest memories. (16.08.13/MQ13)*

The first quilt Nina stitched was for her newborn baby, finishing the hand quilting in hospital. She was devastated when the quilt was accidentally put into the dryer, shrinking the batting. Nina was ready to throw away the quilt. However, she watched as her mother unpicked everything, re-constructed and machine quilted it. When her mother joined MQ, Nina followed a week later.

*At first, it was because Mum was here and that's why I wanted to come. I just wanted to be sewing with Mum. But over the years, I've got to know people, and I love the friendship of the people here. They support and encourage you with your ideas, and just the feel of it really. It's just a great atmosphere so that's why I am still here. (16.08.13/MQ13)*

Now in her late thirties, she is guiding her son to stitch quilts, continuing the family's quiltmaking tradition.

### 5.1.3 Jess



*"I was never really that interested in sewing. Just not my thing. I would rather have been outside doing something else, but it was part of one's school education" (28.08.13/KQ12).*

Knitting was also part of the curriculum, and her mother taught her how to “*knit a cotton pot holder in garter stitch, and I still remember thinking this is the most stupid thing I’d been asked to do*” (28.08.13/KQI2). Nonetheless, Jess became a knitter, while her sewing experience consisted of stitching essential items only, such as net curtains and a four-gore skirt for playing golf. When she gave up golf, due to a back injury, a Cook Islander suggested Jess learn how to quilt. Jess had much admired her Pasifika friend’s *tivaevae*, noting how she now used English paper piecing and traditional quilting methods. After purchasing fabrics at Spotlight, they went straight home where her friend brought out a cutting board and rotary cutter:

*I thought, ‘What’s this? This is quite a dangerous sport; golf is tame compared to this.’ We cut the strips out to make two ‘Rail Fence’ cushion covers. She showed me how to sew the first one, and I did that with her. I was sent home with the second one to do, which I did.*

*Next time, she showed me how to layer it.*

*She threaded a needle, ‘Now you quilt it. I’ll lend you my frame.’*

*And I said, ‘What?’*

*She said, ‘You’ve got to do a little running stitch all down in the ditch.’*

*So I did as I was told, and made two cushion covers. (28.08.13/KQI2)*

Jess saw a local quilt shop advertisement to do a “Quilt-in-a-Day”, where she learned to sew and lay out blocks to create a “Log Cabin” design. Not knowing any other method, she layered and hand quilted it just as the cushions had been constructed. The two friends went to the KQ quilt exhibition, where an invitation was extended to attend their meeting. While Jess did not do anything about it, she later received a card from a KQ member encouraging her to “*come along and see how you find us*”. So she did, and “*I felt I fitted in quite well*”. Jess continues to challenge herself with quilting activities, such as “*I’d never done a ‘Prairie Point’ in my life, so I had a little practice*” (28.08.13/KQI2).

#### **5.1.4 The seven other interviewees**



The other participants interviewed, began sewing at home supported by their mother or grandmother. The older generation’s needlecraft skills were essential for making the children’s clothes. As Jamie noted, “*Mum always sewed for*

*practical reasons more than decorative, making dresses for my sister and I* (4.09.13/KQI3). Bella never saw a *“bought garment in our house, my mother made everything and taught us”* (23.08.13/MQI4). Gemma’s mother earned an income making blinds, and did alterations for a menswear shop, *“so I always saw her sewing, she was always at the sewing machine”* (16.08.13/MQI3). Similarly, Jane watched her grandmother stitch from an early age:

*She was a guild lady, and was fascinated with all sorts of stitching and sewing. We'd always had a treadle machine at home, so as children we would sit and pedal on it. It wouldn't go anywhere but that was the first experience of 'sewing'. (10.09.13/KQI5)*

Delia found her mother’s electric sewing machine was *“an expensive item so we weren't allowed to use it”* (4.09.13/KQI4). Not allowed to “play” on the machine, she started to hand stitch doll’s clothes. Likewise, Jill *“used to make dolls’ dresses, bits and pieces like that, before going on to the machine”* (26.08.13/MQI5). It appeared they were replicating, in miniature, their mothers’ sewing activities. Furthermore, these participants had begun to stitch their own clothes by the time they were teenagers, which Leah emphasised was *“just what we did at weekends”* (21.08.13/KQI1).

Learning to quilt was another matter. Five of these participants chose to pay for patchwork classes led by a tutor. While Jane arranged for a local Community College to send out a tutor to teach a group of rural women, Leah attended a course held at another Community College with a friend. Jamie enrolled in a Beginners’ Class run by a quilt shop. Gemma heard, through word-of-mouth, of a tutor taking lessons in her own home for interested people. Another tutor held a quilting class at a local church where Jill learned patchwork basics. While some of these classes focused on a sampler quilt, others initially commenced with smaller projects. There was variability in the formality of the classes held. For example, Gemma explained that her tutor *“didn't have specific lessons but she usually encouraged you to make something small first”* (16.08.13/MQI3). In contrast, Jill revealed her frustration:

*The tutor did not agree with you sewing on the machine, everything had to be done by hand. I learned to paper piece... old school, traditional way. It started with a little pincushion, then we went on to doing cushions. I desperately*

*wanted to make a sampler quilt, but I wasn't allowed until I'd made a hussif and the cushions. (23.08.13/MQI5)*

Meanwhile, Bella and Delia learned by participating in their respective district's needlework groups. Bella belonged to a rural craft group, and as a one-off activity members decided to make patchwork blocks, part of a quilt retailer's promotional event, conducted through mail order. But this type of learning was not particularly helpful:

*I can honestly say it wasn't startling work that I did, because they didn't really teach us. We kind of had to teach ourselves. I struggle to read a pattern, but when I've seen it done I can do it. So I saw what the girls did and I followed them, but I didn't retain any of it because I didn't carry it on. I'm the type of person I have to keep doing it, or I lose it. (23.08.13/MQI4)*

Bella's account was relevant since it explained her frequent participation with other group members in MQ Workday projects, creating several of the same patchwork items to gift. Delia, on the other hand, went along to a quilting meeting after a farmyard quilt displayed at an exhibition caught her attention. Coming from a rural background, self-sufficiency was necessary. Members showed her how to make a four-patch block which got her started, encouraging Delia to travel two and a half hours each week, to attend a hand quilting evening class held at a fabric shop.

Word-of-mouth then became the main medium for these participants to find, and join, either KQ or MQ. Relocating from other districts Delia, Leah, and Jane used needlecraft networks, such as embroiderers or other quilters; while Jamie, living overseas and continuing quilting within international communities, "Googled" the quilting group. Suggestions from tutors and quilting friends led Gemma, Jill and Bella to their respective groups.

These quilters' stories demonstrate their varied sewing backgrounds and quilting experiences. Similar to a crazy patchwork, the quilters and their individual practice represent "pieces of cloth of various shapes, colours, textures and sizes"<sup>56</sup> but when sewn together form idiosyncratic, overlapping patterns within the quilting community.

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<sup>56</sup> Description of crazy patchwork techniques (Gero & Somerville, 2016, p. 149).

## 5.2 Social Organisation

### Vignette



*On arrival there is a lot of chatter, and movement, around the room. The rostered morning tea ladies wheel in the tea trolley with plates of home baking. Sally and Kerry come in, singing 'Happy Birthday', carrying a cupcake complete with a lit candle. Everyone joins in singing while the birthday treat is presented to Kim, who turns pink with delight. A gift box is opened to reveal another cupcake with a mini 'Gold Card' slipped into the icing (representing becoming a superannuitant). There is much laughter and joke making.*

*Quilters gather around the trolley, collect their morning tea and raffle ticket. Walking back to their seats, they talk with one another, stopping to look at and inquire about current projects being stitched. Meanwhile, Ruby is proudly showing photographs of her new grandchild.*

*At the same time, committee members tidy up proceedings associated with the group's Annual Quilt Exhibition held last week. Quilts are passed to owners, with arrangements made to deliver others to quilters who are absent. Challenge Quilts are placed in a pile ready to hang in the homestead.*

*When everyone is seated the group's chatter quiets significantly. The sudden drop in sound feels rather eerie. Moments before it was loud with conversations, cups clinking, and participants moving. Now there is a sense of calm, with needlework underway. (14.08.13/KQO)*

This vignette introduces a typical scene that greeted the quilters as they stepped through the door to attend their weekly quilting session. Whether it be the Kōmako Quilters (KQ) or Manumea Quilters (MQ) meeting, each participant was enveloped in the warmth of a relaxed and friendly atmosphere: *"It's just like a nice blanket"* (30.07.13/MQHI1). Excited chatter, "over a cuppa", catching up with each other's past week's happenings, discussing completed quilting projects, sharing special occasions or empathetic moments of concern, were all part of a ritual. While affective familial-like relationships was a core component of the quilting community's infrastructure, there was also the co-ordination of activities from which rituals formed, creating cultural patterns and temporal order in the quilters' repertoires of practice. The social organisation of quilting endeavours, such as the distribution and delivery of exhibition quilts, demonstrated how individual quilters worked as an ensemble, making flexible

arrangements, to ensure an activity was achieved. With their love of the craft, individual quilters concentrated on personal, as well as collective, goals they wanted to accomplish. Sewing spaces were set up, projects spread out and quilting tools positioned, with quilters assisting each other so they could effectively work side-by-side or jointly together. Nested within local quilt traditions the quilters became familiar with, and participated in, varying cultural practices.

This section now considers the quilt culture's socialisation processes. Three fundamental aspects of social organisation are elaborated: motives, belonging, and roles and responsibilities. This narrative commences by contemplating the motives that prompted and influenced quilters to join a quilting group. A transitional period occurs as participants become immersed in the family of quilters, developing a sense of belonging. By assuming various roles and responsibilities, contributing to their community, the quilters continue quilt traditions.

### **5.2.1 Motives**

Listening to the quilters' stories, I was interested to explore further their motives for joining either Kōmako or Manumea quilting group. Through individual interviews, as well as during conversations with other research participants, the quilters shared their reasons. There were two distinct motives: firstly, to develop friendships; and secondly, to learn from other quilters. Some participants emphasised "fellowship", for instance although Nola gained satisfaction from quilting: *"It's mainly the companionship. How else would I find so many friends?"* (9.08.13/MQ1). While others reiterated being inspired through "getting ideas", evident from Jamie's comment: *"It's the quilting perspective, it's the motivation. Motivation is probably the key thing. It just revives your interest every week in stitching"* (4.09.13/KQ13).

The participants shared a passion for quiltmaking, and their common interest drew them together. Sometimes, it was difficult to differentiate which goal was more important as they seemed to merge, exemplified by Gemma's perspective:

*To see what type of work other people do, and learn different techniques. You always learn from somebody else, always learn from seeing what other people are doing. Might not be your cup of tea, but you can just pick up on those things*

*and move on to do something from that. It's being with other people, and people who have an interest the same as I've got. (16.08.13/MQ13)*

But personal motives changed over time, as Jane noted when she became a widow:

*My needs are different now. I think once you're widowed the group becomes very important to you. There is always someone there, if you are having a bad day, who understands. I've said to other girls 'just keep coming, don't worry if you get upset, keep coming; it's an understanding group'. I think there's a lot more than just the quilting that goes on, and that's what's really important. There are not many groups that girls can go to like this one, where you can sit and stitch; just relax, and chat about anything. (10.09.13/KQ15)*

Although I was aware of personal or current affairs being discussed, the majority of conversations I engaged in were related to quiltmaking. This occurrence may be accounted for due to the purpose of this research study; the quilters awareness of my researcher's role; and my ethical commitment to maintain participants' privacy.

During conversations, I discerned that the quilters had specific individual goals for what they wanted to accomplish, indicating learning was not just a casual "chance thing", but also intentional. For example, Ruby wanted to create quilts using original ideas, rather than making reproductions, since these were more likely to be selected as exhibition winners (29.05.13/KQCON). Being mentored by experienced quilt exhibition judges had affected the way she now designed, and viewed quilts. Ruby took the opportunity to practise what she had learned, from the mentoring experience, by trying to identify different aspects of machine quilting techniques within another participant's quilt (5.06.13/KQO). While evaluating the quilted artefact, she used the participant's response to gauge whether her appraisal was correct. Additionally, Ruby provided helpful advice, such as how to keep a regular stitch length. Ruby's motive became two-fold: to accomplish her own quilting goal, while simultaneously guiding another.

Close observation of an individual quilter's practice also revealed tacit goal-setting, although I was not aware of these "hidden" motives until I began reflexively looking at participatory patterns. For instance, in my fieldnotes I noticed that when Ella set up a fabric painting demonstration for Emma, no one else seemed to take notice, except Nina (28.06.13/MQO). Intrigued, she silently watched as Ella showed Emma each step of the

process. Although Nina's keen attention seemed a random act, her purposeful deliberation became transparent when she started to experiment with different fibres and threads in her desire to make Aotearoa New Zealand themed quilts, using surface design techniques:

*It is something I would really like to do, and incorporate into something... Just thinking outside the square, rather than putting a piece of fabric there and quilting around it. Why do something plain when you can do something exciting? (16.08.13/MQ12)*

In addition, collective goals were planned, negotiated and carried out. Such an example, mentioned in the vignette, was KQ's preparation and co-ordination of their annual quilt exhibition. Raffle quilts and embroidered patchwork items were collaboratively stitched as fundraisers. Participants were invited to display quilts in the main exhibition, as well as enter into the mystery Quilt Challenge. As part of MQ's aim to revive quilting interest,<sup>57</sup> master quilters were invited to participate in a quilting activity to advance their design knowledge. The collaborative designing activity attracted much attention from other MQ members (novice, experienced and newcomers), so the innovative approach was extended to include collective participation. Accomplishing communal goals relied on commitment, contribution, and engagement of the quilting collective.

## **5.2.2 Belonging**

Although it might seem a simple matter for each individual to follow her own path to fulfil personal goals, and participate in shared endeavours, in practice this idealistic impression was not the case. Integration into the quilt culture required understanding the relation of individual and community life of the quilters. To illustrate this connection I describe the experiences of two newcomers; the community's rituals; the function of spatial arrangements; and what it means to belong to the "family of quilters".

### **5.2.2.1 Newcomers**

While some newcomers were experienced quilters, I have chosen to share the stories of two novice quilters: Bella (MQ) and Meg (KQ). These narratives are constructed by

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<sup>57</sup> Refer to Chapter 4, subsection 4.7.2, for background information about the participants.

retelling Bella's account using the interview transcript (23.08.13/MQI4), and Meg's experiences pieced together through fieldnotes.

Bella's friend Vera, a MQ member, had been suggesting for some time "*why don't you come along*" (23.08.13/MQI4) to the quilting group. But each time Bella refused, until she visited Vera on a Friday which happened to be MQ quilting day. Bella was given no choice, and found herself at the quilting session. "*I have to admit that for a long time if Vera wasn't here I didn't come. I was feeling really quite insecure. I was very reserved. I just sat there next to Vera, and didn't speak to many people*" (23.08.13/MQI4). However, Bella found different quilters would come over, sit down and talk with her. Surrounded by a cluster of quilters, working on their own projects: "*They just brought me into the fold. They were just really lovely, and that helped in the transition for me... It's a lovely process. They are a jolly bunch, really nice, and I think that's important*" (23.08.13/MQI4).

With Vera's guidance, Bella completed two quilts, "*one was squares and the other was chopped up squares – stack and whack*" (23.08.13/MQI4); and participated in communal Workday projects. Another sign of Bella becoming incorporated, and wanting to belong to the group, was her keenness to make a rose appliquéd bag for her sewing tools. She had noticed these bags sitting on some of the quilters' tables, and approached Anita, who had shown the others this specific appliqué technique:

*She gave me the pattern. Then I asked, 'Do I just cut this, this way?' She said, 'No. You come next week and I'll bring a couple of bits in. I'll show you how it's done.' And that's what she's doing. She's helping me today.* (23.08.13/MQI4)

Newcomer Meg, on the other hand, had enrolled in KQ's seven week Beginners' Class, advertised at their quilt exhibition to attract new members. While Meg learned to sew at school, she had done little sewing since. After the final session the novice joined the KQ quilting group, sitting with the peer-tutors. During the President's weekly notices, Leah officially welcomed Meg and introduced her to members. She was invited to show her sampler quilt made at class:

*Leah and Meg hold up the quilt top while Jamie, peer-tutor, describes the quilt using hand gestures, indicating blocks placed on point.*

*Leah: [reflecting on the tradition] These are the blocks we learned.  
Jamie explains Meg is going to extend it into a queen size quilt. The novice has another quilt which is held up; the three layers need to be pinned. The novice takes over, using a similar style of patter, to tell the story about her second quilt. (24.04.13/KQO)*

While working on her own quilt, Meg spent a lot of time watching, and listening to, quilters. For example, noticing Milly chalking quilting lines, she went over to observe the process (1.05.13/KQO). Meg's enthusiasm for quilting was compelling, and participants reciprocally responded. They maintained a discreet eye on the novice's work and shared a responsibility for her progress. For instance, when Meg showed a block with mismatched pieces, Jamie explained the importance of sewing  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch seams, advising: "*The more seams [in block unit] the more accurate you need to be. Unpick the block, and do it again*" (15.06.13/KQO). Meg also contributed to the group by participating in the Quilt Challenge, seeking assistance as needed. For example, when trying to decide which coloured fabric to use as binding, Jane explained to her why certain fabrics worked with the novice's quilt (26.06.13/KQO).

#### **5.2.2.2 Rituals**

The everyday routines of quilting sessions are best described as rituals. Each aspect had a purposeful function, being of significance to the social organisation of quilting endeavours. The cultural habit of drinking tea (or coffee) is a familiar and comfortable part of everyday life. For quilters, the ritual was a means to build community, encouraging sociable and convivial conversation between participants, as they got to know each other. In addition to social knowledge, the discussion of a quilt's progression, or availability of patchwork products, allowed individual and community quilting identities to expand. Wearing name badges was advocated for the benefit of newcomers and visitors, but also endorsed a sense of belonging by "being a member" of the quilting group. Traditional rituals were socially and culturally valued by the community.

The ritual of weekly notices seemed to encapsulate the everydayness of quilters' lives within the quilting community itself, for example:

*Leah thanks the morning tea ladies and reminds members of the roster for next week.*

*Extends birthday wishes to Paige (who tells group her gift was a quilting frame).*

*Welcomes back Jamie from her overseas travel.*

*Announces an invitation from the local Cook Island ladies to attend their tivaevae exhibition (details are given). (5.06.13/KQO)*

Show and Tell was another regular feature of weekly quilting sessions: KQ had a scheduled segment, whereas MQ was an impromptu event. Participants were invited to show their quilt and share a narrative about it. This ritual often revealed quilter identity through the presentation of specific or varying quilt styles, stitching techniques, and inspirational catalyst. I noticed newcomers who were experienced quilters, accustomed to the culture of other groups, used this medium of Show and Tell to establish “who” they were as quilters. Listening participants became the “audience”: asking questions for clarification; making comment to share thoughts; or quietly contemplating individual effort and creativity.

Engagement in two quilting activities exposed rituals of expectation and embedded “rules”. Firstly, with the layering of quilts participants instinctively gathered around layering tables, indicating an expectation to assist an individual with the task. Sometimes, layering required drastic actions, for instance to pin a large quilt two quilters knelt in the middle of the table, while three others worked around the edge (28.6.13/MQO). Members also consciously encouraged newcomers to participate, as evidenced through the following:

*Kim re-clips the layers to include the batting, pulling it taut. The quilt top is placed over the two layers.*

*Rachel: Bring it over a bit [centring the top]. I've got plenty down this end [an adjustment is made]. The new ones should be down here. They could see how it's done. (1.05.13/KQO)*

Secondly, block layouts entailed patchwork units to be positioned in a composite design, and demonstrated how implicit protocol emerged during practical activities. Tacit know-how of communal ways was exemplified when Jill laid out her “Snowball” blocks on the floor for quilters to view:

*Jill invites suggestions about possible changes. Three participants move a few of the blocks to different positions, for example when two blues of similar fabric design lie together. Satisfied, the blocks are labelled in row order. There is an unspoken understanding that no one moves blocks unless the block-maker is present and gives consent. (10.05.13/MQO)*

### **5.2.2.3 Spatial arrangements**

Essentially the quilting community's spatial arrangements were a means whereby quilters created a space for their quilting activity. For instance, arriving at the quilting venue, Jonella organised the worktop space for her needlework project, neatly stacking 900 fabric squares in piles ready to machine piece, and positioned her sketched diagram of the queen-sized quilt to check measurements (18.08.13/KQO). However, spatial arrangements also produced opportunities for bonding among the quilters. For example, sitting together, Lily and newcomer Violet decided to volunteer to make the afternoon tea the following week; Lily borrowed Violet's recipe to bake a batch of biscuits to share with the quilters (26.04.13/MQCON). By using double tables participants sat opposite each other, and with an overall U-shape configuration there was no sense of segregation or isolation (3.07.13/KQO).

In addition, space within quilting group settings provided access for quilters to observe and participate in quilting activities. Therefore, the positioning of furniture (e.g., sewing tables, layering table), quilting apparatus (e.g., ironing boards), and quilting resources (e.g., library books) for communal use was significant. As a result, the physical space of the quilting venue temporarily designated the area as belonging to the quilters. Ease of access was of prime importance for participation purposes. The configuration of table layouts allowed participants to see what others were doing, for instance Kerry observed another participant working on the same kitset, encouraging her to seek advice about using different coloured threads (29.05.13/KQO). Leeway to move freely around the room, prompted participants to share ideas, such as when Jane deliberately proceeded to show samples from a machine quilting workshop, explaining the exercises to interested quilters seated at the other end of the room (17.04.13/KQO). Additionally, there were assigned spaces for participation in specific quilting activities, for example the layering of quilts required a large flat area where participants collaboratively assisted to smooth out the backing, add batting, lay over the quilt top, and pin the three

layers together. Effectively, physical arrangements created spaces for mutually enhancing learning opportunities, and developing friendships.

#### **5.2.2.4 Family of quilters**

The two quilting groups had moved through various phases in their growth and development during the past thirty years. Yet, participants frequently described the community's attributes in terms of "family", whether shared memories of founding members or current experiences of participants, for instance:

- *"It's like an extension of my family... it was just the company and friends I made; the ones I made I am still friends with"* (30.07.13/MQH11).
- *"The family of quilters have shared what they have learned with me"* (28.08.13/KQI2).

Quilters perceived and treated each other like extended family. An affective component was prevalent with strong bonds of friendship formed. Familial-like relationships were important, with expressions of care, kindness and concern for fellow members and their families, demonstrated through: sending "Get well" cards (27.09.13/MQO); food preparation for bereaved (5.06.13/KQO); ensuring participation was inclusive, despite disability or age (24.05.13/MQO); contacting absentee quilters (29.05.13/KQO); carpooling (31.07.13/KQO); and nurturing quilting skills (24.07.13/KQH11). Even when quilters did not intend to stitch they still came, such as when Shari wanted to quilt, but her arm was in a sling, *"so the next best thing is to come to the group"* (26.04.13/MQCON).

A sense of home and homeliness pervaded the quilting space. For example, although not mandatory, KQ participants brought along plates of food to share at Sewing Weekends, including bacon and cheese toasties, savoury scones, fresh fruit, orange cake and citrus slice (15.06.13/KQO). Participants found a seat around the kitchen table, covered with a patchwork tablecloth laden with food, at lunch and break times to enjoy each other's company. In a similar way, MQ Workdays continued through the evening:

*For the half-nighter takeaways of pizza and ice-cream sundaes are ordered and picked up... The oven heats up plates; trestle tables are pulled together with plastic sunflowers twisted into a swan-shape and placed in the centre...*

*Conversation turns to the weekend's Ranfurly Shield rugby match...*  
(6.09.13/MQO)

It was the “little things” that made a difference. Members generously contributed in a variety of ways such as: arranging tables and chairs; giving away fabric and haberdashery from personal stashes; supplying home-grown fruit and vegetables; sharing knowledge and expertise; or sourcing recycled carpet for the storage room. The leisure activity was also a special time-out for some quilters:

*No matter what happens anywhere else, I can come here and just completely forget about it. It doesn't matter until I go home again. It's my time, and as a mother we don't tend to take 'my' time. I can now because it's only me, purely and selfishly mine.* (23.08.13/MQCON)

When packing up to leave at the end of a session one quilter exclaimed, “*I don't want to go home*” (17.05.13/MQO). Drawing the curtains, the participants suddenly realised it was pouring with rain – no one had noticed.

### **5.2.3 Roles and responsibilities**

Cultural-historical traditions formed the foundations of both quilting groups, with similar aspirations continuing to thread their way through the social organisation. Assisting committee or senior members, along with introducing diverse programmes, have remained stable entities. The KQ interim report, “Report for First Half Year”,<sup>58</sup> recognised the need to establish an organisation to encourage people to continue the quilting craft “so they can benefit from the stimulation”. Furthermore, “if a skill is going to be maintained and expanded” then plans for the future were necessary to ensure “full participation in KQ activities”. While there was an initial emphasis on “tutoring” and running “schools”, over time knowledge practices have evolved, introducing different approaches in both quilting groups.<sup>59</sup>

Leadership roles have remained consistent, with KQ's elected committee, and MQ's informal structure of group co-ordinator and senior members. While KQ committee

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<sup>58</sup> All quotes, in this paragraph, are taken from Kōmako Quilters' archival handwritten document, “Report for First Half Year” (1984) (24.07.13/KQDOC).

<sup>59</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, subsection 6.3.2, for details about knowledge practices.

members had delegated responsibilities, for example librarian; MQ was more reliant on participants' initiative to "pick up" roles, such as retrieving and checking library book box. Nonetheless, there was flexibility across the community. Sometimes, duties were assigned to participants, such as KQ's scheduled morning tea roster; or depended on volunteers, namely setting up KQ Sewing Weekend's venue. In addition, participants (mainly experienced quilters) "worked the room" and assisted with problem solving, encouraged individuals to show their quilt, or chatted with newcomers.

Designated leaders seated themselves in a similar place at each quilting session. This deliberate positioning provided an unobstructed view of the participants' activities, overseeing the "flow" of unfolding events. However, leadership was not one of unilateral control; rather, it was a shared role with negotiation an integral aspect of the cultural process. For instance, when initiating Show and Tell themes, Jill (co-ordinator) asked the quilting group: "*What shall we have next time? What do **you** want?*" [emphasising 'you' and puts her hands out to the participants]" (12.04.13/MQO).

The quilters took responsibility for their own, and others', learning and development. Their roles changed as participants became more involved in the quilting group's activities. An example of this transforming participation was reflected in Rachel's pursuit of mastering machine quilting. Encouraged by feedback received about a practice sample presented at a Show and Tell session (10.04.13/KQO), Rachel worked on her Hungry Caterpillar quilt, using the same quilting design. She quipped, "*It's going to be my signature quilting style*" (17.04.13/KQO). With guidance from a cluster of quilters to extend her quilting skills, Rachel trialled various methods to form circular shapes (1.05.13/KQO; 8.05.13/KQCON). However, she was hesitant to use this machine quilting technique on the latest quilt due to a) her level of confidence; and b) the collective's tradition of hand quilting. Recognising Rachel's dilemma, Mia legitimised the action by sharing a narrative and photograph of her finely hand quilted bedcovering: "*Wasn't worth it...they looked the same* [referring to a machine quilted bedcovering hanging next to it]. *You couldn't tell the difference* (19.06.13/KQO). Jamie, another master quilter, stated: "*A modern quilt needs machine quilting*" (26.06.13/KQO). While attaching the border a discussion arose about whether to include stippling stitching to create a floating effect (31.07.13/KQO). With the participants' encouragement and support,

Rachel was determined to enter the quilt into KQ's annual exhibition next year (7.08.13/KQO).

A semi-structured programme of quilting activities was fluidly based around calendar events, including regional and national quilting fixtures. Committee and senior members were not the only ones responsible for organising activities, such as the annual exhibition, participants also used initiative and contributed their ideas. For instance, Rita suggested making a "Ten Minute Table Runner" as a group activity, and gave a completed sample to Jill (17.05.13/MQO). The co-ordinator held up the patchwork runner to show the quilting group, and asked: "*Is anyone interested in making it? Maybe do a class or half-nighter?*" Raised hands indicated interest, and with collective agreement, it was decided to make it as a Workday project, and a date was confirmed. Quilters were reminded of communal activities through weekly notices, and quilting newsletters; individually choosing whether to participate or not.

There was an intermingling of individual and communal activities, blending agendas and responsibilities. Such a case was evident when Delia decided to construct a contemporary version of the traditional "Tumbling Block" pattern, as a floor quilt for a baby. The new design was appraised by the group, stimulating discussion of collectively making quilts for a charitable cause:

*Delia: Make it again... but next time do chenille [technique].*

*Jamie: [makes suggestion] Why don't **we** make baby quilts? Have a working bee... make a whole heap [her emphasis].*

*Quilter1: What about the school's Teen Parents' Unit?*

*Rachel: Do it over one weekend. (14.08.13/KQO)*

The quilting community's multi-voicedness<sup>60</sup> and creative chaos encouraged the quilters' voices to be heard, taking the initiative to share and discuss ideas. Multi-way contributions, within a flexible ensemble of quiltmakers, served as a collective rule for shared thinking and collaboration in quilting endeavours.

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<sup>60</sup> Engeström (2016) described multi-voicedness as "conflicting and complementary voices in the activity" (p. 44).

### 5.3 Multi-Party Interactions

#### Vignette



*Vera pulls a quilt from her sewing bag. She has started to hand quilt the border, but doesn't like the design and asks Kate for advice. Rita looks up from her stitching, stops what she is doing, and leans forward. Aware of Rita's interest, Vera retells her story, showing what she has done. The three quilters begin to discuss options.*

*Sophie, sitting at the far end of the table hand quilting a similar quilt, tunes in to the conversation. She inquires what border pattern Vera is doing. Gina stops layering her quilt, and comes over.*

*Rita: I would do it like this [her finger traces a zigzag line along the border] then echo here and here.*

*Sophie: You can't see it [quilting is lost in the busy-ness of floral pattern]. Can't see any point in doing a design.*

*Gina: Sophie is going round two inches [her fingers form a gap of two inches to indicate measurement from inner edge on the border].*

*Sophie: [holds up her quilt] Like this... doing straight line [masking tape indicates where the quilting line is being stitched].*

*Kate and Rita continue to discuss other possible border designs.*

*Both Jem and Bella have remained stitching, listening but not contributing. (24.05.13/MQO)*

The quilt culture tradition of collaborating in multi-party interactions is demonstrated in this vignette.<sup>61</sup> Although the scene might appear disjointed, the social interactions are smoothly co-ordinated, reflecting cultural patterns of learning within quilting practice. Initially, the quilting activity focuses on the individual who is appraising her border design, and decides to seek advice. The interpersonal conversation among three participants draws the attention of another quilter, who is currently working on a border. Overhearing the developing dialogue, a fifth participant also joins the discussion and tacitly reinforces the idea of quilting a straight line. Along with contributions and justifications for different suggestions, regular reference is made to the quilt itself. These participants are actively “pitching in”<sup>62</sup> to support the individual quilter to accomplish

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<sup>61</sup> Norris (2006) pointed out that during everyday activities people engage in “multi-party interactions”, where actions are co-constructed with different participants.

<sup>62</sup> A term used by Rogoff (2014).

her task. This multi-party interaction seemed to encapsulate two interviewees' complementary observations:

- *"There is always somebody who will give their tuppence worth"* (16.08.13/MQI3).
- *"I give my tuppence worth as well"* (28.08.13/KQI2).

But sitting amongst the crossover of conversation, two quilters have quietly observed the entire unfolding interaction, however refrain from contributing. In addition, around the room, quilters are engaged in other social interactions while working on individual and communal projects.

To capture the surrounding multi-party interactions, while maintaining a narrative approach, I imagine being in the middle of the quilters' room pivoting to get a 360 degree view of the quilting collective. While there were many interactional variations, examples are selected to highlight specific trends of collaborative processes identified in the current study. This section provides the reader with descriptions to exemplify four types of social interactions which quilters were most likely to experience in shared endeavours: mutual reciprocation, guided participation, modelling, and demonstration. Each of these types is then sub-divided into further dimensions. Although the distinctions are fine-grained, their seemingly trivial interactional variances form ubiquitous cultural patterns of learning in the quiltmaking context.

The discussion in this section follows the structure of Table 5.1 which presents a summary of the diverse ways of quilting together, including the vignette to exemplify variation:

- Mutual reciprocation builds on the quilters' common interests through joint participation in four ways: partnership challenge, cluster sharing, spontaneous engagement, and dovetailing.
- Guided participation supports quilter(s) progress towards mastery in five ways: seek guidance, responsive guidance, collective guidance, tacit guidance, and co-equal guidance.
- Modelling provides an example for participants to follow or imitate in two ways: explicit verbalisation, and implicit articulation.

- Demonstration was a practical display of quilting technique with explanation in three ways: impromptu communal demonstration, project cluster demonstration, and side-by-side demonstration.

Sometimes, an interaction might be a combination of different types, creating variations.

Table 5.1 Summary of Diverse Ways of Quilting Together

<p><b>5.3.1 Mutual reciprocation</b></p> <p><b>5.3.1.1 Partnership challenge</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quilter ↔ Quilter</p> <p>(e.g., coin purse construction: 17.08.13/KQO &amp; 18.08.13/KQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.2 Guided participation</b></p> <p><b>5.3.2.1 Seek guidance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             Quilter → Master              ↙ ↘              Participant ↔ Participant         </p> <p>(e.g., table topper colour combination: 6.09.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.3 Modelling</b></p> <p><b>5.3.3.1 Explicit verbalisation</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             Individual ● --- ● Collective              ↑              Masters         </p> <p>(e.g., sharing narratives: 15.05.13/KQCON)</p>
<p><b>5.3.1.2 Cluster sharing</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             Quilter      Quilter              \      /              /      \              Quilter      Quilter              \      /              /      \              Quilter      Quilter         </p> <p>(e.g., differentiating colour-value rows: 4.10.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>Variation example: Vignette</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             5                      1              Sophie → Vera → Kate              ↙                      ↘              Gina                  2                  3                  4              ↘                      ↙              Jem                  Bella         </p> <p>(e.g., border quilting design: 24.05.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.3.2 Implicit articulation</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quilter ←····· Master</p> <p>(e.g., mis-matched shapes: 16.06.13/KQO)</p>
<p><b>5.3.1.3 Spontaneous engagement</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             Quilter + Quilter + Quilter              ↔              Individual Choice              ↔              Quilter + Quilter + Quilter         </p> <p>(e.g., sashing colour “play”: 7.06.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.2.2 Responsive guidance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             1              Master ↔ Novice              ↙                      ↘              2                      4              ↘                      ↙              5                      3              Quilter         </p> <p>(e.g., quilting methods: 24.04.13/KQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.4 Demonstration</b></p> <p><b>5.3.4.1 Impromptu communal demonstration</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quilter → Community</p> <p>(e.g., Prairie Point technique: 24.04.13/KOQ &amp; 1.05.13/KQO)</p>
<p><b>5.3.1.4 Dovetailing</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             1              Quilter ↔ Quilter              ↙                      ↘              4                      3                      2              ↘                      ↙              Quilter              ↙                      ↘              Quilter                  5         </p> <p>(e.g., patterns to batik colour tones: 19.04.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.2.3 Collective guidance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             1              Quilter → Quilter              ↙                      ↘              2                      3              Collective         </p> <p>(e.g., smudged Teddy Bear quilt: 22.05.13/KQO &amp; 29.05.13/KQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.4.2 Project cluster demonstration</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Peer-tutor → Cluster</p> <p>(e.g., thread holder project: 3.05.13/MQO)</p>
<p><b>KEY</b></p> <p>→ Direction of engagement</p> <p>↔ Joint participation</p> <p>---● Observing / Listening</p> <p>·····&gt; Tacit contribution</p> <p>Numbers indicate order of participatory engagement. Refer to text for example explanation.</p>	<p><b>5.3.2.4 Tacit guidance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Master ·····&gt; Quilter</p> <p>(e.g., mixed media sample: 4.10.13/MQO)</p> <p><b>5.3.2.5 Co-equal guidance</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             1              Peer ↔ Peer              2         </p> <p>(e.g., tapa cloth sails: .06.13/MQO)</p>	<p><b>5.3.4.3 Side-by-side demonstration</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">             1              Quilter ↔ Expert              2         </p> <p>(e.g., palestrina stitch: 14.06.13/MQO)</p>

### **5.3.1 Mutual reciprocation**

Looking to my right, clusters of quilters were participating in, and contributing to, cultural activities they had developed themselves. Participants were jointly engaged in shared endeavours building upon mutual interest. There did not appear to be anyone “in-charge”; rather, these forms of equal participation represented horizontal shared collaboration. Four basic forms of mutual reciprocation were identified: partnership challenge, cluster sharing, spontaneous engagement, and dovetailing.

#### ***5.3.1.1 Partnership challenge***

Near the ironing board, two quilters were working on the same quilting project, building on collaborative experiences through their partnership challenge (17.08.13/KQO). Delia and Dolly had purposely purchased the same coin purse kit, containing instructions and fabric. Sitting side-by-side they completed the steps of foundation strip-piecing and hand cross-hatching, but then decided to adapt the pattern. Their laughter and shrieks of delight, as they cajoled and encouraged each other with new challenges, attracted the attention of other participants arousing curiosity. Dolly issued a final challenge to make and attach a three-dimensional fabric flower. This learning sequence continued at the next session when Delia brought along a different purse pattern, determined to trial felted fabric rather than cotton; while Dolly opted to re-create Jackie’s coin purse, using the material artefact as a sample (18.08.13/KQO). Beginning with identical patterns, they supported each other to learn technical skills for modifying instructions, leading onto developing creative adaptations of different quilted purses.

#### ***5.3.1.2 Cluster sharing***

Gathered by the Parish piano, a cluster of quilters’ shared efforts were needed to comprehend a set of block instructions for their design activity (4.10.13/MQO). Each quilter showed her pieced blocks, explaining how she had interpreted the written instructions. Nola mentioned her confusion with the numbered rows, differentiating colour-value. Vicki presented her completed blocks, and concurred that this had been a problem. Gina was pleased Vicki had brought them along because she thought “*the whole thing was in black*” (4.10.13/MQO). But when Nola laid her blocks on the table next to Vicki’s, there was a different placement of colour-valued rows. Perplexed, the

master quilters pooled their expertise, with general agreement that the written instructions for the latest block design were unclear. After much discussion, re-reading of instructions and matching steps with the diagram, the cluster agreed Vicki's rows had been stitched in the reverse order. Due to the designer's absence, meaning-making occurred through the clusters' shared efforts, with recognition that preparation of coherent instructions for design purposes was essential to avoid undesirable results.

#### **5.3.1.3 Spontaneous engagement**

In front of the sewing machines, a team of quilters spontaneously engaged in "playing with colour" (7.06.13/MQO). A participant laid out patchwork blocks on a table, then began to audition fabric options, to determine the best colour choice for her quilt sashing. Six quilters congregated round the table, watching and verbalising thoughts, while folded fabric lengths were positioned. Comparing colour combinations, another quilter collected a black and gold fabric length to trial, but it is not right: *"No one says anything, and the participant shakes her head; so it is removed"* (7.06.13/MQO). They collaboratively built on each other's ideas, sharing opinions: *"too light; merges with pattern; too similar; brings out green tones; orange adds a zing"* (7.06.13/MQO). However, a casting vote showed three quilters liked the green fabric, while the others preferred orange. Smiling, they turned to the participant announcing, *"Your choice!"* (7.06.13/MQO). No matter what others' opinions were, the collective encouraged individuals to make their own choice, respecting that decision.

#### **5.3.1.4 Dovetailing**

Sitting by the window, the conversation of four participants dovetailed smoothly into new topics of discussion (19.04.13/MQO). Kasey noticed the appliquéd hearts on Helen's flower block had blended into the background fabric. The two quilters decided a lighter coloured thread for the blanket stitch would *"bring it out"* (19.04.13/MQO). Turning over each block in the pile, participants named each appliquéd pattern: *"I like this one. The shape makes it look like Māori design"* (19.04.13/MQO). Kasey explained she was making Hawaiian blocks using batik fabric, and picked up the quilt pattern which Gemma was using. As Gemma prepared to rotary cut a batik strip, Kasey commented: *"Wrong colour... too pale"* (19.04.13/MQO), and held the fabric against the other batiks.

In response, Gemma laid another piece of fabric on the cutting board, stating: *“I always listen to advice... I won’t be using it”* (19.04.13/MQO). Dovetailing used pivotal items of interest to link topics: accentuating a pattern, pattern names, indigenous cultural designs, batik fabric, and complementary colour tones. Patterns of dialogue appeared disjointed but for the quilters it was a dovetailing process, focused and coherent, aided by quilting tools and material artefacts.

### **5.3.2 Guided participation**

Looking in front of me, quilters were actively seeking or providing guidance to support mastery of skills. Rather than having fixed roles, as expected in a *hierarchical* form of participation, there was flexibility whereby quilters (no matter what skill level) frequently acted as guides. Participants became social resources for guidance, and in doing so, assumed increasingly skilled roles in the quilting activities of the community. There were both explicit and implicit forms of guided participation: seek guidance, responsive guidance, collective guidance, tacit guidance, and co-equal guidance.

#### **5.3.2.1 Seek guidance**

Standing by her workspace, Vera (project peer-tutor) was approached by a participant who purposefully sought guidance about combining colours to create her “Pinwheel Table Topper” (PTT) (6.09.13/MQO). When Vera began moving the pieces Jade joined in, arranging and re-arranging colour combinations. Vera turned to another quilter who was watching the process, and asked: *“What do you think?”* (6.09.13/MQO). The three quilters trialled, and considered alternatives, resulting in a modification to the original pattern. Jocelyn was pleased with the effect, and produced a length of fabric, running it around the edge. All participants agreed that this fabric would “finish” the PTT. Likewise, the vignette is an example of this form of guided participation, noting Vera (peer-tutor) was the participant seeking guidance on that occasion, triggering multi-party interactions.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Such incidences highlighted the flexibility of complementary roles which were characteristic of the quilting community’s “horizontal participation structure” (Rogoff et al., 2003, p. 184).

### **5.3.2.2 Responsive guidance**

At the layering table, an experienced quilter asked guiding questions, encouraging a novice quilter to respond with her contribution (24.04.13/KQO). During the layering of Meg's first quilt, master quilter Lexi asked: *"How are you going to quilt it?"* (24.04.13/KQO). Meg responded by tracing her finger around the blocks to be machine stitched, followed by hand quilting of cat designs. Another quilter suggested using the hoop first, but Meg counteracted: *"I read in a book to machine it first, to stabilise it"* (24.04.13/KQO). Lexi, supported the novice's decision, quietly explaining: *"My mother did one where she hand quilted it first... it didn't turn out well"* (24.04.13/KQO). Novices were given opportunities to engage with experienced quilters, prompting them to use initiative and to take responsibility for their needlework, while supporting their quilting development through responsive guidance.

### **5.3.2.3 Collective guidance**

By the porch entrance, I observed a quilter spontaneously aid a participant's efforts which, in turn, prompted collective guidance (22.05.13/KQO). Jasmine noticed Stella's slumped shoulders and stopped to inquire what she was doing. Stella showed smudged pen marks around the eyes of an appliquéd bear. She had mistakenly picked up one of the children's felt pens, not the marking pen, and the ink had bled. Stella was distraught, and did not know what to do.

*Jasmine suggests dabbing bleach around the eyes using a cotton bud, but cautions to test it first on same fabric. If that method didn't work she recommends using a brown pigment pen. She motions with her finger, gently running over the affected area. (22.05.13/KQO)*

The following week, during Show and Tell, Stella re-told the story of her Teddy Bear quilt (29.05.13/KQO). An explanation of how the problem was fixed was shared, motivating other quilters to tell of their experiences and solutions. Working with everyday problems often entailed commonsense remedies, with participants generously giving their "tuppence worth".

#### **5.3.2.4 Tacit guidance**

In the kitchen, the unspoken guidance of a master quilter supported experimental methods of creativity, to advance understanding (4.10.13/MQO). With the recommendation of Anita and Jill, Nina had stitched a sample of carded silk/wool fibres sandwiched between soluble fabric, before attempting to construct her original *koru*<sup>64</sup> design quilt. Previously, when Nina had washed the stabiliser it had gone rubbery; consequently, Gina discreetly followed her into the kitchen to assist with this task. Gina watched the procedure, periodically checking the texture of the sample, while Nina rinsed it. She placed a tea towel on the kitchen bench, signalling to Nina that the sample was ready to be laid on top. Gina carefully folded over the tea towel gently patting the sample dry; then used a sugar canister, like a rolling pin, to remove any excess water.

*Nina: [holds up sample] There! I've made a piece of fabric.*

*She turns the sample over, noting that either side can be used. (4.10.13/MQO)*

The quilter's quest to design something new, through tacit guidance and novel approaches, contributed to creating a mixed media material object.

#### **5.3.2.5 Co-equal guidance**

Seated on the floor, two friends with similar quilting experience (co-equals) were surrounded by *tapa*<sup>65</sup> cloth, after one had approached the other for guidance (7.06.13/MQO). Anita described her dilemma: the *tapa* cloth to replicate the Endeavour ship's sails had a light and dark side (7.06.13/MQO). The quilters turned the *tapa* cloth over creating different shadow effects, and evaluated each change, posing other possibilities.

*Lighter sides on the front of the ship form an illusion of sunlight reflecting on the sails. Darker sides are positioned towards rear; with a lighter sail peeking out. The effects of the three-dimensional tapa sails create a sense of movement within the pieced seascape. (7.06.13/MQO)*

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<sup>64</sup> Loop or coil often used in Māori art as a symbol of creation based on the shape of an unfurling fern frond.

<sup>65</sup> "Tapa or barkcloth [is] made from the inner bark of certain trees, especially the paper mulberry; [and] is one of the most distinctive products of the cultures of the Pacific islands" (Neich & Pendergrast, 1997, p. 9).

The unfolding creative process incorporated both quilters' knowledge and skills, learning together as they discussed and played with the *tapa* cloth.

### **5.3.3 Modelling**

Looking to my left, some participatory practices seemed to be exaggerated, with an expectation that they would be emulated, forming cultural patterns. Intentional modelling was a means to construct, re-create and/or refine repertoires of practice. As quilters stitched, played with colour, and solved problems together, their ways of talking, acting and thinking embodied the quilting groups' set of cultural values and beliefs. Modelling occurred either through explicit verbalisation, or implicit articulation.

#### **5.3.3.1 Explicit verbalisation**

Initially, I was perplexed to observe two master quilters asking questions about a quilt, when they obviously knew the answers (8.05.13/KQO). But then I noticed neighbouring participants had tuned in to the conversation. Language, particularly talk, effectively modelled ways to share, and engage, with new information.

*Jane confirmed my interpretation of members' efforts to assist participants during Show and Tell. Supporting quilters, especially the quiet ones, encourages them to share their stories.*

*Leah reinforces: 'It's deliberate'; explaining questions are often asked to give the quilter an idea of what she might share with others.*

*Sometimes, Jane will move around the group looking at the projects, taking note of the ones 'we haven't seen for a wee while'. Participants may be asked to show these quilts during the sharing time.*

*Leah says sometimes she will 'talk for them', modelling the way a quilter might share her story with the group.*

*Referring to a specific quilt, Jane explained that by asking whether the quilt was a panel promoted the idea there is 'a lot you can do with panel fabrics'. It provides an opportunity to share different ways a panel might be incorporated in a quilt, for example left as a panel, cut into blocks, or only use parts of it.*  
(15.05.13/KQCON)

There was community-wide expectation that everyone contributed, and with the aid of modelling through explicit verbalisation, the communal organisation positioned participants to be learners as both observers *and* inquirers.

### **5.3.3.2 Implicit articulation**

My attention was drawn to a master quilter who used implicit articulation to re-direct a participant's focus to the cause of a problem (16.06.13/KQO). Celia handed over her stitched row of oddly shaped pieces, which was causing much puzzlement. Mia inspected the row, moving it between her fingers, before asking Celia for the Perspex template. She held it over each piece, matching the template to the fabric shape, until coming across a piece that was going the other way. Mia exclaimed: "*It's back-to-front* [turns the template over, showing reverse side]. *It's been cut this way*" (16.06.13/KQO). But Celia refuted this assertion, stating the pieces were all cut the same way.

*Mia shrugs and smiles. She turns the whole row over to look at the exposed seam side. She matches the reverse template side to the pieces, finding further mis-matches, each time turning the template over to show the difference. Mia does not speak. Watching the repetitive movements, the quilter suddenly realises what she has done.*

*Celia: Oh yes... I **did** cut it the wrong way. I folded the fabric in half [creating mirror reflection]... so there will be a few that are wrong. (16.06.13/KQO)*

Modelling, entailing implicit articulation with the aid of the stitched row and template, allowed Celia to recognise her mistake and accomplish her task with new understanding.

### **5.3.4 Demonstration**

Looking behind me, the cultural-historical tradition of passing on knowledge by means of demonstration, and example, attracted the attention of interested participants.

Demonstrations occurred within the context of quilters' productive activity. Individuals had a choice of whether to observe a presentation, which frequently stimulated discussion among the attending quilters. The three main forms of demonstration were: impromptu communal, project cluster, and side-by-side.

#### **5.3.4.1 Impromptu communal demonstration**

With the quilters' genuine interest to learn new ways of doing patchwork, impromptu demonstrations became a collective activity of creativity. Demonstrating "how to do" a patchwork technique often arose spontaneously from interest expressed during sharing of needlework projects. For instance, when Jess explained the Prairie Point technique used on the inner border of her Christmas quilt, questions came from the communal audience of quilters (24.04.13/KOQ). Consequently, Jess offered to "*draw something up for next week, if people are interested*" (24.04.13/KOQ). However, a keen participant responded: "*You'll have to demonstrate it!*" (24.04.13/KOQ). Subsequently, after Show and Tell the following week, quilters were invited to Jess' demonstration in the side room.

*Jess has already set up the ironing board with pins, scissors and a strip of fabric lying on top. The completed quilt sample is also on display. A fabric strip has been marked with lines from the centre fold to the edge. Ten quilters gather around the ironing board, positioning themselves to see what Jess is doing. She verbally explains how the folded strip has been measured and marked. Using scissors she cuts the first few markings and demonstrates the folding. Quilters begin to ask questions, pointing, touching, and talking amongst themselves as they inspect the sample and quilt. (1.05.13/KQO)*

In addition to skilfully showing the technique, Jess had prepared written instructions which were made available for participants at the demonstration's conclusion.

#### **5.3.4.2 Project cluster demonstration**

Workday and Sewing Weekend projects incorporated demonstrations for the cluster of quilters participating in the quilting activity. The peer-tutor's demonstration was usually a combination of explanations, written instruction sheet (with diagrams), material sample(s), and extra resources that might be required (such as cardboard for templates). To illustrate this activity, fieldnotes describe a peer-tutor's demonstration with a cluster of quilters as they prepare to construct a thread holder:

*Jill hands out the pattern which includes templates for fabric, plastic inserts, quilting lines and button placement. Using a sample thread holder, she shows how it is constructed 'all-in-one'.*

*Jill: [reiterates] One fabric and one pellon. Cut the fabric out first. Sew round here and leave a gap. See how it all works? (3.05.13/MQO)*

The project cluster demonstration was typically brief, giving concise “how to” instruction while using a sample to show each step. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, borrow the sample, and frequently worked together modifying the pattern.

#### **5.3.4.3 Side-by-side demonstration**

Side-by-side demonstrations entailed an individual observing an expert as she performed a technique, and then practised the skill under the watchful eye of the demonstrator. Quilters were usually aware of other participants’ speciality expertise, for example fabric dyeing; consequently, individuals would frequently request a side-by-side demonstration with a knowledgeable expert. Such an instance occurred, when Betty wanted to learn how to do the palestrina stitch<sup>66</sup> to decorate her patchwork caddy (14.06.13/MQO). After inspecting Jill’s decorative embroidery, Betty asked if she could show her the palestrina stitch. Using Betty’s caddy, Jill inserted a threaded needle, verbalising each step: “Take a little stitch here... and a little here. Now it’s like a chain stitch” (14.06.13/MQO). Jill repeated the steps, doing it slowly, exaggerating each thread movement. Betty nodded to indicate her understanding, and then it was her turn to do the stitching. Other quilters, sitting alongside, quietly watched while they continued with their own stitching. This intensive approach provided an opportunity to learn a new technique which could be applied to a variety of quilting projects.

## **5.4 Summary**

The purpose of this chapter has been to present data relating to the collaborative processes of quilting practice, with a particular focus on sewing backgrounds, social organisation and multi-party interactions. Interviewees provided invaluable background information about their past and present experiences, notably that they had learned to sew as children, with most being shown by family members, while three were formally instructed at school. In contrast, they had learned to quilt as adults mainly through paying tutors for patchwork lessons. Motives for joining the quilting group – developing

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<sup>66</sup> An embroidery stitch which produces a line of evenly spaced raised knots.

friendships and learning from other quilters – reflected the quilt tradition of past generations.

Quilt culture was two-fold:

- (i) Socialisation processes enfolded participants in cultural repertoires of practice, to develop a sense of belonging within a family of quilters. Rituals and spatial arrangements enabled participants to get to know each other. Friendships were a binding factor, which fostered a nurturing and supportive environment in which to share their experiences. Individuals were encouraged to participate in, and contribute to, quilting activities. Participants advocated using initiative to enhance collective understanding of quilting techniques, which endorsed flexible role-switching and the sharing of responsibility for learning.
- (ii) The types of social interactions showed there were diverse ways of quilting together. Multi-directional learning was a ubiquitous element in the quilting context. Flexible role-switching formed a horizontal participation structure where reciprocal relationships were mutually supportive. These multi-party interactions reflected distinct cultural patterns of learning within a collective zone of proximal development.

## CHAPTER 6

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### ETHNOGRAPHIC FINDINGS II

#### Ways of Knowing

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“You don’t teach! You see what others do” (10.05.13/MQCON).

In the previous chapter data was presented in relation to the quilt culture of how participants came to quilting; the way individuals were incorporated into the family of quilters; and the participatory practice of co-ordinating with, and assisting others, in shared quilting endeavours. However, as the quote above indicates, the quilters had particular ideas about how learning occurred in the quilting community, and it did not include teaching. But, how could quilters learn without being taught? In order to answer this unknown, I had to consider “so what did quilters *see*, and what were others *doing*”. I began to closely observe the quilters’ actions as they collaboratively worked together in quilting activities.

This chapter addresses the guiding question “What multimodal dimensions contribute to quilters’ co-construction of knowledge?” Central to data presented is the notion that multiple modes<sup>67</sup> of communication and representation contribute to quilters’ meaning-making. The chapter is organised into three sections. The first section provides an insight of participants’ perspectives about teaching, using observation and interview data, which assisted with interpreting findings. The second section explores the quilters’ multiple modes of making meaning through three multimodal dimensions: social, embodied, and material. The third section examines the co-construction of quilters’ collective knowledge which draws on everyday experiences, with the co-existence of three knowledge practices: knowledge reproduction, knowledge building, and knowledge creation. A vignette precedes the second and third sections, introducing the

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<sup>67</sup> Modes are socially produced in a community, and become cultural resources for making meaning (Kress, 2014).

reader to some key features which are further developed in the text. The chapter concludes with a summary of results, presenting a connection between the two data chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), before leading onto the discussion chapter.

## 6.1 Teaching Perspectives

Trying to understand what quilters do to support one another to learn, when “teaching” apparently did not happen, revealed multi-layered complexities within the quilting community. During my time observing the quilters’ collaborative interactions, I rarely heard the terms – teach, teaching, or teacher. Rather, teaching appeared to be associated with formal instructional contexts, such as school, where lessons were given. Communal projects, peer-led by a group participant, were sometimes light-heartedly perceived in a similar way. Such a happening occurred, when Vicki had a leadership role in planning a communal activity for master quilters to extend their design skills. She showed photographs from magazines, and her own quilt top to stimulate “*some ideas... to push you*”. One of the quilters quipped, “*She sounds very much the teacher*” (6.09.13/MQO). However, the approach of peer-tutoring was consistent with gaining support from more skilled community members and mutuality of project participants, rather than through one-sided instructional control. In addition, there was a sense of reluctance by peer-tutors to utter such words, as exemplified below:

*Jamie is asked by a quilter about her role during the Sewing Weekend, inquiring what she will be doing. Jamie is helping interested quilters to make the ‘5 x 5 Quilt’ which she’d shown to the group a few weeks ago.*

*Jamie: I’m the chief... the co-ordinator... umm... teacher. (9.10.13/KQO)*

### 6.1.1 The interviewees

To ascertain participants’ perspectives I directly asked interviewees: “So when does teaching occur within the group?”



Jess indicated teaching was dependent on participants specifically telling how they did things:

*“I think we’ve got that casual across the table teaching. We haven’t had anything much for a while but at one point we were having two or three, probably every three weeks, someone was being asked to show something” (28.08.13/KQI2).*



While recognising teaching happened, Leah was unable to articulate how it occurred:

*“I think teaching occurs much more than we ever thought”  
(21.08.13/KQ11).*



Meanwhile, Nina described how teaching took place in an informal way:

*I think teaching occurs all the time, in the little things. When I first started here, when I wanted to tie a knot in a threaded needle I would do this weird thing, and the knot would be five centimetres away from the end of the thread. Somebody said, ‘Oh you do it like this’... So I think just teaching a little thing like that was, you didn't come along to learn something as such, but you got taught it.  
(16.08.13/MQ12)*



Jane, on the other hand, talked about teaching in relation to learning:

*“I think the only way we can learn is by showing others, or trying to correct others. Some don't like being corrected, but most take it well and learn from that advice” (10.09.13/KQ15).*

Noticeably, each participant began their statement with “I think”, signalling the presence of teaching had not really been considered, nor was regularly spoken of. In situations where I initially referred to teaching, the quilters had a knack of turning the conversation back to learning. In this community the focus was on “learning”, not “teaching”. Learning happened differently, and was not representative of a structured teacher-learner tradition.

When I inquired about learning, the participants’ confident responses shared common viewpoints, exemplified by the following two explanations:



*It's very much just by **watching** [emphasis added] really, and we **discuss** [emphasis added] such a lot – all the time. We all have our own opinions” (9.08.13/MQ11).*



*Learning goes on all the time by **looking** [emphasis added] at people's work and **saying**, [emphasis added] ‘Hey, that's really neat. How did you do that?’... You just learn by **observing** [emphasis added] people and **looking** [emphasis added] at things.  
(16.08.13/MQ12)*

Additionally, learning was viewed more as an incidental occurrence but which, once again, highlighted similar perspectives, for instance:

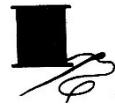


*“Often it is just a **chance** [emphasis added] thing that people come and see what you are doing, how you are doing it, and why you are doing it that way” (21.08.13/KQ1).*

Verbal communication and observation appeared to be *“just the way we do it”* (9.08.13/MQ1). Looking around the room, these two forms of meaning-making seemed to be ubiquitous within the quilting context, for example participants were chatting as they stitched, and a quilter was peering over someone’s shoulder to see the latest quilt being stitched (24.05.13/MQO). But then I noticed other “ordinary” everyday resources being utilised, contributing to the quilters’ understanding. Multiple modes of communication and representation were in operation.

## 6.2 Multiple Modes of Making Meaning

### Vignette



*Kim is hand quilting her kaleidoscope quilt, listening to a cluster of quilters. She suddenly inquires whether anyone remembers the measurements, and hemming steps, for a patchwork runner they did together as a group activity. A quilter sitting at another table leans forward and responds.*

*Looking across the room, Kim sees Jane's quilt in a hoop lying on the table. It is the same quilt pattern as the one she has started, using similar William Morris fabrics. Although Jane has left the room, Kim goes over to take a closer look at the border.*

*Kim: [says aloud to herself] How has it been quilted? ... [pause] ... She's gone along here.*

*Her finger traces the Celtic shape on border, feeling the texture of stitching in order to follow quilting lines, since it is difficult to see the quilting on floral print fabric. Kim checks the back of the quilt to see whether this is the only bit of the border that has been quilted. A cluster of quilters silently watch her actions and listen to her monologue.*

*Kim: [looks up, sees their quizzical expressions, and explains] Jane's got the same quilt as mine.*

*She continues verbalising her thinking, more to herself than to anyone in particular.*

*Kim: She's quilted the inner border [notes how this is done on the narrower border which is also a floral print] but mine's plain [referring to solid colour fabric].*

*Kim turns the entire quilt over to check other quilting lines, which are visible on the backing fabric. (8.05.13/KQO)*

There are complex ways in which modes of speech, gaze, writing, image, gesture, posture, and objects interact in the quilters' co-construction of quilting knowledge. This vignette provides an introduction to how modes were orchestrated to make meaning. The scene focused on Kim and the relationship across and between modes, which included other participants, in diverse ways of knowing. Collaborative processes structured the *social dimension* of interactions, allowing Kim to tune in to the surrounding quilters' talk as an accepted means of engagement. Ideas became blended when Kim verbally asked for advice, with the expectation anyone could contribute, and

the *embodied dimension* of a listening quilter's body movement indicated her intention to respond. Kim's examination of the quilt, re-positioning herself to inspect stitching, foregrounds the *material dimension* of articulating meaning-making. The communicative act was shaped by the quilting group's norms and tacit rules, encouraging Kim to view another participant's quilt without her presence. Knowledge about the quilting technique was embedded in the material artefact, which was shared through Kim's verbalisation. Touch, an *embodied dimension*, aided Kim's understanding as she felt the stitching texture, along with gestural tracing of the design. The *social dimension*, once again, became dominant after Kim realised the quilters' attention was on her, and verbally explained her intentions. Quilters continued to watch and listen, recognising Kim's uncertainty about quilting the plain coloured inner border from the tone of her voice, and further investigation of the quilting design.

As exemplified by the vignette, there exists an ensemble of modes which combine and complement each other, in order to make sense of the quilting endeavour. The discussion in this section follows the structure of Table 6.1 which presents a summary of the three multimodal dimensions: social, embodied, and material. Each of these dimensions has been sub-divided to provide examples of how the selection and interpretation of these modes are significant for the quilters' meaning-making.

Table 6.1 Summary of Multimodal Dimensions of Meaning-Making

6.2.1 Social Dimension	6.2.2 Embodied Dimension	6.2.3 Material Dimension
<p><b>6.2.1.1 Forms of speech</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quilters' vocabulary</li> <li>• Everyday language</li> <li>• Personal and collective viewpoints</li> <li>• Explanation</li> <li>• Storytelling</li> <li>• Judicious use</li> <li>• Thinking aloud</li> <li>• Appraisal commentary</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.2.2.1 Gestural movements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pointing gestures</li> <li>• Iconic gestures</li> <li>• Physical motion</li> <li>• Exaggerated</li> <li>• Touch</li> <li>• Facial expressions</li> <li>• Head motion</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.2.3.1 Written communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Printed resources</li> <li>• Diagrams</li> <li>• Sketches</li> <li>• Drawings</li> </ul>
<p><b>6.2.1.2 Patterns of observation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandering</li> <li>• Third party attention</li> <li>• Observer to doer</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.2.2.2 Body orientation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positioning</li> <li>• Posture</li> <li>• Directionality</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.2.3.2 Technology-mediated tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quilting tools</li> <li>• Sewing machines</li> <li>• Digital technology</li> </ul> <p><b>6.2.3.3 Textile medium for creativity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experimentation</li> <li>• Creative mistakes</li> <li>• Construction method</li> <li>• Embedded or objectified knowledge</li> </ul>

### 6.2.1 Social dimension

The quilters advocated that the use of talk and watching others were the most important features of learning in social interactions. Through collaboration with other quilters, coordinating speech and observation, the participants were able to develop a shared knowledge of quilting. Socially sharing ideas and expertise through these two modes, assisted participants to problem solve, build upon each other's contributions, and gain inspiration, as articulated by Jill: *"If I've got a problem with anything, it's talking with others, seeing what they do which is absolutely incredible"* (26.08.13/MQ15). Consequently, the analysis begins by foregrounding the social dimension to examine the quilters' forms of speech and to explore patterns of observation.

#### 6.2.1.1 Forms of speech

Listening to the quilters' talk, it soon became apparent they had a specialised craft vocabulary that required skill-based knowledge. For instance, the construction of a patchwork bag involved: *"sew and flip, using different lengths of strips, and string piecing"* (5.06.13/KQO); while, sometimes a seam allowance necessitated: *"a bare ¼ inch... not a big ¼ inch"* (6.09.13/MQO).

Everyday language was interspersed as the quilters learned technical skills, providing a practical approach to procedural steps. For example, aware that participants often expressed a difficulty of applying mathematical concepts, Jamie used counts of clockwise turns to explain block rotation, rather than referring to right turns of 90 degrees:

*Jamie: With the first section one turn clockwise [shows this.] One [counts clockwise movement]. The second section two turns clockwise. One, two [rotates block]. This one you don't turn [leaves it]. The fourth section three turns clockwise – one, two, three [rotates block]. (19.10.13/KQO)*

Personal viewpoints presented an assortment of perspectives, adding something of relevance to the conversation. In attending to collective viewpoints, the individual had to consider alternative options as she followed the dialogical exchanges and justifications, in addition to giving thought to her own contribution. For instance, as Rachel considered the placement of circular templates on her patchwork runner to create the quilting design, five quilters gathered around (1.05.13/KQO). They suggested using different sized circles, collected crockery plates to trial combinations, discussed number of circular sets to stitch, and whether to “*stitch-in-the-ditch round peeper*”<sup>68</sup> (1.05.13/KQO). During the communal manipulation of everyday “templates”, Rachel remarked: “*I don't want too many. It's small so I only want a few*” (1.05.13/KQO); and re-positioned the plates on the patchwork top to ensure the peeper embellishment defined the border edge.

Explanation offered guidance in deciding on a course of action. Such was the case during the organisation of KQ's annual exhibition with decisions made about hanging the quilts (2.08.13/KQO). Leah recommended that Jamie's award winning quilt from the National Quilt Symposium be the focal point of the exhibition stating, “*It needs to be right in visitors' line of sight as they enter [points to wall]*” (2.08.13/KQO). Committee members agreed, and Jamie suggested that all the large quilts be hung side-by-side on this wall, which received everyone's approval.

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<sup>68</sup> A trim consisting of a strip of folded fabric inserted into border seamline.

Additionally, explanations provided guidance with proficiency of quilting skills. On such occasions, the speaker's physical actions frequently matched her verbal description of the steps. Evidence of this communicative interaction was illustrated when Celia, threaded needle in hand, proceeded to show a participant the stitching technique for binding a quilt:

*Go in here, forward a bit then up through here... Another thing – go on the seam-line... take the stitch through the seam-line... Like this... then it looks like part of seam... (8.05.13/KQO)*

Storytelling contextualised information by way of a personal narrative or public performance. Details about specialised techniques or quilting trends were shared. Kasey, for example, described her Indonesian shopping experience for batik fabrics in the market alleyways, and the different dye techniques (26.07.13/MQO). Narratives circulated through their retelling, with quilting information “framed” within storylines, adding to the quilting group's collective wisdom.

Talk was judiciously used in situations where quilters collaboratively engaged in familiar cultural practices, such as when layering quilts. This form of speech was exemplified when six participants worked together to layer Rachel's large quilt:

*Hands run over the quilt top, smoothing out fabric folds, a section is pinned.*

*Karly flips over the bottom of the quilt, revealing a folded tuck. The quilters unpin the section, and smooth the fabric out from the middle.*

*When they finish pinning the layers, the quilt is folded into thirds to inspect the back. The quilters spot that one part requires further smoothing.*

*Rachel: I'll check it at home.*

*Sally: Mark the spot.*

*Jess silently hands over a safety pin, pointing to where the quilt needs re-pinning. (7.08.13/KQO)*

Although talk was minimalistic, the participants had a shared understanding of the task, with pointers linked to the quilting activity in which they were engaged.

Thinking aloud, an accepted protocol, provided access to individual cognitive processes. Thinking processes revealed how problems were approached, along with associated

reasoning and justification. Such an example was witnessed when a quilter rearranged blocks of her quilt layout, commenting:

*If I put it here, it looks lime green... but this way, it is purple.* [She recognises the combination of colours create different effects.] *The light from the window changes it too.* [Three blocks are shifted.] *Now the colour flow is lost...* (3.07.13/KQO).

Appraisal commentaries between individuals, and from the collective, were acknowledged as a productive contribution for learning. For example, Avril watched as Gina fingered the stitching on her appliquéd quilt, then inquired about the technique used (24.05.13/MQO). Gina explained it was reverse buttonhole stitching, but added: *"I'm not happy with stitch on white* [prods black thread stitching which slightly overlaps onto the white background fabric]" (24.05.13/MQO). Appraisal occurred in the moment of the activity, with consideration given to the process, as well as to the material object itself. For instance, an individual pegged her kaleidoscope quilt top on the wall, and stood back to view it as a whole (10.05.13/MQO). While she talked with another quilter about what borders to attach and possible quilting designs, other participants began to discuss the patchwork design. Betty commented: *"It's missing something. It needs a pale colour to lift it* [raises hands]" (10.05.13/MQO); notwithstanding, Jill called it *"sophisticated"* (10.05.13/MQO), noting subtleties created by the design. Friendly banter between quilters, working side-by-side, was another form of feedback. Such was the case when Celia, Sara, Stella and Karly conversed together as they worked on their individual projects (17.08.13/KQO). Following Sara's recommendation, Celia unpicked her quilt top to remove a specific block; Karly provided a tape measure so Sara could check the length of her mis-matched rows; and Stella contemplated their preferences for constructing her quilt's border, taking note of Karly's dislike of the appliquéd option. Commenting on one's own and others' needlework was a familiar occurrence. There was an expectation for, and acceptance of, immediate feedback in order to improve their quilting mastery.

#### **6.2.1.2 Patterns of observation**

"Seeing what others do" encompassed attributes of watching, listening and attending which were embedded in the quilters' repertoires of practice. Whether working side-by-

side, or in distal positions, there were opportunities for quilters to observe a variety of quilting activities, both individual and communal projects, that utilised different needlework techniques. The centrality of focused attention incorporated different levels of intensity, ranging from curiosity to purposeful concentration.

It was customary for individual participants to deliberately wander around the room, seeing what others were doing. Comments, such as *“just being nosy”* (9.08.13/MQO); or *“just looking”* (26.04.13/MQO), seemed to legitimatise the action. Stopping to *“enjoy a cuppa, taking time to have a stretch, or walking to the ironing board”* (17.08.13/KQO), provided further opportunities to look at, and inquire about, participants’ projects. *“Just being around”* to observe was encouraged, and in so doing quilters became part of the community’s skilled activities.

At times, casual wandering led to contributing ideas during quilting activities. Such was the case, when Molly stopped to observe a cluster of quilters auditioning blue fabrics for Kate’s *“Pinwheel Table Topper”* (6.09.13/MQO). The navy blue fabric was too dark, while the floral print was too busy, but Kate did not want to introduce another colour. Molly interjected, *“You could turn the blue over”* (6.09.13/MQO), revealing a softer shade which the cluster agreed worked well.

Individual engagement, even in a cluster of quilters, did not preclude keen attentiveness to surrounding events. *“Third party attention”*<sup>69</sup> was a distinct cultural way of learning. Quilters learned through observing others engaged in quilting activities, but which were not directly addressed towards the quilter herself. Common cultural patterns of third party attention included: scanning surveillance, looking fixedly, sideways glance, and tuning in.

Surveillance of the room was a regular observational action by the quilters. By being aware of what was happening around them, participants anticipated ways in which they could contribute. For instance, Rita noticed Vera unpicking and went over to see what had happened, commenting: *“You were working on it last week”* (6.09.13/MQO). Dissatisfied with the cotton thread’s quilting effect, Vera was contemplating how to quilt

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<sup>69</sup> A term used by Silva, Shimpi, and Rogoff (2015).

the runner. Rita collected her box of coloured “invisible” threads, offered them to Vera, describing how the thread changed colour to match the fabric, but that the machine tension might need altering.

In addition, the participants’ scanning action alerted them to activities of interest. For instance, Joan’s unusual action of holding a strip of binding to her nose and stretching out her arm, caught the attention of quilters (3.05.13/MQO). In response to their questioning looks she explained: “*That’s a yard [repeats actions]. Haven’t you done that?*” (3.05.13/MQO). No further explanation was required: the non-standard measurement of an arm length was equivalent to one yard.

The attending quilter, who looked fixedly at an activity, directed her focus on minute details, of which the observed participant(s) was seemingly unaware. Such an event occurred during a Sewing Weekend: while Nancy continued hand quilting she keenly paid attention to Mia making a patchwork bag (15.06.13/KQO). The next morning, Nancy announced to two quilters: “*I wrote up how to make Mia’s bag. I watched her like a hawk yesterday*” (16.06.13/KQO). Observational learning did not rely on anyone intentionally giving systematic instruction.

Meanwhile, the “sideways glance”<sup>70</sup> was a flickering movement of the eyes, being conscious of side-by-side activity. For instance, Petra glanced sideways noticing that Jackie was also paper piecing hexagons (3.07.13/KQO). However, Petra’s eyes began to flicker more frequently towards Jackie’s hexagon pieces. She put down her stitching, and drew Jackie’s attention to the different ways they were preparing each piece:

*While one quilter bastes through the layers of the fabric and paper; the other quilter catches the seam allowance only, leaving the cardboard free. The ease of cardboard removal from the fabric shape is recognised, and this method is used for the last hexagons to be sewn. (3.07.13/KQO)*

Observing activities encouraged comparison of quilting methods, collaboration and guidance.

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<sup>70</sup> A term used by Downey (2007).

Tuning in was sometimes more difficult to ascertain, since it involved an individual(s) who listened in to a conversation. This action was not considered “eavesdropping” since quilters were generous with their information sharing, as illustrated in the following exchange:

*Rita and Kate are facing each other, deep in conversation. Gina is sitting next to them, eyes down, stitching her quilt.*

*Rita: I'd like to do appliqué... [motions turning action]. Not blanket stitch... I don't know what it's called.*

*Gina: [tunes in] Needle turn appliqué. (3.05.13/MQO)*

Attending to third party activities, often encouraged participants to transition from observer to doer. For instance, over several weekly sessions Violet, a novice quilter but master embroiderer, silently watched various activities while stitching, with her attention constantly drawn to the progressive construction of two colonial knot quilts (24.05.13/MQO). Unaware of her observation, Helen and Jocelyn were each making a variation of the quilt pattern, embroidering detailed block designs. Inspired to make a colonial knot quilt for her next project, Violet purchased stencilled blocks in preparation. Finally, she approached Helen to inquire about the construction of the quilt top. Observation sometimes led to being guided by other quilters.

The social multimodal dimension offered learning opportunities for quilters through dialogical exchanges, and attention to the surrounding quilting activities. The quilters' flexible use of speech and observation was a key feature of the quilting tradition, and emphasised the inclusion of participants in the quilting community.

### **6.2.2 Embodied dimension**

A turning point in the present study emerged with an “ah-ha” moment, when I became mesmerised by two quilters who were browsing through a quilting magazine. My attention was drawn to the constant movement of their hands, used to communicate particular features of interest (30.08.13/MQO). The air was punctuated with the odd word or phrase, as pages were turned, for example:

*Quilter1: Same* [pointing to quilt designs].

*Quilter2: Different colour* [turns page].

*Quilter1: Labyrinth* [leans forward to take a closer look at the pattern].

*Quilter2: Clever... way it's worked out* [a finger slips between the pages to bookmark the pattern].

*Quilter 1:* [turns page] *Something about that... jazzy* [hand moves over pattern].

*Quilter 2: Interesting way of doing it... the way it's joined* [finger outlines block construction]. (30.08.13/MQO)

What was being verbalised, found meaning in the quilters' tacit embodiment which remained unspoken. With "new" eyes I looked around the room at quilters' interactions: they not only talked and directed their gaze, but also gestured, using hand, arm, and head movements; and oriented their bodies, assuming various postures.

#### **6.2.2.1 Gestural movements**

Gesture was discerned as a sequence of moving hands, arms, head and facial features, at a particular time and space. Pointing gestures were associated with the quilters' physical environment. These were used to indicate an object, person, location or direction. As illustrated when Meg wanted to know how to hand quilt, pointing gestures may occur with or without speech:

*Jamie:* [picks up quilt] *Really you need enough (fabric) so when you put the hoop on the edges... allows you to quilt here* [points to indicate what she means]. *You need a hoop. We've got hoops* [hand signal made towards storage room]. *You need the round one.* (24.04.13/KQO)

Iconic gestures were frequently used with fingers tracing, and hands forming, pictorial representations for meaning-making purposes. The following example demonstrated embodied thinking, when three quilters collaboratively shared border design ideas for a participant's quilt (2.10.13/KQO). Figure 6.1 illustrates the various designs which were traced by quilters' fingers, building on each other's contributions:

*(a) Nancy notices there are double quilted lines at certain points, but there is not enough stitching to hold layers in place, so she suggests doing some more lines.*

(b) The quiltmaker (Q1) thought about stitching a similar design used on the quilt top.

(c) Delia simplifies Q1's design to create a diagonal line in each oblong border piece.

(d) Nancy adapts this idea, ensuring there are more stitching lines in the border pieces.

(e) However, Q1 then informs the other quilters that the pieced border oblongs are not the same size.

The dilemma required participants to re-think possible designs.

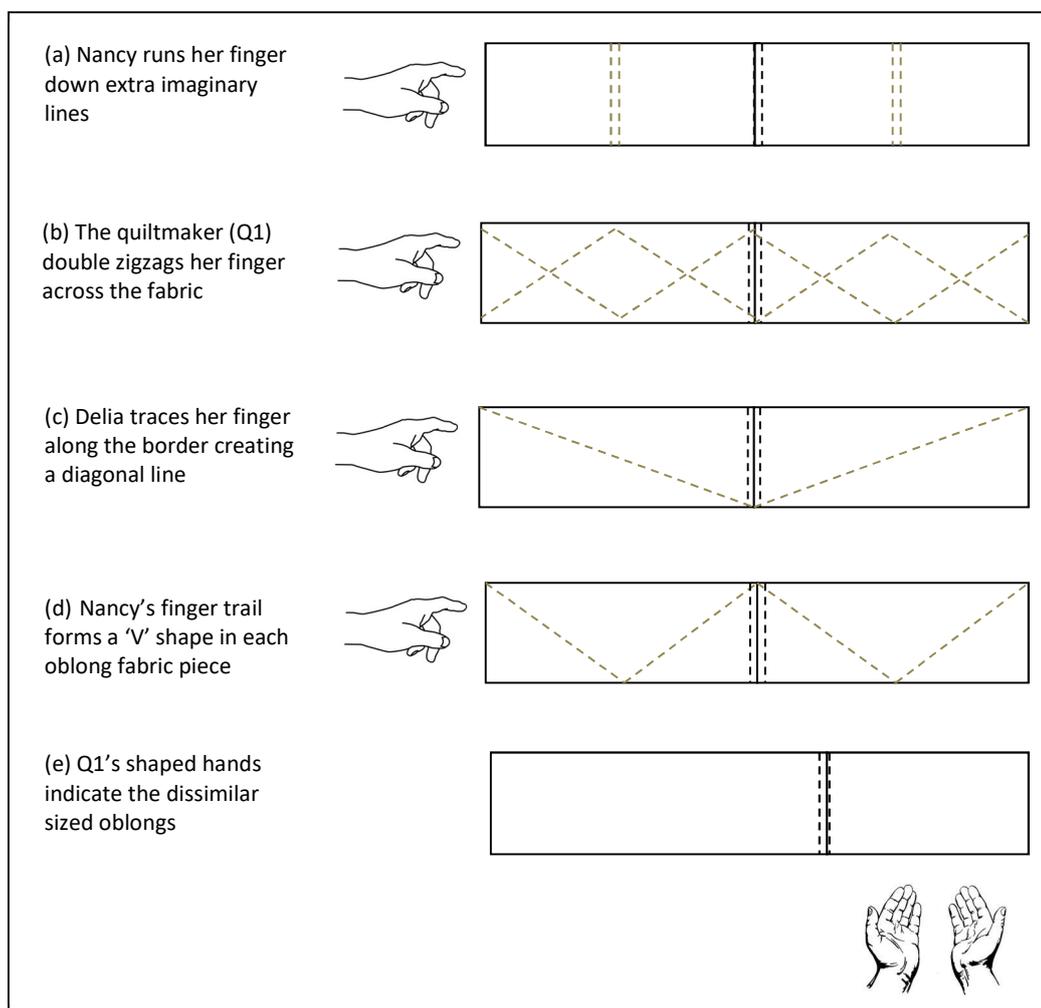


Figure 6.1 Embodied thinking using iconic gestures in a collaborative quilting activity (2.10.13/VMA).

Being able to visualise the design, through the cupping of hands, demonstrated a tacit level of competency. For example, Gina places her hands at right angles, visualising (see Figure 6.2):

*It would form a 'V' here [pause]. Why don't you stop here? [indicating the point at which her hands met at the inner border]... Go back up this way... then across to here... and back? [tracing alternative design]. (26.04.13/MQO)*

Embodied thinking guided the quilting process as ideas were generated and modified.

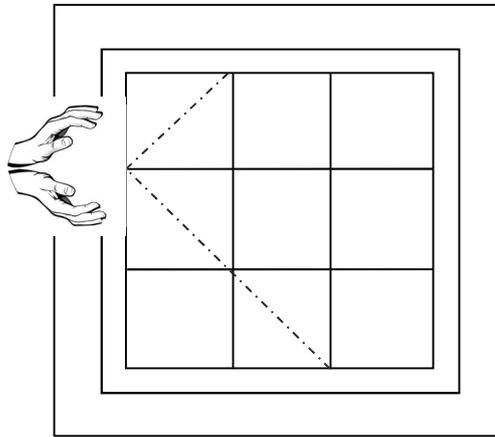


Figure 6.2 V-shaped hands externalise visualisation of quilting design (26.04.13/VMA).

Imaginary tracing of a new machine quilting technique enabled a participant to practise the physical motion before applying it to fabric, as exemplified by Nina: *“I was going to do stippling, but Jill showed me this photo of an art quilt”* (4.10.13/MQCON). Figure 6.3 illustrates how Nina’s finger (a) traced a row of circles on paper: *“You have to be careful with the shape that it doesn’t end up like this”*; and (b) created a pebble effect for the quilting design: *“Better to have them in different places”* (4.10.13/MQCON).

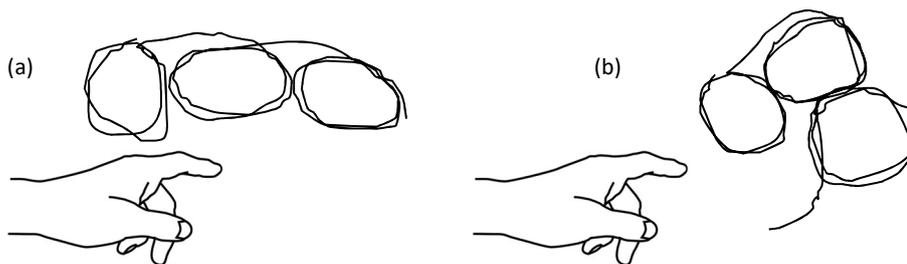


Figure 6.3 Physical stitching motion using gestural movements to (a) explain machine quilting technique, and (b) practise the new technique (4.10.13/VMA).

Exaggerated hand and arm movements, presented in slow motion, magnified the action to demonstrate a new skill or technique. Such was the case, when Delia showed the embroidery technique of feather stitch to Dolly by picking up the thread, exaggerating the movement, saying, *“Put the thread over”* (15.06.13/KQO). In addition, participants guided others’ movement when handling or testing tools ensuring safety and accuracy.

For example, Jamie guided a participant through the rotary cutting process by positioning the participant's hand on the ruler, and physically shifting her hand up the ruler, until the length was cut (19.10.13/KQO).

Touch was fundamental for quilters' sensory experiences, utilising exploratory movements. Textiles were constructed of natural and/or synthetic fibres, creating different textures and weights, exemplified when a visiting South African quilter showed *shweshwe* fabrics produced in her country:

*A variety of brick red fabrics are handed around for participants to feel. The texture is like cardboard since the textiles have been starched, as part of the production process. This aspect raises questions about suitability for quilting, with an explanation that the fabrics are washed, to soften the fibres, before being used for patchwork projects. (25.09.13/KQO)*

The action of touching allowed quilters to "read" textiles of different kinds for quilting purposes, such as suitability for patchwork project, fabric preparation procedure, and care with the layering process. The quilters learned through their actions, with "touch" expanding their resources for meaning-making.

Facial expressions and head motion often expressed active thoughts of participants, at the moment of speaking, as well as in the absence of talk. The subtleties of raised eyebrows, a slight shake of a head, or a determined "look" between quilters communicated tacit understanding. For Meg, Celia and Sara a three-way "conversation" unfolded when the novice quilter approached the experienced quilters for advice about the piecing of rectangles, featuring *tūī*<sup>71</sup> bird fabric (15.06.13/KQO). When Sara suggested cutting around the *tūī* birds to appliqué them, Celia imperceptibly shook her head. Sara looked questioningly at Celia's furrowed brow, while Meg remained oblivious to the nonverbal communication. Realising this technique was beyond the capability of the novice, Sara nodded her head in comprehension. The shift from explicit meaning-making through speech, to tacit knowledge co-construction was represented and demonstrated through embodied interactions.

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<sup>71</sup> A native New Zealand bird known as the 'parson bird'.

### **6.2.2.2 Bodily orientation**

In quilting activities the positioning, posture and directionality of participants' bodies were part of the interplay of messages conveyed for meaning-making purposes. Thinking processes were related to bodily orientations, as evidenced in the following example:

*A Selvedge quilt is spread out on the raised platform. Kasey sits on her quilt with an invited participant, and describes its construction. Aware of the explanation being given, three other quilters approach the platform. Bella leans forward, noting the blocks are triangles. Kasey corrects this misconception by cupping her hands, outlining the foundational square block. Rita kneels down, points to a strip, and asks a question; while Jem stands behind her with a quizzical look on her face.*

*Although some individuals have their bodies turned away from the platform it did not mean they are unaware of the interaction; indeed, later a few of them converge to search for selvedges donated to Kasey's quilt project.*

(17.05.13/MQO)

Embodiment sequences resembled an organised social practice, where quilters mutually oriented their bodies, co-ordinated movements and integrated talk, to co-construct knowledge during face-to-face interactions.

### **6.2.3 Material dimension**

The materiality of a quilting context, such as preparing templates, co-ordinating fabrics, and measuring borders, seemed obvious. Recognition of the material objects' role within social interactions was initially overlooked as I had focused on the explicit and implicit nuances of social interactions. But when reviewing and analysing quilting activities, the "quilt" seemed ever-present, along with the quilters' sewing tools and equipment. Cultural material artefacts and tools functioned as meaning-making mediators between quilters. Evidence is provided to illustrate the scope of the material multimodal dimension: written communication, technology-mediated tools, and the textile medium for creativity.

### 6.2.3.1 Written communication

A variety of printed material provided inspiration for quilting projects. Reference sources included, but were not limited to: published quilting books, children’s picture books, magazines, commercial patterns, kit sets, maps, newspaper articles, archival records and photographs. For instance, designing a quilt based on her son’s experiences at *Pukaha*,<sup>72</sup> Nina used Joy Cowley’s (2012) book *Manukura: The White Kiwi*, for creative inspiration (6.09.13/MQCON). She intended experimenting with machine embroidery and fabric crayons to produce a fabrication of the rare bird. Written instructions of quilt patterns were frequently cited by participants as being difficult to understand. Uncertainty and hesitancy were evidenced through comments, such as: “*I thought it was me... just couldn’t get it [points to head]*”; and “*much easier if it was in comic form*” (10.05.13/MQO).

Diagrams became a visual aid and shared referent for communication. Such was the case, when confusion arose with the fabric layout of the “5 x 5 Quilt” (19.10.13/KQO). Figure 6.4 demonstrates (a) how the peer-tutor folded the original diagram so (b) only the 3 x 3 layout was visible to illustrate placement of the nine fabrics. Participants folded the diagram exactly the way it was modelled, and (c) some decided to create fabric swatch boards, matching textiles to the diagram.

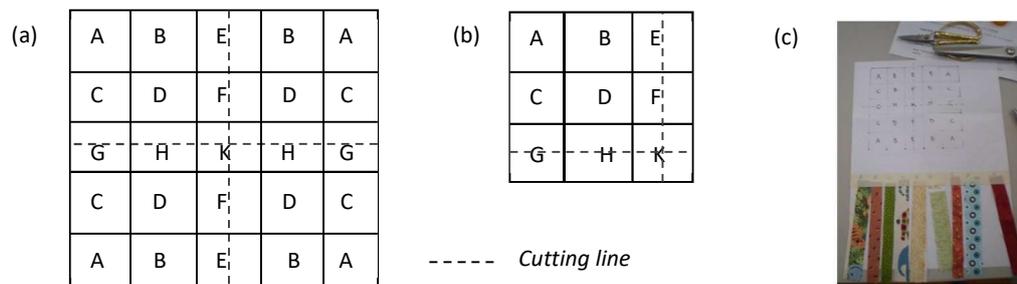


Figure 6.4 Visual aids for “5 x 5 Quilt” construction included (a) diagram for piecing, (b) diagram for cutting lines, and (c) fabric swatch board. Photograph Permission (19.10.13/VMA).

Sketches and drawings enabled quilters to visualise their design ideas, providing guidance for constructing quilt patterns. For instance, sketching was a thinking tool for Kasey to organise visual elements, bringing her proposed block design into a tangible

<sup>72</sup> National Wildlife Centre based at Mount Bruce, Aotearoa New Zealand.

form (see Figure 6.5). Supporting her externalisation, and envisioned design ideas, Kasey recorded experimental options of re-cutting and rotating pieces:

*Kasey: Make 6 ½ inches down to 6 inches [draws diagram of nine-patch with dotted line to indicate cutting into quarters]... If I put it in the centre here [squiggles pen to indicate mustard coloured fabric placement]. Cut out... and turn each square; then there will be spots of it [referring to central fabric]. Spreading it, might just lift quilt...? (10.05.13/MQCON)*

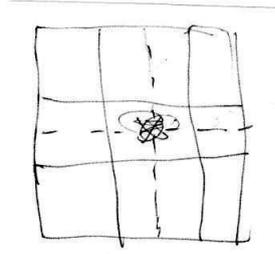


Figure 6.5 Sketching as a “thinking tool” to visualise design ideas (10.05.13/VMA).

Drawings required notated measurements, since accuracy in quilt designing was essential. For example, when Meg approached Jamie for assistance with a revised plan for her KQ’s Quilt Challenge, the master quilter noticed the inaccuracy of Meg’s scale drawing (16.06.13/KQO). She emphasised “maths”, stating the need to measure from the middle, ensuring unit sections were the same, and reminded Meg to add on the seam allowance.

### **6.2.3.2 Technology-mediated tools**

The quilters’ sewing kits contained an array of quilting tools, with basic supplies of needles, pins, scissors, seam ripper and thread. Cultural quilting tools reflected quilting style preference(s), and identified technology-mediated tools from past generations to present-day which were used in the construction of quilting projects.

A rotary cutter, ruler and self-healing cutting mat were popular tools. However, not all quilters were confident in using them, being wary of making a measurement error during cutting. For example, the “5 x 5 Quilt” project required the pieced blocks to be re-cut into four sections; Dolly did not want to be the first person to cut her block, so Delia decided to be brave (19.10.13/KQO). Other project participants stood around the cutting board, watching as the ruler was positioned and checked. Aware of Delia’s hesitancy they chorused: “Cut it now!” (19.10.13/KQO), and the patched row was sliced

in half. The participants proceeded to guide one another, following each step of the cutting process (see Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6 “5 x 5 Quilt” participants’ (inter)action with cutting tools (rotary cutter, ruler, and self-healing mats). Photograph Permission (19.10.13/VMA).

Many of the quilters had extensive knowledge about the practicalities of their sewing machines and quilting accessories. With mutual support from each other, they spent time discussing machine capabilities, as well as solving mechanical problems. For example, several quilters tuned in as Lexi and Gladys shared their machine quilting experiences including: experimenting with tension for different fabrics; using a separate bobbin case; various foot attachments; dropping the feed-dog; changing stitch lengths; and manoeuvring fabric with the aid of a slip mat (15.05.13/KQO). Technological know-how encouraged quilters to trial ideas and create prototypes, extending their boundaries of creativity, for instance:

*Jess: I was going to make pin tucks along the sashing... they were quite wide. Then I thought I might use the twin needle instead.*

*Karly: I’ve never used my twin needles. How...?*

*Jess: It zigzags on the bottom.*

*Karly: Oh-h.*

*Jess: Well, you know twin needles can make it look like pin tucks, so I thought I’d try that. I might use green thread... actually what about two coloured greens?*

*Karly: Two greens?*

*Jess: Yes, instead of using the same green in the top, to have two different colours of green on the top... a line one green, and another shade for the other line. (1.05.13/KQO)*

Most noticeable was the increasing trend of learning being mediated through digital technology within the quilting community. Portable computers were part of the quilters' toolkit, exemplified by the following:

*Betty: I brought my iPad to show Rhona [removes it from her bag]... quilting programme... she has a different one. [Quilters lean across the table to peer at the computer screen as Betty turns it on. She tries to connect to the internet.] No WiFi... [Opens up the programme.] It's an app. I've got this other one too.*  
*Joan: Can I get it for my computer? (26.04.13/MQO)*

The medium of YouTube tutorial videos appeared to be the newest way to learn quilting techniques. This growing trend was evidenced, when Jocelyn explained: "*Watched YouTube. I learned to do candlewicking through YouTube*" (24.05.13/MQO). An interviewee described her response to a quilter who brought along a magazine to share a particular technique: "*I said, 'You Google it! Then you'd be able to see somebody else doing it!'*" (28.08.13/KQI3). This statement reiterated the quilters' penchant to "see what others do". Quilting websites and blogs acted as information repositories, and participants also utilised online shopping facilities to purchase quilting paraphernalia, especially from North America.

Some quilters belonged to online quilting and/or needlecraft communities. For Rita, membership of a North American online community for machine embroiderers, provided an opportunity to critique others' textile works, and motivated her to produce innovative pieces:

*Rita is combining threads with unusual fabrics to create a modern look for her online mystery quilt. Rita and Kate view photos of other entries on her iPad, and discuss the different colour combinations of threads and background fabrics, justifying why some work and others don't. (3.05.13/MQO)*

In addition, digital camera images permitted quilters to discuss various features of quilts, or share experiences of out-of-town workshops. For Ruby, the images supported her appraisal of Australian quilts displayed at a Craft Show, with zoom options enabling a closer look at stitching details (25.09.13/KQCON). Smartphones instantaneously captured a variety of layout alternatives, encouraging discussion, comparison and appraisal of block combinations (9.10.13/KQO); or recorded the finished material

products of a collective activity (6.09.13/MQO). The merging of past and current technologies transformed participation and practice, within and across quilting communities.

### **6.2.3.3 Textile medium for creativity**

Collaborative learning cannot be fully understood without addressing the textile objects that were created, elaborated, and emerged during the quilting process. Participants' attention was on making the quilt, the specific *object* of activity.

Experimentation with textiles, commonly referred to as “playing”, encouraged quilters to explore limitless possibilities for original quilt designs. However, design knowledge was often invisible, embedded in the participants' quilts. For instance, Lexi was cutting paper lining shapes to reproduce the image of a stained glass window (14.08.13/KQO). Watching her progress, Jamie asked about the paper piecing method, trying to figure out how the shapes fitted together:

*Jamie places the pieced segments on the table but one does not fit. She lays the segments on top of each other trying to work out the design.*

*Jamie: Should it go 'pink-yellow-pink-yellow'? [deciding segments form a zigzag shape].*

*Lexi re-arranges the segments, laying them out in a triangular shape. She explains the construction relies on forming triangles, which then join together to create a star. Surrounding quilters are intrigued, listening to the experimental process involved in designing and stitching the patchwork together.*

(14.08.13/KQO)

The quilters' desire to explore colour, line, shape, harmony and design could lead to creative mistakes. When a mistake was made Mia believed in keeping on sewing: “*You never know. It might be better than the original stitch. It doesn't really matter. Create new designs this way. That's how it happens... If it doesn't look right, don't like it – then can decide to unpick*” (19.06.13/KQCON). In some cases, misinterpretation often led to something new, with details clarified during the process. For instance, after embroidering miniature scenes on hexagon pieces Jackie discovered construction of the rosettes did not match the bag pattern instructions: “*Mine's not on point*” (3.07.13/KQO). Jackie laid out the partially joined strip of rosettes, showing others what

had happened. After consideration a different shape was cut and stitched to form a border along the base, adapting the commercial pattern, creating a new bag design.

Different construction methods engendered quilters' interest. For example, Rita's strip pieced flannelette quilts aroused Kasey's curiosity: *"I've only seen it done in squares"* (10.05.13/MQO). However, on further inquiry and feeling the quilts' weight, Kasey realised there were only *"two thicknesses, no batting, and seams stitched on the outside"* (10.05.13/MQO). During the discussion, there was also recognition that *"doing strips would be easier, don't have to match the corners"* (10.05.13/MQO). In addition, examining and comparing material artefacts assisted with problem solving. For instance, following the thread holder Workday project, Bella intended to make six thread holders for family gifts, but had a difficulty: *"Unable to pull the ends in tightly, Bella examines the ends of Kate's completed thread holder. She notices there is no batting in ends and decides to leave it out of her next five"* (17.05.13/MQO).

The quilters placed knowledge, either embedded or objectified, onto the material artefact. Quilts served as an extension of the maker's identity, expressed connections, and carried forward traditions and values. Symbolically giving permanence to self a gifted quilt defined relationships, being a token of remembrance, respect, and love. The sensory aspects of textiles contributed to the embedded attachment of affective emotions, typified by Skye's action of stroking and cuddling the soft quilt made for her niece (10.04.13/KQO). The connections associated with the quilters' conceptual ideas and the production of material artefacts varied. Such was the case with KQ's Challenge Quilt entries which depicted each participant's interpretation of "What Kōmako means to me". Jess's quilt visually symbolised:

*Capital letter 'K' is for Kōmako – steaming hot cup is for the early morning coffee which quilters have together on arrival. Shaking hands is for friendship. Capped scholarly owl is for learning. (17.08.13/KQCON)*

Jamie's entry was more obscure. Using the left-over "ears" (irregular triangles) from the Flying Geese quilt currently being stitched, the title "Scraps, Scraps and More Scraps" defined her Challenge Quilt interpretation (21.08.13/KQCON). Figure 6.7 presents a selection of the quilts to highlight the variation.



Figure 6.7 Quilters' knowledge embedded or objectified in Challenge Quilts, with theme of "What Kōmako means to me." Photograph Permission (21.08.13/VMA).

Through successful collaboration, the quilting groups' social interactions and cultural practices were focused and cohesive. The social, embodied and material multimodal dimensions for making meaning supported and encouraged quilters to build upon each other's contributions, jointly constructing knowledge during their quilting activities.

### 6.3 Crafting Collective Knowledge

#### Vignette



*Emma's innovative quilt is a work in progress, depicting the historical achievements of her great grandfather's architectural life. A pencilled plan of the quilt traces the ship's voyage from Britain to Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1800s. A folder contains ideas for a series of blocks including: sketches of iconic buildings, with scraps of fabrics attached; embroidery strands matched to historic photographs; and, an information sheet about flying fish whose skins decorated colonial homes, in preparation for making an appliqué block. (31.05.13/MQCON)*

*Emma loves painting but has not used it on fabrics. She wants to use paint to lighten the photo transfers and seeks the advice of Ella, who is known for her expertise of applying surface design techniques. Ella has only used paint for drawing illustrations onto fabric, not highlighting photographs. Therefore, they discuss possible types of fabric paint to use, heat setting methods, and experimentation using different techniques. (21. 06.13/MQO)*

*Unexpectedly, the following week, Ella arranges fabric paints on a back table to show Emma how to apply them, using a variety of painting tools. Emma collects paper and pen to take notes. Nina stands nearby, silently observing the exercise.*

*Ella: [dribbles water in container with paint] Add water... tiny bit wet [stirs with mixing stick]. Too much and it runs... You add a medium thinner to lighten it [hands a bottle to Emma]. Then you literally paint it on [strokes paintbrush over the fabric surface].*

*She invites Emma to continue painting the prepared stencilled calico fabric.*

*Emma: [comments] Since I'm doing photos I'll use an opaque over the top of it, rather than transparent. I'll try it first.*

*Jill observes the continuing activity from her central position.*

*Jill: [comments to Anita] Might ask Ella to show group how to do painting.*

*Anita: [agrees] I think that would be interesting. Probably show how to paint backgrounds or small bits on quilts.*

*Spontaneously, the co-ordinator goes over to Ella to discuss the possibility of a Workday project. (28.06.13/MQO)*

While the importance of quilters' dialogue and attentiveness is acknowledged, meaning was made from all modes. I began to wonder about the relationship between the quilters' modes of meaning-making and the co-construction of *collective* knowledge. Practices and artefacts seemed to have a central role. Examining the vignette, the development of Emma's quilt required the quilter to research background information from various sources, and to consider how her personal historical interest could be translated into material form. Being a recreational painter, Emma had everyday knowledge about art painting techniques, but needed advice regarding fabric painting. Although Ella had not used paint for photograph transfers, using her initiative, she brought along paints for the pair to experiment with. The quilters' reciprocal multimodal prompts illuminated signs of learning, making knowledge for both Emma and Ella, such as deciding to use the more reflective opaque paint which allowed extra light to pass through to the image underneath. While Emma and Ella were fully engaged in their shared endeavour, two master quilters (Jill and Anita) contemplated the value of this specialty knowledge being shared with other interested members, as a Workday project. The intentionality of learning, initially a personal goal, became of mutual benefit to the community.

The quilters' approach to knowledge construction positioned joint participation around their knowledge practices<sup>73</sup> and knowledge artefacts (textile projects). This section, firstly, acknowledges the diversity of quilters' life experiences and everyday knowledge, which they brought into the quilting community's learning situation. Secondly, three broad knowledge practices, that is ways of working with knowledge in the quilting context, were identified: knowledge reproduction,<sup>74</sup> knowledge building,<sup>75</sup> and knowledge creation.<sup>76</sup> However, it must be realised that these practices were not mutually exclusive but formed an overlapping continuum, as quilters keenly embraced learning opportunities.

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<sup>73</sup> Knowledge practices refer to "personal and social practices related to working with knowledge" (Hakkarainen, Engeström, Paavola, Pohjola, & Honkela, 2009, p. 687).

<sup>74</sup> Lave (1988) stated that "the reproduction of activities over time *is* a production" (p. 148).

<sup>75</sup> I have borrowed this term from Scardamalia and Bereiter (2010), but purposely adapted its original meaning to bridge the continuous, overlapping connection of knowledge practices.

<sup>76</sup> A term used by Paavola et al. (2004).

### 6.3.1 Everyday knowledge

Quilters drew on their life experiences, building upon their everyday knowledge, personal interests and motives, and community backgrounds. Every quilter belonged to an assortment of communities. These communities were not separate entities, isolated from the quilting community, positioned as boundary objects. Instead, cultural processes overlapped and contributed to the quilting practice, since quilters brought personal toolkits of different forms of expertise, experience, and perspective to the quilting community. For example, Anita's extensive yachting experience and family tradition of quilting intermingled, as she interpreted an assortment of sailing terminology and quilting techniques with quilters:

*Anita: [puts a piece of threaded rigging on, along with the tapa sails] I'm going to cut some holes along the waves. Place the hull behind... Put this here [white threaded spray effect for ship's bow, explaining it was created using a wash-away method]. I might put a little bit of visoflex behind the masts... [positions them]. (24.05.13/MQO)*

Participation in practices of other cultural communities became evident when Bella voiced her perspective:

*With Tikanga Māori<sup>77</sup> we were taught that the first thing you made you gifted so I don't have any of my crafts. Then somebody said you're meant to keep your first quilt. I didn't, and I kind of took it to heart. (23.08.13/MQI4)*

Meaning-making was grounded in the quilters' patterns of everyday experiences and interests.

In addition, regional and national quilting events presented a diversity of quilting methods and expertise. For instance, feedback about the National Quilt Symposium flowed seamlessly into the quilting practice as attendees presented material samples, along with descriptive recounts of classes, lectures, international and national tutors, exhibitions, award winning quilts, and merchant mall (24.07.13/KQO; 26.07.13/MQO). Blending of ideas was evidenced through Petra's motivation to practise a painting technique, learned at Symposium, on her KQ Quilt Challenge entry (7.08.13/KQCON).

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<sup>77</sup> Māori customs and traditions that have been handed down through passages of time.

Keeping abreast with international quilting trends was considered important. Such actions were exemplified by Cynthia who unpicked binding from a quilt, gifted to her during a recent trip to Canada, to ascertain the piecing method (17.07.13/KQO).

Individual competencies and initiative were acknowledged, respecting personal goals and diversity, within the supportive learning space. The quilters' familiar everyday knowledge became entwined with unfamiliar experiences through the community's knowledge practices.

### **6.3.2 Knowledge practices**

The quilters took shared responsibility for learning, and had diverse ways of quilting together<sup>78</sup> using multiple modes for making meaning.<sup>79</sup> Working on individual and group projects involved collaborative processes, from which emerged three patterns of collective knowledge practices:

- Through knowledge reproduction quilters engaged with, and developed, the traditional skills and tools of quiltmaking.
- Knowledge building was either spontaneous or intentional as material artefacts were modified, improving quilting knowledge to the benefit of the community.
- During knowledge creation, a group of quilters shaped their learning activities to deliberately advance collective knowledge.

#### **6.3.2.1 Knowledge reproduction**

The practice of knowledge reproduction centred on the inherited techniques of quilt culture's history. Knowledge of traditional stitching methods and quilt styles were passed on to the current generation of quilters. Although the English paper piecing method<sup>80</sup> was customary in 19<sup>th</sup> century Aotearoa New Zealand,<sup>81</sup> not all quilters were familiar with the technique. A few individual quilters were working on hexagon tops, with one participant who had inherited a box of hexagons commenting: *"It's been a 12*

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<sup>78</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, Table 5.1: Summary of diverse ways of quilting together.

<sup>79</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, Table 6.1: Summary of multimodal dimensions of meaning-making.

<sup>80</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, Figure 2.2: New Zealand quilt collection documentation.

<sup>81</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, Section 2.4, for historical background details about quilting in Aotearoa New Zealand.

*year project so far*" (10.04.13/KQO). Returning from her holiday in Australia, Sara enthused: *"They're all doing it! Really popular [referring to hexagon pattern]. I bought 8 metres of fabric"* (15.05.13/KQO). The quilters revived interest in this traditional quilt style motivated Ruby to purchase a star hexagon pattern, recognising *"It'll take me a wee while to do"* (10.04.13/KQO). Some participants, like Ruby and Petra, were recycling scraps from completed quilt projects.

There was an organised system for constructing the hexagon quilts. Stitched hexagon rosettes were colour co-ordinated, as Gladys explained: *"I've got groups of lemon, blue and pink [indicates rosette piles clipped together with clothes pegs]"* (1.05.13/KQO); while another participant wrote numbers on the paper linings to order her hexagon placements (10.04.13/KQO).

Meanwhile, the existence of traditional knowledge within the community assisted contemporary quilters with problem solving. For example:

*Quilter1: [holds a hexagon rosette in hand] Does anyone know about these? Do you take the papers out?*

*A participant directs Quilter1 to Gladys and another quilter who are stitching hexagons. They tell her to leave the papers in until all the rosettes have been stitched together, forming the quilt top.*

*Gladys notices the hexagon rosette has been stitched incorrectly, and explains that the hexagon pieces are sewn together on the paper lined side of the shapes. (15.05.13/KQO)*

Likewise, when Stella did not know how to arrange her pile of hexagon rosettes:

*Suggestions are made by Sara, Celia and Karly as the rosettes are placed on the table. Pink rosettes form a pattern with single white patterned hexagons becoming 'fillers'. Stella wonders how to finish the edge to give it a straight line. Sara suggests inserting half hexagons with an alternative of cutting a straight line; while Karly provides another idea – to appliqué the quilt top on top of a border. (17.08.13/KQO)*

However, Petra had stitched her hexagon rosettes in rows, rather than traditionally working in a circular motion to join groups of rosettes<sup>82</sup> (31.07.13/KQO).

Variations of the hexagon quilt, a product of cultural history, resulted from using technological-mediated tools of the present day: Perspex templates, manufactured paper linings, pre-cut fabric shapes, and basting products. For example, “*Rather than use the fabric glue pen, Greta holds up a glue stick (bought from a stationery store) and a lined hexagon fabric shape, to show how she is ‘basting’ the pieces*” (31.07.13/KQO). In addition, when Delia completed her bed quilt, made with two centimetre hexagon shapes, she was unsure what to do with the hand stitched leftovers:

*Delia: I’m thinking I might pull the papers out of them... put it on a canvas. Then it could hang in the bedroom. Use a mixture of PVA (glue) and water, and put it over the hexagons...?*

*Jasmine: Yes, that would work.*

*Delia: Then I could put it on the canvas.*

*Jasmine: It would mould around the sides and hold it.*

*Delia: Mmmm... I won’t stitch any more. I might do it as a colour wash.*  
(24.04.13/KQO)

Technical solutions used past and present-day tools and technologies; while collaborative efforts supported the valued heritage of traditional quilting knowledge, developed by previous generations of quilters.

### **6.3.2.2 Knowledge building**

Knowledge building practices focused on pooling individual expertise to improve the collective’s quilting knowledge through exploring and experimenting. Being part of knowledge building processes was considered of value for oneself, *and* the community. The vignette alluded to this practice, demonstrating how Emma drew on Ella’s expertise, while observing participants recognised the merit of her fabric painting knowledge being shared with the quilting group (28.06.13/MQO). Knowledge building practices were

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<sup>82</sup> Suggestion provided by Tapsell (1979) in New Zealand’s earliest book publication on patchwork.

revealed during quilting activities, particularly when a quilter requested guidance to accomplish a task, or in a workshop setting led by a peer-tutor.

In unanticipated knowledge building occasions, participants shared their expertise and information for the benefit of all involved, pitching in to assist an individual. Simultaneously, quilters would gather around, becoming engaged in the activity by observing and listening to contributions made. A typical scenario of such knowledge building occurred when Kim laid out her blocks on the floor, and invited participants to “*change what you want*” (15.06.13/KQO), in order to co-ordinate the quilt top. Several experienced quilters moved forward to shift blocks around, while others joined the cluster watching the process unfold, listening to the discussion and decision-making:

*Blocks are swapped, while alternative suggestions are made: No sashing... Take these off-centre [referring to emerging diamond shape design].*

*A design imbalance occurs on the sides of the quilt, with a dominant zigzag line, and greens appearing in one section of the quilt top.*

*While some participants remain silent, others comment: ‘too much green’, ‘too pedantic’... More quilters gather round as the asymmetrical design begins to emerge.*

*A question is asked about the border. It is suggested the grey fabric may be suitable.*

*Kim: [frowning] I cut the grey fabric for the sashing... but it’s not having sashing now. I should have asked first before cutting it up [insufficient strips to form border]. (15.06.13/KQO)*

There was joint commitment from participants to solve the problem, collectively trialling various ideas such as: “*Strips could go round [coloured strips are randomly placed, with leftover grey fabric positioned at two corners, creating a different visual effect]*” (15.06.13/KQO). The social environment, comprising of the quilters’ dialogical exchanges and experimentation of the block layout, nurtured the individual’s quilting knowledge; and, at the same time, contributed to the collective’s knowledge as suggestions were compared and negotiated.

An alternative approach was an organised workshop led by a peer-tutor for intentional collective knowledge building. On the occasion of the “Pinwheel Table Toppers” (PTT)

workshop, Vera (peer-tutor) set up a demonstration table displaying samples, instruction sheets, and a book showing PTT colour combination variations (6.09.13/MQO). The workshop was an exercise of colour harmony, working with solid and/or printed fabric. The peer-tutor's verbal instructions were brief and to the point: *"Sort out fillers first. Do square first [topper centre]. Cut 4 and 7/8 inches. Put a line across centre [diagonal through square shapes]. 1/4 inch [seam allowance]"* (6.09.13/MQO). The PTT samples were a vital learning resource with the textile medium constantly referred to (by peer-tutor and participants), pointing out the basic unit construction of squares, triangles and fillers. For instance, Anita sought guidance with her pile of fabrics to decide which ones to use:

*Vera: You want contrast, don't you? That will be nice in corners [picks out a bold floral].*

*Anita folds squares of fabric into triangles, and lays them on the surface of the sample PTT. She then begins to adapt the pattern, visualising the effect of the colour combinations with fabric refolded to create a different basic unit.*  
(6.09.13/MQO)

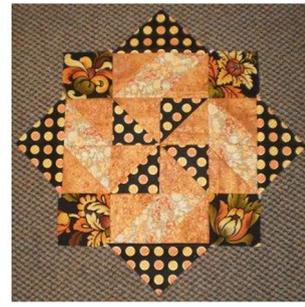
Through experimentation, viewing fabrics in combination with one another, participants began to determine the effect of colour value,<sup>83</sup> evidenced through comments such as: *"I think it needs another blue... breaks it"* (6.09.13/MQO). When one quilter made an error in cutting her fabrics, she decided to leave it as a square PTT, but Jill exclaimed: *"Can't have a square! Have to have points"* (6.09.13/MQO). A cluster of participants began to collaboratively work out how points could be created. The quilters moved around to observe each others' PTTs, contributing ideas and comments. Inspecting the binding on a PTT sample, Jocelyn noted: *"That's not cut on cross? [bias]. I've never done that before"* (6.09.13/MQO). Viewing the PTTs through the lens of a digital camera encouraged some participants to critique the visual texture of colour contrast and unit layout. Figure 6.8(a) shows the peer-tutor's two PTT samples: one is left unfinished to demonstrate a different binding technique. In Figure 6.8(b) collective knowledge building is illustrated through the resulting variety of material artefacts, produced by adapting the original PTT pattern.

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<sup>83</sup> "The amount of lightness or darkness in a colour" (Penders, 1989, p. 28).



(a) Peer-tutor's Table Topper samples, with one on right unfinished to show binding technique



(b) Selection of participants' Table Topper samples, illustrating variation and adaptation to original pattern

Figure 6.8 "Pinwheel Table Topper" Workday project with comparison of (a) tutor samples to (b) participants' patchwork products. Photograph Permission (6.09.13/VMA).

It appeared that quilters who had a project idea were expected to be the peer-tutor for the proposed workshop. By taking this opportunity, while receiving support from project participants and experienced peer-tutors, quilters learned how to guide others. For instance, during the "Ten Minute Runner" workshop Rita (novice peer-tutor) asked one participant if she could use her fabric tube to demonstrate the next step (5.07.13/MQO). Jem replied: *"It's crooked [the top edges are uneven]. Should have sewn them from the same end [recognises problem and shows Rita]. I'll unpick it"* (5.07.13/MQO). Later on, Jill (experienced peer-tutor) came across to check the progress of both project participants and novice peer-tutor:

*Jill: Come to see what you've done.*

*Rita shows Jill the inner seamline of her sample – the next step in the process.*

*Suddenly Rita notices the one-way pattern on Bella's fabric.*

*Rita: Hang on... birds are going sideways. Do you want that?*

*Bella: Doesn't matter... [unconcerned]. (5.07.13/MQO)*

### **6.3.2.3 Knowledge creation**

Using a collaborative process of innovative inquiry, the practice of knowledge creation was aimed at progressively advancing the quilting collective's knowledge and deliberately transforming its social practices. During the inquiry process, quilters developed *new* knowledge together, which was more complex than their existing knowledge and extended beyond knowledge that the quilting collective had previously encountered. The purpose of MQ's group activity, to design collective quilts, was focused on conceiving something new and clarifying yet unknown details. The design activity, "Block of the Month", was purposely planned, co-ordinated, and sustained over a calendar year.

Initially, thirteen master quilters were invited to participate, acknowledging that engaging in this collaborative designing process would challenge and advance quilting knowledge: "*People have different ideas... You get a whole cross-section of people doing different blocks, and that's the whole point*" (16.08.13/MQ13). Each participant was to design a "simple" block, which the other twelve quilters then reproduced in material form. In preparation, participants learned to write clear instructions, as well as provide diagrams and other supportive material, as exemplified below:

*Nola: [looking at Vera's kit] What are these fabric strips?*

*Vera: They can use them in their blocks. I put that in the instructions... That's why I've given it to you – to check the instructions. I trialled it first... to see if it works [shows block sample]. (3.05.13/MQO)*

Nola had to write several drafts of her block instructions: "*I sewed one block back-to-front [trianling a sample block] so wrote in capitals, fabric to be WRONG SIDE UP; even wrote it on the template [drawn on graph paper]*" (10.05.13/MQCON).

Using the materials provided, the stitched blocks were then returned to the designer who sewed them together to form a quilt. The new design practice required a planned monthly schedule for the distribution of block design details, and collection of completed blocks.

Much interest was shown during the inquiry process of designing blocks, with discussion among master quilters, while other group members observed the progressive steps undertaken. Discussion often led to tactile experiences with the comparison of textile artefacts, for example exploring fabric combinations (12.04.13/MQO); pattern variations (3.05.13/MQO); stitching capabilities (31.05.13/MQO); and colour tone-on-tone intricacies (21.06.13/MQO). On one occasion, the preliminary viewing of initial blocks sewn for one master's quilt design, caused activity participants to re-think how to achieve harmony for the overall look of the quilt (17.05.13/MQO). To lift the quilt, using accent colours, Gemma cut extra strips of the cherry fabric to counterbalance the dominant blue strips. Jill constructed four blocks, deliberately incorporating fabrics with plumages and splashes of red. A week later, with the addition of modified blocks, the designer laid out the completed set of quilt blocks. Expecting to see a combination of soft blues, yellows and greens, the participants were surprised at the visual effect. Gina commented: "*It's more yellow*" (24.05.13/MQO).

The knowledge creation practice of designing allowed conceptual ideas to be materialised, which sometimes required creative problem solving. For instance, when Vicki laid out her blocks, her immediate reaction was: "*Colourwash* [pointing to gradual deepening colour tones]... *only way it will work*" (27.09.13/MQO). Figure 6.9 shows how Vicki further modified her design by experimenting with the material artefact, turning blocks "on point" to form crosses ('X'), which differed from the instruction's original diagram.

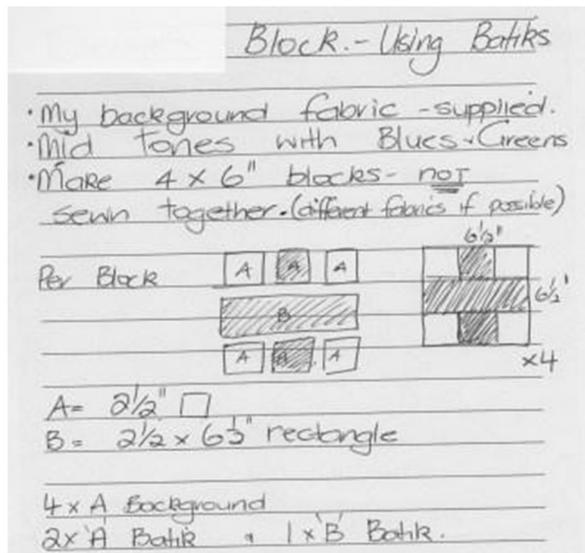


Figure 6.9 Design experimentation during “Block of the Month” activity, featuring Vicki’s instruction sheet and modified blocks stitched on point. Photograph Permission (6.09.13/VMA).

The textile medium of a sample nine-patch block let Kasey demonstrate the steps taken to create a variation of another participant’s design pattern (28.06.13/MQO). Her audience of observing quilters were then able to identify the designers’ creativity of “*putting it together in another way*” (28.06.13/MQO), to fabricate the quilts’ differing visual appearance and form (see Figure 6.10). Showing these quilts also provided an opportunity to encourage members to participate in a design activity planned for beginners.



(a) Kasey’s quilt



(b) Design participant’s quilt

Figure 6.10 Comparison of quilts made using the same foundational nine-patch block. Photograph Permission (6.09.13/VMA).

Designing and stitching of the resulting thirteen quilts demanded intellectual, aesthetic and technical skills. The participants’ reflection during the design process of developing

the textile artefact, from conceptual origins, was evident through the appraisal of quilt tops. For instance, critiquing her block design, Jill realised: *“The problem is, I chose the wrong centre. Wrong accent”* (19.07.13/MQO). Figure 6.11 illustrates a selection of the master quilters’ finished quilts, featuring blocks made by participants, with block layouts often co-ordinated by group members, and quilt top stitched by the designer.



Figure 6.11 Selection of quilt tops from the “Block of the Month” collaborative design activity. Photograph Permission (6.09.13/VMA).

Master quilters decided to build on their new design knowledge, with a sequential activity: “Design a Block with a Twist”. Swapping initial block design instructions, participants had to modify the pattern and use a specified fabric colourway. There was excited anticipation amongst the entire quilting group:

*Quilter1: [observing] This will test you!*

*There is much chatter and lots of thinking going on... Jem shows quilters a length of cream fabric (designated colourway) she’s recently purchased. Nola is quietly reflective, having to consider what she will do using ‘white’ for Gina’s pattern. Another master quilter asks to take a closer look at Vicki’s original quilt (designated pattern). (6.09.13/MQO)*

There was a notable change in quilting practice: “secrecy and whispers” emanated from the collective as visualisation of resulting quilts was considered; design activity

participants' comfort zones were pushed, such as using unfamiliar colourways; and non-participants were unexpectedly collaboratively engaged with decision-making. For example, Jem aired potential design ideas with observing quilters to obtain their opinions, such as inserting piping within the block (11.10.13/MQO). In addition, she requested floral fabrics – not her usual fabric choice – be used by design participants.

Figure 6.12 documents Nola's designing steps: (a) Gina's instruction sheet and quilt was used as a guide; (b) the instruction sheet was modified; and (c) a new design emerged, featuring the "white" colourway. Astonished master quilters gathered round when Nola revealed her completed quilt, and Gemma asked: "*How'd you do it?*" (18.10.13/MQO). Nevertheless, there was a feeling that these quilts did not belong to individual quilters; rather, they were akin to the innovative learning community, with Nola affirming: "*I don't really regard it as my quilt because it had a big input from other people. The quilt was a group thing*" (9.08.13/MQ1). Working creatively with knowledge was not only a matter of playing with ideas, but elicited in-depth inquiry and co-evolution of changing social practices within the quilting group. Consequently, design knowledge has continued to be developed, with design activities sustained over a period of time, extending beyond this current research study.

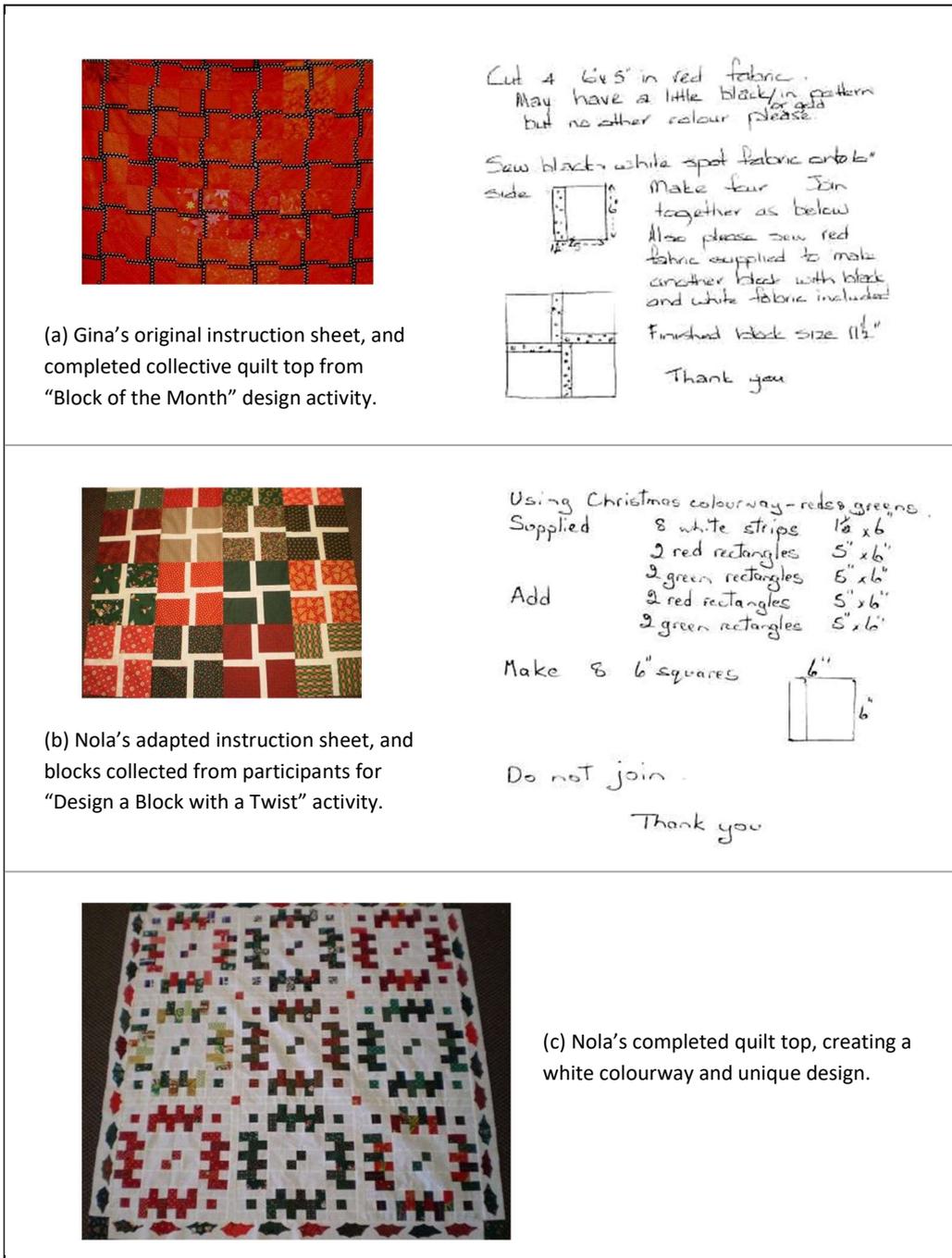


Figure 6.12 "Design a Block with a Twist" activity with example of steps taken to develop collective design knowledge. Photograph Permission (6.09.13/VMA and 18.10.13/VMA).

## 6.4 Summary

This chapter began by establishing the quilters' perspectives about teaching and learning. The presence of teaching was rarely considered; instead, the quilters placed an emphasis on learning. They shared a common viewpoint that learning occurred through talking with others and watching what people were doing, signalling the importance of social interactions. In observing this social dimension, it became apparent that the

quilters' thinking and learning processes were also communicated through, and represented by, the participants' embodiments of gestural movement and body orientation. Likewise, material mediation was central for making meaning, using a variety of material artefacts and tools, to aid thinking and explore ideas for creative purposes. Appraisal, in the form of immediate feedback, occurred during the quilters' ongoing activity to improve quilting competency.

While cultural-historical quilting traditions were reflected in current practices, it was discerned different types of knowledge practices co-existed in the collective. Cultural practices of knowledge-sharing included knowledge reproduction, knowledge building, and knowledge creation. Knowledge was jointly constructed through imitating what others had done; modifying and improving ideas; and/or creating something new. The deliberate advancement of design knowledge, using an innovative inquiry approach, required extra efforts for planning, co-ordination, and implementation. Everyday knowledge from personal life experiences also contributed to the learning environment.

The vignettes presented in Chapters 5 and 6 highlight the multi-layered complexities of everyday learning and teaching in the quilting community. The organisation of informal learning was embedded in the collaborative processes of repertoires of quilting practice. Friendship was valued, with the formation of familial-like relationships, nurturing a caring environment in which participants felt comfortable to share experiences. The quilters were keen to learn new things and provide guidance. They engaged in multi-party interactions, with the emergence of flexible, complementary roles. Embodied actions and material mediation provided an unexpected "layer" drawing attention to the hands on, exploratory nature of quilting activities. Creative zones of development unfolded within, and across, collective knowledge practices.



### DISCUSSION

#### **Interwoven Threads: Learning and Teaching within the Quilting Community**

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“The question ‘What IS informal learning?’ often dominates discussions among informal learning researchers and practitioners. How is informal learning organized? What are its key features?” (Rogoff et al., 2016, p. 358).

The present study investigated the nature of learning and teaching situated in the communal activity of quilting. The querying comment by Rogoff et al. (2016) draws attention to the reality that the subject of informal learning is still contentious, with no clear consensus of opinion. Moreover, while we can describe many aspects of how instruction in educational classes is organised, such understandings with regards to informal learning remains obscure.

This chapter addresses the quilting groups’ organisation of learning and teaching, and its key features. The key findings and themes (see Table 7.1) are considered, with the results discussed within the context of the existing literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. In addition, new literature is introduced in order to synthesise the multimodal findings I uncovered. Quilt studies do not present a substantial body of knowledge in the theorising of informal learning and teaching. Therefore, at the beginning of the discussion, I draw on interdisciplinary literature referencing both quilt studies and educational research. Then, with the narrowing of the study’s focus to answer the overarching research question of: “How do learning and teaching of patchwork and quilting occur within the communal activity of quilting?” educational literature becomes more prevalent in the discussion. Since craft knowledge is extensively expressed in gestures, illustrations are used to support the discussion about the quilters’ embodied and interactive actions of learning.

Table 7.1 Summary of Key Findings and Themes

Research Questions	Findings	Themes
7.1 What are the collaborative processes of the quilting practice?	7.1.1 Quilters are incorporated, developing a sense of belonging, through nurturing bonds of friendships, and encouraging individuals to use initiative, to contribute, and to share responsibility.	Social integration 7.1.1.1 Social organisation of a quilting community 7.1.1.2 Quilters' purpose of participation 7.1.1.3 Quilters' learning intent
	7.1.2 Learning is multi-directional within the collective, consisting of a horizontal participation structure, mutuality and support, with quilters having complementary roles.	Cultural patterns of social interaction 7.1.2.1 Collective zone of proximal development 7.1.2.2 Participation partnerships
7.2 What multimodal dimensions contribute to quilters' co-construction of knowledge?	7.2.1 Thinking with others and learning processes are mediated through embodied interactions, and material artefacts and tools.	Embodied experiences and material mediation 7.2.1.1 Meaning-making modes 7.2.1.2 Appraisal
	7.2.2 Knowledge practices (reproduction, building, and creation) co-exist with the quilters' collective aim to jointly construct, develop, and advance their understanding of material objects.	Collective knowledge practices 7.2.2.1 Cultural practices of knowledge-sharing 7.2.2.2 Collaborative designing for knowledge creation
7.3 How do learning and teaching of patchwork and quilting occur within the communal activity of quiltmaking?	7.3.1 A new and emerging apprenticeship model articulates the quilting community's sociocultural approach to learning. This model extends theoretical perspectives of learning as participation with the inclusion of "hands on" exploration, multiple meaning-making modes, and the creation of new knowledge.	"Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning" 7.3.1.1 Fostering learning in the quilters' community setting 7.3.1.2 "Hands on" and "minds on" engagement in everyday learning

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the key findings and themes, and presents the overall structure for this chapter. Section 7.1 and 7.2 addresses the guiding questions respectively, with the defining features that underpin each key finding encapsulated in a hexagon shape. I purposely constructed the hexagon shapes to be representative of the 19<sup>th</sup> century paper pieced patchwork method to acknowledge Aotearoa New Zealand's quilt heritage, originally "moulded"<sup>84</sup> by British cultural traditions. In Section 7.3, these hexagons are "stitched together" to visually represent the interrelated features of the quilting groups' organisation of learning and teaching.

<sup>84</sup> A term used by Osler (1987).

The resulting theoretical patchwork mosaic defines a new and emerging conceptual framework: “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning” (AMCCL).<sup>85</sup> This model is an extension of the theoretical framework of “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” (Rogoff, 2014). To address the overarching research question, the discussion brings together the themes that are distinct to the two quilting groups which participated in the present study. Lastly, a summary of the interpretative analysis is provided.

## **7.1 What are the Collaborative Processes of the Quilting Practice?**

People have been making quilts, thinking about the meaning of quilts, and passing on their quilting knowledge for generations. While people are making quilts, they are also connecting with others, which emphasises making *and* connecting. Gauntlett (2011) asserted that with craftwork making *is* connecting, using the justification:

- “Making is connecting because you have to connect things together (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new;
- Making is connecting because acts of creativity involve a social dimension which connects us with other people” (p. 2).

On the basis on the present study I would add a third point of reasoning:

- Making is connecting because making quilts and sharing them, connects quilters with historical-cultural quilting traditions, tools and artefacts.

Although quiltmaking is connected with traditions of craftwork and apprenticeship learning, dating back centuries, the resurgence of quilting activity is often viewed, and experienced, as a “new” social and cultural phenomenon.

This section discusses the quilters’ collaborative processes, and associated practices, connecting quilters to the ongoing endeavours of their quilting group. These processes and practices, as noted by Rogoff et al. (2015), are ever-present in the “often-implicit organisation of the community’s distinct approaches to providing learning opportunities” (p. 2). Subsection 7.1.1 considers the social integration of

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<sup>85</sup> Refer to Section 7.3, Figure 7.11, for an overview of the conceptual framework, AMCCL, and its defining features.

quilters where deeply rooted cultural-historical values of developing relationships, and learning about quilting with others, are nurtured. Subsection 7.1.2 examines the cultural patterns of social interaction in the quilters' collective zone of proximal development.

### 7.1.1 Social integration

**KEY FINDING 1**

***Quilters are incorporated, developing a sense of belonging, through nurturing bonds of friendships, and encouraging individuals to use initiative, to contribute, and to share responsibility.***

The current study identified three features that supported the social integration of quilters: (i) social organisation of a quilting community; (ii) quilters' purpose of participation; and (iii) quilters' learning intent (see Figure 7.1). While each facet is discussed separately, there are overlapping connections between them, necessitating that social integration is considered holistically.



Figure 7.1 Three defining features that support the social integration of quilters.

### **7.1.1.1 Social organisation of a quilting community**

The social structure of communal relationships resembled the reconstruction of a familial model. The participants in the present study often referred to the quilting community as a “family of quilters”.<sup>86</sup> This notion is well reported in quilt literature, especially with regard to women’s cultural-historical values. For example, Clark’s (1988) historical study of 19<sup>th</sup> century American friendship quilts found that “home and the family . . . became the model for other communal groups” (p. 79). Doyle (1998) described New Zealand as a “strongly gendered society” (p. 107) whereby constructs of femininity arose from its colonial history, with the characteristic feminine value of “selfless nurturer of family and community” (p. 107) continuing to shape, and be shaped by, contemporary quilting communities. Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (2001) characterised the communal relationships as a “sisterhood”, which defines the quilters as fictive kin. The highly valued historical qualities of kinship, female affection, and social equality continue to manifest themselves in the social context of contemporary quilting communities, nurturing family-like ties and friendship (Cerny et al., 1993; Clark, 1988; Stalp, 2007).

The community organisation incorporated quilters in a range of quilting endeavours: rituals, routines, cultural practices, and social events. While cultural community studies (e.g., Maynard & Greenfield, 2006) recognise that such socialisation agents *support* cultural learning, some craft studies viewed the socialisation process as being *directed* by quilt guilds (e.g., Cerny et al., 1993), with each craft community having an “internal system for indoctrinating and validating its members” (Stevens, 2011, p. 47). In the present study, there was a “subculture of quilting” (Stalp, 2007, p. 267), which Dickie (2003) qualified as “quilters sharing an ethic that valued quilts and their makers, past, present and future” (p. 126). But rather than view the individual quilter and quilt culture as independent components of the quilting community, the findings of the current study showed that quilt culture was formed from the collaborative efforts of quilters working together, using and adapting quilting tools provided by past generations, while also creating new ones in the process.

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<sup>86</sup> For examples of family-like attributes refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.2.4.

Understanding the social organisation of this mutually constituted approach required examining the personal, interpersonal, and cultural aspects of (quilters') activity (Rogoff, 2003). Participants were encouraged to take initiative, with expectations and opportunities provided to contribute according to their quilting interests and skills. For instance, the introduction of KQ's Beginners' Class involved peer-tutors (novice and experienced) planning sessions together, along with an adaptation of the traditional sampler quilt style; novice quilters bringing new ideas (for instance, modifying quilt size and border design); and community members sharing techniques with peer-tutors and novice quilters (such as different ways to knot thread ends). In this situation, contrary to being directed or indoctrinated, the quilters worked together with individual (novice), interpersonal (peer-tutors), and cultural (community) processes constituting each other, and therefore, cannot be separated since they constituted the quilting activity (Rogoff, 1992; 2003).<sup>87</sup> While quilt literature often wrote in terms of transmitting or acquiring culture (e.g., Audin, 2013; Osler, 1987), quilt culture itself, as experienced and observed in the present study, is *not* static; rather, it is a creative collective process of social organisation.

The social organisation of endeavours requires interpreting the (quiltmakers') context as a process of "weaving together", giving coherence to its parts to form a contextual whole (Cole, 1996). Consequently, the quilting "situation" needs to be taken into consideration. For Dewey (1938):

The word 'situation' is *not* a single object or event or a set of objects and events. For we never experience nor form judgement about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole. The latter is what is called 'situation'.

(p. 66)

Of particular significance, in the present study, was the social organisation of the quilting community's cultural-historical rituals which were intricately structured. The cultural processes were rooted in history where past experiences shaped contemporary social practices (Flores et al., 2015). For the quilters, the everyday rituals were important, such as the social etiquette of morning and/or afternoon

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<sup>87</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.2.1, for details of an example emanating from the Beginners' Class.

tea.<sup>88</sup> This congenial space fostered the sharing of craft and life experiences. While some things had changed over time, cultural values of inclusiveness, reciprocity, mutual respect, and personal initiative have endured. These seemingly trivial events, which implicitly enveloped participants through their social networking, generated a sense of belonging. Maynard and Greenfield (2006) contended cultural teaching and learning complemented each other, where cultural teaching was thought of as a system of socialisation that existed to support cultural learning in acquiring cultural knowledge (such as, communal rituals). However, the quilt culture of the community in the current study, provided evidence of a cultural teaching and learning model which went beyond the confines of mere “socialisation”.

#### ***7.1.1.2 Quilters’ purpose of participation***

The women in the current study chose to pursue quiltmaking in their free time as a positive activity: experiencing enjoyment, relaxation, and creativity. The friendly and supportive environment, that encompassed both Kōmako Quilters and Manumea Quilters, was a primary purpose for women to join one of the quilting groups. The affective and emotional components associated with belonging to a quilting community feature strongly in quilt literature. As Roberts (2007) reported, the quilting community provided opportunities for fellowship, exchanging information about quilting and local events, with people who understood personal motives for quiltmaking. Some of quilters’ friendships, in the present study, had spanned across the thirty years since the groups were originally formed.<sup>89</sup> Leisure was an important part of their everyday lives, enabling these women to give and receive emotional support, find companionship and have fun (Stalp, 2015). Their personal lives and quiltmaking became entwined, with friendships developing through engagement in conversations and quilting activities. Such lifelong support and friendship is not always available outside the quilting community (Roberts, 2006). Their leisure activity of quiltmaking held a significant and meaningful place in their lives. Stalp (2007) argued that the women in her quilt study were passionate about, and committed to, their quilting activities and the quilting group to which they belonged. Similarly, in

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<sup>88</sup> For example, refer to vignette featured in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.

<sup>89</sup> During the oral history interviews participants reported the formation of life-long friendships.

the present study, the participants were eager to belong and contribute as valued members of the quilting community.

The relationship between the quilter and her environment draws attention to Vygotsky's (1994) emotional experience (*perezhivanie*). Drawing on his perspective, a quilter "becomes aware of, interprets [and] emotionally relates to a certain event . . . [there is] an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics" (pp. 341-342). Quiltmaking can be described as an emotional experience since the act of quilting, and the quilt itself, expressed and deepened connections with others (Gordon & Horton, 2009). In the present study, quilters felt at ease to express their feelings, attitudes and reactions within the understanding comfort of the group. In addition, "seeing leisure contextually requires . . . seeing it in a sociocultural-geographic context" (Stebbins, 2012, p. 17). Along with the social network of friends acting as a substitute family, the quilters' meeting place resembled Silberman-Keller's (2006) image of alternative home, where the participants felt welcome and comfortable in attending quilting sessions. A sense of belonging was created, encouraging confident movement among varied social and geographical spaces within the quiltmakers' setting. Feeling connected to other quilters assisted individuals in "developing their artistic voices through their quilting endeavours" (Stalp, 2007, p. 115). The women's leisure activity was not only a source of self-fulfilment, but also a way to use their creative talents in contributing to others' development (Stalp, 2006c; Stebbins, 2012).

Another prime purpose for participating in quiltmaking, as a leisure activity, was the quilters' aspiration to learn and express "a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins, 2012, p. 69). Csikszentmihalyi (1996) believed a key element for an enjoyable leisure experience was engaging in activities that contained a balance between challenges and the relevant skills required to accomplish the task. In the current study, an individual was guided and supported by other quilters present in accomplishing the activity at hand. While individual quilters and the collective may have had particular goals, these were not always evident.<sup>90</sup> In addition, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) maintained "a person must develop a strong

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<sup>90</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.1 for examples of Ruby and Nina's goals.

personal sense of what she intends to do” (p. 55). However, some goals in creative or open-ended quilting activities may not be clearly set in advance. For instance, in the present study, one quilter knew she wanted to stitch a quilt for a child who was leaving home to study at university, but apart from that her goals were vague (19.07.13/MQCON).

With changes in personal life conditions, goals altered accordingly; and there was also blending of individual-communal ideas and agendas.<sup>91</sup> Paradise and Rogoff (2009) reported similar repertoires of practice in their study of children’s social integration into family and community activities. Motivation appeared to be “based on implicit understanding of the purpose, relevance and value, to themselves as well as to their community, of what is being learned” (p. 112). Discovering new ways of doing quilting and being a quilter involved learning to collaborate with consideration and responsibility.

### **7.1.1.3 Quilters’ learning intent**

While quilt literature tended to focus on quilting as a means to develop a feminine identity (e.g., Cerny et al., 1993) or an identity beyond that of wife and mother (e.g., Doyle, 1998; Stalp, 2007), findings in the present study showed participants were additionally intent to learn quilting for its own sake. They *all* considered themselves to be learners of quilting. For instance, one senior member referred to her stitchery work as always “*just practising*” (29.05.13/KQCON), never as being an accomplished sewer. Stebbins (2012) would have described such women as “serious leisure participants” (p. 14). The (quilting) community was effectively a “community of learners” where “learning occurs as people participate in shared endeavours with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles in the sociocultural activity” (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209). The quilters served as resources to each other, and their roles varied according to their understanding of the quilting activity at hand.

A paradigm shift is involved in thinking of the quilters’ learning and development as a transformation of participation, rather than the acquisition of quilting knowledge

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<sup>91</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.3 for example of Delia’s “Tumbling Block” baby quilt and the quilting collective’s charity quilt proposal.

and skills (Rogoff, 1997, 1998). By focusing on the quilters' process of participation in an activity (both the individual quilter *and* others present), it was possible "to study how their involvement of the moment was constituted by previous and anticipated participation" (Rogoff, 1992, p. 319). For instance, Rachel developed as she participated and contributed to the group's cultural activities, during the mastery of her machine quilting.<sup>92</sup> Learning, exemplified by Rachel, was a process of a quilter's understanding and personal role being transformed through participation (Rogoff, 2003). Engaging with quilters in this communal way occurred over a period of time, with transformation from "legitimate peripheral participation", which provided opportunities to observe, discuss, and participate with more experienced members of the (quilting) group (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff et al., 1996).

The participants actively pursued gaining new quilting skills, information and experiences, and proudly identified themselves as quilters (regardless of quiltmaking competency). Similar to Stalp's (2006c) findings, "the more women increase their involvement in quilting, the more quilting activities shape their lives and reaffirm their newly found identities as quilters from other like-minded quilters" (p. 207). In the current study, the women's mutual engagement in shared quilting endeavours created opportunities for personal *and* social transformation, necessitating quilters fulfilled differing and shifting responsibilities. Their participatory approach contributed to the way people act, think and feel, and to developing a common understanding (Wells, 2001). To genuinely master the cultural knowledge associated with these material objects, the quilters' learning was a process of changing participation in changing quilting practices.

### 7.1.2 Cultural patterns of social interaction

KEY FINDING 2

***Learning is multi-directional within the collective, consisting of a horizontal participation structure, mutuality and support, with quilters having complementary roles.***

The collaborative engagement of quilters formed cultural patterns of social interaction. There was a sense of social unity in the quilters' learning, with "quilting

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<sup>92</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.3 for documentation of Rachel's transformation of participation.

together” embracing both their personal and collective development. The feature of multi-way collaboration (see Figure 7.2) discerns two key characteristics of the community’s flexible ensemble of interrelationships: (i) a collective zone of proximal development (ZPD); and (ii) participation partnerships. The complexity of these interconnected aspects is discussed separately.



Figure 7.2 Multi-way collaboration through participation partnerships creates the quilters’ collective zone of proximal development.

#### **7.1.2.1 Collective zone of proximal development**

The findings of the present study identified that multi-party interactions (involving collaborative endeavours of quilting pairs, cluster and/or group) extended Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of ZPD<sup>93</sup> which emphasised the learning and development of an individual in her social situation. By comparison, the quilters’ actively and socially created a *collective* ZPD, with the key issue being that the women were doing something together: “a collective form of working together” (Holzman, 2010, p. 30). It is helpful to understand the quilters’ collective ZPD as both a process *and* an activity. Within the quilting community, the ZPD activity simultaneously created the environment (zone) and what was created, with learning leading the quilters’ development.

The quilters were perceived by each other as capable of learning, and there was the expectation that they would learn, no matter how much each already knew. Sometimes though, the quilters did things but did not know they were doing them, such as collaboratively considering construction options by measuring the width and

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<sup>93</sup> Refer to Chapter 3, subsection 3.3.7, for Vygotsky’s (1978) explanation of ZPD.

length of a quilt top to quantify the comparative relation of proportionality (19.07.13/MQO). Such actions portrayed Vygotsky's (1978) stance that "she knows how to do things but does not know that she knows" (p. 99). In the ZPD activity, ideas contributed by participating individuals were integrated into conversations, building on successive explanations, which resulted in the emergence of group creativity.

Learning was fostered within peer group activities, with both more and less experienced quilters willing to learn from each other. Vygotsky (1978) alluded to this notion of collaboratively working together, noting "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are available to operate only when the individual is interacting with people in [her] environment and in cooperation with [her] peers" (p. 90). Although not directly related to quilting, Valsiner (2000) argued that what becomes mastered in the collective ZPD is, therefore, anything in the realm of the quilters' socially shared knowledge, as it is needed by a cluster of quilters or the community. It can be surmised that Dickie (2003) observed this phenomenon when she noted that quilters' learning experiences could be placed in clusters of learning, which appeared to be neither developmental nor sequential.<sup>94</sup>

For the quilters, the collective ZPD activity was "not special or extraordinary but ordinary and everyday" (Holzman, 2010, p. 29). Likewise, Dickie (2003) reported learning in quilt cultures was regarded as "nothing special", just the ordinary way things were done. However, these spaces of activity, while often described as "mundane", exhibited everyday knowledgeability<sup>95</sup> (Lave, 2008b), collaboration and collectiveness (Sannino & Ellis, 2014), and creativity (Holzman, 2010). The data from the current study showed that the collective ZPD processes reflected Rogoff's (2012a) findings:

There's lots of ways of assisting learners that are not what we were calling 'teaching' and learners bring to bear themselves quite a bit of expertise in going about learning in situations where it's not structured like teacher-learner. (p. 46)

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<sup>94</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.6, for Dickie's (2003) list of learning clusters.

<sup>95</sup> To overcome the disparity of knowledge claims, Lave (2008b) decided to use the term "knowledgeability", to imply "that whatever it is, knowledge is always knowledge in persons in practice" (p. 292).

For instance, modelling by experienced quilters revealed subtle forms of communication,<sup>96</sup> shaping quilters learning as well as collective expectations, providing support until it was not needed.<sup>97</sup>

Vygotsky's (1978) contention that collaborative or guided problem solving, in the ZPD activity, required the presence of "more capable peers" commonly leads to the rationale that aid is given to an individual in the form of an "expert". For instance, Maynard and Greenfield (2005) described how weaving involved a great deal of scaffolding by the teacher. In contrast, the present study showed there were community-wide expectations that quilters would support and guide one another. Examples ranged from assistance with layering of quilts<sup>98</sup> to novice peer-tutor receiving support from project participants.<sup>99</sup> As Valsiner (2000) asserted, anybody within the immediate social environment could provide guidance. Being able to understand what another (quilter) knows and does not know, and providing the most appropriate kind of assistance is a sophisticated skill (Maynard, 2002).

#### **7.1.2.2 Participation partnerships**

Everyone participated in the process of learning, and shared responsibility for learning through guiding and collaborating in "participation partnerships". I coined this term to denote the quilters' mutual engagement in their joint quilting endeavours, with varying responsibility from different community participants occurring at different times. Communities of practice, such as this quilting community, are often described as having a structure of horizontal participation. For example, Rogoff et al. (2007) reported that Guatemalan Mayan participation involved "horizontal shared multi-party collaboration" (p. 187); and similarly, Paradise and de Haan (2009) observed the Mexican Mazahua community's "flexible roles and role taking in multi-party interactions" (p. 187). Wenger (2010) defined these interactions as horizontal because they exist in mutual relationships among participants where there is engagement in joint activities, negotiation of mutual relevance, peer

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<sup>96</sup> For communication examples, refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.3.3.

<sup>97</sup> This finding is also similar to Brown and Palincsar's (1989) account of expert scaffolding in an apprenticeship model of learning.

<sup>98</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.2.2.2, for specific examples of quilt layering.

<sup>99</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, subsection 6.3.2.2, of guiding novice peer-tutor, as she learns a new role, in the "Ten Minute Runner" project.

recognition, and commitment to collective learning.<sup>100</sup> In the current study, the quilters' multi-party horizontal interactions formed various cultural patterns of participation partnerships, such as the social interactions of mutual reciprocation.

The collective organisation of the quilting groups enabled participants to have flexible interactional roles. When the quilters took part in activities, often spontaneously and simultaneously, there was no explicit hierarchy as to who would do what, which Paradise and de Haan (2009) also noted in their study, stating "all have something to contribute and are ready and look for the right moment and right way to participate in the shared effort" (p. 189). In the present study, the quilters were learning resources for the community since they took opportunities to get involved in quilting activities around them. For example, when a master quilter laid out the appliquéd fabric quarters to form a circle, there was a large gap in the centre. Two quilters approached the table and provided different suggestions: "*Stitch leaves in the centre... Doesn't need to be a circle... Could put them in the corners*" (26.07.13/MQO), leaving the master quilter to consider the various options. Roles smoothly interchanged during the quilters' collaborative engagement to successfully accomplish the task.

The quilters were prepared to switch to complementary roles, in order for personal and communal goals to be accomplished. The participants' actions emulated Wells' (1999) findings by building on each other's contributions, and collectively constructed solutions, through mutual reciprocity. In so doing, each participant was often put in a position of needing to "rise above herself", and resulted in "an outcome that no single member envisaged at the outset of the collaboration" (Wells, 1999, p. 324). This type of participation partnership is not to suggest there was a "pooling of ignorance". In contrast, the quilters developed cultural resources of tools and practices through their shared endeavours. For example, despite no-one in the quilting group knowing how to paint photograph transfers the participants pooled their expertise, learning with and from each other (21.06.13/MQO). Through the

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<sup>100</sup> In contrast, vertical relations or interactions may be understood as Vygotsky's (1987) interplay between everyday (bottom-up) and scientific (top-down) concepts, and are commonly associated with traditional hierarchies of institutional contexts (Wenger, 2010).

active support and contributions available, within a diversity of participation partnerships, the quilters assumed increasingly skilled roles.

In the present study, the quilters realised (or became aware of) the quilting expertise of self and others. The cultural pattern of the quilters' social interaction showed "no role had all the responsibility for knowing or directing" (Rogoff, 1994, p. 213). In contrast, Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (2001) contended that "experts" shared their knowledge informally through "different degrees of mentoring" (p. 48).<sup>101</sup> Instead, similar to Lave's (2011) findings, the quilters' participation partnerships showed there was a distribution of expertise, and a master quilter's role could not be reduced to that of a coach's role. The quilters, in the current study, kept an eye on each other's progress, offering suggestions, no matter the level of their experience. The cultural practices of these quilters differed from traditional apprenticeships of learning where the roles of knowledgeable expert and learner were strictly defined (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009), since there was fluid formation and co-ordination of participation partnerships.

Without a video recording of interactions, it was difficult to capture the seemingly minute similarities or differences of the quilters' roles and types of information exchanges. Therefore, I applied an adapted version of Rogoff's (1990) guided participation concept. I characterised guided participation as a means to focus on interactions where quilters actively sought advice, or intervened to assist others. There were various forms of collaboration, including both tacit and explicit efforts to guide quilters' learning.<sup>102</sup> While not directly related to quilting, Rogoff (1991) also found that the learner participated *with* others who provided guidance, making a connection from her present understandings to new understandings, stretching her skills. In most cases, one or some quilters would facilitate the ZPD activity, while others actively supported the process.<sup>103</sup>

The majority of quilt literature studies focused on North American quilt guilds which prioritised the transmission of quilt tradition through explicit instruction, such as

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<sup>101</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, subsection 2.3.6, for further details about mentoring.

<sup>102</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, Table 5.1, to view an outline of various forms of guided participation.

<sup>103</sup> Refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.3.2, for specific examples of seeking or providing guidance.

specific education programmes (Dickie, 2003), with quilting classes and lectures (Cerny et al., 1993). In addition, North American studies of quilting groups emphasised the need to foster generativity, with quilters taking responsibility to “contribute their time and talent for teaching” (Piercy & Cheek, 2004, p. 31), requiring that the “older ladies should teach the younger girls . . . what they need to do” (Williams, 1991, p. 127). In contrast to these earlier studies, in the current investigation, the quilters’ capability to assist others within participation partnerships was not necessarily reliant on age and/or competent mastery. Moreover, the quilters refrained from using terminology associated with teaching; and even showed reluctance to refer to themselves as teacher.

The community of learners, in the present study, actively sought to increase opportunities for learning and sharing quilting skills and knowledge, through participation partnerships. Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (2001) contended that the connection between guild participation and individual production formed a “natural” cycle.<sup>104</sup> In contrast, Rogoff (2012b) argued that learning through intently participating in the community was “not just natural” (p. 239); rather, it required sophisticated collaborative efforts by both the community and individual. Similarly, the current study provided evidence that the complexity of the quilters’ participation partnership was part of the dynamic structure of quilting practices, where processes of learning were developed and understood through the quilters’ collaborative experiences.

## **7.2 What Multimodal Dimensions Contribute to Quilters’ Co-Construction of Knowledge?**

To understand a sociocultural phenomenon (such as communal quilting) Ivarsson, Lideroth, and Säljö (2014) contended that the investigation “must focus on the interaction between the individual and significant others in the socio-cultural environment” (p. 299). Through, initially, focusing on social interactions in the quilting community, it became apparent from the present study’s emerging data that the quilters’ “verbal and non-verbal communication as well as the embodied and

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<sup>104</sup> Refer to Chapter 2, Figure 2.3, for Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell’s (2001) cyclic “Model of Textile Handcraft Guild Membership”.

material aspects were intertwined” (Lahti, Kangas, Koponen, & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, 2016, p. 16). Consequently, in this section the dimensions of the quilters’ multimodal ensemble of meaning-making are explored in subsection 7.2.1, with an elaboration of the quilters’ collective knowledge practices detailed in subsection 7.2.2. Due to the embodied and interactive nature of the learning and teaching in the quilting context, I use illustrations in this discussion as a means to resolve the “deficiencies of purely text-based presentations” (Koskinen et al., 2015, p. 69).<sup>105</sup> The words and illustrations complement each other, bringing to the fore the quilters’ ubiquitous means of interaction and knowledge construction.

During the quilters’ everyday communication they talked, directed their eyes, located their bodies, assumed various positions, moved their hands, manipulated textiles, and handled quilting tools – all of which constituted an interactive event for knowledge construction (Jones & LeBaron, 2002). Communication modes, such as body movement, were carriers of meaning and frequently represented, and demonstrated, the quilters’ tacit and embodied craft knowledge. Theoretical frameworks of multimodality and embodied cognition provide a foundation to discuss and elaborate emergent findings. In addition, the discussion builds on DiGiacomo and Gutiérrez’s (2016) framework of relational and material feedback to understand appraisal for the development of quilters’ competency. These conceptualisations broaden Lave and Wenger’s (1991) somewhat conservative notion of apprenticeship.

While the participation metaphor of learning focused on the process of becoming a member of a particular community and working with existing practices (Sfard, 1998), the findings of this present study showed that the quilters not only reproduced knowledge, but also modified knowledge, *and* created new knowledge. The co-existence of collective knowledge practices, which supported the participants’ quilting experiences, is examined. Furthermore, the quilters’ designing process is

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<sup>105</sup> Initially, I was uncertain whether to utilise fieldwork illustrations; but I did not know how else to “describe” the quilters’ tacit interactive and physical means of communication and sense-making. Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen reassured me: “I think that you can and you should use your snapshot sketches illuminating your study results” (personal communication, June 4, 2017). My intention to use the illustrations is indicated in Chapter 4, subsection 4.6.1.

discussed as it relates to Paavola and Hakkarainen's (2009) framework of triological learning and to Seitamaa et al.'s (2010) model of "Learning by Collaborative Designing".

### 7.2.1 Embodied experiences and material mediation

KEY FINDING 3

***Thinking with others and learning processes are mediated through embodied interactions, and material artefacts and tools.***

The quilters, in the present study, held deeply embedded implicit beliefs about how they learned and developed, and what they should know. From these cultural beliefs, known as folk theories or psychologies (Bruner, 1996), flowed folk pedagogies which are depicted by the comment:

*I think most girls today who start, think they know it all because they've watched others. When in fact it's the tips that just come without even thinking about it, they just flow... like how to hold a rotary cutter the correct way. We listen to these things because that's how we learn and pass it on.*  
(10.09.13/KQ15)

Specialised craft knowledge (such as quilting) was often taken for granted since it was founded on everyday, commonsense knowledge, and has largely remained unquestioned as quilters learn the traditional craft (Bereiter, 2002; Dickie, 2003; Lave, 1996). Therefore, I had "to think *explicitly* about their folk psychological assumptions, in order to bring them out of the shadows of tacit knowledge" (Bruner, 1996, p. 47). By deconstructing the quilters' folk theories and pedagogies through analysing the fieldwork data, the current study identified two features of their ongoing mediation of collective knowledge: (i) multiple meaning-making modes; and (ii) appraisal of quilting efforts (see Figure 7.3). Sense making and competency development in quilting was dependent on interaction and collaboration with fellow participants, facilitated through embodied experiences and material mediation, using physical tools and artefacts in their quilting activities.

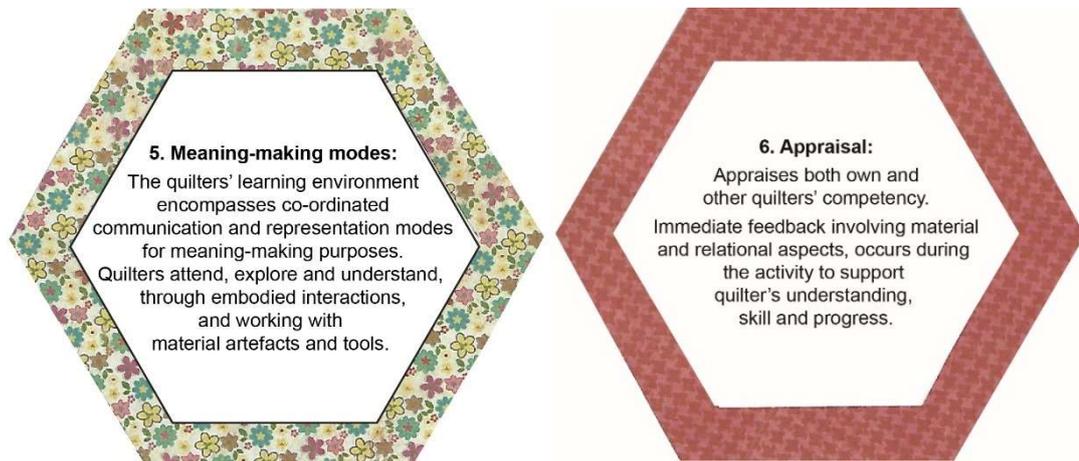
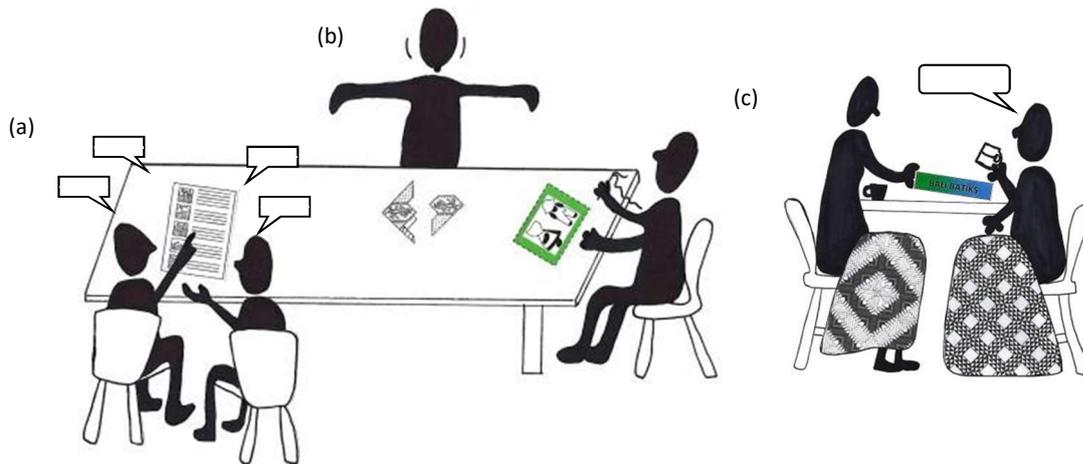


Figure 7.3 Understanding the quilters' multimodal ways of meaning-making and appraisal through materially mediated and embodied interaction.

### 7.2.1.1 *Meaning-making modes*

Theories of multimodality broaden the focus of relational perspectives (e.g., Lave, 2011; Rogoff, 2014) by examining how people communicate and interact in social contexts, using different resources (or modes), to express themselves and make meaning. A mode can be described as a communication channel which is recognised and culturally accepted by a community, such as speech, gaze, posture, gesture, writing, images, video, and material objects (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Jewitt, 2014; Streeck, Goodwin, & LeBaron, 2013). In addition, Norris (2011) expands the commonly held notion of "interaction" to use the term "(inter)action" in order to encompass "each and every action that an individual produces with tools, the environment, and other individuals" (p. 1). All (inter)actions are multimodal (Goodwin, 2000; Jewitt, 2014; Jones & LeBaron, 2002; Kress, 2014; Norris, 2004, 2006). In the current study, the quilters encountered a steady stream of meaningful gestures, body positioning, head movements, tool utilisation and textile manipulations. Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, and Tsatsarelis (2001) found in their study that "meaning is made in all modes separately; at the same time, that meaning is an effect of all modes acting jointly" (p. 1). Therefore, from a sociocultural perspective (e.g., Ivarsson et al., 2014; Norris, 2011), it was important to conceptualise the quilters' meaning-making as emerging from their interpretative practices of (inter)actions within their quilting activities.

The composition of different modes creates a “multimodal ensemble” (Jewitt, 2014). There is an interrelationship between the modes present in (inter)actions, where modes combine, support or extend the work of different modalities: “meanings are corresponding, complementary and dissonant as they harmonised in an integrated whole” (Jewitt, 2014, p. 465). Figure 7.4 illustrates three multimodal ensemble examples (a), (b), and (c) of quilters’ (inter)actions, within their social context, making and shaping meaning.



*Figure 7.4* Multimodal ensemble of communication involves several modalities, such as (a) language, (b) gestures, and (c) touch. Each mode carries different creative aspects as the quilters interact in different ways to contribute to an expression of meaning-making.

In each of the three examples, featured in Figure 7.4, specific cultural resources (modes) for quilters to co-construct knowledge are brought to the foreground. While language was the principal mode of meaning-making in Figure 7.4(a), other information was simultaneously being communicated through hand movements, facial expression, written referent, and the close proximity of participants. However, in Figure 7.4(b) gesture, gaze, and head movement were prominent communicative modes; whereas, language was minimal or absent. Meanwhile in Figure 7.4(c) the shared tactile experience, exploring a range of textiles, extended the participants’ creative ideas.

In the sociocultural tradition, emerging from Vygotskian and related theory, much emphasis is placed on language (e.g., Sawyer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). Wells (2009) argued that “dialogue is the most powerful” (p. 245) because knowledge can be more fully achieved in discursive encounters between two or more people. In the current

study, while there is no denying that language often played a central role in social interactions, the quilters' joint activity frequently involved the co-ordinated use of embodied interactions and material objects to mediate communication, collaboration, and problem solving. Similar to Norris's (2004) study of multimodal interactions, the quilters were aware of many things that surrounded them: the way a person stood or sat, nodded or leaned backwards, handled a tool, as well as the pitch of her voice.<sup>106</sup> The multiplicity of modes are categorised into three broad dimensions: (i) social, (ii) embodied, and (iii) material.<sup>107</sup> In the following discussion I draw on each multimodal dimension, without privileging one modality over another, to discuss its role in the quilters' (inter)actions of meaning-making.

#### *7.2.1.1.1 Social dimension*

The quilters' construction of knowledge, in the present study, was often shaped by their social interaction and the articulation of shared notions, through various forms of speech and patterns of observations. In studies by Kendon (2009), and Paradise and Rogoff (2009), contextualised talk was an effective way to engage with new information. Similarly, in the current study, language was used for the communicative tasks of sharing, informing and requesting when carrying out their quilting activities during collaborative interactions. Even when talk was judiciously used during the quilting endeavour at hand, as evidenced in other craft and community studies (e.g., Kangas, 2014; Marchand, 2007; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009), the quilters' conversations were focused and coherent. There were shifts between the different types of talk within situated quilting activities, with each form serving as an interactional technique from sharing personal/collective viewpoints, providing explanations, to retelling narratives.

Conversational dialogue between the participants reflected and stimulated productive inter-thinking when ideas were shared and considered (Gauvain, 2005;

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<sup>106</sup> An intense examination of each modality, such as depicted by Norris's (2004) study in relation to the disciplines of applied linguistics and social semiotics, is beyond the scope of the present study.

<sup>107</sup> The vignette featured in Chapter 6, Section 6.2, exemplified that the orchestration of multimodal dimensions are constantly in a process of change, either being foregrounded or becoming subordinated, for meaning-making purposes.

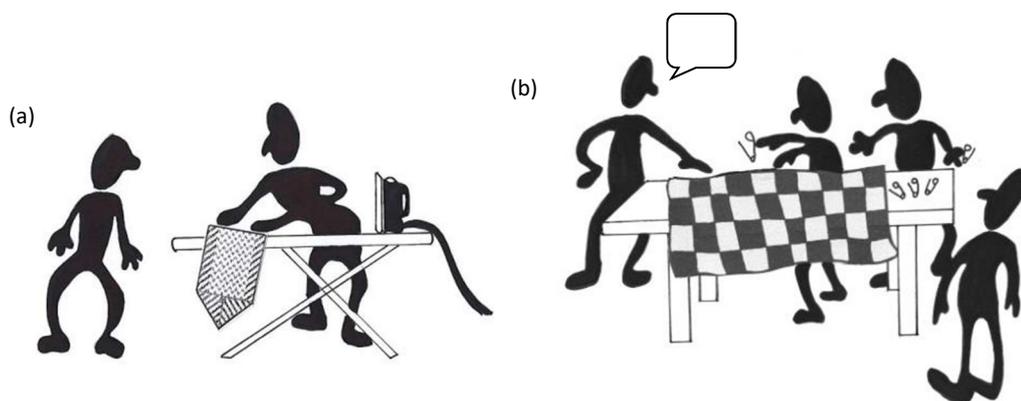
Hennessy & Murphy, 1999; Mercer & Howe, 2012). The social encounters of this collaborative process were characterised by improvisation, unpredictability, and moment-by-moment contingency with each participant's action dependent on the one that occurred just before. The participants built on each other's verbal contributions, with suggestions becoming incorporated in collaboratively constructed utterances, establishing common grounds for understanding. In the quilters' learning environment each person had an opportunity to contribute equally (Sawyer, 2013), and to consider one's own verbal offering (Wells, 2000), such as sharing opinions about whether to extend a quilting design into the border (15.06.13/KQO).

During the verbal sharing of expertise, which closely resembled Hutchins' (1995) social distribution of cognition, the quilters worked together to accomplish the quilting task. In addition, the improvisational flow of dialogue provided evidence of situated cognition, where talking occurred *within* a particular quilting practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), exemplified by an explanation of how to hand stitch a binding (8.05.13/KQO). Moreover, talking *about* quilting practices consisted of narratives which contextualised information encouraging keen listeners to reinterpret and extend ideas, such as dye techniques of Indonesian batik fabrics (26.07.13/MQO); or to problem solve through guided storied actions, for instance removing pen marks on fabric (29.05.13/KQO).

In their study, McCurdy et al. (2005) found that folk terms represented the explicit cultural knowledge and were part of the everyday language of specialised craft vocabulary. When quilters, in the current study, spoke words such as "*bare ¼ inch, free motion, show and tell, shadow effect, mitred, and peeper*" during conversations with each other, they were using folk terms which had cultural meaning in the quilting community. Stevens (2011) noted that "each community distinguishes itself from one another through a shared language and communal dialogue" (p. 47). He argued that individuals had to become conversant with this "internal vocabulary" in order to participate in the community's craft practice. For the quilters, in this present study, conversations frequently revolved around the visual and technical aspects of patchwork and quilting. Mathematics was frequently expressed as being a personal

weakness, so everyday terms, such as clockwise turns, were used. Yet, the participants were tacitly proficient in geometry, estimation and measurement, including interchanging between the New Zealand metric system and North American imperial units.

In the present study, the quilters recognised that they learned by watching others, listening in to conversations, and attending to some entity in the local environment (such as a material object or the temporal rhythm). Figure 7.5 exemplifies two contextual configurations framing the social production of meaning through the act of observing. Standing side-by-side, the observing quilter in Figure 7.5(a) perceives the handling of a hot iron (as well as sensing its smell), positioning of fabric, directionality of pressing seams, and application of fusible web to appliqué pieces (5.07.13/MQO). In some cases, the person(s) being observed were unaware of a quilter's efforts to observe an activity for learning purposes. In Figure 7.5(b), a quilter stands at a distance, yet attends to the action and conversation occurring with the layering of a quilt (17.05.13/MQO). In addition, the mutual attention of the three quilters at the layering table was essential for successfully accomplishing the task, such as collaboratively smoothing the fabric flat, checking for tucks, and carefully placing safety pins.



*Figure 7.5* Contextual configurations of observation occurred while working (a) side-by-side; and even in (b) distal positions, with quilters attending to specific skills.

The quilters' keen observation, in the current study, was more than a simple matter of casual co-presence, or as expressed by Lave (2011) "hanging out". Not only did the quilters notice activities within close perceptual range through, say, a sideways glance, but they also actively pursued opportunities to understand activities of

interest, intensely focusing their attention on specific aspects of quiltmaking.<sup>108</sup> Social interaction was “organised around the jointly attended matter” (Kidwell & Zimmerman, 2007, p. 594), with the observing quilter(s) needing to develop an understanding of others’ intentionality for the activity at hand, that is, what participants were doing and for what purpose. Consequently, similar to Ingold’s (2000) findings, there was no observation without participation, since the observing quilter had to couple the “movement of her attention to surrounding currents of activity” (p. 108). Moreover, there was an expectation that the observer would carry out the aspect observed, either immediately or at a later stage (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009).

Observation was an important feature of organising learning in both quilting groups. Similar to Silva et al.’s (2015) findings, the quilters inclusion in community activities occurred through the constant opportunities available to observe and participate. They learned to use their attention skills broadly and flexibly, improving their personal perceptual capacity regarding quilting matters. Furthermore, this cultural approach of attention to surrounding events was valued, and seen as a contribution to the quilting community in two ways: (a) the quilters’ attentiveness was a means to appropriate cultural knowledge to ensure the continuity, and development, of the quilt culture; and (b) there was anticipation that they would offer their own ideas, or guidance, in the co-construction of knowledge.

#### *7.2.1.1.2 Embodied dimension*

Much of the quilters’ craft knowledge remained tacit. Nonetheless, the findings of the present study showed that this knowledge was communicated, and represented, through the participants’ bodily engagements and actions, such as pointing, touch, and posture. To understand the quilters’ enactment of joint knowledge construction, I had to take into consideration a broader system of communicative co-ordination: their *embodied* processes of thinking. Figure 7.6 exemplifies the way quilters employed embodied resources for meaning-making purposes.

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<sup>108</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, subsection 6.2.1.2, for specific examples of observation.

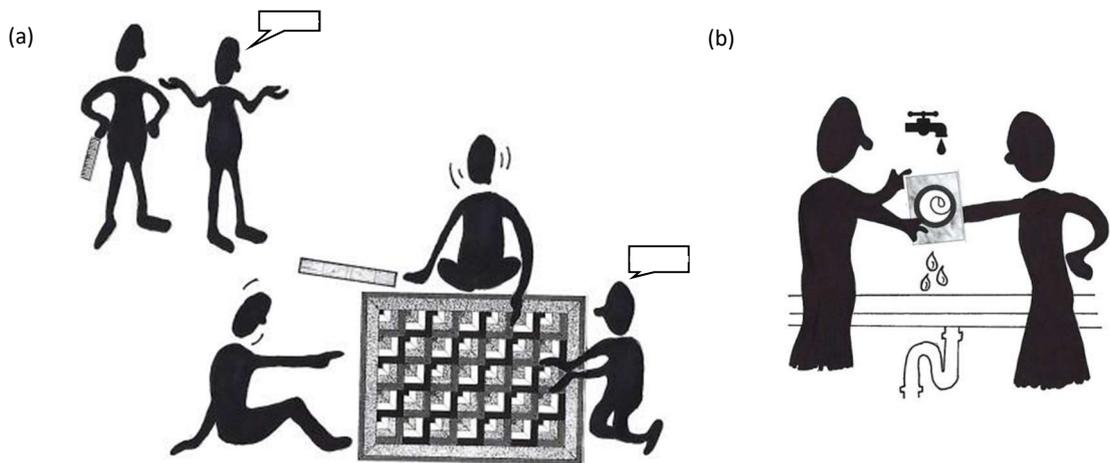


Figure 7.6 Engagement in tacit embodied experiences during which quilters (a) organised their talk, gestures, and stance when they interacted with one another in their material world; and (b) developed a sense of touch for shared cognition.

Figure 7.6(a) illustrates how some of the embodied resources (namely, modes of stance and gesture) were used by the quilting community, with much more communicated than was being verbalised. The stance of the two quilters, standing in the background, reveals the directionality of their focused attention. One quilter has a quizzical facial expression, while the other makes an utterance and raises her arms, indicating their questioning interest in what the participants, clustered around the quilt, are doing. Meanwhile, the three participants in the foreground, have “positioned themselves to see, feel, and in other ways perceive as clearly as possible” (Goodwin, 2007, p. 61), in order to carry out relevant courses of action. This cooperative stance visibly orients the quilters to each other, and the setting of their interaction, to accomplish the quilting task. Spoken words of “*there*”, “*here*”, and “*see*” (17.05.13/MQO), accompany the cupping of hands to correct a misunderstanding that the patchwork unit is square, not triangular. The quilter sitting opposite nods her comprehension, reinforced by the raised hand movement pointing to the patchwork unit. After perceiving this action, noted by the sideways head movement, the third participant begins to trace an imaginary trajectory of a potential quilt design to emphasise the patchwork unit shape. The integration of these modalities took on “what would otherwise be information to be attended to during the construction of an explanation” (Roth & Welzel, 2001, p. 127). Gestures provided the “glue” for the quilters to jointly co-ordinate the conceptual layers of meaning in their shared endeavours. The participants’ thinking became visible through their

gestural movements and bodily orientations, as they made sense of their material world.

Figure 7.6(b) demonstrates how the quilters' development of a sense of touch was an essential element for the construction of textile objects. A participant's hands are working with a water soluble stabiliser – washing, testing, and exploring through touch – while at the same time being guided (non-verbally) by another quilter who feels and checks the texture.<sup>109</sup> While the explorer felt the tangible characteristics of the textile stabiliser, the guider's touch was intentional, actively feeling for something – the moment when the stabiliser had completely dissolved. By signalling this textural change, the guider's demonstration of touch became meaningful to the explorer. The quilters' hands came to know the texture, fibre flexibility and quality in order to make sense of textile properties and behaviour. Similar tactile quilting experiences provided evidence that “learning how to touch is a prerequisite for communicating what is felt” (Bezemer & Kress, 2014, p. 84).

Recent craft studies (e.g., Groth 2017; Härkki, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, & Hakkarainen, 2016) have investigated participants' capacity for “knowing” through sensory exploration. For instance, Groth and Mäkelä (2016) found that embodied engagement with materials, through tactile experiences, were important for guiding a craftsperson's choice of materials for future projects. However, they noted that “little attention has been attributed to the body in the formation of knowledge” (p. 3). Emerging perspectives of embodied cognition (e.g., Núñez, 2012; Patel, 2008) develop the notion that “cognitive processes are deeply rooted in the body's interactions with the world” (Wilson, 2002, p. 625). This concept of embodied thinking extends my interpretation of the quilters' experiences, where the term “embodied” can be perceived as “a unity of cognitive and bodily processes” (Gulliksen, Dishke-Hondzel, Härkki, & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, 2016, p. 1). In the present study, the quilters' bodies, actions in space, handling of material objects and tools, and interaction with other participants were related to their thinking processes. Consequently, “embodied interaction refers to both social interaction

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<sup>109</sup> For specific details of this example, refer to Chapter 5, subsection 5.3.2.

between the [participants] as well as a physical interaction with materials, tools and body” (Koskinen et al., 2015, p. 59). Quilting knowledge itself is embodied.

#### 7.2.1.1.3 Material dimension

In quilting, material artefacts and tools had a central role in mediating the quilters’ thinking and learning processes. The quilters, in the present study, were very much “hands on” during the quilting sessions, and rarely seen without some sort of textile-related object or apparatus in their hands. The physical context of participants’ interaction with concrete objects (such as quilts, sewing machines and patchwork patterns) denoted the quilters’ disposition to keenly attend, explore, discover and understand the material aspects of their craft. Engagement with, and manipulation of, material artefacts and tools encouraged the quilters’ practice of exploration and experimentation. For instance, textile swatches were auditioned, swapped or discarded; a potential quilting design was sketched; and alternative decorative stitches were trialled. While concrete objects provided a common referent for discussion between quilters, as Hennessy and Murphy (1999) noted, the physical interaction with these objects also rendered processes of the quilting activity visible to other participants. Consequently, findings of the current study suggest that the quilters’ expertise was socially *and* physically distributed. Being an externalisation of quilters’ tacit knowledge, material artefacts and tools contributed to a common language of understanding (see Figure 7.7).

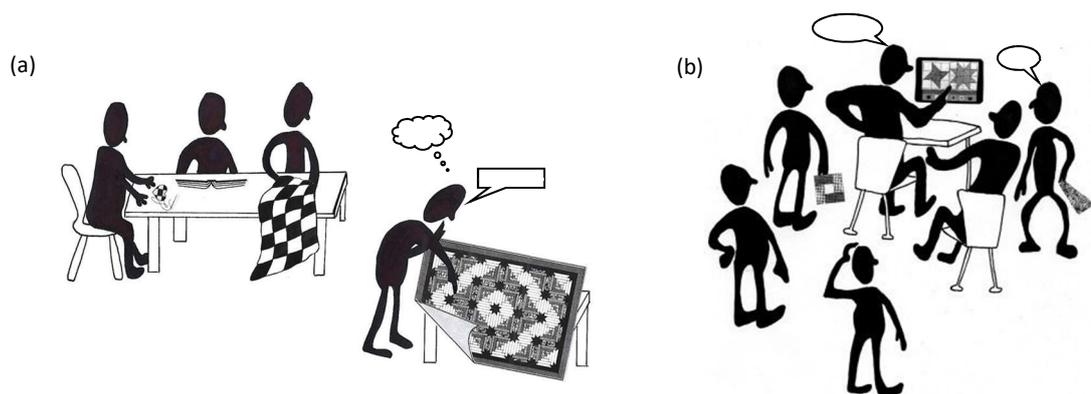


Figure 7.7 Exploring problems mediated through material objects with (a) self-discovery, and (b) cooperative actions, where both activities are inherently social.

Figure 7.7(a) illustrates how a quilt functioned as a mediator for meaning-making between mind, body and individuals.<sup>110</sup> An individual attentively examines another person's quilt, with her finger tracing the stitching line while simultaneously verbalising her thoughts. Similar to Patel's (2008) findings focused on baking, the relationship of the quilter's body, quilt and her working space formed a functional pattern of cognitive thinking. Engaging bodily senses (in this case, touch and sight) to explore the problem space, the quilt acted as an aid for the individual's processes of thinking, reasoning, and reflecting. In addition, the individual quilter's action of thinking aloud provided information about visual and technical elements of quilting to the other three participants, who had tuned in and silently watched the quilter's (inter)action with the material object. Similarly, Groth, Mäkelä, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, and Kosonen (2014) found thinking aloud accounts tracked "cognitive processes of an individual during an activity" (p. 1640), and provided content-rich documentation about solving a design task. While Wertsch (2010) questioned equal access to cultural artefacts and tools, the current study provided evidence that the openness of the quilters' working space allowed communal knowledge to be re-created and interpreted by the participants in practical and effective ways.

Figure 7.7(b) demonstrates how digital technologies impacted on, and supported, interaction between collaborators. A change of pattern became noticeable with the increasing utilisation of smart phones and portable computers in the quilters' collaborative practices.<sup>111</sup> Spatial patterns were re-arranged when quilters clustered around a digital screen questioning, pointing, comparing and discussing various colourways, shapes, and textures of images for design purposes. As Jewitt (2014) noted, "the multimodal facilities of digital technologies enable image, sound and movement to enter the communicational landscape in new and significant ways" (p. 19). The relative novelty of digital technology resources enabled participants, in the present study, to build on collective ideas, combining still photographs, moving images with their own textile sample or sketch, bridging virtual and real worlds. The practicalities and complexities of design ideas could be evaluated, supporting social

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<sup>110</sup> The vignette in Chapter 6, Section 6.2, describe contextual details related to Figure 7.7(a).

<sup>111</sup> Further examples are detailed in Chapter 6, subsection 6.2.3.2.

creativity, and, for some quilters, overcame difficulties with interpreting written instructions.

Engaging in “play” was a creative way of exploring and experimenting with materials. For the quilters in the present study, hands on exploration connected “observing” to “pitching in” where, using their initiative, they experimented with varying material aspects in productive activities. Material artefacts and tools provided a “means for [self and] others to interact with, react to, negotiate round, and build upon an idea” (Kangas, 2014, p. 29). Creating their own learning environments involved self-discovery and co-operative actions, with exploration being an intrinsic part of the quilting process.

Folk theories held common views that discern quilting as an innate talent, with sewing skills being a natural process (e.g., Bruner, 1996; Wanigasekera, 2006). However, in the present study, while a quilter seemed to “just know”, say, how to cut multiple layers of fabric with a rotary cutter, the participants’ narratives<sup>112</sup> and fieldwork observations, indicated the presence of others who provided support and guidance. Instead, findings of the current study, provided evidence that the quilters’ “practices tend to rely on the tacit understanding that [they] have acquired through extensive experience of working with materials and processes” (Nimkulrat, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, Pantouvaki, & de Freitas, 2016, p. 3). There was an (inter)active relationship between materials, embodied experience, and articulation (explicit and implicit) during the quilters’ interpretation and construction of knowledge in joint activities.

#### **7.2.1.2 Appraisal**

In the present study, the quilters took ownership of their learning processes, with the social organisation of activities facilitating the appraisal of their own and other’s work, as well as of contributions made. All participants considered themselves “learners”, no matter their quilting experience or mastery of skills. Similar to Rogoff et al.’s (2016) findings, evaluation of the success of the quilters’ development focused

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<sup>112</sup> For example, refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.1, for stories shared by the quilters about how they learned to sew and quilt.

on supporting the learners' understanding, skill, and progress. Feedback could also "come from being given responsibility for more difficult aspects of a task with less supervision" (Rogoff et al., 2015, p. 10), evidenced by an expectation that a participant's Quilt Challenge design was re-drawn to include accurate measurements. The openness of the quilters' appraisal further validated their learning environment was a safe and nurturing place, supported by a sense of social belonging, personal contributions, and multiple roles in meaningful learning practices.

Productive feedback reinforced the notion of equitable learning spaces in the quiltmakers' context. Moreover, DiGiacomo and Gutiérrez's (2016) study showed "feedback-in-practice" (p. 141) encouraged relational equity among participants; noting that appraisal, in the form of immediate feedback, assumed a partnership-like approach during the activity-based investigations. The opportunity for immediate feedback – both material and relational – was important for "promoting sustained engagement in the learning process" (p. 149).

In the present study "participation partnerships"<sup>113</sup> already existed in the quilting groups, with the co-ordination of individual and collective activities. The material and relational feedback elements of the quilting activities and context can be characterised as three types of "immediate feedback" (see Figure 7.8), which are explicated through the ensuing discussion.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Refer to subsection 7.1.2.2 for discussion about the quilters' multi-party horizontal interactions.

<sup>114</sup> Specific examples related to each feedback type illustrated are detailed in Chapter 6, subsection 6.2.1.1.

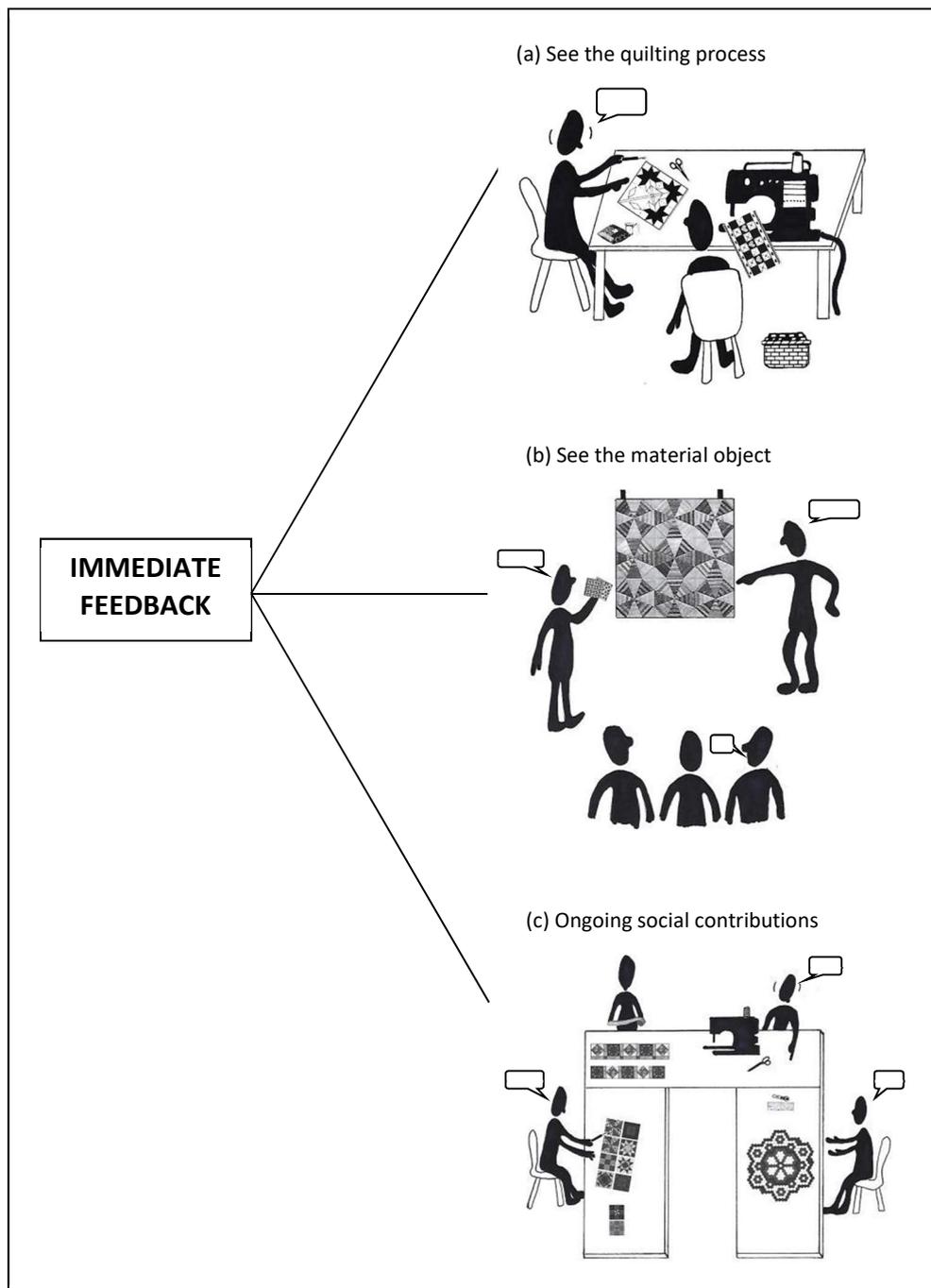


Figure 7.8 Three types of immediate feedback (involving material and relational aspects) which productively support the accomplishment of quilters' goals, in moment-to-moment activity.

In Figure 7.8 immediate feedback facilitated meaning-making during the physical activities in three ways described below:

(a) See the quilting process

The quilters readily saw the consequences of each step during the construction of the artefact, gaining understanding of "what works" within the moment-to-moment activity. For example, Gina realised the consequence

of combining and sewing a monochromatic black and white colour scheme as she prodded the overlapped stitching lines (24.05.13/MQO).

(b) See the material object

The quilters saw the textile product and how the parts related to the whole quilt, enabling them to physically interact with it. For example, a kaleidoscope quilt top was hung in order to ascertain suitable border attachments and quilting design (10.05.13/MQO). The quiltmaker received immediate feedback from another participant, while observing quilters commented to each other about the overall aesthetic effect.

(c) Ongoing social contributions

Working in close proximity, the quilters provided ongoing congenial feedback, regarding their individual (or joint) projects. For example, during their conversations Celia, Sara, Karly and Stella appraised each other's work as they stitched side-by-side (17.08.13/KQO).

The opportunity for material feedback, portrayed by Figure 7.8(a) and Figure 7.8(b), showed that the participants offered possible explanations as to why a construction method worked (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016), or shared interpretations of quilt aesthetics, pattern and variation (Dickie, 2003). In addition, relational feedback, shown in Figure 7.8(c), demonstrated the ongoing availability of mutual reciprocation, guidance, and modelling, with opportunities to improve skills or try new techniques within a supportive “repair-friendly context” (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 143). Even when there was disagreement, say, over the choice of fabric, participants felt encouraged to try again. The quilters' focus was on “accomplishing the productive goal of the activity at hand” (Rogoff et al., 2016, p. 362). Consequently, feedback-in-practice became knowing-in-action, where feedback took on the character of a process of knowing.

## 7.2.2 Collective knowledge practices

KEY FINDING 4

***Knowledge practices (reproduction, building, and creation) co-exist with the quilters' collective aim to jointly construct, develop, and advance their understanding of material objects.***

In the present study, the quilting collective took responsibility to construct knowledge that was of value to the participants. Lave (1996) pointed out that, “‘What you know’ may be better thought of as doing rather than having something – ‘knowing’ rather than acquiring or accumulating knowledge or information” (p. 157). While “knowing” is commonly perceived as cultural transmission (or socialisation) through the dialectical structuring of an activity among people acting (e.g., Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991), “knowing” is also about joint work around shared concrete objects and practices that support this work for the deliberate advancement of knowledge (e.g., Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2009). There was evidence of the co-existence and co-evolution of different collective knowledge practices in the quilting groups.

This section discusses (i) the quilting collective’s cultural practices of knowledge-sharing; and then critically examines (ii) Manumea Quilters’ collaborative designing practice which was deliberately introduced to create new knowledge. The quilters’ knowledge practices involved ways of working together to replicate ideas, to improve ideas, *and* to generate new ideas. Analysing the nature of the quilters’ everyday activity involved understanding the various types of knowledge practices – how they were used and for what purpose. Figure 7.9 highlights the key features of collective knowledge practices which involve changes in knowledge and action which were central to the quilters’ learning.

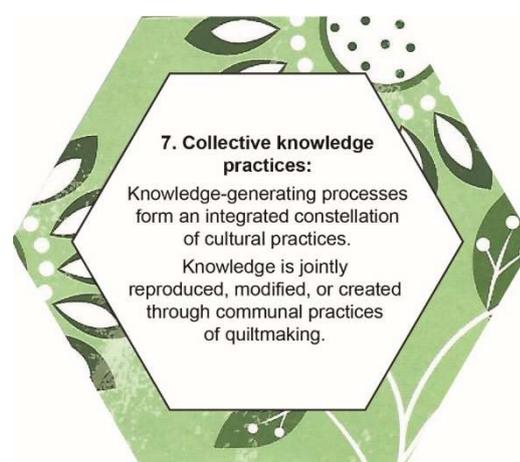


Figure 7.9 Appropriation of communal knowing from reproduction to creation, with contribution of everyday knowledge.

### **7.2.2.1** *Cultural practices of knowledge-sharing*

Being a community of practice, the quilters participated together to carry out different activities. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2015) contended that through the participants' regular interaction, they learned to do (quilting) better. Education-based literature often reported that a community of practice, such as a quilting group, was essentially a local container of recycled knowledge which was used for socialisation purposes (e.g., Elkjaer, 2009; Roberts, 2006). Meanwhile, quilt studies emphasised the necessity for individuals to draw upon the collective's knowledge of quilting traditions, as part of the socialisation process, to develop quilter identities (e.g., Cerny et al., 1993; Cheek & Piercy, 2004). But, Scardamalia and Bereiter (2010) insisted that "the need to improve existing ideas is constitutive of the community, it is why the community exists in the first place" (p. 11). The participants, in the current study, were part of a knowledge-generating culture, not only improving ideas but also created new knowledge, sustaining the creative energy of the quilting groups. The collective knowledge practices can be represented by a continuum, while noting that each practice seemed to extend and merge into another, sometimes making it difficult for me to distinguish among them. The seamless nature of the quilters' cultural practices of knowledge-sharing in the form of knowledge reproduction, knowledge building, and knowledge creation, also encompassed overlapping everyday knowledge practices of other cultural communities to which the quilters belonged (see Figure 7.10).

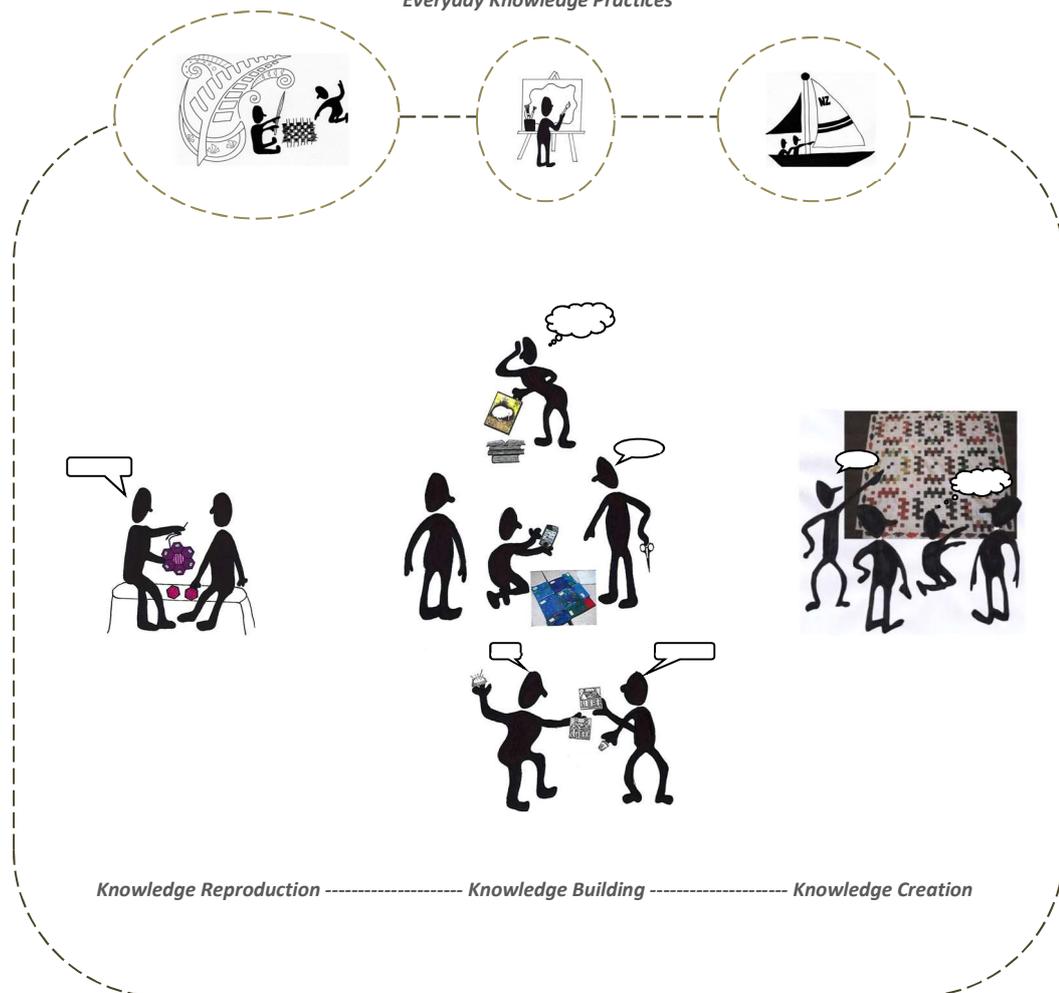


Figure 7.10 Quilters' knowledge-sharing practices co-exist on a continuum (theoretically and practically), with overlapping cultural community processes of other everyday practices, forming an integrated constellation of practices.

The quilters participated in multiple communities, engaging in a variety of everyday knowledge practices which reflect the findings of Lave (1988) and Wenger (2009). Similar to the household studies of Moll et al. (1993) and González et al. (2005), the sewing backgrounds of the interviewees indicated that the household task of home sewing was a source for the quilters' funds of knowledge. But, as Rogoff, Chavajay, and Matusov (1993) contended, in an appropriation model there is no boundary between the individual and the rest of her world. Instead, Rogoff et al. (2014) argued that there existed commonalities of cultural processes in other communities. It would seem that, in the current study, other leisure pursuits in which quilters participated (such as making traditional Māori crafts, using nautical principles, or applying paint from an artist's palette) had a connection to the quiltmakers' approach to learning. With the incorporation of *koru* designs, creating billowing sails from *tapa* cloth, and

painting photograph transfers on fabric, everyday knowledge practices overlapped with the social-historical character of the quilting community, to form an integrated constellation of cultural practices. In addition, engagement in quilt-related activities outside the quilting community (such as National Quilt Symposium workshops and lectures) offered alternative processes, and were considered by the collective whether to adopt, modify, or reject those cultural practices.

In knowledge reproduction practices participants learned through observing others, listening to the words spoken from past generations of quiltmakers, and being guided in culturally-and-historically valued activities. Quilt literature often drew attention to the rules and conventions of quilting (e.g., Graham & Stalker, 2007; Stalker, 2005), with the necessity of “getting it right” (e.g., Dickie, 2004; Hindman, 1992). In the current study, the quilters relied on basic construction techniques for the successful accomplishment of quilting projects. For example, a demonstration of accurate measurement to attach borders, ensured a quilt hung straight (10.09.13/KQI5). The metaphor of knowledge acquisition (Sfard, 1998) seemed to dissipate when learning in the quilting community was conceived as “a construction of present versions of past experience for several persons acting together” (Lave, 1993). For example, the resurgence of interest in the English paper piecing method encouraged participants to learn together about the quilting tradition, while using materials and tools available to them to construct contemporary-style quilts. Such knowledge and skills were part of the groups’ reproduction knowledge practice, with this “knowledgeability” (Lave, 1996, 2011) accepted as part of the quilters’ ordinary, productive activities. Quilting traditions and rules supported individuals to build on ideas, and engage in creative endeavours.

Characteristic of knowledge building practices was the exploration and experimentation undertaken by individuals, small groups, or in peer-led workshops, to modify and improve ideas for the construction of textile projects. Kosonen and Mäkelä (2012) noted that during the creative process of craftwork, exploration took the artist out of her comfort zone as she began to crystallise her ideas in a visual or textual form. Coincidences, mistakes and surprises arose with the experimentation of unfamiliar materials. Similarly, in the present study, quilters “played” with the

materials (such as fabric, dye, paint, water soluble stabiliser, beading, and embroidery threads), and discovered new methods and ways of working with concrete objects and tools. Along with the guidance of other participants, an individual's ideas were transformed into a tangible form. While the peer-led workshops might have been discerned as merely a way to follow, or imitate, what others were doing using existing knowledge, the participants played creatively with their ideas to produce different versions of the same product (for example, Pinwheel Table Toppers).<sup>115</sup> For Härkki et al. (2016) successful collaboration in textile projects required:

[T]he building of knowledge and the utilisation of that knowledge productively, taking into account other team members' interests and strengths. It requires the sharing of one's knowledge, ideas and embodied experiences, as well as the evaluation, adoption and adaptation of knowledge, ideas and embodied experiences that others share, either in conversations or in interactions with materials. (p. 2)

In the quilters' knowledge building practices implicit techniques were made explicit, through conversations and embodied interactions. These (inter)actions lead to improving and adapting techniques to fulfil their intended purpose, and allowed the modified techniques to then recede into the unconsciousness of collective knowledge (O'Connor, 2005).

The quilters' knowledge creation practice was a special kind of cultural inquiry process. The dialogical approach emphasises engagement in an organised and joint activity, with a common aim to create something new in the community (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2009). This type of collective learning went beyond given information, with the participants systematically developing common objects of activity to intentionally advance communal knowledge (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005a). The focus was not on the quilters' interactions, but on the specific *objects* of activity. Therefore, "the process is considered to be dialogical in nature because it takes place in interaction between personal and collective efforts mediated by shared objects of activity" (Hakkarainen, 2008, p. 5). Mediating tools and mediating processes (such as interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge) provide a basis for people to

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<sup>115</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, Figure 6.8, for visual presentation of Pinwheel Table Topper variations.

produce object-like things together. The applicability of dialogues has not been previously investigated in everyday practices of learning and teaching, such as the leisure activity of quilting.

In the current study, the basis of dialogical learning for a group of master quilters was to collaboratively design and construct group quilts. Renegotiating the purpose of their quilting group, the Manumea Quilters recognised the need to deliberately transform the quilting practice, advance their designing knowledge, and develop expertise. Key features which constitute the dialogical approach were present in their collaborative block design activities (that is, “Block of the Month” and “Design a Block with a Twist”).<sup>116</sup> Table 7.2 details the dialogue elements, shared objects being developed, and mediating tools in the context of the quilters’ knowledge creation practice.

Table 7.2 Dialogical Features of the Quilters’ Knowledge Creation Practice

<b>Dialogue Elements</b>	<b>Block Design Activity</b>
(1) Individual quilters	13 Master Quilters
(2) Learning quilting community	The Master Quilter participants, which then extended to include the other community quilters in the sequential block design activity
(3) Purposeful use of objects	To design and construct 13 group quilts
<b>Developing Shared Objects</b>	
Knowledge artefact	Written instruction sheet for block design (Each participant produced a design instruction sheet = 13 patchwork patterns)
Practice	Organisation of activity, roles and collaboration, such as activity co-ordinator, monthly schedule, participants’ individual kit preparation, and collective problem-solving
Externalised ideas and representations	Sketch, diagram, templates, prototype block sample
<b>Mediating Tools</b>	
	Included but not limited to: quilting magazines and books, digital images, websites, needlework tools, material artefacts such as quilts and other participants’ block designs

Applying these features to a visual model of Paavola and Hakkarainen’s (2009) dialogical learning framework (see Figure 7.11) emphasised, that for the quilters’ knowledge creation practice, the focus was not just on individual learners nor just on social processes, but also on a third element – on jointly developed objects – meant

<sup>116</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, subsection 6.3.2.3, for specific details and examples of the block design activities.

for some later use. Using mediating tools each quilter designed a patchwork block, externalising their initial ideas in various ways, such as drawing a sketch. A collaborative inquiry approach emerged as the participants learned to prepare written instructions, follow the pattern steps to stitch blocks, and construct group quilts. Not only were knowledge artefacts jointly constructed, but also the quilters' ways of doing things together (that is, collective practices) were modified during the process. For example, the introduction of new roles, that is an activity planner and an activity co-ordinator who took care of negotiating the design project context. Meanwhile, the master quilters' engagement in this innovative knowledge project involved personal and collective accountability, such as ensuring to meet monthly schedule timelines, and to follow design requirements requested by co-participants. Furthermore, during the "Block of the Month" activity master quilters collaboratively worked on the joint project, while other participants observed from the peripheral. However, there was a significant change in the "Design a Block with a Twist" activity when community members began to contribute their ideas too. The quilters' processes of learning were inseparably intertwined with their processes of inquiry which is discussed in the following subsection.

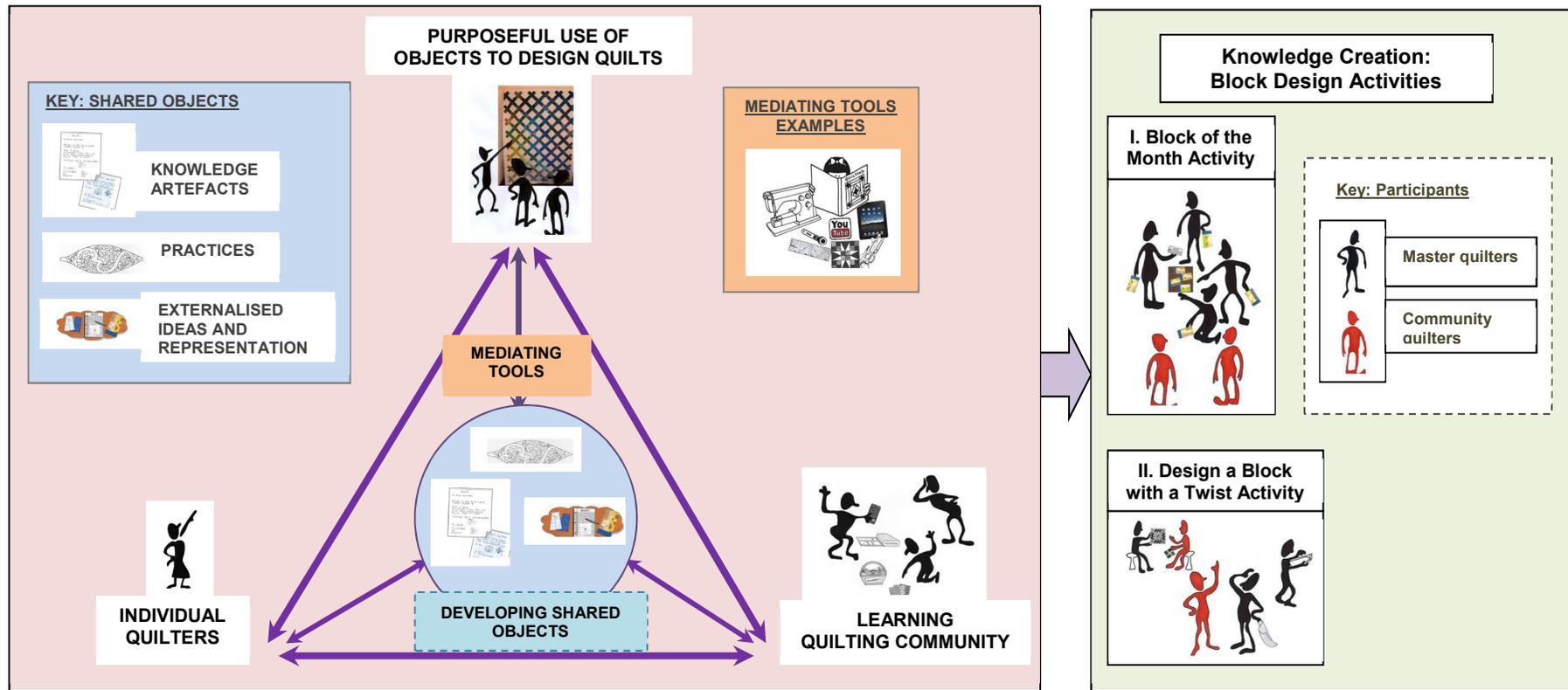


Figure 7.11 The triological learning framework applied to the quilters' block designing activities.

Left – Collaborative knowledge creation forms a triologue between individuals, community, and purposeful use (and re-use) of objects.

Right – The two design knowledge activities illustrate quilters' transforming patterns of participation, organised through their collaboration of developing "shared objects", from I) master quilters' mutual reciprocation to II) engagement with other community quilters.

### **7.2.2.2 Collaborative designing for knowledge creation**

In this subsection I articulate the quilters' triological development of shared objects, using Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al.'s (2010) "Learning by Collaborative Designing" (LCD) model,<sup>117</sup> as a guide to elaborate the special features of Manumea Quilters' joint design activity. In the present study, cultural knowledge was created when the master quilters' wanted to learn how to design patchwork blocks, write an instruction sheet for the block patterns, and make group quilts. An essential feature of such a progressive inquiry was the participants' questions or problems that guide the inquiry process (Hakkarainen, 2003). Without questions posed by the quilters themselves, "there cannot be a genuine process of inquiry" (Hakkarainen, 2003, p. 1073). The designing of patchwork blocks had conceptual and practical components: the participants developed their ideas through taking part in knowledge-creating inquiries, as well as stitching block samples (prototypes) and quilts (material products). A new practice unfolded as the participants negotiated collective understanding of relevant concepts and material matters, and addressed unanticipated issues to maintain the creative flow of the activity.

The block design activity was the initiative of an individual (activity planner), with details refined in discussion with another individual (activity co-ordinator). However, similar to the LCD model, central to the quilters' inquiry process was the distribution of expertise and collaboration (see Figure 7.12). All participants worked at developing block designs by sharing their expertise socially *and* physically. While the activity planner and activity co-ordinator assumed roles for organising the project, they were also participants in the collaborative designing activities. The design context was established with the challenge to prepare an instruction sheet for other participants to re-create a block design, requiring implementation of initiative to decide how to achieve this task successfully. The design activity provided common ground to jointly construct new material artefacts and communal practices, as well as ways to externalise their ideas (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2009).

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<sup>117</sup> Refer to Chapter 3, Figure 3.2, for illustration of "Learning by Collaborative Designing" inquiry model.

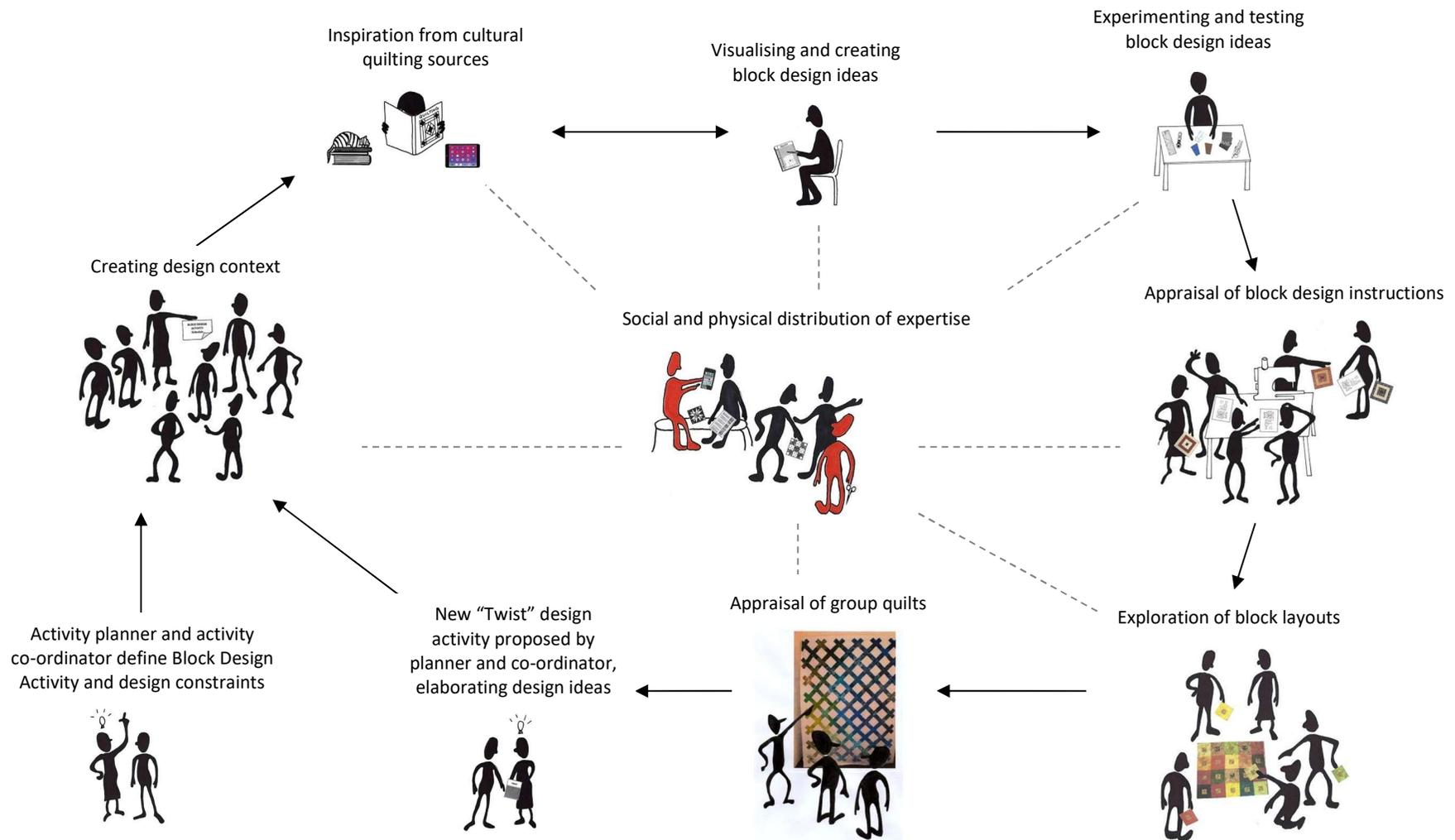


Figure 7.12 The quilters' collaborative designing for knowledge creation. (NB: Red figures represent roles of other community quilters.)

In the current study, the inquiry process became a cyclic progression, involving multi-way collaboration, as each of the thirteen participants' ideas were developed, design elements considered, and appraisals made to enhance design knowledge, with new information shared among the collective. Initially, the quilters alternated between gathering inspiration from quilting sources and externalising their visual ideas by way of diagrams and "thinking sketches" (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen & Hakkarainen, 2000). Within the "shared design context", the participants were able to address technical issues of constructing and realising mental images of potential block designs (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2010). The materialisation of these ideas, through making and experimenting with sample design blocks, enabled written instructions to be checked for accuracy.

Immediate feedback was given – "see the quilting process" – as participants conferred about the various interpretations of the written instructions; with encouragement to try new techniques within a supportive repair-friendly context (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016). Collaborative explorations of block layouts and sashing options offered different choices, as well as presenting design constraints. Group appraisal of the finished quilt top – "see the material object" – allowed the quilters to consider the visual and technical characteristics of the individual's quilt design, providing opportunities to collect, share, and evaluate varying design ideas (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016; Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2010). Sometimes, the organisation of visual elements did not result in producing the designer's original desired effect.

The quilters' pursuit of learning to design patchwork blocks, producing written pattern instructions, deepened their design knowledge. Similar to the LCD model, "the design process appears from the beginning to the end to be mediated by the shared artefacts being designed" (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2010, p. 113). Suggesting tentative explanations, searching for alternative solutions, and making constructive use of new information gathered from literary, digital and human sources advanced the quilters' inquiries. Moreover, the inquiry process of "Block of the Month" gave rise to new questions, requiring further elaborated conceptualisation, leading to another cycle of knowledge generation with the sequential activity of "Design a Block with a Twist". Furthermore, there was increased involvement by other community members, made

visible through their productive contributions. Within the context of these knowledge creation activities, there were reciprocal transformations of participation, material artefacts, *and* practice (Hakkarainen, 2008).

### **7.3 How do Learning and Teaching of Patchwork and Quilting Occur within the Communal Activity of Quilting?**

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of this chapter addressed the two guiding research questions. This section draws together the findings of the study to discuss the overarching research question for the investigation of everyday learning and teaching within the quilting community. Informal learning is often conceived as a residual category of all learning that occurs outside school and is, therefore, considered the polar opposite of formal education (e.g., Duguid et al., 2013). But I argue that voicing another way of supporting learning, outside formal and non-formal education systems, develops a deeper conceptual understanding of learning itself. Consequently, it was important to view *how* learning was organised and supported in communal quilting activities, rather than considering *where* learning occurred. I present a new and emerging conceptual framework, “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning” (AMCCL), to articulate the organisation and support of informal learning within the quilters’ community setting (see Figure 7.13).

When viewing AMCCL, it is necessary to recognise the inherent inseparability of the seven features, while taking into consideration other facets which are in the background. For example, the quilters’ eagerness to pitch in (facet 2), relied on them having opportunities to explore and communicate ideas (facet 5) while being included in quilting events (facet 1); they served to support and guide each other through the social and physical distribution of expertise (facet 4), sharing responsibility for learning (facet 3), as material artefacts were collaboratively constructed (facet 7), which were appraised in the moment of the activity (facet 6). The results of the present study support the rationale that learning through AMCCL is an integrated process of organising how quilters learned.

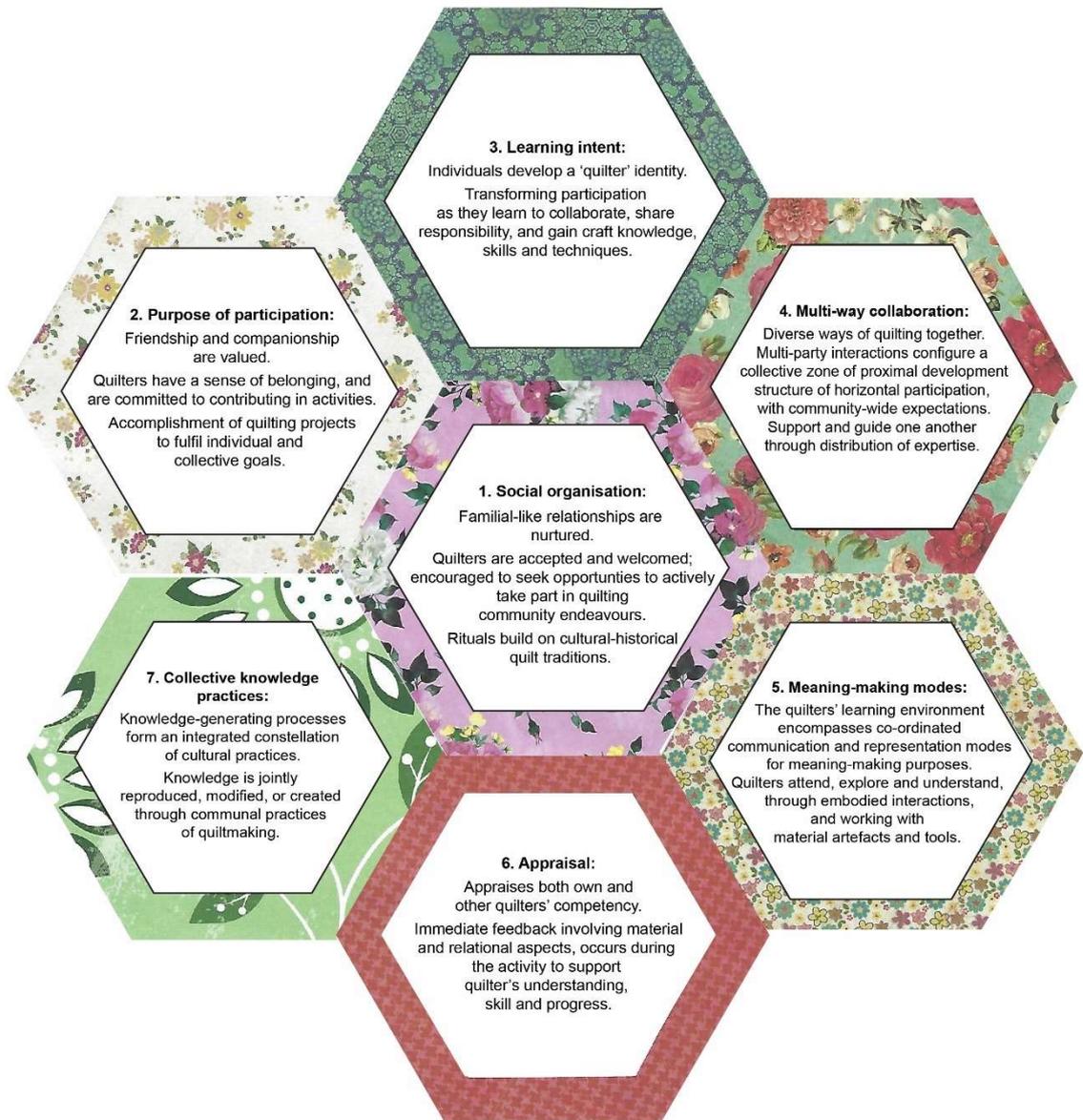


Figure 7.13 "Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning" conceptual framework, with patchwork mosaic defining features of the quilting groups' organisation, and support, of learning.

### 7.3.1 “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning”

#### KEY FINDING 5

***A new and emerging apprenticeship model articulates the quilting community’s sociocultural approach to learning. This model extends theoretical perspectives of learning as participation with the inclusion of “hands on” exploration, multiple meaning-making modes, and the creation of new knowledge.***

In the present study, while the organisation of informal learning shared some common features with Rogoff’s (2014) “Learning by Observing and Pitching In” (LOPI), the emerging apprenticeship model was *not* LOPI, since it uncovered aspects which were unique to the distinct settings of quilting in Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>118</sup> The new conceptual framework, “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning” (AMCCL), is based on Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural frame of reference, whereby learning and development mainly relies on the quilter’s participation in the activities and practices of the community which mutually constitute the quilt culture. The ideas and practices of AMCCL also resonate with Dewey’s (1938/1963) notion of pragmatism, where everyday experiences happen not only *in* the quilters’ environment but in interaction *with* their environment. Additionally, in the course of these everyday experiences, the quilters’ embodied and material practices draws attention to a “mind and body” connection, highlighting that a relationship exists between the body and the process of thinking. Cultural knowledge is valued, with participants keen to contribute through improving ways of doing things, as well as advancing novel ideas, transforming material objects and practices. The discussion focuses on (i) how learning is fostered in the quilting community; and (ii) distinguishes AMCCL characteristics specific to the quilters’ exploratory “hands on” and “minds on” engagement in their everyday learning.

#### **7.3.1.1 Fostering learning in the quilters’ community setting**

Quilting practices and development, extending from historical networks to the present day, are shaped by cultural-historical values and norms. The craft tradition of quilting has evolved over centuries (Gillespie, 2010; Roberts, 2007), with learning

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<sup>118</sup> Refer to Chapter 3, Figure 3.1a, for Rogoff’s (2014) prism defining the features (facets) of LOPI theoretical framework.

being organised in communities in ways that have worked for many generations, for instance, the medieval European guild-based apprenticeships (Moonen, 2010), family cottage industries of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Osler 1987; Prichard, 2010), and quilt clubs in latter times (Osler, 2010; Stalp, 2007). Learning processes are connected to the quilting communities' practices, which are historically and locally situated. The British heritage of quilting was reflected in the early New Zealand quilts made by European immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Wanigasekera, 2010). Social and friendship networks were vital as a means of support for women so distant from their families in the "homeland" (Swarbrick, 2011). Women's organisations and self-improvement groups of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided opportunities for companionship and to learn various skills, including needlework, in a supportive social setting (Else, 1993). In the current study, the quilters continue to participate with others in culturally organised activities, building friendship bonds within familiar rituals, as well as being encouraged to explore novel ideas and new skills.

There are similarities in the organisation of informal learning, whether it occurs between children and adults (such as in Indigenous American communities), or among adults as evidenced by the quilters in the current study. Rogoff et al. (2016, pp. 359-360) identified six important commonalities found in a diverse range of informal learning settings, which I explain in terms relevant to the quilting groups in the present study, as follows:

(i) Informal learning is interactive and embedded in meaningful activity.

The quilting groups included novice, experienced, and master quilters in a wide range of endeavours, working together, to accomplish productive goals in their stitching of individual or collective projects.

(ii) Guidance is available to learners and their partners through social interaction and the structure of activities.

Clusters of quilters engaged collaboratively as an ensemble with fluid coordination of participation partnerships. There was flexible role switching "between the person who knows and giving each other support while working" (Illum & Johansson, 2012, p. 13) for the distribution of expertise, to which

newcomers also contributed. Quilting knowledge and skills were intensely relational to the community's highly valued social and affective factors, thus "thought, emotional experience, and practical action" (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2000, p. 1) were integrated in the meaningful relationships with individuals who were in cultural teaching roles (Maynard & Greenfield, 2006). But there was "little room for narrowly conceived instruction" (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009, p. 114); instead, in the present study, cultural teaching was about those who were knowledgeable providing guidance, or where mutual reciprocation was necessary for problem solving, during collaborative engagement in quilting activities. Moreover, the structure of activities was an important source of support, permitting individuals to observe embodied and material practices, interpreting what other quilters were thinking and doing.

(iii) Talk is conversational, not didactic.

There was a focus on the mutual bridging of meaning about an activity at hand, with exchange of information during conversations, which was not necessarily intended to instruct. However, variations in speech forms were affected by the physical elements in the (quilters') environment, with dialogue being complemented by rich non-verbal communication, as participants worked on their projects (Illum & Johansson, 2012). For example, verbal communication included simple statements, such as "*Look at this*" (10.04.13/KQO) or "*That'll hold it*" (5.06.13/KQO), and short questions, like "*Is that what we use?*" (19.06.13/KQO) or "*How will you stitch this?*" (5.06.13/KQO). Engaging in conversation was a reciprocal process, where participants had to co-operate in order to appreciate what others were experiencing.

(iv) Involvement builds on individual initiative, interest, and choice.

The quilters keenly observed activities occurring around them, for instance attending closely to a nearby demonstration that did not include them, yet provided an opportunity to learn. Anyone could take the initiative as they saw a way to contribute, but final decisions were usually made by the individual about her quilting project.

(v) Assessment occurs in support of contributing to the activity, not for external purposes.

Appraisal, in the form of immediate feedback, was an ongoing learning process as part of the quilting endeavour within a repair-friendly context. Each quilter took responsibility to improve her own, as well as others', mastery of quilting skills.

(vi) Participants hone their existing knowledge and skills and also innovate, developing new ideas and skills.

Learning to collaborate with consideration, quilters gained task-specific information and skills which, in turn, enhanced their contributions and role in the quilting community. There was deepening knowledge, through the modification and building of collective knowing but, in terms of the LOPI participation-based approach (Rogoff, 2014), the notion of handling innovation becomes a problem since it requires extra efforts (Hakkarainen, 2008).

The quilters had cultural repertoires of practice – that is, “the formats of (inter)action with which individuals have experience and may take up, resist, and transform” (Rogoff et al., 2007, p. 490) – and were often based on previous generations' quilting experiences. Nonetheless, as quilters moved across different everyday settings they also actively engaged in variable ways, and chose to integrate some of these learning processes with current circumstances in the quilting community. This constellation of practices connected the quilters' immediate activities, encompassed in the cultural tradition of quilting endeavours, to widespread communities. The quilters' expanding repertoires of knowledge practices draws attention to the agency of an individual's active role in selecting, adapting and transforming ways of participation, *as well as* to the dynamic nature of the community's guiding role in transforming practice *and* material objects.

### **7.3.1.2 “Hands on” and “minds on” engagement in everyday learning**

The new and emerging AMCCCL conceptual framework broadens the perspective of how informal learning is organised. In the present study, exploration and working with one's hands was a distinct attribute of the quilters' learning, and is a missing feature of LOPI's

(Rogoff, 2014) learning by intent participation. Exploratory experiences were characterised by a playful and experimental style of engagement. “Playing” was considered by the quilters to be a valid and valuable way of working: “*Play... it’s important just to play*” (21.05.13/MQO). In Resnick and Rosenbaum’s (2013) study of the “tinkering” process, individuals might begin by playing around with materials and a goal would emerge from their messy explorations; while other people started with a vague plan, which they continually adapted and renegotiated, “based on their interactions with the materials and people they are working with” (p. 165). In the current study, the participants, even when they began with a commercial pattern, would trial new ideas, unpicked stitching to make refinements, and experimented with alternative possibilities. Although their initial explorations seemed rather random, this playful style of thinking was a valuable process in creating something material.

Quilting knowledge was tacit in nature and embodied in the participants’ material practices. The physical interaction with textiles and quilting tools, as well as social interaction between the quilters, all worked together to support their meaning-making processes (Lahti et al., 2016). Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, Huotilainen, Mäkelä, Groth, and Hakkarainen (2016) investigated the processes in which the hand, eye, and mind collaborate in craft activities; while Nimkulrat (2010) focused on the textile artists’ handling of materials within creative practices. Both research studies acknowledge the need to consider how craft practitioners’ embodied cognition involves, and builds on, sensory experiences through interactions with their environment. For instance, Koskinen et al. (2015) stated that “in craft activities, we think through our hands, and thinking is visible in our bodies (movements, gestures)” (p. 59). The two aspects reflected in this statement are pertinent to the quilting community:

- Firstly, the quilters learned through physical experiences, such as Nina’s experimentation with making fabric, guided by Gina, to achieve the “right” texture.<sup>119</sup> Such skills became mastered during the process between the person, tool and material, with the appropriation of knowledge “mediated

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<sup>119</sup> Refer to Chapter 7, Figure 7.6(b), illustrating embodied cognition where the guider refers to the state of the textile through the mode of touch, as the learner masters the new physical experience.

through allowing the learner to discover, learn and think with the material, [so] her body can remember the difference” (Illum & Johansson, 2012, p. 12). On the other hand, the guider relied on her previous embodied experiences of looking at, listening, touching, and physical interactions, to assist a learner. Consequently, embodied thinking can be conceived as “an anchor linking the mind and body” (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, Laamanen, Viitala, & Mäkelä, 2013, p. 7). Tacit understanding was achieved through the quilters’ extensive “hands on” experiences with material objects.

- Secondly, communication between the participants occurred through the multimodality of social, embodied and material dimensions to support sense-making processes. Thinking became visible in the quilters’ (inter)active experiences. For example, in the current study, participants regularly used gestures when considering viable quilting designs. The movement of hands and gestures were recognised and interpreted (by observing participants) through their relationship to the material artefact (Streeck et al., 2013).<sup>120</sup> Transforming ideas into concrete objects involved embodied cognition as participants interacted with one another, physically touched and manipulated textiles, and used a variety of tools. Material artefacts and tools represented cultural knowledge, acting as mediators between quilters, and were aids for thinking. Thought and action were built into these shared experiences, with the participants’ perception determining action (and vice versa), creating a collective memory (Hostetter & Alibali, 2008; Illum & Johansson, 2012).

The AMCCL conceptual framework encompasses an innovative inquiry process where shared objects are collaboratively developed over a sustained period of time. In contrast, participation-based approaches focus on learning to function as part of a community of practice in order to become a full participant (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2014) “without intentional aspirations to bring about conceptual or social change” (Hakkarainen, 2008, p. 4). Instead, in the present study, master quilters

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<sup>120</sup> Refer to Chapter 6, Figure 6.1, for an illustration of embodied thinking made visible through gestural movements.

deliberately transformed existing practices so their communal quilting knowledge could be significantly enriched. During the progressive inquiry process of collaborative designing, not only were knowledge artefacts jointly constructed and developed, but also the quilters' practices of doing things together were modified in the dialogical learning activity. While taking part in the inquiry process, new ideas unfolded through the conceptualisation of block designs and practical explorations; participants appropriated novel practices and more demanding roles; and original group quilts were produced.

At the beginning of this present study, the quilters' assertion that "*You don't teach*" was rather disconcerting. However, emerging features of the new AMCL conceptual framework demonstrated that cultural teaching, or situated instruction, occurred through (and in) the quilters' idiosyncratic communal practices of learning together. The participants did a great deal to assist each other with learning. But the relations between the quilters were not the same as conventional teacher-learner relationships, and it became clear to me that learning was not dependent on teaching. Embodied processes, material exploration and experimentation, and engagement with concrete tools were integral to the social and physical distribution of expertise (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2016). Embedded in meaningful activity, learning was socially interactive with "hands on" and "minds on" processes tied to the quilters' bodily experiences and material world within the collective ZPD.

#### **7.4 Summary**

The original literature review for the study was based on the perception that language (and, particularly, contextualised talk) was the most effective way for quilters to engage in new information, with knowing located in the dialectical relations between the participants. Due to the emergent findings from the fieldwork, additional literature was sourced on multiple modes for meaning-making. These scholarly research studies enriched the analysis of the findings and discussion. In addition, I used illustrations to highlight the essential role of embodied (inter)actions and material mediation in quilting practices which was difficult, and sometimes impossible, to describe. The discussion was

structured around the two guiding research questions and the overarching research question, focusing on five key findings and associated themes.

The first key finding established that the social integration of quilters builds on cultural-historical quilt traditions. Similar to past generations of quilting activities and practices, the social organisation of the quilting community was founded on nurturing familial-like relationships, incorporating participants in a wide range of endeavours, to develop a sense of belonging.

The second key finding revealed distinct cultural patterns of social interaction. The major feature of multi-way collaborations drew attention to the quilting community's flexible ensemble of interrelationships. Role switching was commonplace, with the quilters sharing responsibility for guiding others through participation partnerships, in their commitment to collective learning.

The third key finding focused on the tacit nature of quilt knowledge, uncovering sense-making processes through the quilters' embodied experiences and material mediation. Meaning-making modes of communication (such as gesture, gaze, and touch) are integrated in quilters' perceptual and physical interactions, and grounded in their environmental setting. Exploratory practices developed tacit understanding through the quilters' extensive experiences of working with materials. Appraisal occurred during quilting endeavours in the form of material and relational feedback.

The fourth key finding realised the co-existence, and co-evolution, of different collective knowledge practices in the quilting groups. An integrated constellation of cultural practices encompassed knowledge reproduction, knowledge building, knowledge creation, and overlapping everyday knowledge practices of other cultural communities. The advancement of communal knowledge, through an inquiry process of collaborative designing, broadens participation-based approaches of learning to consider the elements of triological learning in the quiltmakers' setting.

The final key finding presents a new conceptual framework, "Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning". This theoretical model emphasises that the defined features of the quilters' everyday learning and teaching is a coherent, integrated

process. This organisation of learning highlights the quilters' "hands on" and "minds on" engagement, including the extent to which they playfully explored, their thinking and knowing was embodied, and the ways participation, practice, *and* material objects were transformed.

## CHAPTER 8

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### CONCLUSION

#### “Passing On” Knowledge

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The beginner is usually conscripted to the patch by a friend or a relative, to whom a third party has already passed on the method of joining together the hexagons, and the chain reaction, consequently, keeps the craft very much alive. (Tapsell, 1979, p. 16)

The present study investigated communal quiltmaking as a form of everyday, informal learning and teaching, and it has been interpreted as a sociocultural process of appropriating knowledge within the situated context. During the early stages of the worldwide revival of quiltmaking, New Zealander Lauri Tapsell (1979) noted how the knowledge of patchwork was passed on. Over thirty years later, from a new generation of quilters, a research participant explained: *“I have passed on the knowledge that’s been passed to me – and I’m passing it on to you now”* but then added *“I’ve adapted it to lots of things”* (26.07.13/MQCON). This research study provides some unique insights about the collaborative processes and multimodal dimensions for co-constructing knowledge in an everyday setting.

This chapter draws conclusions from the findings of the study and, based on these conclusions, presents a new view of learning and teaching within the quilting community. Contributions to knowledge, made by this study, are considered. The implications of this research for learning and teaching in everyday settings, particularly communal quiltmaking, are outlined. Limitations of this study are identified. Finally, recommendations are provided for future research.

#### 8.1 Conclusions from the Study

The current study reported a range of defining features that were integral to the communal quiltmaking process. The quilt, shown in Figure 8.1, was made during my

fieldwork, and carries specific meanings associated with the organisation of informal learning in the quilting groups. Therefore, I use this particular three-layered quilt as an analogy to present the results of the study.

### **8.1.1 Top layer**

Stitched zippers reveal a contemporary strip-pieced quilt pattern, emerging from an antique mosaic of patched hexagons, to metaphorically illustrate:

- Rituals built upon cultural-historical quilting traditions
- Informal, everyday learning is meaningful and coherent, embedded in the quilters' activities
- A constellation of knowledge practices co-exist in the quilting community.

### **8.1.2 Inner layer**

Batting is the filler, the unseen layer between the quilt top and the backing, which represents:

- The tacit nature of quilting processes and meaning-making in quilting practices
- Social interactions, embodied actions, and physical materials mediate cultural information
- Through exploration, and working with their hands, the quilters come to know about textile properties and manipulation of tools
- There is both social and physical distribution of expertise.

### **8.1.3 Foundation layer**

The backing fabric stabilises and anchors the quilt, and figuratively characterises:

- The strong network of relationships nurtured within a supportive environment
- Participants' aspirations to develop friendships, and to learn new quilting skills and knowledge
- Through multi-directional learning quilters share responsibility to assist each other, by guiding and collaborating in participation partnerships
- Transformation of participation, material artefacts, and cultural practices, occur within a collective zone of proximal development.



*Figure 8.1 Winds of the Past Unzipped. Machine pieced and appliquéd, machine quilted, cotton with metal zippers, 1450 x 1500mm. Personal Photograph (5.01.14).*

Together, these three layers formed a new conceptual framework I termed “Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning” (AMCCL). This theoretical model presents how learning opportunities are organised in which quilters are broadly integrated into the activities of the community. It is a multi-faceted process as participants learn by being attentive to quilting (inter)actions around them, “playing” with material objects to explore ideas, and contributing to the community’s quilting endeavours. Cultural teaching is present in the form of situated instruction which occurs through, and in, the quilters’ learning processes of “doing” quilting. The quiltmaking context is seen as the participants’ engagement in historically, culturally and socially defined forms of productive “hands on” and “minds on” activity.

## **8.2 Contributions to Knowledge**

This current study has contributed to knowledge on informal learning and teaching theory, situated in a quilting community-based setting, in eight main ways.

1. It has provided Aotearoa New Zealand-based evidence of informal, everyday learning within the quilting community, building on the work of national and

international quilt scholars (e.g., Dickie, 2003; Doyle, 1998; Stalp, 2007; Wanigasekera, 2006, 2010).

2. The significance of relationships, developing a sense of belonging through friendships made and the motivation to learn, is consistent with that reported by quilt studies (e.g., Burt & Atkinson, 2012; Cerny et al., 1993; Piercy & Cheek, 2004; Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001).
3. The sociocultural principles underpinning a community of practice have been further developed within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, situated in the quilting community. This contribution builds on the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Lave (2011). In particular, the study contradicted the idea that communities of practice are stable conservative entities, where learning is constrained to recycling knowledge and adapting to the quilting community's practice (e.g., Elkjaer, 2009; Hargreaves, 2002; Leander et al., 2010). Instead, the study extends the idea of funds of knowledge (e.g., González et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1993) to build on Rogoff et al.'s (2014) constellation of cultural practices.
4. Consideration was given to how Rogoff's (2014) theoretical framework of "Learning by Observing and Pitching In" (LOPI), as a cultural paradigm, was applicable to a quilting community far removed in time and space from the Indigenous communities of the Americas. The focus on adults' informal learning, in a leisure activity, shifted the emphasis away from children observing and contributing to family and community endeavours. As a result, a related approach: "Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning" (AMCCL) emerged, to describe the quilters' organisation and support of learning (see Figure 7.13). This conceptual framework qualifies and extends existing literature about the processes of informal learning (e.g., Maynard & Greenfield, 2006; Paradise & de Haan, 2009; Rogoff et al., 2016).
5. This study has identified cultural patterns of social interaction (see Table 5.1) which I termed "participation partnerships". In this horizontal participation structure of mutual relationships, flexible role switching occurs with quilters assisting each other as they share responsibility for learning. This multi-party collaboration perspective builds on the work of Rogoff et al. (2007), Paradise and de Haan (2009), Wells (1999), and Wenger (2010).

6. While language is considered a principal mode of meaning-making (e.g., Mercer & Howe, 2012; Säljö, 2010; Sawyer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 2009; Wertsch, 2010), much of quilting knowledge is invisible, since it is tacit in nature and embodied in material practices. The present study identified the social, embodied and material dimensions for the quilters' meaning-making (see Table 6.1) which builds on understandings about communication and representation in social environments (e.g., Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Jewitt, 2014; Kress, 2014; Norris, 2011; Streeck et al., 2013), and, in particular, research that focuses on craft and design knowledge (e.g., Kangas, 2014; Kangas et al., 2013c; Koskinen et al., 2015; Lahti et al., 2016).
7. The emerging notion of embodied cognition is consistent with that reported by Groth (2017), Groth and Mäkelä (2016), Härkki et al. (2016), Núñez (2012), and Patel (2008).
8. This study extends the participatory view of informal learning (e.g., Lave, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009; Rogoff, 2014; Rogoff et al., 2016) to build on the research work of innovative knowledge communities (e.g., Hakkarainen, 2008; Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2009; Paavola et al., 2004). The elements of triological learning, as they relate to the quilters' knowledge creation practice, are identified in Table 7.2 and Figure 7.11. The quilters' collaborative designing process advances understanding of knowledge creation in the leisure activity of communal quilting (see Figure 7.12). This contribution builds on Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al.'s (2010) inquiry model of "Learning by Collaborative Designing" (LCD).

### **8.3 Implications of this Research**

Understanding how people learn in everyday situations, and specifically in the leisure activity of quilting, entails a cultural paradigm shift. The study of communal quilting requires a shift from the conventional notion of teaching and learning to the "ways of doing quilting together". The organisation of quilters' learning, in the current study, portrays a participation-triological paradigm – "Apprenticeship Model of Craft Community Learning" (AMCCL) – which encompasses the activities and practices of the quilting groups. This paradigm shift has theoretical and practical implications for

how we think about, and treat, “just plain folks” learning in their everyday activities and practices. The implications of the research are derived from the conclusions and contributions to knowledge, as they relate to everyday learning and teaching in quilting communities.

### **8.3.1 Theoretical implications**

Sociocultural theory has given researchers a new way of thinking about informal learning in community-based settings, enabling them to make sense of everyday practices. Processes of individual development constitute, and are constituted by, interpersonal and cultural-historical activities and practices (Rogoff, 1997). Emerging theoretical frameworks (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Maynard & Greenfield, 2006; Rogoff, 2014), show that the organisation of informal learning has common features, but there are also differences across cultural settings. A key implication for researchers is that while the LOPI framework (Rogoff, 2014) provided a foundation for understanding informal learning in the quilting community, allowing examination of the model’s coherence and generality, it needed to be extended through the integration of other theoretical approaches. Research investigations should not be bound by a specific conceptual model, recognising that informal learning settings differ in the extent of focus on and ways of, say, “playing” and guidance. The emerging conceptual framework, AMCCL, had to consider various conceptual ideas ranging from multimodality, embodied cognition, constellation of practices, to dialogues.

The conservative notion of communities of practice depicts learning as primarily a one-way movement from incompetence to competence. In contrast, the quilters’ multi-directional learning forms a horizontal participation structure within the collective zone of proximal development. Moreover, the tacit nature of quilting knowledge is made visible through embodied interactions and material mediation. The implications for researchers is the need to consider the quilters’ thinking, learning and development, with regard to their relations and (inter)actions with other people, community, material artefacts and tools. While knowledge is reproduced, the co-construction of knowledge also builds upon ideas through hands on exploration, with overlapping everyday knowledge practices shaping learning experiences. Additionally, extra efforts are made

to create new knowledge in the community through cultural inquiry processes of dialogical learning, resulting in the transformation of participation, material artefacts, and practice. The participation-based approaches to learning are challenged, with the need for researchers to view quilters as active inquirers, generators of new knowledge, and agents of change.

### **8.3.2 Practical implications**

In the present study, the quilters held distinct viewpoints about the benefits of belonging to a quilting community, and in particular how learning occurs. The researcher needs to take into account the quilters' folk pedagogies, building on their ideas, in order to consider practical implications relevant to the quilting community. It is evident through fieldwork observations that the quilters understand each other's thinking as they collaborate in shared endeavours. The quilters are aware of the significance of observing, and talking with, each other to make meaning. An implication for quilters is being attentively aware of embodied actions, and what these embodiments communicate and represent, in relation to quilting knowledge (Koskinen et al., 2015); as well as realising what sort of contextualised talk is used to support the activity at hand (Paradise & Rogoff, 2009). The notion of "making sense" can also be understood through the quilters' sensory exploration, expanding their capacity for "knowing". An implication for quilters is to acknowledge the legitimacy of engaging in "play", to experiment and try new ideas, opening up possibilities for embodied ways of knowing (Groth & Mäkelä, 2016; Resnick & Rosenbaum, 2013). In addition, material artefacts and tools allow quilters to interact with one another through the object itself, functioning as a mediator and supporting their collaboration (Lahti et al., 2016).

This research study confirms the importance of broadening quilters' perspectives of learning, teaching, and knowledge construction. Given the enriched learning environment, the quilters' collaborative processes, involving roles of mutual reciprocation and guidance, is an effective way to learn. A further implication for the quilters is realising that knowledge is not acquired (e.g., Cerny et al., 1993) or transmitted (e.g., Cheek & Piercy, 2004); rather it is appropriated through participants' joint construction. Quilting expertise within this community of learners is socially and

physically shared, as ideas are exchanged and quilts are created. The quilters also have the capacity to deliberately advance knowledge which is new to the collective. An implication for a quilting community is to consider the intentionality of new knowledge, and what benefits it has for the collective (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2010). There also needs to be personal and collective responsibility for the success of knowledge creation, and commitment to engaging in inquiry processes over a sustained period of time (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2009).

#### **8.4 Limitations of the Study**

It is important to acknowledge and identify the limitations of any research project. The main limitation of this study is the small sample size of two quilting groups which were purposely selected in a localised area. The bounded multi-site case study limits the generalisability of the findings. Documenting the variety and frequency of quilting practices, situated in one or more geographical areas, would provide further insight into the organisation of informal learning processes in community-based settings. But, as noted in Chapter 4, pragmatic decisions about the parameters for this investigation had to be made.

Another limitation of the study was the relatively small number of interviews undertaken, comprising of two oral history interviews and ten individual interviews. Facilitating a focus group interview with founding members may have provided a depth of understanding about historically determined cultural factors in the quilters' present learning processes. A better appreciation of the "experience of quilting", as described by participants, would have been achieved through interviewing a larger sample of quilters from different backgrounds, and dissimilar quilting style preferences, to gain a variety of perspectives. Nonetheless, in the current study, a purposeful selection was made (from novice quilter to master quilter) in an attempt to encapsulate subtleties of variance and similarities, within their personal interpretations.

A further limitation of this study is the conflict between my roles as quilt practitioner and apprentice researcher. Originally, I considered this dual role to be an advantage. However, being a quilter, I initially did not "see" taken-for-granted quilting practices; then, as a researcher, I discovered there so much to "see" in the ongoing endeavours of

the quilting groups. Although there is no guarantee about the accuracy or thoroughness of data, this issue and other arising matters were negotiated through the reflexive stance adopted. While I could not be totally neutral, the use of a “Pensieve”, in the form of my reflective journal, was an essential tool to logically explore and objectively document the research process.

Finally, a limitation of the study is the difficulty to pick up *everything* in real time since things occur simultaneously in the quilters’ learning environment. A video recording would have captured imperceptible (inter)actions of the participants to assist with synchronising sequential events and associated actions, in order to better understand the tacit nature of knowledge construction. As an alternative, I articulated research findings through combining written text and illustrations, drawing attention to the centrality of materiality and embodiment in the quilters’ knowledge practices.

## **8.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Ethnographic research is not just about a systematic investigation into the everyday lives of people, in order to seek an answer and develop understanding. Instead, during the inquiry process, I began to identify further issues and frame more questions that require exploration. As a result, in this section, key areas for future research are recommended.

Further research studies of everyday activities will provide a broader, and more enriched, understanding of learning and teaching. Consequently, there is a significant need to develop and expand conceptual frameworks of informal learning. The new and emergent framework, AMCCL, specifically describes and articulates how learning is organised and supported in two quilting groups, located in Aotearoa New Zealand. There are opportunities for researchers to examine AMCCL in another quiltmaking community-based context, within a new location and/or culture. There may be features of AMCCL that are held in common, as well as those that vary in quite distinct settings.

Processes of exploratory practice need research attention, in order to understand hands on experience as a form of “knowing” or embodied cognition. Understanding how the mind and body interact in the process of thinking, to successfully accomplish a task, requires analysing the quilters’ physical and sensory exploration of material objects,

such as manipulating or changing a textile using surface design techniques (for example, painting, dyeing, or adding embellishments to the fabric's surface).

Emergent findings of the current study, demonstrated the significance of multimodality for meaning-making purposes. Research into the selection and configuration of modes is needed to understand the quilters' everyday communication and interaction in shared endeavours. The quilters' forms of speech and patterns of observation, as a social activity, are embedded within a complex multimodal ensemble of embodied actions. Therefore, an in-depth inquiry might usefully focus on the ways embodiment assists the expression of a quilter's intentionality, the way it is interpreted, and reacted to by others, during the social process of quilting.

In today's digital age, there is instant access to learning resources via the Internet – YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter – which raises the question of how these mediating tools impact on the quilters' designing and making of quilts. Since digital technology is becoming part of the quilter's toolkit, research is required about how quilters socially construct spaces to integrate digital technology (such as smartphone, camera, and computer "apps") into communal quilting contexts for learning purposes.

The present study appears to be the first of its kind to conceptualise the dialogical approach in an informal learning context. Without further research into knowledge creation practices, it will not be possible to move beyond common understandings of knowledge transmission and transference in quilt culture. An avenue for future study is an in-depth examination of the inquiry process for collaborative designing, such as studying solo exploration within the collective activity, examining the renegotiation and shaping of quilters' design ideas, and investigating the long-term effect(s) on the quilting community's practice.

## **8.6 The Final Stitched Words**

My learning as an apprentice researcher, along with the quilters' learning experiences, is encapsulated by Paavola's (2015) interpretation of Meno's learning paradox: "How can we learn things which are more complex than our existing knowledge and extend

beyond knowledge we have previously encountered?" (p. 104). When I embarked on this research study, I had envisaged this thesis would present a quilt culture of "passing on" knowledge from expert to novice, teaching traditional quilting techniques with accuracy and precision, interspersed among a mass of communal news and gossip exchanges. I was scarcely prepared for the increasingly complex forms of the quilters' engagement, or the ways embodied knowledge was communicated. A participant's statement made me reflect on my initial assumptions:

*"We all know something, some know more than others, but we all know something... I think it's more important to have the willingness to share that knowledge than having the knowledge" (16.08.13/MQ12).*

Capturing the quilters' knowing in context provided a sense of freedom, as I explored learning and teaching beyond the world of traditional schooling. I began to wonder about *what* might be known and *how* it might be known in our everyday lives.

Inevitably, my pen became a needle to express my ideas and messages in the form of a quilt (see Plate 2). Each patchwork and appliquéd piece is a link to the thesis, which augments an interpretation of everyday learning and teaching in this communal quiltmaking context. Transforming ordinary materials into an object of significance and value embodies the discovery of something I did not understand about informal learning and teaching. But more importantly, as has occurred over the centuries, may this textile object make a connection with others in the collective quest for knowledge.





Plate 2

*Te manu e kai ana i te mātauranga nōna te ao* [Māori whakataukī]

*The bird who partakes of knowledge will inherit the world*

Machine pieced and appliquéd, cotton, 470 x 830mm

Linda Warner, 2016

Quilted by Lesley O'Rourke

New Zealand quilt design by Jacqui Karl

Photograph: Richard Robinson



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## APPENDICES

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## Appendix A: Preliminary Exploration of Aotearoa New Zealand's Quilting Community

Quilting Group/Guild	Provincial Region & District	Date	Contact	Type
<b>1</b>	<b>A1</b>	28.07.12	Friend of group member	Email
		29.07.12	Friend of group member	Email
		31.07.12	Friend of group member	Email
		03.08.12	Group member	Phone
		03.08.12	Group Co-ordinator	Phone
		11.08.11	Group 1pm-3pm	Visit
<b>2</b>	<b>A2</b>	08.08.12	Committee member	Annual Exhibition
		15.08.12	Group 10am-2pm	Visit
		15.08.12	Regional President invite to fundraiser	Conversation
<b>3</b>	<b>A3</b>	20.08.12	Fundraiser host	Visit
<b>2</b>	<b>A2</b>		Invited to speak about my research	
<b>4</b>	<b>A3</b>		Casual conversation and stories shared with each group during the day	
<b>5</b>	<b>A3</b>			
<b>6</b>	<b>A3</b>		11am-4pm	
<b>7</b>	<b>A3</b>			
<b>8</b>	<b>B1</b>			
<b>9</b>	<b>B1</b>			
<b>10</b>	<b>A1</b>			
<b>11</b>	<b>C1</b>	12.08.12	Initial email from group member's daughter (email 09.02.11) who passed email onto Parish Chapter Co-ordinator whom I contacted. Also had connection through local parish clergy.	
		13.08.12		Email
		29.08.12	Casual conversation and shared stories 9am-12pm Parish chapter members voluntarily passed on contact details for other groups	Visit
		14.09.12	Parish Chapter Co-ordinator	Email
		17.09.12	Parish Chapter Co-ordinator	Email
<b>1</b>	<b>A1</b>	13.10.12	Conversation with group members	Annual Exhibition
<b>10</b>	<b>A1</b>	13.10.12	Chatted with members whom I recognised also belonged to another group	Exhibition
<b>12</b>	<b>C1</b>	15.10.12	National Community Co-ordinator (contact passed on by local Vicar)	Email
		17.10.12	National Community Co-ordinator	Email
		15.11.12	National Community Co-ordinator discussion about Chapter organisation, held at cafe 10.30-11.30am	Meeting

Quilting Group/Guild	Provincial Region & District	Date	Contact	Type
13	C1	15.10.12	Community Quilt Guild Co-ordinator (contact details were passed on to me by group members)	Email
		19.10.12	Community Quilt Co-ordinator	Email
		28.10.12	Community Quilt Co-ordinator discussion	Phone Toll Call
14	C2	21.10.12	House Group Co-ordinator (I had read about activities in <i>New Zealand Quilter</i> magazine)	Email
		24.10.12	House Group Co-ordinator	Email
		19.11.12	House Group conversation, stories and shared lunch 11am-4.30pm	Visit
15	B2	22.10.12	Group meeting (I am an associate member) 7.30pm-900pm	Visit
		23.10.12	Group President provided contacts for community quilt groups in area	Home visit
16	B2	23.10.12	Group member (I had met at another group's meeting) made other networking connections	Home visit
17	C1	24.10.12	Guild President (I obtained contact details from <i>New Zealand Quilter</i> Directory)	Email
		02.11.12	Guild President discussed activities, with particular reference to community quilts. Invited to Christmas meeting.	Phone Toll Call Visit
		20.11.12	Guild meeting with casual conversation 12pm-3pm	Visit
18	C1	20.11.12	Speciality community quilt group specifically attended Guild meeting to discuss and share their quilting activities	Email
		15.01.13	Group member voluntarily sent photographs of quilting activities	
19	B2	27.10.12	House group member (a) (contact details passed on by Group President)	Email
		27.10.12	House group member (b)	Email
		27.10.12	House group member (c)	Email
		04.11.12	House group member (a)	Phone Toll Call Phone Toll Call
		04.11.12	House group member (b)	Email
20	B2	27.10.12	Individual who made community quilts (contact details passed on by Group President)	Email
		28.10.12	Individual community quilt-maker who casually met with two friends to stitch quilts at home	Email
21	C3	22.11.12	Group member and tutor	Home visit

Quilting Group/Guild	Provincial Region & District	Date	Contact	Type
22	A1	02.12.12	Regional Group for casual conversation and observation of what they do 1pm-4pm	Visit
23	A1	04.12.12	Group (invited to attend) with conversation and quilting 7pm-9pm	Visit
10	A1	13.01.13	Casual conversation with group members	Exhibition
24	A1	26.02.13	Group (invited by friend who is a member)	Visit
25	D1	22.07.12	CTANZ member sent details for another group but distance too far for travelling	Email
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>Geographical Provinces</b>  <b>Regions: 4</b> <b>Districts: 9</b>	<b>Number</b>  <b>2</b> <b>1</b> <b>16</b> <b>4</b> <b>1</b> <b>1</b> ----- <b>25</b>	<b>Contacts</b>  <b>Guilds</b> <b>Regional Group</b> <b>Groups</b> <b>House Groups</b> <b>Community Chapter</b> <b>Parish Chapter</b>  <b>Total</b>	



## **Appendix B: Historical and Individual Interview Question Guide Sheets**

### **HISTORICAL STORY ABOUT YOUR QUILTING GROUP: QUESTION GUIDE**

*I am interested in talking with you about the history of the quilting group...*

- Tell me how the quilting group got started?
- When was the quilting group formed? Why was it formed?
- Who and what have been key influences in the group?
- Have there been changes during this time? If so, how did this come about?
- What is important to the group?
- What special events does the group do together?
- What are some of the highlights for the quilting group?

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## INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: QUESTION GUIDE

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- When did you learn to sew?
  - Tell me how you got started with patchwork and quilting.
  - Why do you belong to this quilting group?
  - What do you do in this quilting group?
- If a new member joined the group what should she need to know about patchwork and quilting?
  - When you joined the group what did you know about patchwork and quilting?
  - Do you have a particular technique or skill that you enjoy doing e.g., appliqué? How would you show me do that?
- Tell me about the quilting project you are currently working on.
  - Where do you get your ideas and inspirations from?
  - If you wanted to know how to do a particular technique what would you do?
  - If you wanted help with any part of your patchwork and quilting
    - i) What would you do? Why?
    - ii) Who would you ask? Why?
- On many occasions we bring a plate of food to share...Similarly as quilters we bring what we know about patchwork and quilting to the group, pooling our knowledge and sharing this with each other:  
Can you give an example of something you have learned in the group?
  - I saw a quilter doing candlewicking and she showed me how to do the colonial knot...  
I thought I'd like to do that:  
What have you seen other people doing that you might like to try?
- When does teaching occur in the group?
  - Do you share any of your ideas with others in the group? How do you do this?
  - Has anyone picked up on what you have being doing and done it too? Did the group member(s) do it the same way as you?
  - How do group members support each other when you work together on a project?
-

## Appendix C: Pamphlet

### Why am I interested in this research?

Currently there is little documentation in New Zealand and internationally about the teaching and learning we experience in our everyday lives. This is often undervalued and thought of as insignificant.

When quilters work together the teaching and learning that occurs often appears seamless. Being part of their ordinary quilting practice it is simply taken for granted. But how they 'just do it' is not fully understood. This makes everyday teaching and learning that happens in a community of quilters extra-ordinary.

This research will contribute to uncovering the diversity and complexity of teaching and learning in the collective activity of quiltmaking.

Linda Warner  
*PhD Candidate*  
*Massey University*

## Uncovering Everyday Teaching and Learning in a Community of Quilters



*Working on "The Art of Colour" quilt. Personal*

### **What is the research about?**

The research is about documenting the way your community of quilters work together to develop the quilting practice. It aims to find out how teaching and learning patchwork and quilting occurs in your group.

### **How would the research be done?**

Linda would start by visiting your group meetings to observe. She would participate in some of your quilting activities. While quilting together Linda would take notes about what she sees happening. She would also talk with you and other quilters in the group to gain your views about quilting practices.

As Linda gets to know more about the activities and work of the group she may invite individuals to take part in more in-depth discussions. This would be negotiated with group members and may include sharing treasures and taking photos. At that stage Linda would provide a separate information sheet for anyone who is interested.

### **Who would be involved?**

Linda Warner from Massey University, your quilting group and you... if you are happy about this.

### **What would happen to the notes?**

Linda would read the notes and reflect on the ways patchwork and quilting knowledge is 'passed on' and 'picked up'. She would think about the views you shared and use some of them to write a report.

### **Will anyone know what I talk about with Linda?**

Conversations with you and your group are confidential. Linda's interest is in what the group is doing so individual views assist her to understand the development of the group's quilting practice. Pseudonyms, not real names, will be used to protect your privacy.

## Appendix D: Information Sheet



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

April 2013

### Uncovering everyday teaching and learning in a community of quilters

Dear Quilter

My name is Linda Warner. I am currently a fulltime student at the Institute of Education, Massey University. Prior to this I was an educational adviser and lecturer working for tertiary institutions. I am conducting a research study for my PhD to uncover everyday teaching and learning in a community of quilters. As I have been a quiltmaker since the 1970s I am very fortunate to be able to combine my passion for patchwork and quilting with educational research.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research study.

The aim of my study is to investigate the nature of teaching and learning within communities of quilters. We often take for granted the teaching and learning that occurs in the quilting group – we just do it. This research will provide a better understanding of how patchwork and quilting knowledge is 'picked up' and 'passed on' within quilting practices. To find out how this all happens requires documenting the way your community of quilters work together to develop their quilting practice.

Currently there is little documentation in New Zealand and internationally about the teaching and learning we experience in our everyday lives. This is often undervalued and thought of as insignificant. Collaboratively, we have the opportunity to make a positive difference uncovering the diversity and complexity of teaching and learning in the collective activity of quiltmaking.

If you are agreeable, I will join you during your regular gatherings for a short period of time (to be negotiated with the group). To begin with I will participate in your quilting activities and observe what you are doing. I will take notes about the group's quilting practice to help me reflect on the session afterwards. During the sessions I will take part in your conversations about patchwork and quilting. My interest is in the group's quilting practice and your perspectives and ideas will assist me to understand this.

At a later date, I may invite you to take part in more in-depth discussions about your quilting practices. These discussions might be individual, in pairs and/or group discussion; using

Te Kunenga  
ki Pūrehuroa

Institute of Education

Cnr Albany Drive & Collinson Road, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T +64 6 356 9099 [www.massey.ac.nz](http://www.massey.ac.nz)

photographs; and sharing treasures. A separate information sheet and invitation will be given to you at that stage if you are interested.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may contribute in whatever way you feel comfortable. If you decide to take part in this study, each participant has the right to:

- i. ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- ii. decline to answer any particular question;
- iii. withdraw from the study at any time during participation;
- iv. provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential. Your name, and that of the quilting group and participants will not be used;
- v. be given access to a summary of the study findings when it is concluded.

For further information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Linda Warner

Telephone: 06 843 7953

Email: [the.warners@actrix.co.nz](mailto:the.warners@actrix.co.nz)

The supervisors for this study may also be contacted:

Professor John O'Neill

Institute of Education

Massey University

Private Bag 11222

PALMERSTON NORTH 4442

Telephone: 06 356 9099 (extn 81090)

Email: [j.g.oneill@massey.ac.nz](mailto:j.g.oneill@massey.ac.nz)

Dr Alison Sewell

Institute of Education

Massey University

Private Bag 11222

PALMERSTON NORTH 4442

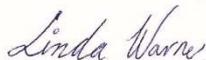
Telephone: 06 356 9099 (extn 84456)

Email: [a.m.sewell@massey.ac.nz](mailto:a.m.sewell@massey.ac.nz)

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee (Southern B), telephone 06 350 5799, extn 80877, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)

Thank you for taking the time to consider your involvement in this study.



Linda Warner

## Appendix E: Consent Form



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TE KURA O TE MĀTAURANGA

April 2013

### CONSENT FORM

#### Uncovering everyday teaching and learning in a community of quilters

I have read the letter giving information explaining the study. Any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and decline to answer any specific questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding my name will not be used. Pseudonyms, not real names, will be used. The information provided will be confidential and only used for the purposes of this research.

**I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the letter.**

Quilter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Quilting Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please place the completed form in the envelope provided.  
Many thanks.

Linda Warner

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## Appendix F: Tracking Co-ordinator's Movement Example

### Manumea Quilters: Quilting Session (7.06.13)

#### Observation of Co-ordinator's Role (Jill)

- 10.15am: Assists with setting up room.
- 10.30am: Helps with quilt layering and pinning.
- Provides individual attention with explaining instructions for Workday project: Folding Rubbish Caddy. She is concerned since there is a mistake in the instruction sheet handed out last week and expects to be dealing with questions. It was not easy to understand so she has re-written the instructions (original sheet prepared by another quilting group). Problem solving occurs throughout the day with alternative solutions contributed by participants.
- Workday Ideas: Apart from Vera's Jelly Roll Squares the projects undertaken so far have all been Jill's ideas. She gauges interest beforehand – if there are only one or two keen quilters then it is not worth doing.
- Personal project: Shares felt book with others; then photocopies enlarged owl templates (Parish Office) and begins to trace pattern pieces. However, task requires concentration so abandons activity to work on Block Design Activity: "Block of the Month" (BOM) – stencils quilting design and starts hand quilting.
- Jill is asked for advice about a number of projects e.g. participant's block layout.
- 1.40pm Jill re-directs Jem to Gina for reimbursement of Manumea Quilters' badges made for members.
- 1.55pm Shares notices with the group, checking her notebook.
- 2.35pm Jill joins different clusters observing what participants are doing – very much aware of activities e.g. listens to Anita's quilt construction explanation along with Kate, May and Gina. Jill's eyes are roving the whole time, and comments: "Sometimes I don't get anything done."
- 2.45pm Jill purposely moves around the group.

#### ***Tracking Jill's movement and actions...***

Anita: Appliquing Endeavour ship's pieces onto background (discussion).

↓

Kate: Hand quilting William Morris quilt (holds up quilt to show cluster then whole group).

↓

Q1: Machine quilting a pile of quilts (discussion).

↓

Avril: Ironing rows of patchwork snowball blocks (discussion).

↓

*Collects a hot drink from kitchen server, looks at giveaway items on stage and picks up a pattern.*

↓

Violet: Embroidering colonial knot blocks (gives the giveaway pattern to her saying, "Thought you might like it" ... Leaves the quilter to read the pattern).

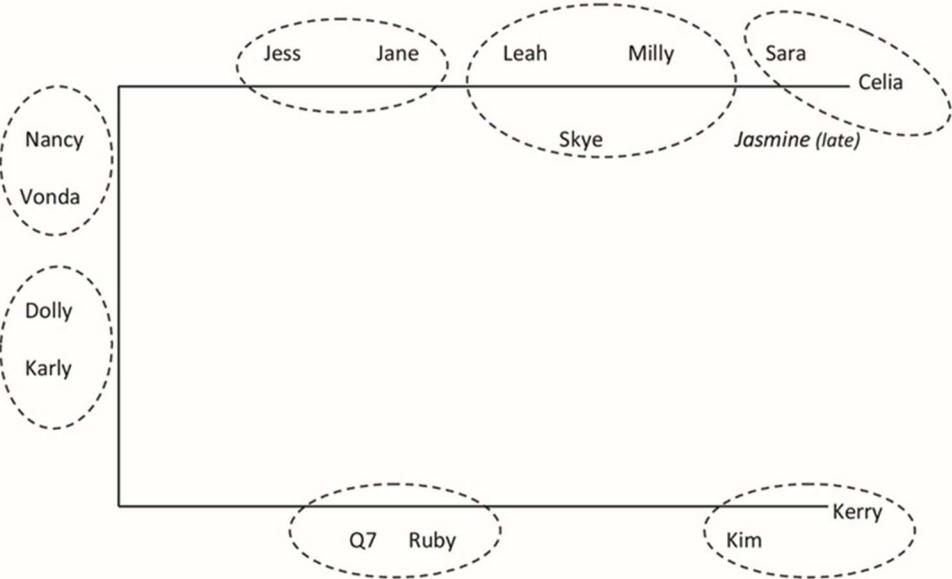
↓

Back to own seat and continues hand quilting BOM.

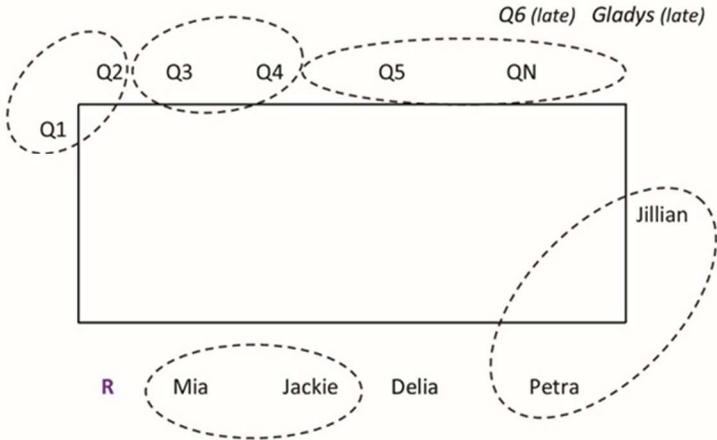
- 3.00pm Jill joins cluster – asks questions, encouraging discussion and explanation of Emma’s appliquéed butterflies which leads to a cluster activity working on Vera’s cushion.
- 3.40pm Jill ensures cups remain out for half-nighter session rather than being put away by afternoon tea volunteers.  
*Jill continues to have her eyes everywhere, very aware of what is going on, maintaining smooth running of session. She looks tired and is conscious of the need to maintain continuity.*  
Jill tells me, “I go home exhausted. I don’t cook when I get home. My husband knows it’s takeaways for tea.”
- Vicki speaks to Jill about where to set up sewing machine. Another table next to Avril is organised.
- Discussion with Ella (about her dyed fabric); goes over to speak with Edith and Nola; provides label suggestion for BOM participant’s block.
- 4pm Vicki informs Jill about next Block Design Activity – “Design a Block with a Twist” – discusses start/finish dates and commitment by participants.
- 4.30pm Jill leaves with Edith (car pooling) ensuring a set finish time. Other group members take over leadership and support roles and responsibilities. Gina effectively becomes the overseer with support from key participants – Vera, Nola and Vicki.

# Appendix G: Sociogram Examples

Kōmako Quilters: Quilting Session (12.06.13)  
 Room Layout: *Social Interaction Tracking* 10.30am



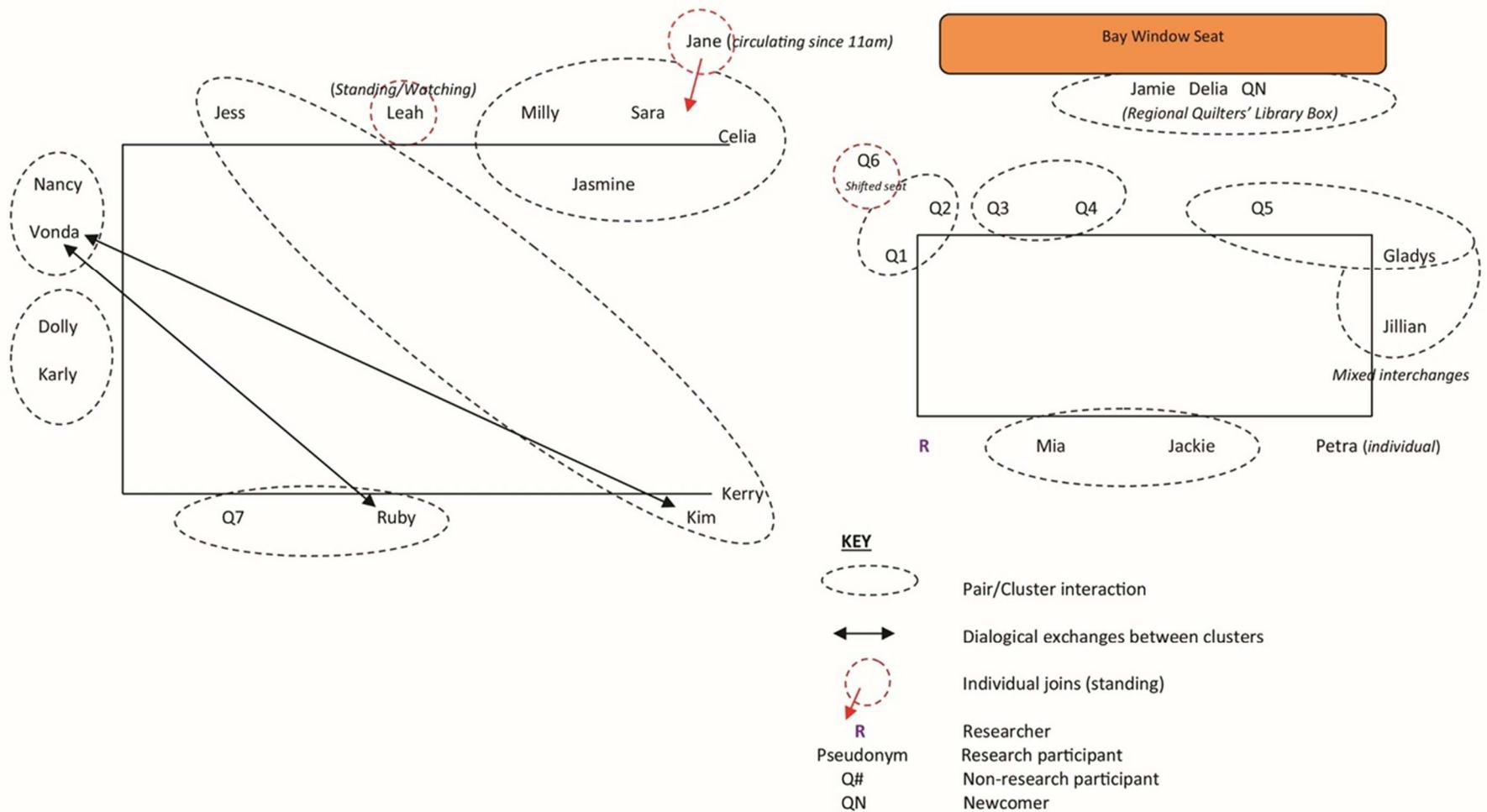
Bay Window Seat



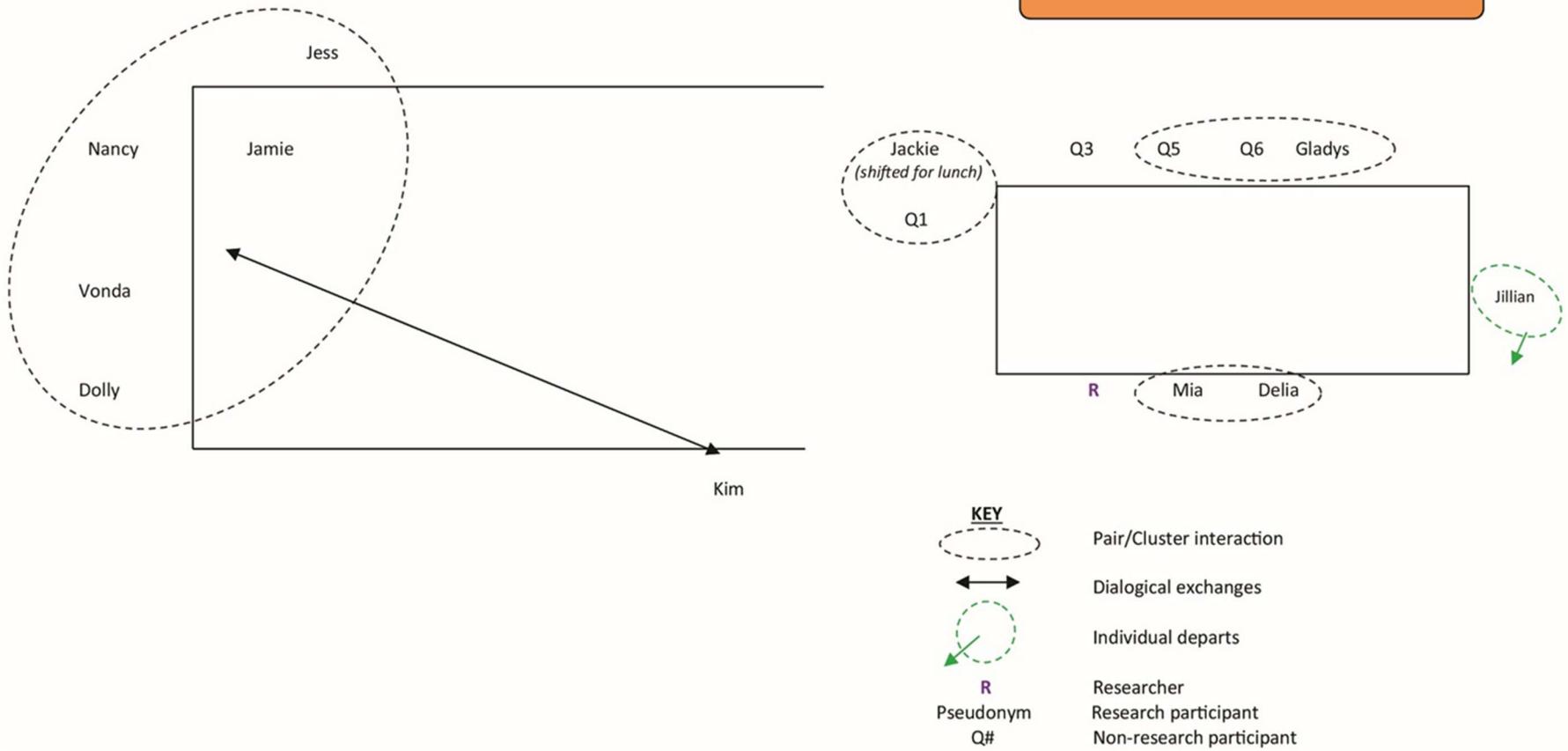
Attendees: 15 (Left-side room) + 11 (Right-side room) = 26  
 11.00am – 29 attendees: 22 research participants (76%) & 7 other quilters

- KEY**
- Pair/Cluster interaction
  - R** Researcher
  - Pseudonym Research participant
  - Q# Non-research participant
  - QN Newcomer

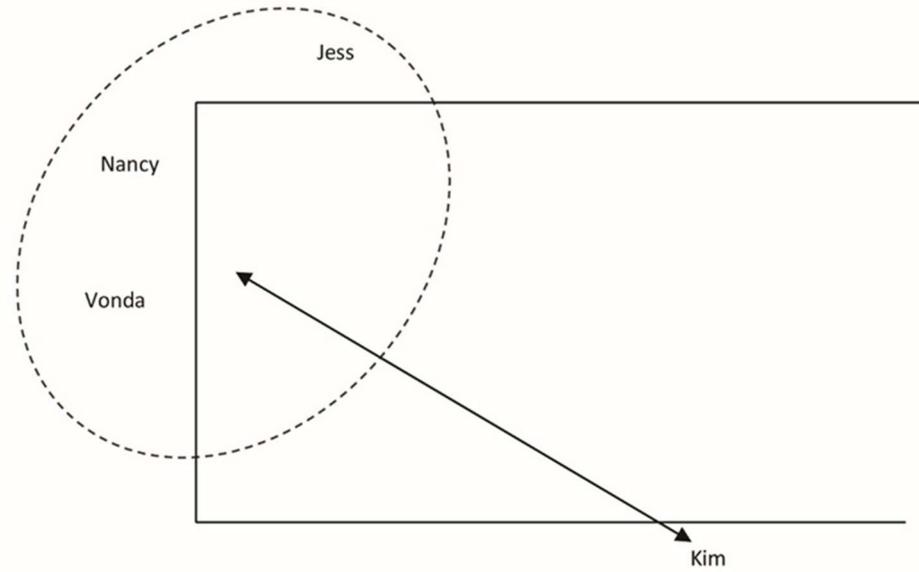
Kōmako Quilters: Quilting Session (12.06.13)  
 Room Layout: Social Interaction Tracking 11.30am



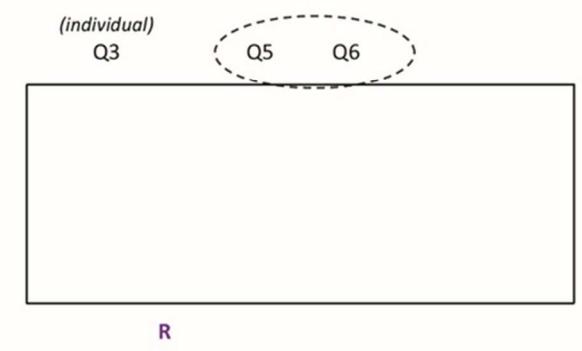
Kōmako Quilters: Quilting Session (12.06.13)  
 Room Layout: *Social Interaction Tracking* 12.30pm



Kōmako Quilters: Quilting Session (12.06.13)  
 Room Layout: *Social Interaction Tracking* 1.25pm



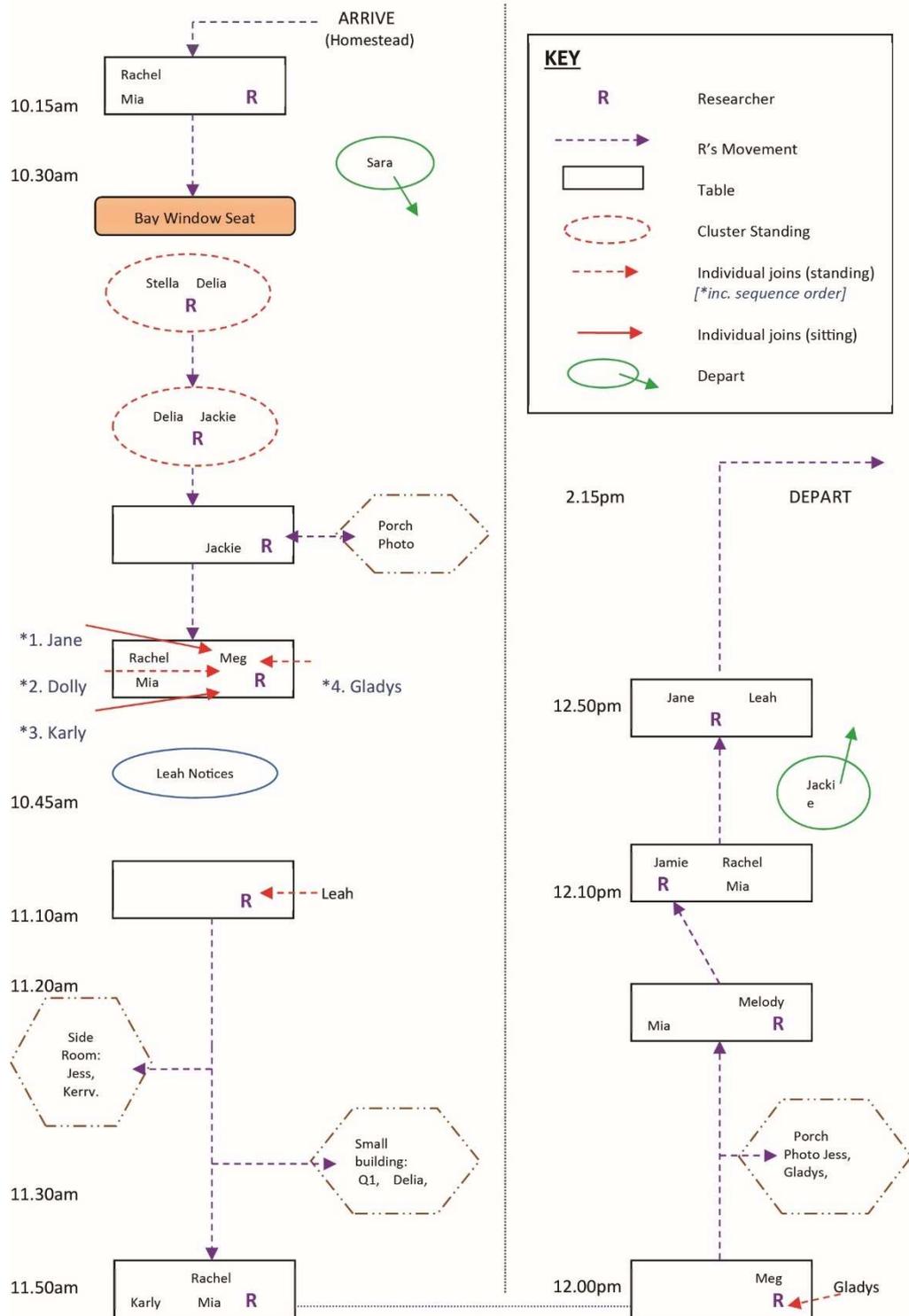
Bay Window Seat



**KEY**

-  Pair/Cluster interaction
-  Dialogical exchanges
- R** Researcher
- Pseudonym Research participant
- Q# Non-research participant

## Appendix H: Tracking Researcher's Movement Example





## Appendix I: Codebook Excerpt

Category	Code	Definition/Explanation	Example
<b>OBSERVATION</b>	third party attention	Intensively watches and/or listens but does not engage socially in the action; with observed participant(s) seemingly unaware	Mia emphasises to a quilter that the way to learn different stitches is to have a project (a purpose for doing them). She hands over an instruction sheet and templates which she has prepared to create Christmas decorations. Two quilters, busy stitching with their heads down, are quietly listening. This is not apparent until one comments about Mia's experience and the way she gives of herself to assist others. (12/6/KQ)
	observes event	Watches specific quilting activity, with the knowledge of other participant(s) who may encourage observation	May, who is sitting near the back of the room, leaves her needlework and joins two quilters who are layering a quilt. She looks at what they are doing, then returns to her seat. (4/3/MQ)
	wide, keen attention	Scanning surveillance, actively aware of activities and interactions within quilting space	Quilters are interested in what others are doing, stopping to inquire when (1) moving between ironing board and work table; and (2) taking a break from concentrating on personal activity – 'time to have a stretch' – and deliberately rove around room. (21a/4/KQ)
	observer to doer	Purposely observes an activity, then proceeds to 'do' the activity, either individually or as a shared endeavour	A quilter watches Vera place fabric squares in the middle of the sample, trialling different ways to form triangles, before choosing a two-coloured combination. Noticing the sewing sequence and how seams are pressed, she does the same thing. (22/8/MQ)
	sideways glance	Individual engagement, but eyes flicker sideways, briefly checking what other participant(s) is doing	Two quilters are learning to stitch fabric flowers. Together they check the size of their stitches. An experienced quilter, working on her own project, glances sideways subtly keeping an eye on what they are doing. (10/6/KQ)