Learning through Participation in a Playcentre Routine

A thesis presented
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education (Early Years)
at Massey University,
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Paulene Heather Gibbons

2004

Abstract

This study investigated the organisational culture of two New Zealand Playcentres in order to explore the way in which the culture influenced the learning experiences of the children. The study focussed on the morning tea routine.

A qualitative case study approach was employed, drawing on ethnographic methods. Qualitative observations at two playcentres during the morning tea routine, focussing on the actions of children, birth to five years, and adults, were used to explore the children's participation in the routine. Informal interviews and focus groups with adults, and field notes facilitated an exploration into the meanings the adults placed on the happenings during the routine of morning tea. The case studies were analysed using cultural models to consider the organisational culture of the centres. A further analysis of children's learning employed Rogoff's three-plane model of analysis.

The study of the routine of morning tea in these centres indicated that the physical environment and historical influences impacted on the practices in the centres, and the social, philosophical and pedagogical beliefs of the participants were evident in the interaction patterns between adults and children, and children and children. Both centres showed characteristics of being communities of learners with parental involvement as educators, and yet favoured an individualistic orientation. These characteristics influenced the way the centres operated, and thus the learning opportunities for children and their parents. Children were learning, in differing ways, what it meant to be a member of their playcentre during this routine.

It is argued that the organisational culture of the centre influences the participants' views of learning, the social patterns in evidence in the centre, the structuring of the programme, and therefore the opportunities for children's learning.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people who made this thesis possible:

The participants

Many thanks to the families in each of the two playcentres who gave their time to talk with me, to explain their ways and the thinking behind their ways. I am grateful for those children and adults present on the sessions, who allowed me to 'look over their shoulders' and be a part of their centre.

Massey University College of Education

Thank you to my supervisors, Joy Cullen and Cushla Scrivens, whose knowledge of the areas into which I was researching was invaluable. Their support, thorough proofreading and critique were appreciated. The Distance Library Service provided timely responses to all requests, which greatly eased my way as a distance student. The Graduate Research Fund grant, which covered direct costs of much of the research and the Massey University Human Ethics Committee that reviewed and approved the research, PN Protocol 02/06, were also necessary parts of this research.

Family and friends

Appreciation is also extended to friends and colleagues whose inquiries and interest gently buoyed me along. My family, Phil, Catherine and Suzanne never doubted that I would finish and gave the support and time needed for this. Yvonne Guy, my current employer, saw the research as important to me, and allowed generous use of the photocopier, and flexible working days and hours. Ella Kahu, whose academic interest was encouraging, proofread the final draft.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The contexts in which a child is an active participant must be acknowledged when considering a child's learning. The present research focussed on the setting of an early childhood service, the New Zealand Playcentre, through a study of organisational culture. Such culture is "not in the head of individuals [but] is produced and reproduced through public negotiations" (Corsaro, 1992, p. 164). Two centres in operation during the morning tea routine were observed, as it is through such routines that the organisational culture becomes visible and the distinctiveness of each becomes apparent. Routines are recurrent and familiar activities and a child's participation in these increases their sense of belonging to the group. Their participation is an ongoing learning frame within their community. Socialising and learning what it means to be a member of a community is not something that happens to children; it is a process in which children, in interaction with others, become contributing members of their world.

1.2 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is the relationship between learning and the social situation in which it occurs. Rather than looking at what body of knowledge children may be learning, this research has considered learning as being a participatory role. The inquiry has been into the social interactions and engagement with others that provide the context for this learning. Children learn by participating in the early childhood setting, not by gaining a body of knowledge that can be transferred. The roles the children fulfil within their day to day lives give us insight into their learning. "Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not an individual mind" (Hanks, 1991, p. 15).

The introduction of *Te Whāriki*, the draft early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1993) was a significant milestone in the reforms (Department of Education 1988a, 1988b; May, 1999) in early childhood education in New Zealand. The curriculum

was defined holistically in terms of the child, their family, and their world. This definitive stance on the positioning of education and care for young children followed on from the move to bring all early childhood services in New Zealand under the one government department, education, in 1986. The final version of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) defined the curriculum as "the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (p. 10). Thus the child's participation in the routines of their centre is accepted as an integral part of their learning.

1.3 Routines in early childhood

Frequently during set routines the culture of a centre becomes more visible and values of the educators and families may be articulated. The respect for children and the responsiveness of educators towards children's needs become obvious as does the way the group of adults work together, as a cohesive team or not. The respect for children's work may be seen in the timing of the routine and the interruption it makes to the flow of play. For example,

> ...when it's time for everyone to come to circle, they don't just tell everyone to stop immediately and come right away. They walk around the room and kind of whisper 'come to circle' or they'll tell the group that circle time is in 5 minutes, or they'll tell one group and it will spread around and everybody will know it's about time for circle so they should finish what they're working on (Magarian, 2001, p. 107).

The way each centre carries out such routines is individual to that centre and the personnel who belong there: they operate, consciously and unconsciously, from the basis of their organisational culture.

By studying the organisational culture of an early childhood centre, tacit beliefs of the educators and parents may be able to be surfaced and the impact of these on young children's learning studied. Few studies look into the organisational culture of early childhood centres and relate this to the educational opportunities that occur within the centre. It is a central claim in this thesis that the children's learning within a centre is shaped and defined by the organisational culture of the centre, with the people who belong, forming this culture.

1.4 Communities in educational practice

Each early childhood centre can be termed a community, in existence for educational purposes. The members of each community mutually engage in educational practices. Through this joint participation, they develop shared meanings and goals which are negotiated by the members and which connect the members to each other, usually in complex ways. The belief of learning as being a dimension of social life, from which it cannot be separated, derives mainly from Vygotsky's (1978) work. This socio-cultural approach assumes that individual children's development and learning must be understood within the social context. In this, individuals are involved with others in shared efforts with societal organisations and tools (Cole, 1985).

In early childhood centres, the community that develops has learning as the basis for its existence, and as such can be termed a learning organisation (Senge, 1990) or a community of learners (Brown, 1994). Within the New Zealand Playcentre, this is manifested in a dual emphasis on learning for adults and children. The essence of a community of learners is group participation and pooling expertise. The adults engage in personal learning at various levels, and team learning about the children and the centre. Within the Playcentre structure, there are systems and incentives for educators' learning; and chances for adults to learn from and with one another are accepted and valued. As educators respond to each child and adult in the centre, they develop new understandings of how learning and growth happens, building collective knowledge and a sense of community. Their interest and involvement in learning is alongside the children's learning, with both dependent on the other. The children are in an environment where learning by all is expected and encouraged, planned for and role modelled. The learning culture shapes the interactions between people and the practice through which new learning occurs (Rogoff, Turkanis, & Bartlett, 2001).

1.5 Playcentre in New Zealand

The Playcentre movement began in New Zealand in 1941 to support families and promote developments in early childhood education. The movement grew out of the educational enthusiasm spread by the British New Education Fellowship. The initial leaders came from the "ranks of the intellectual elite" (May, 1997, p. 202) who were very interested in

progressive education comprising of 'child-led free-play'. The idea of parent education grew alongside and by the end of the 1940s the philosophy of Playcentre parent education had taken its distinctive form (Somerset, 1990). Today Playcentre continues to be a part of the early childhood education scene in New Zealand. Its mission statement is "quality early childhood education – a co-operative family/whanau experience" (New Zealand Playcentre Federation, 1999, p. 1). This is fulfilled in two essential ways:

- providing an early childhood education option through provision of playcentres for children from birth to six years, emphasising child-initiated play and the importance of whanau/family as first educators of their children, and run co-operatively by the parents/whanau; and
- providing a participatory programme of education for parents/whanau leading to the Playcentre Education Diploma.

The focus on adult learning as one of the key objectives of the Playcentre movement still distinguishes it from other early childhood providers in New Zealand. The right of parents to be a vital part of their child's educational journey and their enthusiasm for the well-being of their children are the hallmarks of Playcentre today (Stover, 1998b). Playcentre is evident within the urban region of this study with 18 playcentres operating; each still showing what was defined as Playcentre culture over 25 years ago:

> Members of families interact as family members of playcentre. The interaction is the core of learning. No one is teacher, all are learners. No one is taught, all are learning. No one knows, all are enquiring. No one is grown, all are growing (Grey, 1975, p.2).

This concept of adults and children learning together places playcentres within the framework of a community of learners accepting responsibility for their own learning and that of their children. With this backdrop it must be acknowledged that all the playcentres in this city uphold the Playcentre philosophy (including the values for children's and adult's learning); are licensed and chartered; operate on the basis of a self-selected play programme; have similar equipment and a similar range of play experiences available; have similar routines; but each has a distinctive and individual character. The two playcentres in this study also show differences in the management, organisation, practices and atmosphere, all of which are composite parts of the culture. This prompted my query about

what signs there are that give each centre its distinctiveness, and what difference this makes to children's learning.

1.6 Methodology

A multiple case study method was used in this research, using an ethnographic approach. This qualitative method focussed on meaning in context and was appropriate to study both the organisational culture of the two early childhood centres and the young children's learning from a socio-cultural perspective. Because the organisational culture of an education setting is complex, a keyhole of the morning tea routine was chosen through which to view it.

1.7 Reasons for the study

The wide variety of early childhood services offered in New Zealand (Smith, 2003) show diverse patterns of operation and structure. This creates challenges for curriculum implementation (Lidington, 2000); and for families when initially choosing an early childhood service into which they can fit and feel comfortable. Knowledge in the ways that children participate in differing centres is needed, as is an understanding of the ways that centres vary other than through their structural components.

With the continual push from both government and the early childhood sector over the last 15 years for improved quality could come the tendency for the regulations and requirements to require all early childhood centres to begin to act and look like each other. Te Whāriki is not prescriptive and has empowered centres to continue in distinctive ways. However, if the diversity that is evident is considered a strength (Hatherly, 1997) then those in the early childhood field need to be documenting and researching what the differences are, and why we consider this facet as a strength.

1.8 Aims and organisation of the thesis

The aims of this research were to:

- explore what happens during the routine of morning tea that shows each playcentre's distinctiveness; and
- investigate how children's learning experiences are affected by the organisational culture of the centre in the context of the routine of morning tea.

In Chapter 2, the literature surrounding the concept of organisational culture is reviewed. The literature about socio-cultural learning is also explored through the impact the culture has on children's learning. A link between the socio-cultural literature and that of organisational culture is made through the concept of a community of learners. It is argued that the culture of the early childhood centre frames the way adults interact with children, their attitude towards the children's learning, and the atmosphere of the centre.

Chapter 3 describes the ethnographic approach, multiple case study design, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and issues of rigour relevant to the present study. The participants and settings are introduced.

In Chapter 4, findings are presented in the form of descriptions of the two playcentres and their morning tea routines, followed by a cultural model, comprising five filters, considering the organisational culture of the centres. Chapter 5 continues the findings with consideration of children's learning analysed through a three-plane model of Rogoff (1993, 2003).

Chapter 6 draws both analyses together in a discussion of how the organisational culture of a centre impacts on the learning of children who are members of the centre. Conclusions are drawn, the implications of these findings for early childhood in New Zealand are made, and future research directions suggested.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The present study is placed within the broad contexts of existing research on organisational culture and early childhood education, and the learning that is occurring through these contexts. It draws on a range of theoretical models and concepts in relation to socio-cultural learning in an early childhood community.

Early childhood education is a very sparsely studied entity in terms of organisational culture, therefore, the literature within the compulsory school sector and corporate organisations, which is well documented, has been surveyed and applied to this study. The concept of organisational culture, and its use, is explored, in relation to how and why organisations vary.

One facet of the early childhood life was chosen to study the organisational culture: the routine of morning tea. This has been used as a 'viewing spot' for the centre in action. The place of routines is discussed in this chapter as it relates to organisational culture, and its place in the curriculum of the early childhood centre. Literature about the socio-cultural perspective of learning has been searched to form the basis for the second section of this study, linking it with the child's learning within the organisational culture of the centre. Finally, the concept of learning within a community is explored, bringing together the two other areas of literature.

2.2 Organisational culture

2.2.1 The concept debated

Since the concept of organisational culture has been used for educational and other settings there has been debate over the definition of culture and its components, and therefore on what basis research has been conducted. Prosser (1999) claims it remains "enigmatic and much abused" (p. 1). The notion of it being an abstract concept is the baseline of all descriptions.

Generally, it is thought of as "the normative glue that holds a particular school together" (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 1). It is the 'way that things are' in that setting: of an intangible nature, but forceful, and observable through the behaviour of its members (Corbett, Firestone & Rossman, 1987; Ott, 1989; Poskitt, 1989; Schein, 1992). It prescribes the ways in which members should act and the way they should interact with each other (Corbett et al., 1987; Sergiovanni, 2000). Usually these ways and rules are taken for granted and acted on unconsciously by the organisation. As new individuals enter, they take on board these norms, and in becoming members acquire the capacity to alter them. The evolution of a culture is through the continual reconstruction of it by its members. The culture and its parts can only be understood by studying the people as cultural participants (Hatherly, 1997) in an evolving activity and acknowledging that the members of an organisation are continually involved in generating the culture (Staessens, 1993).

For the purposes of this research, I define culture in application to organisations as "a set of beliefs, values and feelings, consciously and unconsciously held by members, and manifest through their expression as symbols, metaphors, routines, rituals and the behaviour of members". It is what indicates the distinctiveness of the organisation. I include behaviour, based on Geertz's (1973) argument that "[b]ehaviour must be attended to, because it is through the flow of behaviour ...or social action, that cultural forms find articulation" (p. 17). Schein (1992) does not include overt behaviour patterns, other than acknowledging that formal rituals would reflect cultural assumptions. He asserts that only through his methods of analysing the culture of an organisation to the essence of the culture, is it possible to specify what is and what is not (in terms of behaviour regularity) an artefact that reflects the culture.

Research using differing definitions therefore shows differing outcomes. Depree and Hayward's (2001) research in early childhood centres in New Zealand used a reflective process with educators in the centres, and regarded the changes in practice that occurred because of this process, as changes to the centre culture. Without long-term engagement in the centre, and delving into the tacit assumptions held by staff as a group, I challenge their claim that the centre *culture* was changed. Both Schein (1992) and Bolman and Deal (1997) stipulate that a deeper level of analysis is necessary, that of underlying assumptions. In one centre Depree and Hayward (2001) report, "Although there was an established culture whereby parents were always welcome in the centre, few parents were actively involved in centre life" (p. 6). Using Schein's (1992) analysis, it would have to be argued that parental

involvement did not feature in the centre culture. A statement about the centre culture can only be postulated where congruency, between the staff espoused values and the actions of all involved, is studied. In a similar vein, Lewis' (1994) research in a tertiary setting that found no match between the practices of the teachers and their beliefs, used only the espoused beliefs and values of teachers, but drew conclusions about the organisational culture of the college. Schein (1992) argues further that to not recognise that overt behaviour, opinion and feelings are merely artefacts, and not the underlying culture, leads to a danger of superficial cultural audits with surface indicators. Research using a different definition from Lewis, and Depree and Hayward that did find a direct casual link (Poskitt, 1989; Staessens, 1993) is discussed in section 2.2.2.

The compulsory educational sector began using the concept of organisational culture during the 1980s and 1990s after seeing its widespread use in the business sector. It allowed schools to be studied as a whole entity, through case studies, often looking at effectiveness, leadership and management or administration (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989). Research emerging from the commercial sector (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982) was showing that successful businesses had identifiable cultural traits, and from this, planned organisational change was heralded as a way of improving an organisation. While the research by Peters and Waterman used a large sample of 62 companies spread over America, it lacked the rigour of traditional research methods. The sample of cultural members was selected, often by the firm's management, and the study itself focused primarily on the top managers of those firms. The view of the powerful subculture in each firm was treated as a company-wide culture. Kotter and Heskett's more extensive study of over 200 firms, over a 5-year period, found only a moderate correlation between indices of a 'strong' culture (that is, having clearly identifiable and consistent values, and a distinctive way of doing things) and long term performance. However, it did discover that firms with consistently good economic performance over time, tended to posses core values of an adaptive nature.

Excellence for the business companies was measured in terms of economic success. Nevertheless, educational theorists, perhaps driven by educational managers, adopted the concept and the Total Quality Management ideas, and transferred these to the educational sector (Greenwood & Gaunt, 1994; Keesing-Styles, 1999; Sallis, 2002). By the 1990s much research on organisational culture in education had school change and improvement as a basis

for the research (Kieviet & Vandenberghe, 1993; Lewis, 1994; Nias, Southworth & Yeomans, 1989; Poskitt, 1989).

2.2.2 Educational research in organisational culture

Much of the educational research on organisational culture has been based on the concept of change. Although change and organisational culture is not a major question in this research, it is nevertheless an underlying concern within early childhood education today. The changes that have happened in New Zealand over the last 15 years (Meade, 2000; Scrivens, 2002) and the push for continued improvements (Ministry of Education, 2002), indicate that the mechanism of change management requires consideration. Where organisational culture has been linked with change, then it has relevance for this thesis.

A direct causal link between the organisational culture of a school and the school's attitudes to change was found in primary schools in Europe (Vandenberghe, D'hertefelt & de Wever, 1993); in a three year study of the early childhood program, Head Start, in the USA (Lubeck, Jessup, deVries & Post, 2001); in primary schools in New Zealand (Joyce, 2000; Poskitt, 1989); and in high schools in the USA (Corbett et al., 1987). From these studies emerged services with certain organisational cultural traits, which supported and allowed their moving successfully through a change process. Vandenberghe et al.'s research in nine schools found that where the school culture was aimed at ongoing learning, the staff embraced the changes. In two qualitative studies using intensive ethnographic methods, Poskitt (1989) and Corbett et al. (1987) found the sacred values of the schools played a crucial role in determining what changes would occur. The three American high schools that were involved in Corbett et al.'s study exemplified the situation where the changes required challenged the cultural mores of the schools. Not only did the changes threaten the 'what we do around here', but also the 'who we are around here', the identity of the teachers. The school culture not only described what teacher behaviours were acceptable, but it also defined who the teachers were, and when this was challenged, the changes were either not permanent or openly resisted.

The systematic and thorough longitudinal case study carried out by Lewis (1994) had different findings. Although Lewis had expected it, she found no direct link between the culture and the performance of the organisation. Her finding that "whole patterns of behaviour were changed without changing work-related values in a positive direction" (p. 43) is justified through her methodology. However, the relating of this to the above studies is

made difficult because of Lewis' definition of the facets of organisational culture, as previously discussed. It may well have been because her research used participant observation and phenomenology to record the behaviours of the participants; and interviews and focus groups to hear the *espoused* values and opinions of the participants, that no link was found.

It is clear from the above research that study of the organisational culture of a setting is necessary before change initiatives are made. Ways need to be found to raise the taken-for-granted social practices to the level of conscious thought, to enable initiators to work with these ideas and beliefs (Lubeck et al., 2001). Senge et al. (2000) go further and state that otherwise "the new policies and organisational structures will simply fade away and the organisation will revert over time, to the way it was before" (p. 19). The "successful implementation of change requires knowing what changes are inherently compatible with the local culture, which ones are not, and which ones can be negotiated to fit existing norms" (Poskitt, 1989, p. 163).

One response to this issue comes from Ainscow, Hargreaves and Hopkins (1995) who developed new techniques to inquire into the dynamics of school change. They favoured collaborative methods with teachers, requiring less of their time, and being less cumbersome and time consuming for the researchers. The research conducted in the trial of these methods found direct links between school change and the organisational culture of the schools. These alternative research methods involved staff, and in some instances students, discussing personal beliefs and their perceptions of the happenings in school and of the school culture. Certainly, a drawback of many studies into organisational culture is the time involvement of both the researcher and the participants. The availability of the techniques developed by Ainscow et al. may facilitate more research in other organisations, although whether the findings correlate to more intensive ethnographic-based studies has yet to be determined.

Sergiovanni (2000), in writing about schools, uses the term 'lifeworld' for the meaning, purposes and significant beliefs that make up the school culture, as separate from the 'systemsworld', the management system. When both 'worlds' are engaged in an interdependent relationship then the school operates as well as it can. Both are important to the setting. In McLeod's (2002) qualitative research in early childhood, the relationship between management and leadership and organisational culture was explored. The research

showed that the organisational culture of a centre, based on underlying beliefs of the staff, shaped the environment in which children's learning took place. Management models in place in the centres were contextually based, and stemmed from the organisational culture. Educational cultures do present differently and some appear more cohesive, appropriate and dynamic (Poskitt, 1989). It is the combination of the elements that is crucial, and the 'binding' that makes the difference. Corbett et al. (1987) give two types of norms that produce a school's culture: the sacred (immutable) norms and profane norms (which can be changed or modified). Their research concluded that the key is to have a balance between solid values, providing stability, and those that are open to exploration and questioning. The research on change in schools highlights the importance of organisational culture as part of the change process.

Few of these research studies made it clear who the cultural participants were. In Poskitt's (1989) study, one of the schools (the intermediate) had a 50% turnover of pupils each year. It must be questioned whether the culture lay with the staff, or perhaps in the wider community of families who send children to the school. Likewise in early childhood settings who are the main cultural players? Within New Zealand, public kindergartens frequently operate with 3 teachers, and 45 children who spend less than two years in the centre. Nias et al. (1989) admitted that their ethnographic research describing the organisational culture of English primary schools, based on an interpretation of staff relationships, did not take into account the children, although they acknowledge they are a major part of the school culture. In Nivala's (1998) model for educational leadership, he acknowledges that the organisational culture of an early childhood centre constitutes not only the leader and staff, a traditional way to consider organisations, but that the children and parents are also an integral part. In the current research, because the families comprise the educators, parents and children of the centre, they are central in the organisational culture.

It is acknowledged that the role of leadership and the place of founders in relation to organisational culture are central (McLeod, 2002; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1991). Schein (1992) postulates that "the dynamic processes of culture creation and management are the essence of leadership and ... [that] leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin" (p. 1). However, the research literature on this will not be reviewed as part of this thesis as leadership is not a focus of the study. It is available from: Rodd (2001), who thoroughly discusses leadership in early childhood education; Thornton (2003), who, in an extensive

review of literature on leadership within early childhood in New Zealand challenges that acknowledgement of the crucial role of leaders has not been made or encouraged by government, the sector, or pre-service training bodies with the exception of Playcentre; and McLeod (2002), who draws strong links between leadership and management to the organisational culture of early childhood centres within New Zealand.

2.2.3 Cultures of collaboration

The principle of collaboration has emerged as a productive response to the rapid changes within the educational sectors, and a powerful source of professional ongoing learning and shared reflection (Gordon, 2004). Collaboration as a way of adults working together to provide a quality environment has been moved to the fore by post modern writings and as an acknowledgement of diverse perspectives on quality (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994). From an educational perspective, a 'successful' culture is described by Peterson and Deal (1998) as one where there is a shared sense of purpose amongst all involved, and where there is an underlying norm of collegiality and improvement. Burton and Lyons (2000) stress that developing a collaborative and interdependent group of educators is important. Building relationships among adults is an "important determinant of curriculum coherence and the quality of care" (p. 283). In the current research the adults, operating in collaborative teams, were a distinctive feature of each centre.

In his discussion of collaborative cultures, Hargreaves (1997) distinguishes between fully functioning 'collaborative cultures', where openness, trust and support are the basis of relationships between teachers and where they take initiative for building a community; and 'contrived collegiality' where administrators create interactions between teachers through mandatory procedures. The important distinction is between the control from administrative leaders for contrived collegiality and a collaborative culture controlled by the members.

However, it must also be realised that teachers in a strong culture, or one where there are easily identifiable and consistent values, could be effective in reinforcing each other's ineffective practice. A culture of collaboration and collegiality is not an end in itself. The relationship must be about effective learning for children (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Each culture has its own unique blends of attitude and beliefs, but the point is whether it is appropriate in its environment.

The sharing of goals between teachers was found to be a necessary basis for collaborating in ways to meet these goals for the education of the students (Rosenholtz, 1991; Vandenberghe et al., 1993). Rosenholtz researched this positive bias through a mixed method of research, using qualitative and quantitative methods, in 78 elementary schools in the USA. In another in-depth ethnography, case studies into teacher relationships were carried out by Nias and colleagues (1989) in five schools interpreting the staff relationships in each school in terms of organisational culture. They found the shared beliefs the staff held about working collaboratively were seen in positive daily practise and were self-reinforcing. From this, Nias et al. suggest that understanding the concept of organisational culture should be a part of pre-service and in-service teacher education, as "culture lies within the control of those who participate in them; leaders and members together make their own schools" (p. 186). They also noted that in concentrating on the school as an organisation they were aware of sub-groups within a school, who worked differently, and espoused different values.

2.2.4 Organisational culture and children's learning

The link between the organisational culture of a setting and children's learning has thus far been implicit only. In the settings involving change, one presumes that the change was to improve children's learning. A number of studies have more explicitly considered this.

Carr (2001a) reports on an interpretive case study with four-year-old children working on everyday technology in a New Zealand kindergarten. The research used daily field notes, interviews and audio and video records over six weeks, to look at whether the social identities to which children sought to belong had a basis of performance or learning goals. Two identities, 'being a technologist' and 'being a friend' were perceived as being for learning, or exploration; and three identities, 'being good' 'being a girl/boy' and 'being nearly five' were for performance. While the organisational culture was not studied directly in this research, Carr found that underlying beliefs and assumptions held by those in the centre were the basis of these goals. In the context of the present research, this is interpreted to mean, that the performance or learning goals were not dependent on the child, but were enmeshed in the organisational culture of the centre. Carr concludes that the implicit argument in the paper "is that the participants in early childhood programmes should be aware of frequently invisible cultural norms and assumptions" (p. 539).

Two studies in New Zealand early childhood centres (Hatherly, 1997; McLeod, 2002) found that teachers held a view of the child that had a substantial effect on the management and educational practices in evidence. Views of the child, such as whether a child was seen to be in need of care, as a burden to parents, as a competent learner, or as morally corrupt, stemmed from the founding function of the centre and were part of the centre's current organisational culture. Because of this, McLeod suggests that those involved in early childhood services need to be aware of the ways in which the image they hold of a child are part of the organisational culture of the service, and therefore are incorporated into the structures and activities of the centre. McLeod also reported that the beliefs of centre personnel, seen in their practices, frequently contradicted their rhetoric and often were not, in terms of curriculum, matched to currently accepted theory. The opportunities for children's learning were thus shaped more by the unconsciously held assumptions of the staff, than their espoused beliefs.

Similarly, Goldman (1998) comments on situations she saw in schools where the values of the school had a direct impact on children's experiences. Where the culture of the school, expressed by the principal, encouraged staff to accept responsibility and take initiative, children in the classroom were encouraged in similar ways. In other schools, where teaching staff were not encouraged in school-wide discussion on issues, attempts at open-ended discussions in the classroom did not engage the children. Where staff were involved in a learning community, ideas and practices about learning were modelled and talked about between adults and with children. Goldman posited that where certain educational values are desirable in children, then how these are seen in the behaviour of the adults must be considered. She found that the deeply held educational beliefs of the leader were mirrored in the school's culture.

A combination, qualitative and quantitative, study by Kiley and Jensen (2003) assessed the learning environment in an early childhood centre through the study of its organisational culture. The four-year study, although of one centre only, concluded that research into the centre's organisational culture was a beneficial way of viewing the centre's social operation and values base. It showed that participants in an organisation need a vision and coherent way of working, to maintain a positive learning environment. The features of organisational culture in the research offered "multiple lenses through which to view learning environments" (p. 98).

In a longitudinal study in American high schools, McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) discovered direct links between opportunities for students' learning and the school culture. They involved all the teachers in 16 schools, with a wide sampling area of seven different districts, over two states, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. In many of the schools, a sub-culture or group was found to be a more readily usable unit for analysis, as often within schools subject departments had differing cultures, and differing expectations for staff and pupils existed. In schools where teachers "worked together in communities of practice united around shared beliefs and responsibilities for teaching" (p. 2) positive effects on student learning were found. Positive effects were also noted in schools where teachers were in a culture that enabled and encouraged their professional growth, for example in communities of learners.

2.2.5 Playcentre and organisational culture

While organisational culture in relation to the New Zealand Playcentre has not been studied as such, six studies offer some relevant insights.

In her doctoral thesis on the organisational structures of kindergarten and playcentre, Meade (1978) concluded that the ideological values in each organisation had considerable influence on how decision makers could and did use their power in management issues. Meade's study comprised two large case studies using rigorous, multiple qualitative data gathering techniques, and surveying both organisations at local, regional and national levels. Meade's research showed that Playcentre's cultural tenet of innovativeness helped in its growth. She argued the "innovativeness is ... associated with the structural looseness, the freedom to communicate in all directions and on insistence on democratic rather than authoritarian decision-making, all of which have been features of the playcentre organisation since the time of establishment" (p. 22). This concurs with McLeod's (2002) research in linking organisational culture features with the values of the organisation at its inception. Meade's research connected the ideological beliefs of Playcentre to its decision making in economics, property, parent education programme and interpersonal processes. However, it did not propose such links to children's learning, the gap that this current research fills.

Two pieces of historical research into Playcentre describe it in ways that identify basic underlying beliefs. Knox (1995) described Playcentre in the 1950s as being paradoxically

both maternalistic, emphasising children as of prime importance in mothers' lives, and feminist in the ways that its structures and organisation encouraged women in decision making and in holding leadership positions in a centre. A view of Playcentre as being an agent for social development is portrayed by Stover (1998a), who sees the underlying assumption of Playcentre being for adult mental health as a reason for its continuing survival, in an economic climate that offers little optimism for its existence. These views show an early childhood organisation that caters for more than education for young children. Knox and Stover (1998a, 1999) point to the communication systems that allowed members influence and control over the organisational processes and direction, and facilitated structures which meant centres could open and operate in diverse environments adapted to suit local needs.

The New Zealand Playcentre Federation has twice initiated collaborative research under the supervision of New Zealand Council for Educational Research. The first was to consider the parent-helping role in playcentres (McDonald, 1982) and the second to investigate the needs of children under two and a half years in a mixed-age setting (Podmore, 1992). Both research projects gathered information nationwide via the regional associations and involved questionnaires, and observations carried out by playcentre personnel. In both, the "spirit of inquiry" (Morris, 1982, p. vii) was made obvious through the active involvement of the playcentre participants. Further, McDonald discovered that the research questionnaire was used again by individual centres for their own reflection, and as a basis for group discussions. The quest for ongoing learning within the playcentre community was a clear and underlying belief.

Research, not into Playcentre, but into Head Start programmes in the USA (Lubeck et al., 2001) over three years examined how contexts mattered to the programmes. Ethnographic and discursive data were used to explore how social life was organised in each programme. This was similar to the present research, in that it looked at three Head Start programmes and discovered they were different, as was found in the playcentres in the present study. What defined the difference was the culture. "Differing practices evident across the sites ... testify to the fact that mandates [legislative requirements and national-organisational requirements] are 'real-ised' in different ways" (Lubeck et al., p. 504) and facets which in one setting are a strength may not be seen as such in another. For example, while the Head Start programmes all followed a policy of the inclusion of children with disabilities, in one programme 20% of children identified as having mild disabilities were included in the programme, and in another

all the children with disabilities, regardless of type or severity, were accepted into the programme.

The essence or culture of an early childhood centre can only be understood by studying the members of the centre (children and adults) as participants in an evolving identity. The culture both defines the organisation and prescribes the ways in which members should act and interact. It both sets the boundaries for expected behaviour and sets challenges for change or reasons for retaining the status quo. While it may be hidden and not spoken of, it sets the direction and meaning of the organisation. The process of modifying or maintaining an organisational culture remains with those who constitute it. The idea of an early childhood setting framed in a culture of collaboration, shared purpose and reflection sets a firm base for children's learning through, and as an integral part of, the culture.

2.2.6 Models for examining organisational culture

Schein's (1992) typology of culture is useful in understanding the concept of organisational culture. He conceptualises culture as operating on three levels, from the very visible to the tacit and invisible:

- **Level one**: artefacts. This is the 'obvious' level to observe initially during research, involving what is seen, heard and felt: the visible structures and processes.
- **Level two**: espoused values. To find out why members of the setting are behaving as they do requires inquiry into the values and principles. These may be verbalised by members and written into documents.
- **Level three**: shared tacit assumptions. These are the deeper level assumptions that people hold, either consciously or subconsciously. Many of these will be situated historically and stem from occurrences when the then current members made a discovery as to what was 'right' for them. The members currently belonging, while perpetuating these ideas, may be unaware of them.

The implication of this typology, is the realisation that this deep seatedness is so profound, that the culture is stable. It would be difficult to change because of its representation of the "accumulated learning of a group, the way of thinking, feeling and perceiving the world that have made the group successful" (Schein, 1992, p. 21). As Kilman (quoted in Hatherly, 2000, p. 28) has suggested "culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual: a hidden yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction and motivation" and yet because people are responsible for an organisation, then it is people who change it. The organisation

and its culture exist in and through the individuals (Schratz, 1993). Broekstra's (1998) similar model adds a touch of romanticism with three levels distinguished, metaphorically representing the body (action, outward manifestation), the mind (vision, values, concepts) and the soul (being, identity, relatively enduring beliefs). The present research used Schein's topology as a beginning point for analysis, and then turned to a model by Bush (1995).

Bush (1995) explains the features of cultural models as needing to take into account the values and beliefs of the members, the shared norms and meanings, the rituals and ceremonies, and the heroes and heroines. The cultural model, using these features, has four parts: the goals, structure, environment, and leadership. This was adapted for the current research to consider the organisational culture of these centres in terms of the environment (physical and historical), relationships (including leadership and social structures), philosophy (beliefs, values and goal)and structure (organisation). A fifth category, pedagogy, was added, relevant to the educational setting.

Other research have used differing models (McLeod, 2002; Hatherly, 1997; Lubeck & Kezar, 2002), making it difficult to draw cross-study conclusions. Each of these studies has approached the study of organisational culture using slightly different models, as to what was appropriate in that situation, and thereby enhancing the beliefs of the researchers that differing frameworks may be necessary to examine the differing images that are being portrayed.

2.2.7 Summary

In the current study, these ideas of culture are used as the context in which the children's learning experiences occur, both spontaneously through the other people in the centre and planned by the educators. Debate on organisational culture suggests that the organisational culture both determines and is determined by the actions of the participants in the organisation, and therefore is integral in influencing the learning experience provided for young children.

In the research outlined thus far, although there is some agreement on the components of culture, there is no clear agreed-upon definition; hence, there were difficulties in drawing cross-research comparisons. Few of the studies considered all the participants in an organisation when investigating into the organisational culture, but instead looked to the

leaders in the business sectors, or the teachers and principals in educational settings, as the main holders of the culture. A realistic view of educational settings would suggest that the students and students' families are an integral part of the organisational culture.

There is also diversity in the methodologies used. Most have used qualitative methods, with many being in depth ethnographies. While this provides much contextualised information, because of the labour-intensiveness of this method, the amount of research available to draw upon is not optimal. In order for general principles to be drawn from such approaches, a large number of case studies need to be completed, and the current research broadens the literature available.

Because the operation and organisational culture of an early childhood centre are complex and widespread, it was decided for this research to view it through a keyhole of one of the routines: morning tea.

2.3 Routines as a visible part of a centre's culture

Routines are where the organisational culture becomes visible as the participants in a community interact with each other in known patterns of behaviour. Children and adults have opportunities to learn about rules, ways of acting, codes, discourses and what it means to be a member of that group. There has been little research on the place of routines in early childhood education, although every service spends a fair proportion of their 'learning time' in these, and they are considered as curriculum (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Ministry of Education, 1996b).

In an American study in eight full day childcare centres, Wiltz and Klein (2001) sought children's views of quality. Observations and interviews of 122 four-year-old children probed into their likes and dislikes. Overwhelmingly the routine activities of circle time and naptime, which took them away from play, were disliked. As soon as an activity was no longer theirs by choice, that is was teacher directed or mandatory, the children saw it as no longer play, and therefore as cutting across their enjoyment. However, in all the centres the children persevered and made play the central focus of the day. As the researchers spent

more time in the centres and realised the children's views, predetermined questions were set aside in preference to 'natural conversations' occurring as the children played, ensuring their place in the centre and participation in the research was acknowledged. The perspective of the child was respected with the children seen as competent to add these views to the quality debate.

In a similar study seeking the child's perspective, Holmes (1992) found that children introduced and maintained play themes during snack time. The children's play needs took precedence over social protocol with the food being used as play props, especially if the children found the time to be boring. Guerra (1989), likewise, found children used the lunchtime routine as a time to engage in play with language: exaggerations, 'toilet talk' and 'one-upmanship'. Hännikäinen (2001) described humour and joking with language and exaggeration as playful interactions between children, occurring throughout the day at childcare centres. Her interpretive study comprising observations of 16 five-year-old children, in seven full day childcare centres, showed that such playfulness was a way the children made connections with each other, and a sign of togetherness between them. In all of the above research educators reacted to this play with acceptance and non-acceptance, the latter being often when adults had learning plans for the children that they felt were being hindered by the playfulness. The children's desire for play and social connections was enacted throughout their day; they brought play into routines.

2.3.1 Reasons for routines

As well as the functionality of routines, teachers see the value of gathering the children as a group in fostering a child's feelings of membership in the group and their importance to the others (Hill, 1994) through discussion of who is absent and welcoming new people. Others use times such as morning tea to programme communicative interaction (Selman, 2001) and to support the social and emotional life of each child (Murray, 2000). Yet in some instances, time spent in routines is inappropriate without the child's interests or needs being considered (Doxey, 2001; Fleet & Patterson, 1998). Wiltz and Klein's (2001) research initially determined a quality status of the centres in their research using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford, 1980), and the Classroom Practices Inventory (Hyson, Hirsch-Pasek & Rescorla, 1990). They found in low quality centres, the circle times (teacher-led group discussions or activities) varied in length of up to 30 minutes and were held more than once in the day. The high quality centres

encouraged more child directed activities. This thesis argues that the basis for the programme and the place of group routines is part of the organisational culture.

There has been much research into children's nutritional intake at early childhood centres in snack and lunch times, under health studies (see Escobar, 1999). A few studies are mentioned here as they relate to the current research of children's learning. Because the early years are a key time for experimenting with and establishing dietary habits the experiences children have with food in an early childhood centre are of importance. Birch (1980) found that three- and four-year-old children would change their selection and consumption of vegetables because of sitting beside children whose preferences differed initially from their own. This quantitative study, while based on children learning from peer models, regarded the target children as individuals "conforming to the peer group" (p. 495) rather than considering a centre or peer culture which is collaboratively created and modified. While in this research children had a choice of what they were to be served, a study by Branen, Fletcher and Myers (1997) showed that when children were able to serve themselves 'family-style', the mean intake of food was significantly greater and with, comparatively, no more wastage. Because the study was carried out over four months, it is unlikely that the increased intake was due to the novelty of serving method, but rather allowing the child autonomy and active involvement in the selection of foods and the quantities eaten. Stanek, Abbott and Cramer (1990) studied the eating environment of two- to five-year olds at home using a postal survey involving checklists and open questions, to 1200 families within one state in the USA. However, with the return rate being only 36% and the respondents having a higher educational background than the general population in the area, it could not be claimed that a cross-section of the state was surveyed. They identified several adult behaviours that correlated positively with adequate nutrition for the children, all of which could be used in early childhood centres. These were having the child prepare food or lay the table, giving the child the choice of type of food eaten, discussing healthful foods, and eating with the child. Children's learning about and participation in healthy nutritional practices needs to be considered alongside the social, emotional and cognitive possibilities of routines.

2.3.2 Change in routines

In a recent New Zealand study by Aitken and McAllister (2003) change was made in one early childhood centre from a fixed morning tea to a rolling morning tea, where children

were in control of when they wished to come and snack. It was found that the children began planning when to interrupt their play for a break, and became more aware of their own food intake needs. Concurrently the centre changed the lunchtime and sleep time routines to respond to individual children's body patterns. The centre personnel and researcher viewed the set group routines as not in line with current thinking of children and their learning as being holistic, and accepted the new ways of operating as more respectful and responsive to children. The teachers reported that the snack, meals and sleep times were calmer and less stressful for them and the children. Less stress for staff and children in one early childhood centre was also reported from another action research project (Depree & Haywood, 2001) after the change from a group morning tea to a rolling morning tea.

In a challenge to the taken-for-granted ways of organising a morning, one early childhood centre in America for toddlers (Wien & Kirby-Smith, 1998) experimented with removing clocks and watches, with the impetus for when to have snacks, sleep and toileting coming from the children. While the 'rushed' feeling of the day was no longer there, the staff found a different tension in needing to work as a team in their interpretations of children's needs. No longer were tasks able to be clearly divided between them, according to the clock. However, for the children it meant longer time for extended play, more food eaten, and less fuss about naps. The teacher-dominated pattern was able to be changed through much staff discussion of the issues involved.

2.3.3 The place of routines in early childhood

The "cultural guidelines" (Bartlett, 2001, p. 49) that centres have in place help participants to determine expectations for themselves and others. They allow children and adults to settle into a familiar pattern and free them to explore their learning. To help them participate fully, children and adults build a script: a conceptual representation of event sequences. That young children develop scripts about routines and regular events in schools and early childhood centres has been reported often (Cullen, 1998; Dockett & Fleer, 1999; Farrar & Goodman, 1990; Klein, Kantor & Fernie, 1988; Wiltz & Klein, 2001), and these are the frameworks that children use as their participation in the community develops. It is by participating that children understand the purpose of the routines with these experiences viewed holistically as part of the child's learning.

How routines are viewed by educators and children varies greatly. Before separated education settings for young children became widespread in the Western world, children's learning was built on collaboration in ongoing community activities (Rogoff, Bartlett & Turkanis, 2001; Singer, 1996). These activities had real meaning for the children, and the reasons to learn about them were obvious to the children. Their learning occurred during the contributions to such activities. Such learning through real life is still the basis for many societies today, for example the Mayan society, as reported by Gaskin (1999). However when young children are gathered in large groups, such as in early childhood centres, there is a likelihood of routines being overlooked when planning for children's learning (Murray, 2000). For the current literature review there was no research found on the meaningful involvement of children during snack or meal times. It is unknown whether children are encouraged to join in food routines in meaningful ways such as the preparation of food, wiping the tables, engagement in social conversation, and clearing away afterwards. Research in New Zealand and overseas reported on the general objective of routines being mainly practical. In some instances routines have been stressful for adults and children (Aitken & McAllister, 2003; Depree & Hayward, 2001), a place to learn group rules (Williams, 2001), boring for children (Wiltz & Klein, 2001) or relaxing for children (Hännikäinen, 2001). Their place as necessary is not in dispute, but how they are coordinated for the benefit of children and adults has not been explored.

Routines evolve in varying ways including direction from outside of the centre, and internal reflective practice. In one area in New Zealand, the regional management of kindergartens 'imposed' a new policy, whereby morning tea would no longer be a collective and group time, but in effect be a 'rolling morning tea' where children could choose when to have their snack and with whom. Ritchie (2001) comments that some teachers challenged this, and wished to hold true to their sense of community and sharing that had previously prevailed, but were overruled. She encourages exploration of ways that teachers plan the environment to foster children's collective endeavour and collective responsibility. Ritchie also urges arrangements in centres that are conducive to negotiation and sharing, for example, a shared morning tea rather than individual lunch boxes, which has become the norm in many centres. She asserts that teachers' expectations of cooperation will transfer to children with such expectations being made explicit through role modelling and discussion. In two recent New Zealand studies (Aitken & McAllister, 2003; Depree & Hayward, 2001) change in a centre came about through action research, guided by someone from outside the

centre who facilitated the staff reflection, planning and the change process. The call for educators in New Zealand to have time available and an interest in reviewing their practice, their processes or routines has been made by Bell (1990), McLeod (2002) and the Ministry of Education (1999).

The socio-cultural perspective of learning emphasises children learning through participation in a culture. The organisational culture of each playcentre, while subtle, pervades all the events in a centre. It is this culture that children are moving into as they participate alongside peers and adults during the routines in place. The literature concerning young children's learning through the cultural practices of their educational setting is now outlined.

2.4 Socio-cultural perspective of learning

The traditional model of learning was individual and independent of the context. An alternative, socio-cultural view, which is currently the accepted model in early childhood education in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 1996b) derives mainly from Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work. In this, learning focuses on the relationship between the learner and the setting in which s/he operates. The context in which this happens affects the learning activity through the tools (Vygotsky) in use in the society. In the present research, the technical tools, such as the play equipment and building, morning tea furniture and resources, and the psychological tools, such as language, curriculum and routines, structured the activity. Wenger (1998), uses the term 'repertoire' as both "reificative and participative aspects" (p. 83) belonging to a practice. It is through the appropriation of the social system of which the child is a member that cognitive development occurs. The learning that occurs is sited in action, in the relationship of the biological mind of the individual and the cultural-historical setting (Cole, 1996; Wertsch, 1991). Vygotsky provided a theoretical framework "that integrates culture, context and cognition and outlines mechanisms for their mutual influence" (Jacob, 1992, p. 311). Subsequently, neo-Vygotskian work has continued in the examination of specific relations between an individual, and the context in which they are active with the emphasis on meaning-making in the social world. The focus is on the system or culture within which the children learn, jointly created by the children and adults through their relationships (Smith, 1996).

Suggestions from such theories are being written into practice for early childhood education (Carr, 2001b).

In following the socio-cultural approach, which indicates that learning is not just of a child, but of a child-in-action with others (Moll & Whitmore, 1993; Rogoff, 2003), then consideration of participation in practice is important in understanding this learning. This participation has been described in various, although similar ways: guided participation and apprenticeship by Rogoff (1990, 2003); situational learning and legitimate peripheral participation by Lave and Wenger (1991); and situation cognition by Kirshner and Whitson (1997). In all descriptions, the learning through activity is defined by the authenticity of the context, whether students in school learned the language and other tools for meaning making in the particular discipline (Wells, 1999), or girl scouts learned about selling and distributing biscuits (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, Lacasa & Goldsmith, 1995), or, as in the current study, that young children learned what it meant to be a playcentre child at the morning tea table. The emphasis is on the interaction between individuals, the group and the organisation with the learning happening in a community. This notion of a community within which the learning occurs is further discussed later in this chapter.

Traditionally children's learning was viewed as external information crossing a boundary, to be stored internally by the child, with either the child or the environment being responsible for the transfer (Rogoff, 1990). From the transmission perspective, the environment produced the learning by inserting information; and from the acquisition perspective, the individual gathered the skills and information. Rogoff (2003) proposed a third perspective where development is viewed as transformation of participation.

A useful term coined by Rogoff, Paradise, Arauz, Correa-Chávez and Angelillo (2003) 'intent participation' is utilised in the current research to denote children's active watching and listening, in anticipation of participation. Learning through intent participation was particularly noticeable, in the current research, by the younger children and newer members of the playcentres.

2.4.1 Development as transformation of participation

Development as transformation is a dynamic view of cognition, which places the child's learning as a function of participating in shared events, of a changing participation, rather

than focusing on change as belonging to individuals. The changes in individuals are assumed inseparable from their involvement in their sociocultural activities. According to Rogoff (1993, 2003) observation of development can be made through three planes of analysis. The three planes cannot be isolated, and none is primary except for the purposes of study, where one is the current focus. To understand each plane requires the involvement of the others:

- community activity (apprenticeship): active individuals participating with others in culturally organised activity
- interpersonal relations (guided participation): how people communicate and co-ordinate efforts in interaction, as well as restriction of activities
- role of the individual (participatory appropriation): how the individual changes through their involvement in activity, and uses this learning gained in future situations.

By using this view the child's role changes in socio-cultural activities, dependent on how the 'culture' is organised and how activities are structured. Of importance is not how the environment changes for the child, but how the child's role changes in activities in which s/he engages. The child cannot be taken out of the situation to assess his/her learning, but change within the child is studied in the context (or culture) in which s/he is learning (Rogoff, 2003). The interrelationship between child and society is the unit of analysis (Sameroff & Haith, 1996; Smith, 1996) and it is through this that the child's learning develops.

2.4.2 Research analysed through Rogoff's lenses

Several recent pieces of research have utilised Rogoff's (2003) planes of analysis to enable a thorough study of the learning situation concerned. Rogoff herself, with Baker-Sennett, Lacasa and Goldsmith (1995) studied the sales of Girl Scout biscuits in the United States of America. In such a study consideration of the context, the group of participants, and the individuals involved was necessary. Their study, considering the girls' involvement in the annual fundraising sale of biscuits, was deliberately chosen as being outside of the researchers' usual spheres of investigation, such as schools and laboratories, to aid the detection of the systems in place. The relevance of the context was that the Girl Scout troops only existed because of the girls' participation; without the sales of biscuits, the girls' experiences in the scouts would be different; without the scouting programme the

girls' learning experiences would be different; all existed through each other and change occurred in all. During the process of the sales much interpersonal interaction occurred, which allowed for investigation in this plane.

Two studies in early childhood education (Jordan, 2002; Surman, 2003) had the teachers' role in the early childhood setting as a focus. Surman's analysis was of the pedagogical decision making processes of teachers, while Jordan's research was on the teachers' provision of authentic learning experiences with children. Both argue for reflective practitioners to consider all three planes when considering their work with children. In Jordan's work, the analysis of the community plane is used in almost the same way as the current research's consideration of the organisational culture. Indeed, while Jordan uses Wenger's (1998) words of reification of the community's practices, the current research uses the terminology of organisational culture. Further research in Australia by Fleer (2003a) was into the incongruity between Western schooling practices and the perspectives of Aboriginal families on learning for their children. Fleer's research used Rogoff's (2003) planes of analysis in a different way from the other reports thus far mentioned. Fleer asked the families to video their child over the course of a day and portray the important parts of growing up as an indigenous child in Australia. The videos were then shared, with the families explaining what was important to them, firstly with the other families involved, and then with the wider early childhood community of specialists both indigenous and non-indigenous. The transcripts of all of the above were analysed, firstly, as to how the family explained what was important to them (personal plane), then how they explained it when in conversation with the other families involved (interpersonal plane) and finally the understandings that were made between the families and the wider early childhood community (community plane).

The current research uses an analysis method in a similar way to Bourke (2000) who considered children's learning through Rogoff's (2003) three lenses. Bourke's qualitative study inquired into students' conceptions of learning and self-assessment in both the school setting (an intermediate school) and in out-of-school situations. In identifying how students became familiar with an activity (community plane) Bourke's research showed the importance of contextualising specific learning skills, rather than these being provided as discrete learning skills. What was made obvious was that students operated in differing communities, and changed their behaviour and learning styles according to the context. At

the interpersonal level the participation by others, children and adults, was significant, with development of all involved parties evident. Students' change because of their participation was shown through risk taking and self-inspection.

The use of Rogoff's (2003) planes for analysis was a useful way of highlighting differences in student learning in school and out-of-school contexts and in identifying how the cultural contexts affected the ways a learning activity was defined and how the students interpreted this. It was also an effective method of defining the importance of the context, or culture, in which the learning was happening.

The viewing of the child's learning as occurring 'in action' with others leads to the concept of active adults as partners in the learning development. The child's changing participation in experiences depends on the adult's involvement and belief in the co-operative nature of learning, occurring within communities.

2.5 Learning through community

Children are a part of many groups, or communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), namely the home, early childhood service, and perhaps a church community, swimming classes and so forth. Each community has its own culture, knowledge base and expectations of the child. Children grow into the group by learning what it means to be a member of that group (Kruger & Tomasello, 1996). With the sociocultural view of learning, comes a focus on such groups or communities. As Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) admit, "It is not that communities of practice themselves are new, but the need for organizations to become more intentional and systematic about 'managing' knowledge, and therefore to give these age-old structures a new, centre role..." (p. 6).

2.5.1 Communities of learners

Working from the perspective that children learn by being a part of a social situation, has led to the call for the creation of a 'learning community' or 'community of learners' over the last decade, as a response to educational reforms (Sergiovanni, 1994); reviews of theories of development (Rogoff, Matusov & White, 1996); and business reviews (Senge, 1990). For both schools and early childhood centres, this is viewed as children, educators,

management, and parents learning together. It is a way of life based on an organisational cultural understanding and building on socio-cultural perspectives on learning. The community of learners develops cultural practices and traditions that are more than what the individuals involved bring to the group. Building a community is seen as part of building the culture (Sergiovanni, 2000).

Other terms have also been used such as Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Communities of Inquirers (Wells, 2001, 2002). Wenger's term describes the ways in which people function in everyday life. Through this functioning together comes a sense of identity and a unique perspective, as well as a common body of knowledge and practices. Learning occurs through their interacting on an ongoing basis. Wells' concept of communities gives high priority to knowledge building and understanding through inquiry. The communities encourage collaboration between all involved, and provide for learning for each individual as well as development of the whole community. The settings involved in the current research had a focus on learning for both children and adults.

Many schools and early childhood centres are attempting to define themselves as communities of learners with teachers and administrators reflecting on their practice with each other (Brown, 1994). Five principles of a community of learners, according to Brown, are:

- active learners who are aware they are learning and how they are learning;
- educational settings that are places for multiple zones of proximal development. In using this Vygotskian notion Brown identified that every learner learns at a different rate and in different ways, and therefore the programme needs to plan for this;
- legitimisation of difference whereby individual differences are not only recognised but valued and the diversity is rejoiced in;
- a community of discourse is valued with the social basis for language and thought acknowledged; and
- a community of practice where members are critically dependent on each other.

Some schools and early childhood centres have made positive attempts to include parents within this community (Konzal, 2001; Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlett, 2001). In New Zealand, the Playcentre movement holds as one of its basic tenets that centres are in existence for both the education of the young child and the parents, as learners together (Densem &

Chapman, 2000). Another distinguishing aspect of Playcentre is the involvement of parents as the educators, whilst involved in ongoing training in early childhood, and working with others more experienced.

Over the last two decades, there has been much research to support the importance of parental involvement in children's education. Konzal (2001) identifies many such research projects where children are identified as 'doing better' in school when their parents are involved; where their parents share common values and beliefs with other parents and the teachers; and where parents understand and support what occurs in school. Parents being involved is important, not only in the above ways, but where they are an integral part of the school community, as 'co-educators' (Whalley, 2001) and where they are seen as "equal contributors of understanding and knowledge to the educative process" (McCaleb, 1994, p. 26). Brown (1994) and her associates used this theoretical basis to the advantage of children's learning by concentrating their vision on building a community of learners.

Knowledge, within a sociocultural framework, is owned and developed in the communities in which it is used. Its origins are from the history of that community. Within the community, participants work together, mediating each other's knowledge through joint activities (Edwards, 2000). Both adults and children joining the community become members through increasing "engagements with the knowledge in use in that community" (Edwards, p. 187). The community develops a history across generations and creates bridges for the transitions between generations. "An understanding of the principles of a community of learners gives participants a basis for knowing what to do, but at the same time, it seems that participating is essential for finding the principles" (Rogoff, 2001, p. 145). Through its continuation the community adapts as times change, tries new ideas, with the participants learning from their efforts in developing the principles and practices for themselves (Rogoff, Bartlett & Turkanis, 2001). The current research, while inquiring into the organisational culture of each centre, brings to light characteristics of the communities, and of them being communities of learners.

2.5.2 Educators in ongoing learning

One principle emerging from the experience of Rogoff, Bartlett and Turkanis (2001) is that "supporting the learning of adult participants is key to being able to foster the learning of children" (p. 10). The adults' understanding of the collaborative approach is essential to

their being able to contribute to the children's learning environment. Members who see themselves as on a learning journey, full of learning experiences, become valued participants. In studies of school improvement, Stoll and Fink (1996) suggest several cultural norms, one of which was lifelong learning. Hatherly (1997) found, in a study of the culture of a childcare centre in New Zealand, that where staff saw themselves as 'qualified' and ongoing learning as not relevant to their practice, after a period of professional development, change (in terms of pedagogical moving forward) was unlikely to happen. Acknowledgement that all participants are learners is the crux to forward moving educational communities.

Studies of effective schools, determined by student learning, have focussed on their culture as a determinant of their practices. The schools have been found to be characterised by a strong commitment to learning and teaching; support between adults; acknowledgement of achievements; open communication and collaboration; and shared beliefs (Owens, 1995). The value of the importance of learning, not only the children's but also the teachers', is also significant (Nias et al., 1989). Johnston (2001), who was a teacher in a parent cooperative school in America, reflects, "I learned to use students, parents, [other] teachers as a means to continue my own learning. I lost my need to have all the answers and learned to enjoy new challenges" (p. 30).

2.5.3 Active learners

Rogoff (1996) distinguishes between models of instruction in schools: adult-run, where learning is managed by experts who transmit knowledge; children-run, where learning is the province of the learners who acquire knowledge through their active exploration; and community of learners, where learning involves "transformation of participation in a collaborative endeavour" (p. 388). The community of learners model is a distinctive model based on a philosophical approach quite different from that of the other two models. In a community of learners all are active: children take an active role in managing their own learning, working with adults who contribute to the direction of the activity. Either party may offer guidance and support and each will learn through their involvement (Rogoff, Bartlett & Turkanis, 2001). The children and adults are active in structuring the learning endeavour.

Within New Zealand, reports to government (Austin et al., 1999) have concentrated on school culture as being the key factor in school effectiveness and improvement, especially the value of the school having a 'learning culture' and operating as a 'community'. It is from this basis that the current study has significance. A study of an early childhood centre's culture is a necessary part of investigation into learning experiences available for children.

2.6 Summary and rationale

This chapter has provided an overview of the available research, current theory about organisational culture as it relates to the early childhood situation and routines as a visible part of that culture, and learning from a socio-cultural perspective.

The first studies examined focussed on the setting of an enterprise, business or education, whose operation was studied for its underlying culture. Throughout, there was no agreement on the definition of the concept of an organisational culture, although there was some agreement on the components. Neither was there congruence in research methodology, hence systematic comparisons within the field were difficult. The research identified that organisational culture is a real, albeit abstract notion, that influences the practices within organisations. Studies in educational settings found that staff beliefs, attitudes and relationships were reflected in classroom practices, with the organisational culture influencing the way teachers viewed the students and the learning process. Positive effects on student learning were found where the setting operated as a collaborative community. Methodologically, few of the investigations included direct observations of the culture in action, relying rather on questionnaires or interviews. The current study adds information gained directly in the field.

Because of the scarcity of studies of organisational culture within early childhood, the present research drew from findings in other sectors, such as business and other educational sectors. The studies in early childhood in the New Zealand context have both considered full-day childcare centres (Hatherly, 1997; McLeod, 2002). Playcentre is one of the traditional providers of sessional early childhood education in this country, and because of its characteristic of the supervisors being parents of the enrolled children, it is reasonable to

expect that the culture would differ from that of childcare centres. With the recent interest from government (Ministry of Education, 2002) in research into parent-led services, the current research is timely. The research literature also showed discrepancies about whose views and participation was considered when the culture was investigated. Few involved the families of the children, or the children themselves. The current research, in considering a setting where the parents are the educators, will add knowledge on this.

Research on the place of routines, as a part of the curriculum in early childhood settings, showed them to be frequently not enjoyed by children or adults. When the routines were dominated by adults, they were frequently stressful or boring however, when children were allowed more autonomy, their participation was more positive and conducive to learning. However, there are few studies on the function of routines for young children's learning.

The socio-cultural approach to learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978) identifies the place of context through which learning occurs, and therefore supports the consideration of an organisational culture in early childhood centres. The community, in which a child functions and learns to be a member, has a culture that permeates the practices carried out within it. The routines of the community, such as morning tea, are a specific part of the culture, and therefore is a medium through which learning occurs for children. Only one piece of research reviewed (Kiley & Jensen, 2003), explicitly made a link between the organisational culture of an early childhood centre, and the centre's core function, young children's learning. The research questions for this current study were framed to fill the gaps in the literature reviewed.

This thesis argues for an interface between the two bodies of literature of organisational culture and socio-cultural learning. In doing so, a review of each is presented as the basis for the research as to the influence of organisational culture on children's learning. The research questions and the methodology used to address these are outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to develop a holistic picture of a playcentre in operation during one of its routines, morning tea, through the concept of its organisational culture. A possible link was then investigated, inquiring into the impact the organisational culture had on children's learning.

Two research questions framed the investigation:

1. What happens during the routine of morning tea that shows a playcentre's distinctiveness?
2. What learning experiences happen for children during the routine of morning tea that are associated with the organisational culture of the centre?

To enable exploration of these questions, a qualitative methodology drawing on ethnographic perspectives was chosen for the research, based on multiple case studies of an event. This method was chosen as it focuses on meaning in context and uses data collection techniques that are sensitive to underlying methods. Qualitative research aims to capture the variability, spontaneity and creativity of human social interactions by constructing richly detailed descriptions of the cultural life of particular social groups. It searches for patterns or regularities amid the chaos and complexity (Dobbert & Kurth-Schai, 1992) thus contributing to our general knowledge about the kinds of "life-worlds humans create" (Egan-Robertson & Willett, 1997, p. 5) and the nature of the cultural processes operating to create these worlds. Such a study allows the researcher to "seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). Because the organisational culture of an early childhood centre is complex, it was decided to view it through a keyhole, to concentrate on the routine of morning tea.

3.2 Methodological Approach

3.2.1 Multiple case studies

Yin (1994) claims that the case study "allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 3). The scope of each case study was a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This method was chosen to deliberately consider contextual conditions, rather than separate out a phenomenon to control it (as in experimental research). Each case study was conducted within a "localised boundary of space and time" (Bassey, 1999, p. 58). In a case study, what is looked for is "the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi).

The current study involved collecting and analysing data from two cases, with each case study providing many variables of interest and multiple sources of evidence, which converged to provide triangulation.

A multiple case study, as in this investigation, is a variant of the case study design (Yin, 1994). Each playcentre was considered and analysed as a whole entity. The findings are presented as a description of each centre, and their morning tea routine, as indicative of their organisational culture. Secondly, the data are presented as an analysis of children's learning through the routine. By looking at the two sites, the precision, the validity and the stability of the findings were established (Merriam, 1998). The inclusion of the two case studies follows a common strategy for enhancing the external validity of the findings.

To allow this investigation to remain true to the meanings the participants have within their centre, an ethnographic approach was appropriate, although time in the field was insufficient for the study to comprise an ethnography.

3.2.2 Ethnographic perspective

In using an ethnographic perspective there were many voices: participants in the field, community members from the past (as evident in documentary collections and in their influences on the present), the researcher during the data analysis, other researchers whose work has been referred to, the voice of 'the process' (combination of participants and

researcher) made evident through the implicit and explicit meanings described within the social situation. The research used these voices to answer the question "what is going on here?" This is a question of behaviour and meanings, requiring a description and interpretation of cultural behaviour. As Hatherly (1997) also found, this search for connections between people and their actions made an ethnographic approach appropriate for an holistic study of organisational culture in an early childhood setting.

The perspective of this study is based on several assumptions or characteristics of ethnography (Egan-Robertson & Willett, 1997; Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; Janesick, 2000; Spindler & Spindler, 1992):

- an approach to research from a holistic perspective. The playcentre group was considered in its entirety in the knowledge that the organisational culture being researched was greater than the sum of its parts, and that its full significance would emerge by maintaining an encompassing perspective;
- a design that is emergent and evolving in response to the lived realities encountered in the studied setting. The research built on itself: from the initial investigation, collections and interpretations were made about the data and further direction was generated. This research design has been likened to a funnel (Jacob, 1987) where the researcher proceeds from a general observation phase to a more focussed phase;
- use of the researcher as the primary instrument for the research, the 'human tool'. An emphasis was placed on direct and personal means of collecting data, with any interviews being open-ended with room to be 'true' for the participant. Descriptions of the happening were recorded as full and rich or 'thick' (Geertz, 1973) data. Conversations and comments heard were recorded in an account that was as complete as possible. My presence as the researcher did make a difference in the setting, and is acknowledged. My personal involvement and partiality was accepted with the research design incorporating room for the description of the role of the researcher as well as description of the researcher's own biases and ideological preference;
- analysis beginning soon after the first data are collected with this generating more collection;
- an aim to generate research and interpretations that can be used by the participants and educators to find their own solutions and to contribute to the broad understanding of human life (Spindler & Spindler);

- an understanding that observations are contextualised, both in the immediate setting in which the research is carried out, and in further contexts, social, cultural and historical, as relevant; this being crucial for understanding the behaviour and events studied;
- fieldwork whose strength is the multi-instrument approach, utilising various sources of data and cross checking.

3.3 Participants and setting

Two licensed and chartered playcentres were part of this study with an average of twenty children, ranging in age from birth to five years, attending per session. At Rimu Playcentre, there were 43 children (60% aged 3-4 years) and 32 adults; and at Kauri Playcentre there were 40 children (45% aged 3-4 years) and 26 adults. The children under 2½ years were accompanied by a parent. Both centres were in urban suburbs and licensed as sessional centres. Because of the ways these playcentres operated, the adults on duty differed for each day of the week and the composition of the groups of children present varied. The older children (four year olds) were the most constant participants. Both centres operated under team supervision, with every family required to take a weekly turn on the supervision team, unless excused for health reasons. In each centre, there was a vast majority of female adults on session, with Rimu having one man who participated regularly on session, and Kauri having two. At Rimu 89% of families identified as Pakeha, 5% as Māori and 6% as other. At Kauri 64% identified as Pakeha, 10% as Māori, 6% as other, with 20% undisclosed.

Both playcentres have been operating in their current location for over 30 years, Rimu in a purpose-built centre, and Kauri in a renovated hall. The grounds of each are spacious allowing for much free movement by the children. The sessions operated for 2½ hours on a self-selected play-based programme, with a group gathering for a snack midway through the session. Rimu also had a brief group activity at the conclusion of the session. For the rest of the time the children chose the activity they wished to be involved in with adults supporting their learning in each area. Each centre operated several sessions a week, with families choosing up to five per week for their children to attend. At Rimu, food was prepared at the centre for a shared morning tea, while at Kauri the children brought their snack in a lunch box.

Communication between the adults of each centre occurred in many ways: monthly newsletters, centre meetings held twice every term with minutes of such circulated, programme planning meetings, several notice boards in evidence, and adults made the opportunities to chat with each other on session, or when children were dropped off and picked up.

From Rimu Playcentre the majority of the children moved on to one of two state primary schools in the suburb, both decile 10, or an integrated catholic full primary school, decile 9. From Kauri Playcentre the children moved on to one of four state primary contributing schools, deciles 5 - 7 or a full primary integrated catholic school, decile 7. A full description of both centres is included in Appendix 1.

3.4 Data collection methods

As in many qualitative studies, the researcher was the primary tool. The emphasis was on collecting data in face-to-face situations. Detailed descriptions of the event, including direct quotations, were recorded with as full a portrayal of the scene as possible. Observations at the centre were repetitive, with the morning tea routine and the time directly before and after, being observed ten times per centre to establish the reliability of the observation. Many people were spoken with to ensure a spread of views was heard.

Various sources of data that complement each other to form a full 'story' were used. This multi-instrument approach is a strength of this research method. The three categories of methods used:

- observing: watching and listening to the session in action;
- interviewing: talking with the adults and children in the centre about what is going on; and
- studying artefacts: examining things available in the centre, often written material;

or as Wolcott (1992) phrases them: experiencing (with an emphasis on sensory data), enquiring, and examining (materials prepared by others).

3.4.1 Observation

The main data were gathered through observation with the requirement for it to be direct, prolonged, and on-the-spot. Observing can be from a participant position or as a detached observer. On a day-to-day basis, my role as the researcher varied and I found myself at different points along a continuum (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) from mostly observational to mostly participatory, at different times.

Mixing with the adults and children in the centres was essential to maintain trust and interest with the participants, and within playcentre, it would be considered odd if no participation happened. I attempted, as Hatch (1995) puts it, "to be present in the social contexts I study, but to do my best not to influence the natural flow of social interaction" (p. 261).

As the researcher, I tried to maintain a delicate balance between achieving as complete an understanding of insider's perspectives as possible, and enough distance to permit rigorous analysis of them (Woods, 1992). Indirect observation, through photography and sound recordings, did add to data collected, but could not provide as rich data as the alert observer aware of the big picture, the components within, and the subtleties and divergences that arose. The written observations (Appendix 2) were as-full-as-possible notes on what was happening with this limited by my writing speed and my selection of what to record.

A photo journal was kept. Photos were taken of varying aspects of the morning teatime. These were planned to be used in the following ways:

- interpretation by adult participants of the event;
- interpretation by the researcher of the same;
- as a stimulus for interviews with the children, with open-ended questions such as "tell me about what's happening here".

My presence as photographer was a little different to that of observer. The children and adults were aware of me as well as of the camera, but I never noticed that this was something that disturbed their interactions with each other or the routine.

3.4.2 Interviewing

'Interviewing' in this research is used in the broadest sense possible, meaning anything that the fieldworker did that intruded upon the natural setting, done with the conscious intent of obtaining particular information directly from the participants. As an observer, I let the

situation parade before me. In the interview role as I took the lead in gathering information, it was intentionally intrusive. I planned for only informal interviews, consisting of 'conversational interviews' (Patton, 1990) evolving with little formal structure and based on the immediate context. No predetermined set of questions was possible under such circumstances, because it would not be known beforehand what was going to happen, or what would be important to ask. Where possible I spoke with those involved as soon as possible after the event, as long as it did not interfere with the running of the session.

With children, informal conversation interviews were planned for at the morning tea table, or once they had left (depending on the appropriateness), following naturalistic approaches of considering the child in context (Cullen, 1997), either as an individual or in small groups. Interviewing children can reveal their perceptions of the scene (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996; Watson & Fischer, 1980; Wiltz & Klein, 2001) and may be useful, however it was not intended that much interviewing be done with the children. I sought permission for this in case it presented as a valid data gathering method at the time and planned to make written notes following such conversations.

In practice, I made no such interviews apart from discussing the photos. Once in the field I realised my participation in this way would have changed the natural flow of what was happening in the centre. The environment was such that children moved easily back to play after their snack and on the occasions I wished to share and talk about the photos with them, their interests were more on resuming play, a similar finding to that reported by Wiltz and Klein (2001). For me to be fully accepted as a regular adult, and able to chat freely with the children, would have meant spending double the allotted time, to allow for playing and participation and becoming known.

Informal interviewing with adults, while more feasible than with children, was not easy to carry out during the session, and both centres conducted an evaluation time at the end of session, after which the adults and their children wished to go home. Of more value were phone calls that I made during the afternoon, or the next day, following an event I wished to query. Some of the questions used as probes with the adults were:

What do you mean by .....?

I'm not sure I'm following you when you said .....

Would you explain ..... ?

What were you thinking at the time?

Tell me about ....

The photos taken, provided a starting point for discussion with the children about their views on morning tea. At the first research site, I made a series of booklets showing the process of morning tea. I sat in the book area, participated in some story reading, and then shared the photo books. I asked the children to tell me what was happening in the photos. Their immediate focus was in finding themselves in the books, but their interest in discussing the photos and the event portrayed did not go further than that, a similar finding to an ethnographic study by Smith et al. (2003). At the second site, photos were placed on a large display board that was available to the children over a longer period. Supervisors offered to record any comments made by the children and on one occasion, children's responses were taped.

3.4.3 Focus group

For each case study, two focus groups with educators were planned. As a research technique the focus group collects data through group interaction (Flick, 2002; Morgan, 1997) combining the strengths of in-depth interviewing and observation in a group context. They were useful for exploring the topic, with the purpose to stimulate talk from multiple perspectives from the group participants (Madrid, 2003; Wilkinson, 2003) and they provided the opportunity for group members to "articulate those normally unarticulated normative assumptions" (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001, p. 5).

These were with interested adult members of each centre and coincided with the sharing of data gathered, and following up on such data. A separate permission form (Appendix 3) was discussed and signed on the evening. At the end of the first evening the participants in each centre admitted their preference to meet only once as a group, but offered that I could contact them individually for any other information or opinions required.

During the focus groups (two hours each) trends and interesting points, which had arisen from the research, were discussed more fully; with leading questions (Appendix 4) being asked to explore the reasons for the members belonging to this playcentre and for them doing things the way they did. There was the opportunity for participant feedback and the members' checking of my notes and analytic patterns that were developing. These focus groups were taped for

accuracy and for easier facilitation of the discussion. Later, copies of the transcripts were given to each person for their comments and verification.

3.4.4 Collections

Documentation involved gathering information from a variety of different kinds of materials: minutes of centre and planning meetings, Centre Management Plans, Information for Parents booklets, documents, notices on display, historical documents on the formation of the centre, photos, artefacts; anything that may have been related to the study. The Education Review Office reports on each centre, while accessed, were not as useful as hoped in that they were both written five years before the research.

By using these multiple sources of information and viewing the one event from several angles, the variety of data produced allowed for trustworthiness of the study.

3.5 Fieldwork

When planning the fieldwork for this study the research began first in one centre, and then moved onto the next. It was not carried out simultaneously, to avoid confusion with too many names to remember and too much diverse data to manage. The fieldwork in both centres was for comparable time lengths, but during the second case study, fewer notes were gathered because the first case study provided a focus to define the parameters of the next.

The pattern that was followed in both research sites was:

- initial time spent establishing rapport with centre members, becoming familiar to the children, carrying out general observations, and becoming familiar with the routines. This comprised of two visits to each centre, lasting three hours each;
- ten visits per centre, in total, for observation;
- the main data gathering period over eight weeks, visiting the centre one or two times each week. Because the teams of educators varied on each session of the week, I also varied the session on which I observed. The naturalistic observations and photograph collection concentrated on the children and adults as they partook in the morning tea routine;

- recording began when the first child or adult mentioned morning tea, or began physical preparations for it, and finished when general play resumed. In addition general notes were taken, prior to morning tea, in case links could be made from play episodes to conversation or happenings during morning tea;
- collection of information from written artefacts relating to the study, as outlined earlier; and
- a focus group meeting in the evening, after six visits to the centre.

Differences in the research process between the two sites were as follows.

Site 1

- Because the research was carried out here in the third term of the year all the morning teas were inside (because of the weather), though mention was made that it is often held outside in warmer weather.
- The observations often continued for 1 - 1½ hours, as food was prepared by adults and children. Once the children had sat down, songs, rhymes and a discussion were held before the food and drink was shared.

Site 2

- Because the 'sit-down' part of morning tea took less time than at Site 1, fewer observation hours were needed. A music time (10 – 15 minutes) was held for the children interested in joining in, prior to morning tea, which the adults regarded as part of the routine.
- The children sat down and began eating straight away, from lunchboxes, with some moving away after ten minutes. One adult usually would call the register after five minutes or so, when everyone had settled, and often continued chatting with the children.
- Two snack-times were held outside, although the routine was similar.

3.6 Rigour

In qualitative research, rigour can be assessed in a variety of ways. The natural science model (Ezzy, 2002) of rigour holds to the aim of objectivity and emphasises the terms validity and reliability as major methodological criteria. Research carried out under this

model assumes to present an external and objective viewpoint. Validity refers to the appropriateness of the interpretations from data: whether the data reflects the intended content area. Reliability is the degree to which the research method consistently measures whatever it is measuring, and the ability to repeat the research and obtain the same results. Objectivity is the assumption that the opinion, prejudices and values of the researcher have not influenced the research at all.

This view raises problems with research carried out from an ethnographic perspective. The case studies, in the present research, were concerned with the meaning and interpretations that the participants gave to their experiences. These would change as their lives and society change and it would not be possible to replicate the study. There was also not one clear meaning of an event, they were polyvalent (Ezzy, 2002); therefore, the "idea that a theory should reflect accurately the experiences of social life (validity)" (p. 52) was also problematic. The issue of objectivity denies the current ideas (Denzin, 1997) that researchers' views must influence the production of knowledge that comes from qualitative research. So, therefore, what criteria could my research be measured against for quality and rigour? I followed the lead of Janesick (2000) who argued for the replacement of validity, generalisability and reliability with quality referents, and have chosen dependability, critical subjectivity, quality of description and inclusion of ethics.

3.6.1 Dependability (Trustworthiness)

Rather than trying to replicate my study, readers should be able to concur that the results of the research do make sense based on the data collected. The results are "consistent and dependable" (Merriam, 1998, p. 206) and "fit between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs in the setting" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 36). This concerns the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data. Each step of the research has been documented as an "audit trail" (Merriam, p. 207) or as Yin (1994) puts it a "chain of evidence" (p. 98). The multiple methods used to collect data, the place of the researcher at the research site, the description of the context and the procedures followed are all included in this report to build the readers' vision of these case studies.

Cross checking was carried out in three ways: the use of multiple methods of data collection (observation, informal interviews, document study); carrying out the focus groups whereby several people were asked the one question, or given the same lead to

speak, and variety of responses were possible; and the participants reading and commenting on my notes.

Triangulation involved making the area of study clear through using a variety of vantage points (Edwards, 2001). The use of multiple perspectives (theoretical triangulation), multiple research sites (two centres) and multiple methods (methodological triangulation) in the current study were used as a way to build a robust picture and to confirm the truth of the study (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001). It was also, as Flick (1992) argues, to enrich the research not merely to confirm the data.

It is generally accepted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Ezzy, 2002; Walker, 1993) that qualitative researchers do not hold the expectations of other researchers, that replication of a study is important. A case study is viewed as simply that: a one-off investigation, which is "legitimate in [itself]" (Walker, p. 166).

3.6.2 Critical subjectivity

To be sensitive to the voice of others I needed to be aware of my own preconceptions and biases. My views were an unavoidable influence on the research. By becoming aware of my own ideologies, beliefs and value systems, my interests and questions about early childhood education, I attempted to develop a method to deal with them. Throughout the data collections and early stages of analysis, I recorded my reflections. For each case study, I portrayed many dimensions, rather than narrowing the field. My primary goal was to add to knowledge, not pass judgement on each setting.

I ensured my field notes were typed up as soon as possible including as much on the context as possible, to avoid selective memory. I also discussed my ideas with others, to make me aware of any unconscious or subconscious judgements I may have made because I had certain expectations of what was likely to be seen. Moyles (2002) refers to this as surfacing these judgements. I am also aware there must have been some selective attention. What I saw and heard were subject to my biases and selection. To minimise this I checked my own potential biases against what others had written in relation to research of a similar kind, reading any research similar to mine as well as literature on research methodology.

3.6.3 Quality of description and interpretation

By using 'thick' (Geertz, 1973) description of the social life in the centre and focussing on the processes which continually and actively construct this life I provided two facets of what Gubrium and Holstein (1997) argue are central to rigorous qualitative research. They also note there needs to be an appreciation of subjectivity and a tolerance for the complexity of the social life described. This needed prolonged engagement at the research sites, persistent observation of emerging issues and adequate checks of raw data with the source. It was a matter of my understanding how the participants interpreted their experiences, rather than deciding if their interpretation matched my construct of their reality.

3.6.4 Inclusion of ethics as rigour

More recently, the influence of feminist, postmodernist and hermeneutic theory has laid the basis for "rigour in qualitative research to include ethical conduct as part of the criteria for rigorous research" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 51). These theories make it clear that knowledge has a moral base with ethical implications. My desire to do what was best for each of the centres I studied and Playcentre in general was a basis for the way I carried out the research. Initially I chose Playcentre in which to research, to give voice to those who have rarely been heard from in early childhood research in New Zealand. The complexity of the playcentre communities and the continual flow of adults and children through the centre on a day-to-day basis have meant that playcentres have often not been chosen as research sites. My respect for the centre personnel and their social practices shaped the day-to-day realities of the research.

3.7 Ethical considerations

As expressed in the above section a qualitative approach to the research was used with care and respect for all involved.

I approached this research as both a researcher and a Playcentre person. To ensure the research was conducted according to university ethical protocols I followed the guidelines given in Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct for Teaching and Research Involving Human Subjects (Massey University, 2000). My studies with Massey University and supervision of

this thesis ensured the research was thorough. My position as a member of Playcentre meant that the research could be conducted with my experiential knowledge of the Playcentre culture, and ability to view the current situation with that knowledge. It also meant the participants could trust me to be responsible for and answerable to Playcentre's philosophy and mores. Steps taken to minimise any conflict of interest are discussed in section 3.7.2. My place in this research speaks to the issue of dual notions of accountability: to both the Playcentre world and academia.

Initial permission was granted (Appendix 5) by the Playcentre Association for research to be carried out in playcentres belonging to the Association. This approval from the umbrella organisation was important because of the trust that needed to operate between the researcher and the playcentre families within the region.

After the Massey University Human Ethics Committee had approved the research proposal (PN Protocol 02/26) the President of the Playcentre Association was asked for support in initially approaching centres (Appendix 6). Using an intermediary, centres would hopefully, feel more confident to say yes or no to the research than if approached directly by the researcher.

Two centres showed interest, and both invited me to one of their regular centre meetings to explain the research further. At each centre, I spoke about the research intent and process and of my presence on session, reassuring the participants that I hoped not to influence the children's play and participation but to observe it as it happened. Information sheets (Appendix 7) outlining the research, and what it would involve for the adults and children in the centres were circulated. Also distributed were copies of an article by Hedges (2001) on what early childhood centres should be aware of when participating in research. The centre members were informed that any observations of individual children, or small groups, which could be of benefit for the children's profiles and planning for them, would be passed on to the centre along with copies of all photos.

In both centres, consent forms (Appendix 8) were distributed a few days after my meeting with them, giving the participants time to think over their decision, consider the information sheet, and speak with those who were not at the meeting. One hundred percent of the families in each centre gave permission for themselves and their children to be involved.

The research itself was carried out following the principles of the Code of Ethical Conduct (Massey University, 2000): informed consent, confidentiality, minimising of harm, truthfulness and social sensitivity. After each centre had discussed the proposal in general, and given permission for the research to take place, then adults had the opportunity to participate in three ways: to be present when I was observing a session, to chat with me informally on session and/or to be part of a focus group discussion. Each centre member was able to participate in ways in which they were interested and felt were appropriate, or not at all. The term 'participants' was a carefully chosen identifier, rather than 'subjects', to allude to the attitudes of inclusion, reciprocity and willingness to cooperate in the research.

Whilst all attempts have been made to protect the identity of the participants, it was not possible to describe the centres in such a way that those familiar with the city and its playcentres could not identify them. The centres were made aware of this in the initial stages of the research. Codenames were used for both playcentres and for individuals to maintain confidentiality, although anonymity of the centre could not be guaranteed. At the end of the fieldwork, when several parents in each centre asked for their own names and that of their children to be used in preference to pseudonyms, I followed their lead on this. With the participants being involved at regular intervals in discussing the research findings, any revealing information that may have done harm to the centre or its members, or Playcentre, would have been identified and a joint decision made as to what was to be done with this information.

3.7.1 Research with children

Incorporating children's perspectives and giving power to their voices has been seen as sound practice for some years in early childhood research (Farrell, Taylor & Tennent, 2002; Sorin, 2003; Wiltz & Klein, 2001). The suggestion has been raised, though, that research needs to move beyond the concern to hear children's voices and change the power relations in research with them (MacNaughton, 2003); use the research time to expand children's understanding of the research topic (Sorin); and honestly allow the children involved the time and tools to become research partners (Fasoli, 2003). While each idea is justified through its involving and respecting children, also to be considered is the child's choice as to whether they would wish to participate under these circumstances and for what reason

they would choose to participate. In each instance, it means the child must choose between play, and interacting with the researcher. The researcher must consider if such a choice is feasible and fair for young children to make.

While some recent research (Coady, 2001; Hedges, 2002) has obtained consent from young children, because the current study involved children from birth to five years, did not involve lengthy time with the children in conversation, and individual children were not targeted, it was not considered appropriate or necessary. All the children were familiar with adults carrying out observations as part of the usual centre planning cycle, so should not have been concerned by the records I made.

I had planned to carry out informal interviews with children on session. At all times the interviews would allow the children to control the context and their participation (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986) and be an ongoing conversation with them about their world, with my being alongside them in whatever activity they were engaged. I did not follow through with these as discussed previously.

3.7.2 Research bias

Observer bias refers to information that may be invalid due to the perspective the researcher brings to the study. Because observation is always filtered through the researcher's interpretive frames, opportunities existed for excluding data contradictory to the researcher's views. My background, set of experiences, preferences and attitude affected not only what and how I observed, but also my personal reflections and interpretations.

My background in Playcentre as a parent, educator and advisor was a declared bias, with issues of rigour attended to and the interpretation of the data subjected to supervision to reduce the effect of bias. It was necessary and desirable to recognise that I was a part of what I studied, and therefore needed to look critically at the situation.

Accounting for myself and my Playcentre background was important to this research; both to gain me access, and secondly to ensure my understanding of the context. My employment by the Playcentre Association and close involvement in the centres had ceased ten months before the research beginning, and this was a sufficient time lapse for no conflict of interest to arise. My knowledge of Playcentre and involvement in early childhood education provided a solid

base for trust of the participants in the researcher and my studies with Massey University ensured the research would be rigorous.

At all times, I maintained awareness of this bias and strove for accuracy. All field notes were documented and a field journal maintained during the research. This was an introspective record of my experience in the field, and was useful to identify my perspective of the site in general, and of specific facets I had observed or taken part in.

Focus groups were chosen, rather than individual interviews, to diminish the potential for the data to be influenced by me. The multi-method approach to the research helped minimise the effects of bias and interpretation. All data gathered (observations and personal) were available to the participants and several commented on these to me, which confirmed the viewpoint, or challenged me to revisit it. The participants were given the opportunity to comment on the initial analysis.

3.8 Analysis

Data analysis began at the same time as data collection. This is consistent with what Ezzy (2002) terms the "dialectical, or hermeneutic, relationship between theory and data." (p. 6). The simultaneous collection and analysis are a strength of qualitative methods, following an inductive method for understanding interpretations from the participants of the study. It allows the analysis to be shaped by the participants and the researcher with reshaping occurring as the research proceeds. The data collected at the beginning of the process were used to guide the direction and the queries that were made as the research progressed.

Immediately after each observational time, initial patterns that were arising, further queries, and initial interpretation of behaviours were recorded. All notes were transcribed as soon as practicable, usually the same evening, simplifying the reflection over the issues raised. This served as a preliminary form of data analysis. Links began to be made between the life of the centre and the experience of the participants, and theory. It was valuable at this time, that I noted my hunches, guesses, suspicions, and predictions so that later in the analysis these could

be taken into account as possible reasons for my recording certain aspects that appeared important to do so.

Focus group discussions were transcribed by an independent assistant. To gain greater familiarity with the data I listened to the tapes, with the transcriptions, to enable me to hear behind the words and the participants' expressions. The transcriptions were given to the participants, for comment.

The major data analysis activity was the coding. This is the process whereby data are "broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new ways" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996, p. 144). The content was considered and then reorganised, using creative and reflective thinking, from a chronological order into meaningful categories (looking at behaviours, events and words), a process of "combing the evidence" (Edwards, 2001, p. 132). This brought together fragments of data, to create categories having some common property.

3.8.1 Frameworks for analysis

Three frameworks were used to interpret and explain the routine studied:

- Schein's (1992) three levels of organisational culture or layers of intensities;
- An adaptation from Bush (1995) considering the organisational culture, constituting the five filters; and
- Rogoff's (1993, 2003) three socio-cultural lenses to view children's learning.

Metaphors from the field of optics have been used in this research to enable the study of the centres. Other researchers within education (Agee, 2002; Rogoff, 2003; Roth, 2001) also found such metaphors useful. The centre as a whole has been looked at through a 'keyhole' (morning teatime). Schein's (1992) three levels of culture, or 'intensities', were used in an initial consideration of the data. This provided an understanding of the data on three layers: the very visible and obvious artefacts, the espoused values of the group, and the shared, tacit assumptions. A series of 'colour filters' were then used to enable different facets of the organisational culture to be examined. In the same way as viewing an object through a transparent coloured filter allows only colours that reflect the same light to be seen, the research results are viewed through five filters, enabling only that consideration to be explored at a time. The five filters, adapted from Bush's model (1995), either considered the source of, or were indicative of, the organisational culture of each centre. Schein's (1992) levels of

culture were used to distinguish between surface level facets, espoused values and underlying assumptions. The framework of filters was used for thematic analysis and interpretation.

Finally, the three lenses, personal, interpersonal and community (Rogoff, 1993, 2003) were used to consider the learning for children during the routine of morning tea. As in optical lenses, these allowed certain parts of the learning process to be focussed on, while the remaining parts became the necessary background. The complexities of organisations require multiple lenses through which to study it (Agee, 2002; Kiley & Jensen, 2003; Roth, 2001) to reveal the differing perspectives for consideration.

3.8.2 Organisational culture

The written transcripts were coded into patterns, which began to become evident during the collection period. Firstly they were coded into what was actually happening during the morning tea time, for example adult's actions and children's reactions; child initiated actions and adult reaction; habits used by members; physical layout and its impact on the routine; time taken for sections of the routine; interactions between adults and children. These were the visible, easily observable happenings, or artefacts at Schein's (1992) first level and based on the actions of children and adults, as 'products' of the organisational culture of their centre. The connections between the categories were also studied. The material needed to be considered in two ways. Firstly, each piece of data belonged in its contextual place – where it happened in the observational notes and secondly, each piece of data belonged in a coded category (or in some instances several categories).

Schein's (1992) second and deeper level of culture comprises the principles, patterns of behaviour and reasons the members give for their actions. These were available from written material produced by the centre, the transcript of the focus group, and the informal interviewing of adult participants. Using inductive thinking, the findings at Schein's first and second levels were brought together, to make suggestions as to some of the tacit assumptions, at Schein's third level, held by centre members. Some were aware of these, and others used them subconsciously.

The centres' organisational culture, as conceptualised by the above three levels could then be described and analysed. A cultural model by Bush (1995) was used as a framework to

describe the organisational culture of each centre. Bush's model was adapted to consider the organisational culture in terms of:

- environmental: the physical and historical features of the centre which impacted on the practices and beliefs of the members;
- social: the relationships between participants, the social structures evident, and the systems of leadership;
- philosophical: the beliefs, values and goals of the participants, both current and past;
- structural: the organisational facets of the centre, and the activities that occur on a day-to-day basis; and
- pedagogical: the main pedagogical strategies of the educators.

This is shown in figure 3.1, with each facet acknowledged as affecting the others.

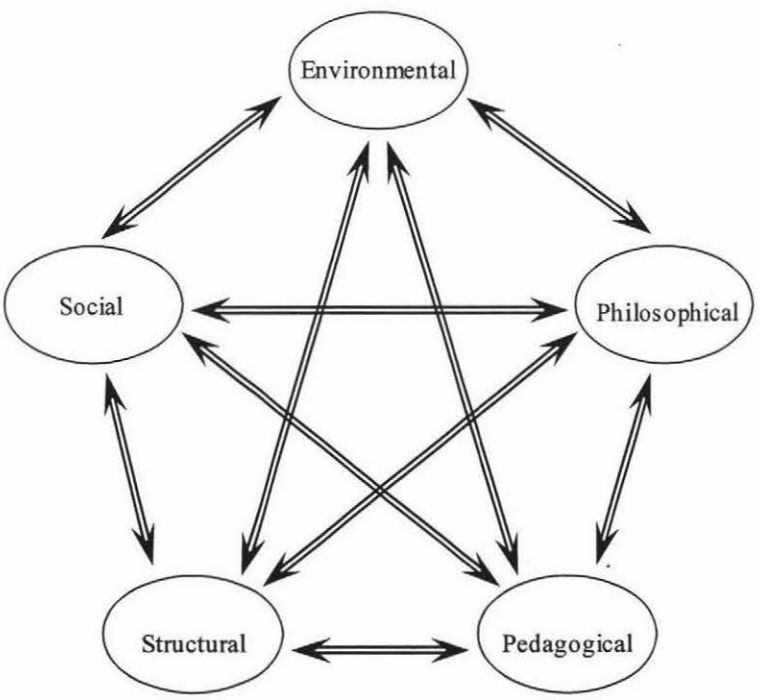

Figure 3.1 Five colour filters.

3.8.3 Children's learning

The second analysis was based on Rogoff's (1993, 2003) work on children's learning being seen as a transformation of participation in the social settings of their everyday lives. As outlined in Chapter 2, this socio-cultural perspective of learning looks at the development through three planes of analysis. The transcripts of the observations and focus groups were analysed in terms of these three planes:

- the personal plane (how an individual changes through their involvement in activity); highlights the individual child and the concept of appropriation;
- the interpersonal plane (how others, children and adults, may guide the learning of children); features the interactions between the individual and others within the social setting, and utilises the concept of guided participation;
- the community plane (how the participation is part of a culturally organised activity); concentrates on the cultural or institutional context, and uses the metaphor of apprenticeship.

This qualitative data analysis was a "process of interpretation" (Ezzy, 2002, p. 77). The data collection, transcribing, and reflection were an interpretive process, occurring during the data collection period of research, and continuing until the conclusion of the research.

3.9 Strengths and limitations

As with many qualitative methods, this project had its advantages and disadvantages. The rich data produced provided a wealth of information. Descriptions of the centres in action refined the understanding of 'what is happening' with the strengths of the direct observation being reality (covering the event in real time) and contextual (the event was seen in context).

However, exploring the processes that create the patterns in human life, demanded much participation by the researcher. The personal commitment in time and energy was a major limitation of this approach. With the researcher being the main research instrument, the limitation became critical, considering the research was not being undertaken on a full time basis. Another substantial limitation was the possibility of selectivity with all the information being "filtered through my perceptual capabilities and subjective opinions" (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p. 273).

A critical factor was the rapport and relationship with the participants that needed to be nurtured to determine the success, or otherwise, of the research and the amount of access to information. Had the research been in an institution with which I was not familiar, it would have meant a lengthier time at the beginning. This would have been necessary, firstly to be accepted and to build up trust, and secondly to learn about the organisation, much of which would be far from systematically articulated by the group (Woods, 1986). This labour intensiveness is a constraint on qualitative research. Because of my background in Playcentre, and familiarity with the two centres, I found my proposal was accepted by the participants with relative ease. After the initial centre meeting to which I was invited and the first session visited, I was able to move in and out of each centre comfortably and unobtrusively. As it was, I realised part way through the fieldwork that I had not allowed sufficient time for the children to become familiar with me, to chat easily and therefore the informal interviewing with children did not happen as already discussed.

There was also some lack of control over field conditions. On one occasion, several visitors appeared at the centre whilst I was observing. To maintain the ethical standards of the research I had to quickly speak with them and gain their permission to continue (accepting I would not record any of their participation).

The use of multiple sources of information was a major strength of this case study data collection. As well as providing many perspectives of the one event, it allowed for the development of "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 1994, p. 92), one of the processes to add to the authenticity of the work.

The closeness that built between researcher and participants was both advantageous and a drawback. On the one hand, it provided information from 'the inside' that may not have been shared otherwise. On the other hand, I was aware I might have become so involved that I took on the values of the group and could no longer rigorously analyse these.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has explained how a qualitative research design was adopted to explore the organisational culture of each of the centres studied, and to investigate a possible link to children's learning experiences.

Multiple case studies were carried out, using an ethnographic perspective in two urban playcentres. Data collection consisted of observations carried out over ten sessions for each centre, informal interviewing with adults, and the collecting of written material produced by the centre. A focus group discussion was held in both centres, involving one third of the adult participants, for further exploration of the topic.

Analysis began at the same time as data collection, allowing the analysis to be shaped by the fieldwork. Initial analysis of the data used Schein's (1992) three levels of organisational culture, followed by a thematic analysis using an adaptation of Bush's model (1995) considering the centre's culture in terms of environmental, social, philosophical, structural and pedagogical considerations. A further analysis, into children's learning, was based on Rogoff's (1993, 2003) three planes of analysis. The research was conducted following university ethical protocols (Massey University, 2000) and using accepted quality referents (Janesick, 2000).

The next two chapters present the findings of this research by exploring the settings and the ways the participants work and learn within their early childhood centre.

Chapter 4

Results: Organisational culture

4.1 Introduction

Three frameworks were used to analyse the routine studied in this research:

- the organisational culture of the playcentre, on three layers,
- the organisational culture of the playcentre, through five filters,
- children's learning viewed through three socio-cultural lenses.

Described in this chapter are the research findings in relation to the organisational culture of each playcentre. The question which guided this part of the research was "what happens during the routine of morning tea that shows each playcentre's distinctiveness?"

The bulk of the data came from the naturalistic observations made over ten visits to each centre, supplemented by informal interviewing of adults in the centres, and one two-hour focus group with adults in each centre. The data revealed much about the observable characteristics of each centre, and what the adult participants felt were important to them and their children at the centre. They spoke easily of the ways they worked and the ideas that guided them. Some underlying beliefs, which are a deep part of the centre's culture, have been able to be suggested from these data.

In describing and interpreting the culture of these two playcentres, I was guided by several cultural models as described in Chapter 2. I align myself with organisational theorists Bolman and Deal (1997), Bush (1995) and Hargreaves (1995); and researchers in organisational theory Kiley and Jensen (2003), Lubeck and Kezar (2002) and McLeod (2002) who have applied many views to the study of organisations as a method of developing a more holistic picture of how they function.

Each centre is more than just a system or a set of interrelated elements. While each element influences and is influenced by each other element, it is the relationship between these elements that comes from the culture. The first framework for analysis, by Schein (1992)

enabled initial consideration of the data on three levels: the visible and obvious artefacts, the espoused values of the groups, and the shared, tacit assumptions. Once these layers of the culture were identified, a thematic analysis and interpretation was possible. The cultural model used for this, adapted from Bush (1995), considered each centre environmentally, socially, philosophically, structurally and pedagogically. These views of each centre I have referred to as 'coloured-filters', akin to when one looks through coloured glass: all aspects of the view remain, but certain elements take precedence. Each is interrelated with the others as was shown in Figure 3.1. Within each filter, a few key themes were identified.

This chapter now briefly describes each centre, to set the context for the study, and then tells the story of the morning teatime in each centre as a way of entering into the playcentre. The routine of morning tea was, in this research, being used as a keyhole through which the centres' organisational culture was viewed.

4.2 The centres

The two centres involved in the research have been introduced in Chapter 3, and there is a comprehensive description in Appendix 1.

4.2.1 Rimu Playcentre

Rimu Playcentre was a purpose built early childhood centre set on spacious grounds with many trees. The main indoor play area was one large room, with an extensive range of equipment and resources available to the children. Children were free to move in- and out-doors for most of the session. The sessions operated for 2½ hours on a self-selected play-based programme, with a group gathering at morning teatime, and a brief activity for children and one or two adults at the conclusion of the session. For the rest of the time the children chose the activity they wish to be involved in with adults supporting their learning in each area. The role of the parent-educators was seen as supporting and guiding children's learning, following their interests and extending their thinking.

4.2.2 Kauri Playcentre

Kauri Playcentre operated in a converted and extended church hall. The high-pitched roof and the light yellow and white interior paint colour made for a very airy and open building. The outdoor grounds were extensive with many possibilities for children's play. A wide range of equipment was available indoors and outdoors, for the children to access during the session. The programme was based on the Playcentre philosophy of self-selected play, for all but fifteen minutes, for morning tea, of the 2½-hour session. The parents are the supervisors, who worked in teams with the more experienced working alongside the newer members, to support the children's learning through their play.

4.3 Views through the keyhole (the stories of morning tea)

4.3.1 Morning tea at Rimu Playcentre

If there was baking to be done, preparation for morning tea often began at the beginning of the session. The main tables in the play area were used, with one adult preparing biscuits, scones or bread, and as many children joining in as wished. After the food preparation, while it was cooking, the children moved into different play areas. One adult was rostered on kitchen duties and laid out several plates of food, with sliced fruit, vegetable sticks, crackers, sandwiches, cheese, and perhaps the day's baking. All adults on session brought some food to contribute.

The children were called in for morning tea, to wash their hands, and gather round the tables located in the middle of the main room. Most children appeared to have their favourite positions around the tables. On some sessions, name-cards were put out for the children to indicate a place for them and on other occasions, they chose freely. On one session, a child helped put out the name-cards. These cards had the children's names on one side and their address and phone number on the reverse. On some sessions, they formed part of a brief exercise on names and letters within the names, or numbers and addresses.

One or two adults led morning tea, beginning with some songs and rhymes. These were sometimes chosen by the children, from large song charts, or by the adults. After the singing (4 - 5 songs), there was an adult-led talk-time, usually about a topic decided on by all the parents at a planning meeting. During the research, this was on the seasons. At the

end of this, a morning tea song was sung, a karakia said and the food brought from the kitchen. The children sometimes helped pass individual plates and cups to each other. Adults carried the food plates to the tables, often offering individual children a choice, before placing the plate on a table. A general rule was that children took two pieces of food initially. Water jugs were also available on the tables, with children pouring their own drinks or having them poured by adults.

When all the children were eating, the adult leading this part of the session called the roll. This was accompanied by some instruction as to how the children could reply, often using a Māori phrase of greeting, a greeting in another language, an animal noise, or the children were asked individually to share something about their day, or what food they enjoy. The adults were also individually acknowledged in a similar fashion.

As the children finished eating, the procedure was that they asked to leave the table, cleared their plate and cup and resumed play. The children differed in their participation of these steps. As the children left the tables, they moved back into play easily. The whole time the children were involved as a group could be extended, up to 30 – 45 minutes on occasions.

4.3.2 Morning tea at Kauri Playcentre

Children brought their own morning tea and drink bottles to playcentre in lunch boxes which were put (often by the children) on trays in the kitchen at the beginning of the session. Some adults also brought their own or shared from their child's box. One supervisor made a deliberate habit of bringing her snack in a lunch box, to be able to sit with the children on equal terms.

A music time (approximately 15 minutes) was planned before morning tea, which children could choose to join, was part of this study. Most children joined in with this, at the end of which a morning tea song was sung and the children moved off to wash their hands. The children who had not been involved in the music were called to wash their hands. Two or three long tables (which were only used for food) were set up, with chairs around ready for when the children returned. The children chose their seats, and adults handed out the lunch boxes. Drinks of milk or water were also offered to children without drink bottles. After the children were settled, one or two adults sat down at the tables with them, a few sat behind their child, and the remainder sat further away from the tables, as it had been agreed

at a centre meeting that adults would not have hot drinks at the tables. A recent purchase of mugs with lids may mean that in the near future the adults would feel confident to have their drinks at the tables with the children. One adult called the roll while everyone was gathered. This was always an acknowledgement of each child, a smile, and an expectation that those children who felt comfortable would make a comment or reply.

As the children finished eating, they left the table at will and quickly settled back into play. The older children generally packed up their own lunch boxes and returned these to their lockers, or backpacks. The adults encouraged the younger children to do so, and cleaned up any remainders. Several bowls, labelled 'rubbish', were placed on the tables for any food scraps or paper. The centre had a wormery and appropriate food scraps were added. No child was hurried through this time, and on several occasions one or two remained eating after most children had moved away, appearing quite comfortable doing so.

There were two highchairs for infants and toddlers, and chairs with arms to fit around the main tables for the older toddlers. These had been purchased a few years previously, with the purpose of enabling the younger children to sit comfortably and be able to join in with the others. At the end of the snack time, the dishes were left until play had resumed, or until an adult who was not involved with the children could do them. Involvement with the children was seen as more important.

4.4 The five colour filters (views of the culture of the centres)

Bush (1995) explains a cultural model as having four parts: the goals, structure, environment, and leadership. This was adapted to considering the organisational culture of these centres in terms of the environment (physical and historical), social systems (including relationships and leadership), philosophy (beliefs, goals and values), structure (organisation and activities), and a fifth was added of pedagogy, relevant to the educational setting. Each is interrelated, as shown in Figure 3.1, and is discussed in turn.

4.4.1 Environmental

The environmental filter enabled consideration of the physical and historical settings that were in place in the centre and which may be the source of many of the values and beliefs that combine to form and perpetuate the culture of each centre.

The morning teatime in both centres was the only time in each session that all adults and children were gathered in one area in a combined activity, and this was seen as important for cohesion.

Communication is necessary between team members

Both playcentres, following the tradition of many early childhood centres in New Zealand, had extensive outdoor play areas, with educators and children moving freely during the session throughout the building and grounds. This free moving of adults and children affected adult interaction in two ways. Because each centre was based on one main playroom, with surrounding grounds, there were constant opportunities for adults to observe and learn from others. Supervision teams were structured to ensure educators with less experience were alongside those with more. The knowledge that other adults could always be called upon, and were there to share their knowledge and skills was an underlying taken-for-granted. Confidence was gained through working as a team. Similarly, Nias et al. (1989) found that the environment, school buildings and layout affected a school's culture by determining the nature and extent of interaction between staff members. Secondly, because of the extended nature of the centre properties, educators were only together as a group at the morning teatime. In the current research, differences were noted in the adult interactions during morning tea, between wet and fine weather days. On fine days, the adults were spread throughout the property, following children's interests, and sometimes not interacting with other adults until the morning tea gathering. On wet days, due to everyone being inside, the morning tea time was needed less as a chance for adults to catch-up with each other, as on the fine days.

As Christine explained:

> *I think morning tea is also the chance for the adults too; to get time to talk to each other; because usually during the session, you're out the front, or out the back, and you don't get a chance to catch up with the other adults.*

The morning tea gathering was important to the participants, for communication between them, and to reinforce the sense of belonging to a group.

Some adult's work requires separation from children

Children's access to some of the areas of the playcentre was restricted. Rimu had a new kitchen installed in the centre two years before the research, including child-safety gates. While this is required for safety regulations, it also inhibited the children from being able to play a full part in preparing the food for morning tea. In contrast, Kauri's galley kitchen, being part of the main thoroughfare, enabled the children to access plates, cups, cutlery and the preparation action, as required. On one occasion, an adult, Andrea, was chatting to three children, including Robbie, 4 years and 10 months old (4.10), about a new variety of pears she had brought for a snack, and included the children in the preparation:

> *Andrea: "Robbie (4.10), can you grab me a plate to put these on?" He does so ... very matter-of-fact. He knows which cupboard the plates are in.*

On another occasion, one child was able to care for another child because of the access to the kitchen:

> *Krystal (4.3) gets yoghurt out of lunch box: "Oh, look. I need a spoon. My mum forgot to put a spoon in." (laughs, as though it is quite funny that mum would have forgotten.) She takes the lid off the yoghurt, and joins in conversation ..... Zac (3.6) comes back to table and gives a spoon to Krystal. Clare: "thank you Zac. He went and got a spoon for you (to Krystal). Did you ask him to get one?" Krystal: "no". Zac: "I just went and got her one".*

The incorporation of children in the kitchen, while a natural part of children's learning in the home, is becoming more infrequent in early childhood centres. While Rimu involved the children in baking for morning tea, this preparation was separated from the putting-out-of-food. When children came to enquire about morning tea, they were separated from the process by the gate. This idea of children being catered for by adults continued at Rimu by the adults serving food to the children at the tables, rather than a general sharing and offering to each other.

All adults on session are in a teaching role

The elongated shape of the building at Rimu meant the tables for morning tea needed to be placed in a long rectangle. During the singing, the adults usually spread out around the tables, so every child had an adult within sight, to be able to model the singing and actions.

> *During the song the children are watching adults closely, for clues for words and actions. They tend to watch the closest adult in their sight. Song: Five little men in*

their flying saucer. Finn (3.3) watches Pamela (adult) the whole time very carefully. He arranges the fingers of his left hand, (using his right hand) to get the numbers right. Some words attempted, although the body language shows its taking him lots of effort to keep up with the actions and the words. Eye contact between them most of the time.

The adults accepted this role, and the children were familiar with multiple role models, including their own parent. At Kauri, because of the shape of the building, the children usually sat in a circle on the carpet for singing, and it would have been possible for one adult to be in the teaching role. However, because of the team approach of the playcentre, several adults usually chose to join in. The physical structure of the building influenced the ways adults worked together as a team, at Rimu, how they placed themselves in the buildings, and therefore, the way learning experiences for children occurred.

Toddlers require more care than older children do and this is easiest by the parent

The place of toddlers at morning teatime was frequently different from that of older children. Historically, children were not enrolled in playcentres until they were at least 2½ years, although younger children accompanied parents when they were on duty. The playcentre educational programme was considered to be for three and four year olds, in line with kindergartens (Stover, 1998b). Government funding was not made available for the under two year olds until early 1990s, and as recently as six years ago neither Kauri nor Rimu included these children in the planning system. Toddlers (and babies) now join in sessions alongside their parent, are enrolled and are part of the regular planning cycle. However, remnants of them being different from the others remain.

At Kauri, the morning teatime for toddlers was primarily for their nutritional needs. Both centres used high chairs for some children, with those at Kauri being set back a long way from the tables, so they were *"safe from being bumped"*, and where the children were less distracted. Paula explains:

there's so much activity going on around the table ... so if he's a little bit away, it's just a bit quieter and then he can get down to the business of eating.

At Rimu, the high chairs were close to the main tables, with social interaction happening between toddlers and older children.

In both centres, mothers of toddlers expressed the belief that they, rather than the team, were responsible for their own child. At the focus group in Kauri, Paula talked about this in relation to her son, Daniel (0.11):

> *Paula: "The feeding of the toddlers is the parent's responsibility. He's in the high chair and I can feed him there."*
>
> *Researcher: "If you decided he was big enough to sit at the table?"*
>
> *Paula: "Then I'd put him at the table."*
>
> *Researcher: "Would he then graduate from your responsibility, to ..."*
>
> *Paula: "No, because he's not old enough to be just in a group, he's still ...me, personally, I'd be right there."*
>
> *Wendy: "..... other adults would help and take notice."*
>
> *Julie: "I guess it's when they [toddlers] move from the high chair to the table, we start to do the sharing care."*

At Rimu, Lorene had similar experiences:

> *Maybe I need to relinquish the role on Ben (1.4), and hand it over to someone else. But he comes to me. That's where I have a problem – I need to delegate. ... he will go to other people, it's just that I take that role because he's a toddler, and I don't expect other people to have to do everything for him.*

These underlying beliefs surfaced in other ways, also. Often the toddlers were put in high chairs for the parent's convenience, so that their parent could concentrate more on their interaction with the whole group of children. While the written documents of each playcentre espoused that playcentre is for children from birth to six years, the care-taking function during morning tea appeared to be pre-eminent for toddlers, rather than the situation being structured for and around the child's learning.

The following Table 4.1, summarises the above information linking the environmental or historical facet with how it has influenced the underlying beliefs of the centre, and how these are seen in practice.

Table 4.1 Summary of environmental view

Suggested tacit assumption	Practice	Effect of the physical and historical environment
Communication is necessary between team members. It is important for adults to feel part of a group. It is necessary for educators to touch-base with each other, at a time that will not interrupt the flow of play.	Morning teatime used as a time for adult conversation and for adults to regroup as a team. (Both centres)	Extensive indoor & outdoor play space with adults and children moving freely throughout, limiting casual communication. Gathering together at morning tea time.
Some adults' work requires separation from children. Children need protection, so barriers are used to restrict children's entrance as a safety precaution.	Kitchen facilities separate from the play space, from which children can be excluded. (Rimu)	Legislation for early childhood centres emphasises physical health and safety issues.
All adults on session are in a teaching role. The combined efforts of many people are a strength.	Adults placed strategically around the morning tea tables to act as models for the singing and actions. (Rimu)	The shape of the building and the layout of tables and chairs required multiple adults to interact with children during morning tea.
Toddlers require more care than older children, and this is most easily met by the parent.	Toddlers (and infants) while included in most activities, often remain the responsibility of the parent. (Both centres)	Historical educational emphasis on three- and four-year-old children.

These environmental facets affected the centre culture by determining the use of facilities for children's learning, and the extent of interaction between adults and the way they worked with children. The social relationships within the playcentres that arise from such factors are surface ways of viewing the culture.

4.4.2 Social

This filter considers the relationships between all the participants, children and adults, and how these are indicative of the organisational culture.

Playcentre is a place to make friends and build relationships

Child friendships were very noticeable at the morning tea tables, especially amongst the three- and four-year-olds. In both centres, the far end (furthest from the kitchen) of the tables was claimed by the older children. Seats were saved for friends and often others were called to sit alongside:

> *Krystal (4.3) comes to table, carrying own lunch bag (see-through carry bag). Robbie (4.10): "Come and sit by me" patting the table next to him. No chairs are out at that end. Krystal goes and gets a chair, and sits down.*

It was important to the older children who they sat beside, but not so for younger children, who usually, during most of the seated time, watched others and quietly ate their food. Siblings frequently sat next to each other, with the older child arranging it for the younger, or the parent steering the younger one beside the older. Friendships were facilitated by the adults, with children able to choose who to sit with, whether to chat or observe, how long to stay at the table, whether to play, and being able to help each other and accept the role of contributing to others' well being:

> *Lane (1.10) reaches for the jug of water. Dara (3.0) passes it to him, and pours for him. Jo: "Well done, what a helpful thing to do..."*

The time at morning tea was seen by some adults as an opportunity to build and maintain relationships with children and especially with those the adult may not usually interact with during the rest of the session. Terry shared:

> *During play, I tend to gravitate towards one group of children, and I might not get to know all the children as well. Because my preference is obviously in a particular direction even if I'm not aware of it. So at morning tea I get to know the other children and the other adults. It's the one place when you can actually have a good chat quietly.*

However, in both centres a majority of the adults saw the morning teatime as a chance for the children to build relationships with each other, and chat without adult intervention. At Kauri, some adults chose not to sit with the children for this reason. Paul expressed this:

> *Whenever the kids are sitting at the table, and there is an adult, there is a mind block. Whenever I came, if I sat down I'd sit in between them, and then they wouldn't really react with anybody else. They're looking at Daddy for the right thing to do, 'cause that happens at home. But when we're at playcentre I actually*

don't sit there beside them, but behind them, so that then they get the chance to physically talk to the other kids, or try to interact, as well as eating their lunch.

What was observed in the centres was that the chatting happened between older children while most of the younger ones were absorbed with eating and watching others. As well as chatting, children also used play and humour as a way to make connections with each other (Hännikänen, 2001). Holmes (1992) found that play frequently entered the snack routine. She identified five types of play, all of which were seen at both centres. For example: nonsense talk. At Rimu, a birthday cake for one child had been shared and then:

Nathan (3.4) begins singing: "Happy birthday to Will." Will (3.11) begins to laugh. Nathan: "now you're five" Will: "No. A hundred. Ha-ha". Nathan: "now it's your turn. (meaning Will should sing to him?) I'm 15."

Many of the children were building social skills, through interactions and intent participation, during the morning tea routine.

Independence is valuable and should be encouraged

While the existence of a group morning tea alludes to the belief of social community, children were generally encouraged in ways of independence, rather than interdependence (Gonzalez-Mena, 2003). In Kauri, the children ate from their own lunch boxes, and when completed were able to leave at will, clearing (preferably) their own box and drink bottle. At Rimu an ideal situation existed for adults to role model and encourage the passing and offering of food to each other. However, this was seen infrequently, with the adults often offering an initial piece of food to children, while standing behind them, with the plate then being placed on the table for the children to help themselves. On some occasions, children poured their own drinks and on others, adults did it for them. When they had finished eating, they were expected and encouraged to clear their own plate and cup.

Independence was encouraged in both centres during morning tea in differing ways. In Kauri, the use of individual lunchboxes was a way of nurturing self-sufficiency; of children being able to look after themselves and pack away after. However, the use of gladwrap in a few children's boxes obviated this idea, with children handing over the sandwich or roll to be unwrapped, and on one occasion a parent opening the box for the child, and then undoing the wrappers. While information about not using gladwrap for children's snacks

was included in the introductory booklet (given to all new families) and as a part of the introductory talks, this is an example of a system in place for new parents not being effective for all families. When we discussed what parents wanted for their children Wendy said:

> *I think I'd just like my children to sit there, and be reasonably responsible for their own food, drink, unwrapping, all that type of thing. I mean, even Christie (1.8) can unwrap her sandwiches, and whatever.*

At Rimu children's independence and self-care skills were encouraged by the use of jugs for them to pour their drinks, large plates of food from which to select for themselves, and them clearing their own plates and cups. As at Kauri, some of the customary procedures had not been picked up by all parents, even though the procedure and reason behind it was recorded in the introductory booklet, and the centre Management Plan. Lorene explained that she had never thought about why they had small jugs at the tables, and that she usually "*... poured it for the children because it was quicker.*"

Teamwork is an effective way of valuing everyone

Adults' roles and ways of working together were clearly shown during the morning teatime. Each of the playcentres operates with a team of different parents on duty every session. The research, therefore, saw as many as 30 educators working in teams of four-to-six adults. Every term these teams may be altered, to allow for those leaving, new people entering, altered attendance patterns of children, or to encourage different adults to work together for new learning. Nevertheless in both centres, for most days, the cohesiveness of the teams was obvious. Teresa explains how adults know what role to play at Kauri:

> *Like today, I saw people sitting down so said 'oh, would you like a cup of tea', and I thought I'd make a few, to offer round. So you just sort of see who's picked up what ... who's at the table with the children, and involved with talking with them, so they won't be getting up to get the cups of tea. Well ... we're all on the same team so you sort of watch and see ...*

An adult at Rimu explained their roster system for the various aspects of morning tea:

> *We roster someone else on [to tidy the kitchen] that isn't the person that was here in the morning. And if you're rostered on, you don't absolutely have to do it ... if you're busy doing an activity with the kids or something else, someone else will do*

it. But we try to swap it around, and make it flexible; make it so that ... we share it round.

Much of the cohesiveness seemed to depend on the adults being aware of each other and working with their knowledge of the others on the team. The conversations and relationships between them were the basis for each team, and each centre.

There were frequent occasions of adults working in ways that showed they were familiar with each other and with others' ways of working:

After the food is served, Linda leads some letter recognition using the blackboard on the wall. Murray (2.7) gets off his chair twice and moves towards Linda. She leads him back to the table. Murray begins crying. Linda picks him up and moves away from table. Gillian takes over at blackboard. Children hardly seem to notice it's someone else.

There were many times when an adult openly supported another around the tables:

Cara is calling the roll. Some children begin to chat. Cara: "Can we be quieter? My throat hurts if I talk loudly." Lorene (standing near the kitchen): "hey, let's be quiet. It's a bit rude not to listen to Cara."

Adults felt quite comfortable with relying on others, and a team approach. When one adult spoke up to support another adult, this was accepted as a technique for support, not a sign of his or her inability. Reliance on others in many ways was a taken-for-granted, as Susan said to Sarah:

Neat morning tea (meaning the food). I'm always amazed how we always have a variety. It never works out that we have all fruit... Great synergy.

Belonging is necessary before contribution can take place

Adults were gently eased into fulfilling roles in the playcentre. Catherine speaks of new parents joining:

For the new mums, it's something we do – we put them in the kitchen, because it's a familiar area ... you know, putting it out on the plates. You feel you're contributing. You may be a bit nervous about being out [at the tables] and discussing with the kids, so it's like a safe area for new people to start in.

Children, also, were allowed to become familiar with the centre, before being expected to follow group norms. Clare speaks of when she first joined Kauri:

I know for myself, I didn't push my children to do that [clear lunch boxes] for a long time. I waited until they did it, and it was months ... And I thought that was fine, because they were getting used to this whole new place and everything else about this new centre. Whether to put their lunch box away or not to me wasn't important and when they became more comfortable with the routine, they started, because they'd absorbed the rest of the stuff about the centre.

Goldman (1998), through research in schools, had similar findings that where the educational values and goals for children were a part of the school culture, and fostered with the teachers, then they became a reality for the children. It was important in both centres that children and adults felt comfortable in the centre before being asked to take on wider roles with others.

Adults' being encouraged gradually into taking responsibility has happened since the beginnings of playcentre (Goldschmidt, 1998). This emergent leadership meant adults were supported to take on roles when appropriate for them and the group. Wendy shared how she became confident in leading the music during the session:

I'd done a little bit of my training, and I remember Debs ... I don't know how, or what her words were, but I was to do music. And I did that first music session and I survived, and then the next week I did music, and then I was in ... yep, that just took me ... and never looked back. I also felt more a part of it [the centre] then.

Those who had been in the centre for a while gradually involved others in the running of the session. Clare explained:

Sometimes I find I'm on a session where there are newer people, so I invite them to do the roll, or other things ..... But that's just the role that I'm in because of my training level. I get newer people involved ...and most people are really pleased to.

Because the process was part of their life in the centre, often the adults had moved into a leadership role without realising it:

Clare: "I also remember stepping from that time of being just the mum and I'm the one that's following, to 'my goodness, why are people looking at me? Do you think I know something?' That's quite odd at the start."

Julie: "It's a bit of a strange sensation when you realise people are actually asking you things and you're not doing the asking yourself. But then you realise you do know more than others, or how to find out the answers."

At times, it appeared in both centres that those with vibrant personalities were more obvious on the sessions and in a leader's role, but quiet leadership was also obvious, as Teresa shared:

> *When I arrived Christine took me under her wing. She gently guided me through what was going to happen next, before it did happen, so the expectation of what was coming up like: 'now we go and do this, and you'll see the children do this'.*

This "community reproduction" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 56) is more than newcomers learning about and through their roles as participants. The changing participation requires consideration of roles, as newcomers become old timers, apprentices become masters, and the rich, diverse relationships that support this.

The above points about the relationships within the centres are summarised in the following table:

Table 4.2 Summary of social view

Suggested tacit assumption	**Practice**
Playcentre is a place to make friends and build relationships. Children can be trusted to nurture their own friendships.	Children chose where to sit for morning tea, chat without adult intervention (at times), and help each other. (Both centres)
Independence is valuable and should be encouraged.	Children were allowed to help themselves to food, and leave the table when finished. (Both centres)
Teamwork is effective and allows everyone to feel a valued member.	All adults on session take turns at tasks and leadership roles, with support from others. There are different educators on each day of the week. (Both centres)
Belonging is necessary before contribution can be made. Families, adults and children, need to feel comfortable and that they belong, before they can take on wider roles with others. Emergent leadership.	Adults and children are introduced to routines, at their own pace, with them accepting responsibility when it's appropriate for them. (Both centres)

The systems in place, in each centre, which allow such a complex way of working to occur successfully have built up over the years of playcentre, been documented in histories (Stover, 1998b), in centre Management Plans, and woven through the Playcentre Training (Playcentre Education, 2000). The reasons for much of it are also expressed in the individual written philosophies of the centres.

4.4.3 Philosophical

The culture of a centre may be expressed through its goals and its mission statements, which usually serve to reinforce the values and belief of the organisation. Where these are spoken of and referred to frequently, it helps provide a common vision and to raise the consciousness of the underlying beliefs. Where official goals are set by an umbrella organisation, or stem from historical figures, as in playcentre, then in each individual playcentre these will be interpreted in line with their own values.

Playcentre philosophy is wider than the educational focus of an early childhood centre. It encompasses several strands that could be seen in the two research centres: dual learning systems, acceptance of diversity, relationships as the basis for existence, respect for bicultural practices and family involvement. The educational ideas will be discussed under pedagogy further in this chapter.

Learning for adults and children

The mission statements of both centres had an emphasis on adults and children learning through and with each other:

> *Rimu Playcentre Mission Statement: A safe, caring and fun environment where families/whanau learn alongside each other.*
>
> *Kauri Playcentre Mission Statement: At Kauri Playcentre children and family/whanau learn together through child-initiated play in a friendly and safe environment.*

Playcentre has always had a dual emphasis of education (Hill, Reid & Stover, 1998) and it continues to nurture the growth of the two distinct, yet linked involved groups, parents and children. This has affected the evolution of playcentre's philosophy and unique organisational structure. At Kauri, a small group of adults were working together on a playcentre training course during one session. At morning tea, they joined with the rest of the group, and then as the children and adults on session returned to play, they resumed their

discussion group to one side of the play area. That adults were learning was openly talked about with children. Wilma was filling in for another educator one day, and asked for children's assistance when she called the roll:

> *I'm going to call the roll now, and could you help me find the people? Because I'm not usually here on Wednesdays and there might be people I don't know. I need to learn from you.*

Julie spoke about how she had learned from other adults:

> *There are always others around that act as positive role models. They aren't all the same ... so we end up learning different things from different people. But everyone is working towards the same results, for the benefit of our children.*

At Rimu, during the focus group gathering, one member who had not been on session very often, offered to go home and "*send back his partner*" who had attended more sessions. However his offer was rapidly declined by the others in the group, because his "*input was valuable, and there would be things to be learned from the evening*". His presence and current knowledge of the centre were acknowledged and valued, and it was expected that the evening would be one of learning. In this centre, learning opportunities were looked for, and participation expected as a part of this.

Diversity can be managed and be a strength

The diversity that characterises playcentre is generally seen to be a strength. That each new family that joins adds a different viewpoint to the centre was seen as an advantage. Kim expresses why she selected playcentre:

> *I chose to come here over kindy, because I didn't want just three people watching my children all the time. I wanted different cultures, and different people, with different opinions and different rules to be educating my children.*

Kotter and Heskett (1992) found in their research on the relationship between culture and performance that high-performing companies had adaptive cultures, where people took on a set of core values that included those pertaining to continuous change. Similarly, each playcentre had systems in place to allow for the continuous admittance of new people into the playcentre group. The acceptance of all adults within the playcentre as educators of the children acknowledged the potential in all for growth as learning partners.

Such diversity can also mean conflict. Because differences of opinion were approached constructively, practices and beliefs were examined and through this process, each centre

ensured its continuing relevance for its community. The group at Rimu talked about the issue of having shared food at morning tea being revisited every few years. Terry came to Rimu from another playcentre and wanted to change the routine:

> *Terry: "I actually brought up the lunch box issue, and tried to get everyone to change. We've done a lot of that... talking about it .....But I do like it better, now."*
> *Jo: "Every couple of years you can see in the minutes [centre meetings] that it comes up. But it's good that it's brought up and discussed."*

Documentation indicated that for some years, the playcentres in New Zealand had been exploring their acknowledgement of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In both centres, this included sensitivity to bicultural practices, and the use of te reo Māori. The use of a karakia was a newly introduced part of the routine at Rimu.

> *Jo (adult): "Are you ready to do your karakia? You need to be quiet." She waits a few seconds, then: "Put the food down, we need to say the karakia." Jo reads the karakia:*
>
> *Thank you earth who grew the food*
> *The sun who makes it ripe and good*
> *The earth, the sun by you we live*
> *To you our loving thanks we give.*

Through cooperation, common goals can be worked towards

With the diverse backgrounds of families joining playcentre and the continual flow of new members, the co-operative philosophy of playcentre has been emphasised. From the beginning of the introductory process, the idea of parents working together is stressed, with everyone's contribution valued. As parents join the centres, they begin accepting responsibility for session supervision, and for management of the centre. It becomes a 'we' who are responsible, not a 'they'. During the research, two parents called the roll for the first time at Kauri, and one parent led the discussion at the morning tea table for the first time at Rimu. On all occasions, another adult was nearby in a support role.

As cooperatives, the playcentres are built on relationships, for support, friendship, and to foster learning. Supportive relationships between adults on session were a noticeable feature in both centres. Part of the Playcentre philosophy is the nurturing of all adults into the group, and the empowering of them to contribute to the centre in increasing ways. At the focus group meeting at Rimu, the group talked about how good it would be if more

adults sat down around the tables. The next day on session, Thelma, who usually stayed in the kitchen area involved in food preparation and cleaning up after, was encouraged to join in:

> *Terry: "Thelma, would you like and come sit down, there's plenty of space beside me." Thelma does come (but wouldn't have otherwise?)*

Relationship building is one of the systems that were in place in both centres, to lessen the effects of the continual flow of new parents. The Rimu philosophy statement outlined seven distinctive features of their ideas, with four of these relating to the adults in the centre. Many of the descriptors used allude to relationships, for example:

> *cooperative, responsibilities shared, support for each other, care for each other, working together. (Rimu philosophy statement)*

Kauri's philosophy statement likewise puts into words that positive relationships in the centre were essential for the wellbeing of all.

The family involvement in early childhood education was fundamental in these two playcentres. That the families of each enrolled child were the playcentre body precluded the need for "involvement" of parents as required, desired and encouraged by the Ministry of Education in various documents: *Desirable Objectives and Practices* (DOPs) (Ministry of Education, 1996a); *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki* (Ministry of Education, 2002) and *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). Because families were such an intrinsic part of playcentre, this was not mentioned by any parents at either focus group. However all the sessions at Kauri were parent led, and most of those at Rimu. Grandparents and other family members were welcome to stay all session, or drop by. André's birthday was celebrated at Rimu with a cake, and his grandparents were present and introduced to the group. The place of parents in the centre impacted on the structures of each centre.

Table 4.3 summarises the practices stemming from the philosophical ideas of the centre members.

Table 4.3 Summary of philosophical view

Suggested tacit assumption	Practice
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Many parents involved in the adult education programme. Trying new roles in the centre because of this. (Both centres)
Diversity (of people and experience) can be managed and be a strength. A range of beliefs and practices have a place in the centre.	All parents are valued, and all ideas are discussed, evaluated and often tried. Use of bicultural practices on session. (Both centres)
Through co-operation, a group of adults can function together towards a common goal. Family involvement in early childhood education is fundamental.	Parents take responsibility for supervision of sessions and management (and administration) of the centre. All educators are parents of enrolled children. No division between parent and professional teacher. (Both centres)

4.4.4 Structural (and activities)

In most ways, the structure of the centre can be regarded as the physical manifestation of the organisational culture. It encompasses what happens on a day-to-day basis and the reasons for this. The organisational structures were similar in both centres, reflecting common playcentre ways. If compared with other early childhood centres they would show marked differences (McLeod, 2002).

The actual activity of morning tea has been described earlier in this chapter and points arising from this are now discussed.

Joining together as a whole group is important

The reasons for having a group morning tea were many and justified in that it reflected how most of the families sat down for meals together at home. In addition, members in both centres explained how it allowed children to socialise with those children with whom they may not usually interact; to hear and learn to recognise everyone's names (child and adult)

through the roll call; and to learn by being part of a whole group. Teresa spoke of how her children enjoyed the routine:

> *It's also nice for Anna (2.3) and Benjamin (3.6) listening to the older children talking, too, they're quite fascinated and a bit of hero worship goes on.*

However, primarily it was to gather all the children and adults for one time during the session as a group. Julie explained:

> *If you had a rolling morning tea it would meet the individual needs of the child to eat when they wanted to, but then it's not going to give the whole group-together social thing ...*

The event was planned not just for children, but for the whole group, ensuring the adults' emotional and social wellbeing was catered for, as part of the children's wellbeing.

Children are at playcentre to learn through play

In having a whole group activity during a session, it could be considered to compromise the philosophy of children directing their own learning through play. However, at Kauri the time that most children were involved at the tables was on average 15 minutes. This compromise had been made by adults because of valuing, equally, the gathering together at snack time. The morning tea at Kauri was preceded by a music time, to which children were not expected to come if they were involved in other play. The adults, in previous years, used to group all the children at music, however as Clare said:

> *What I hated was calling children to music time. And I still feel uncomfortable doing that, because it changes from the child-initiated thing, to an adult initiated thing, and when's the right time to do it? ... because that group looks really busy there, and that group over there ... ... and when do you actually break that? Now I don't expect all the children to join in.*

The emphasis on children learning through self-selected activities was obvious.

In both centres, towards the end of the routine, children stayed finishing their snack, sometimes by themselves, and often without an adult sitting with them. At other times, an adult sat back at the table to be with the child/ren as they finished.

While adults did need to move to other play areas as the children left the tables, it also shows the importance placed on the learning the children were doing through the play, rather than at the table.

Many types of learning are possible while children are in a large group

At Rimu, the morning tea routine involved some group singing, often an adult-led discussion, the roll call, and the sharing of food, with the times for most children involved being 25-30 minutes. A variety of learning activities occurred while the children were grouped. On average it was 45-50 minutes between when the children were first called to the tables and when the last child left, although the first children at the tables were usually not the ones who remained. When this information was shared at the focus group meeting, the adults were amazed and a little horrified at how long was spent focussed on a large group gathering, and that their practice did not reflect their beliefs. Their ideas that the children's time at the centre should be mainly spent in play, and not group sit-down, is also the viewpoint of Morris (1999) who calls for extended periods of unbroken time, for children's play to develop. Through the reflection that occurred during the focus group some educators were discussing changing the way they carried out the group discussion, having more adults involved around the tables and being aware of the time taken.

In line with its nature as a group event, the morning tea routine split the session into two, and was a time interval for the children.

> *Judah (4.2) comes in and tells Cara about making a rocket ship. He explains what he needs ..... Cara: "What say we make that after morning tea, because it will be morning tea time soon." Judah: "OK"*

Learning that their time at playcentre was divided into two was part of the children's learning about their playcentre culture. Earthquake and fire drill practices were often timed to occur just after morning tea, so as not to disturb play further.

The two playcentres viewed the routine differently, concerning the types of learning they saw as possible and desirable. At Rimu, the words 'morning tea' signified the time for learning through music, chants, discussion, roll call, and sharing food, often over 30 minutes. At Kauri, 'morning tea' was about eating, with a brief time for the register, usually taking 15 minutes. Similarly, Lubeck et al. (2001) found that within Head Start, educators in different programmes, frequently had different meanings for words.

The centres varied in the arrangement for morning tea: lunch boxes were in use at Kauri mainly because it was believed that the time taken in preparing food by an adult was better

spent in being involved with the children. It was also presumed that the families would provide adequate nourishment of a type familiar to the children. However, as Wendy said:

> *At the starter group [as part of the roll calling] I've been asking the children, to show me a fruit or vegetable in their lunchbox, and I've noticed the quality of lunchboxes have improved because the adults must know I'm going to ask them (laughter)..... that's my way of getting good food for the children in there .....*

While there is conflict here in the philosophical ideas of faith in the family, it also shows that the centre expected parents to learn during their parenting and offered support and facilitated this.

Individuality is important

Calling the roll was also a noticeable feature. This happened in both centres once the children were eating. On some occasions, this was a brief part of the routine with a short response from children (and adults): a wave, a vocal reply in English or Māori, or another language.

> *Rachel (adult) sits down: "now you need your listening ears on. We'll say tena koe today. So I'll say tena koe, and you can reply tena koe back. Tena koe Colin (4.8)." The children are called in the order of their listing in the register. All children answer, using tena koe. No other questions are asked of them, or comments made. During this process the chatting stops..... Adults are greeted as part of the roll call.*

On other occasions, the roll call took longer as the children were asked individually about a topic of interest.

> *Rose sits down with the register: "When I call your name, you could tell me about what might blow in the wind. It's very blowy today." All the children are greeted by Rose individually, and asked about what they could think of that might blow about in the wind. She continues down the roll, picking up and commenting on what the children have mentioned. Much more adult talk than child. Child in position of respondent only.*

Both centres also frequently called the adults' names as part of the roll-call. Of interest was discussion at both focus groups about the use of parent's first names, in preference to being known as someone's mother or father. It was important to the participants that they were known as themselves and not in relationship to others.

Table 4.4 summarises the above points on the structure of the centre and the activities that make up the day-to-day happenings.

Table 4.4 Summary of structural view

Suggested tacit assumption	Practice
Coming together, physically as a group, is a part of emotional and social wellbeing for children and adults.	Group morning tea. (Both centres)
Children are at playcentre to learn through play.	Children grouped for only 15 minutes for morning tea, and use lunch boxes for ease. (Kauri)
Many types of learning are possible while the children are grouped together. The social and cultural meaning behind sharing food is important.	Morning tea is the time for group discussion, singing, direct teaching and sharing of food. (Rimu)
Individuality is important. It is good to acknowledge, publicly, everyone's presence.	Calling the roll. (Both centres)

4.4.5 Pedagogical

Consideration of the practices and ideas about learning and teaching in the centres was more difficult, as most of the educators saw the morning tea routine as happening between the main learning-through-play blocks. As Jo expressed:

> *They come and they have the .....I can only think of the Steiner thing like the out-breathing, and then you come together and there's the concentrated together social stuff, ... So we have like two big free plays.*

The ideas of the educators on the self-choice programme and play were not explored as part of this research as ideas of teaching and learning were considered only in relation to the routine of morning tea.

Children learn through being actively involved, with adult encouragement

In both centres, there was a strong flavour of children learning by being part of an activity. The physical gathering together as a large group for a snack was valued, both for children to

be with peers, and to socialise as is done in the wider community at meal times. During the snack, the children were expected to cater for their own needs, chatting with those they chose to sit with, eating from either their own lunch box or communal plates, and cleaning up after themselves.

At both centres, it was observed that educators expected children to learn in two ways, in regards to clearing their plates or lunch boxes. Firstly, by watching other children and adults, and secondly by verbal encouragement. Their useful role in the playcentre community was stressed.

> *Gillian (adult): "Lane (1.10), you need to come back and take your plate and cup over. Bring your cup, and tip out the water. Good. Now bring your plate." She guides him through this, giving positive comments.*

This scaffolding by the adults of the children's participation was clear during the morning tea routine.

Children are respected

Rimu ensured the food offered to children was a well-presented variety, as Pamela explained, the presentation not only provided them with a pleasant looking variety, but also showed the children that the adults valued them:

> *It gives me pleasure to see the food presented nicely. The plates are laid out attractively. There's a good selection of healthy food .....there's always a good deal more fruit [than biscuits], different colours, different textures; there's always things they are familiar with, because otherwise it would be a bit overwhelming. But it gives me pleasure, and when I prepare it, I like to be able to give that for the children. .....but I think it's teaching them things too, about presentation, and about their value – we value you enough to present you with a lovely morning tea.*

The importance of children having responsive and reciprocal relationships with adults is emphasised in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b). The respect adults showed for children at Rimu was clearly a basis for such relationships.

Children learn through intent participation

The morning teatime was also a useful environment for children to learn about and try different food. Seeing other children selecting a wide range of food led Murray to change his eating habits. His father, Ron, observed:

> *I have to say that Murray, before he started coming to Playcentre, never used to eat sliced fruit at all. He would have a banana, but he would never eat apples or sliced fruit, and it's only through seeing other kids, and having sliced fruit..... I actually think this is a really good way of doing it. They get to eat stuff that, well at least in my case, they don't at home.*

In a similar vein, Birch (1980) found that children were influenced by what their peers ate, and would change their selection and consumption of vegetables in accordance with what was offered to and eaten by others. Terry initially preferred lunch boxes because:

> *I could control what my child ate – I knew what she'd eaten. I knew what came back in the lunch box was what hadn't been eaten and it could form part of my overall thing. However I'm a convert to this thing now. They eat things they might not otherwise touch if I wouldn't use it. Because they will experiment, and there is this whole social interaction and atmosphere, and I'm sure they eat twice as much because it's fun.*

Learning through listening to others talking was a belief of Rimu Playcentre. The adult-led discussion was a feature as part of the morning tea routine. While only a few children took part, it was expected that the others were listening and watching the participation. Many early childhood centres have a circle time or mat time, at some time during a child's day. In Wiltz and Klein's (2001) research, children talked about their dislike of this routine, viewing play as preferable. In their research, as in the current research, the discussion was aimed more for children's listening than talking, with listening being perceived by the children as boring. Rimu began its morning tea with a few songs, and then usually one adult led a discussion on a topic that had been agreed to at a planning meeting as the focus for the week. The main examples of these during the research were on the weather, in particular the cold weather, and the seasons. On some sessions this took about three minutes of brief talking by the adult, with some open questions that one or two children answered, and on other sessions between eight and ten minutes. For example:

> *Jo: "who's got chilly hands this morning?" She rubs her hands together. One child also rubs hands. "Whose ringaringa are makariri? Whose hands are warm?" Some*

children look like they may have answered, but none spoke up. Jo continues to talk briefly on hot and cold weather. Then she asks: "What season are we in now? We have new flowers, and new lambs. Scott, do you know what season we're in? I'll give you a clue. Spr... Spr... It's spring. Haven't you heard of that?" A few children's faces show some signs of recognition of the word.

While there was some opportunity for children to join in, generally the ideas came from the adult and perhaps one or two older children. During this time it was expected that the children stayed quiet, unless answering. It was here that some of the educators found it difficult to engage all the children's attention.

Literacy practices can be included in the morning tea routine

Much awareness was evident of encouraging children's literacy at Rimu, and this was included into the morning tea routine in two ways. Firstly, there was a blackboard on the wall near to the tables, on which (on two sessions) an adult wrote and talked about what they had written to direct children's attention to a child's name, or the letters contained in it. On the following occasion, it took the place of the roll call, and included a brief answer to something the child could see on the table.

Linda (adult) is standing by the blackboard. She writes 'Oliver'. "I wonder whose name this is? It begins with O." Oliver (4.0) puts his hand up. "Well done. Oliver, can you tell me something that's on the table?" Linda goes through all the children. A comparison is made between Amy and Anita's names. The children at the table nearest to the board are watching intently. The rest, less so, especially those who need to twist round to see. There is no side-chat from children. Some have guesses at each name.

The second way literacy was encouraged was in the use of 'name cards'. These were pieces of card, 10 x 30 cm, folded in half so they stood up. On one side a child's name was printed, and on the reverse was their phone number and address. These were used in differing ways. On two days they were placed around the table for the children to find, and therefore be their seat for the day, but with no discussion following. On another occasion, after involvement with an adult in reading the names, one of the older girls helped to place the cards around the table:

Ann (adult) and Alice (4.8) sort through the name cards. There is some discussion between them, and Alice looks round to see if certain children are here. Once identified, Alice places the cards round the tables. Alice takes hers, Amy's and

Kezia's and puts them next to each other. The three girls usually sit together. Kezia (4.1) and Amy (4.4) come inside and over to the table. Kezia looks at all the name cards and finds her own.

Twice questions were asked of the children, on the letters that made up their names, or about the numbers in their phone numbers, which were on the reverse of the cards. On each of these occasions the rest of the adults on session were spread around the tables, pointing out letters to children where necessary, or affirming their knowledge of what was on the cards.

Planning for morning tea is important

The specific planning (in addition to the existence of the routine) for morning tea at Rimu was more for content matter (based on individual children), a theme, or literacy practices. This was discussed at the focus group:

Catherine: "Sometimes we plan. You know, we'd say so and so can help get the names out, and we'll try and get one of the kids to place them round the table, or who can read the first letter."

Jo: "or hands out conducting, if we're doing leadership skills, or have a train day, and have some train songs, or like we did science experiments ..... or names – for new kids, lots of naming songs."

What was not referred to as learning, but those at Rimu talked about, was the routine itself, with children learning skills for independence. The idea of belonging and being part of the group, although talked about as being of value in the centre, was not mentioned as part of the formal planning for morning tea. In Kauri, the emphasis on the planning was the time for children to sit and chat, to rest, and as an organisational point for adults:

Kim: "We planned for two children, Krystal and Robbie. Krystal needed some space on her own without Robbie telling her what to do. And so it was to use language and say 'I feel like sitting by someone else today'. But it's for them to get together as their little group of children and discuss their day to day life, like at dinner, adults would sit around the dinner table and discuss their lives."

Wendy: "It's a bit of an information sharing time."

Julie: "It also can be a sort of a rest time ... a quiet time... to regather for the next onslaught sort of thing. And a chance to talk about things like what we're going to do after morning tea, or we talk about that we're going to do an earthquake drill and just remind people what we do for an earthquake drill or a fire drill or things like that. So it can be a busy time."

At Kauri, the routine as a whole had been considered when planning for one child whose current interest was fantasy play. It had been decided to operate morning tea as a café, to extend this child's participation.

The above points of the pedagogical view are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Summary of pedagogical view

Suggested tacit assumption	Practice
Children learn through being actively involved, with adult encouragement (through scaffolding)	Children involved in helping themselves to food, and clearing up afterwards. Adults reminding children and giving verbal guidance to them to clear away plates or lunch boxes. (Both centres)
Children are respected	A variety of food attractively presented for children. (Rimu)
Children learn through intent participation; watching and listening	Having mixed age groups where more experienced peers act as role models for others. (Both centres) Adult led discussion as part of the morning tea routine. (Rimu)
Literacy and numeracy practices can be a part of the morning tea routine.	Individual name cards used on the tables. Letter and number recognition activities. (Rimu)
It is important to plan for morning tea, cognitive development: content, themes and literacy, social and emotional development, physical nourishment.	Planning for morning tea on subject matter to be discussed or included in songs and activities. (Rimu) Planning for morning tea has an emphasis on children's eating and chatting. (Kauri)

4.5 Summary

Morning tea in each centre had a different emphasis. In Rimu, it was quite a formal occasion that needed planning for, while at Kauri it was considered a brief, informal time with an emphasis as a social relaxed time for children and adults.

To understand a particular early childhood centre's culture it is necessary to go beyond the obvious artefacts, such as routines and rituals, the language used and roles performed and consider the assumptions for these. The use of a model, as in the adaptation of Bush's cultural model (1995), aids in the sense making of the culture. Using the five filters, evidence has been provided of many facets of the organisational culture of the two centres studied, and described as practices, linked to a suggested underlying belief. An analysis such as this allowed activities, which initially appeared random and unconnected, to be seen as manifestations of an underlying value system.

The values that the centre is based upon, like the culture, are learned and inculcated from the time new members join. This learning happens through experience, education and intent participation, and is subject to continual reappraisal.

The physical layout of each centre affected communication between participants during the session and therefore the role of morning tea being important as a group gathering. The design of each centre affected the ways adults joined in during the morning tea routine, and the ways in which the children were able to take a full part. The historical emphasis of early childhood centres for education for three-to-four year olds was still evident in these mixed-age settings, where toddlers and infants were regarded principally as requiring care and being the responsibility of the parent. The social and philosophical beliefs of each centre were seen in the ways that children were encouraged to make friends and to act independently, based on a sense of belonging. Having the adults work in teams was effective in valuing the diversity of families who belonged, with the structure providing a way to involve all parents as educators, and to foster cooperation towards a common goal. Pedagogical beliefs centred on children learning through active involvement and intent participation.

The focal point that emerged from the research for both centres was that they had the characteristics of being communities of learners. While this, in part, stemmed from their common histories as playcentres, it was an intimate part of their organisational culture, and had huge influences on each centre as a learning environment for children. This concept will be discussed in Chapter 6. The following chapter explores the children's learning, by analysis through socio-cultural lenses.

Chapter 5
Results: Children's learning experiences viewed through three planes

5.1 Introduction

Children's learning occurs within a variety of situations and through their participation in a range of experiences. This study looked at the participation in the routine of morning tea at two playcentres. The previous chapter presented and explained data concerning the organisational culture of the centres, based around the question 'what happens during the routine of morning tea that shows each playcentre's distinctiveness?' This chapter examines data collected at the centres mainly through observation, but also through informal interviews with adults and children, and documents produced in the centre.

The research question associated with this part of the research was 'what learning experiences happen for children during the routine of morning tea that are associated with the organisational culture of the centre?'

The data are explored through Rogoff's (1993, 2003) three planes of analysis: personal, interpersonal and community planes. In using these, attention is drawn to one plane, whilst continuing to take into account the background information from the other planes. Each part of the situation: individuals, other people, and the social context, have mutually defining roles. None exists without the other. However, with the use of such planes it is possible to consider the individual playcentre context (community plane), the interactions between children and others (interpersonal plane), and how the child's participation changes (personal plane). This view is one of considering the child's actions and development as part of the social context at playcentre; not merely that the context has some influence on it, but that the activity is embedded in it.

5.2 Community plane

The community plane provides a way of examining how children become familiar with the routine of morning tea and develop full participation in it. Rogoff (1993) uses the term 'apprenticeship' to describe the child's growing to be competent in joining in the cultural activity. This involves the child realising the cultural mores that are followed during the routine at playcentre, and being able to take a full part. This cultural routine is the context for the development of the child as s/he partakes in the social interaction and appropriates the intellectual tools and skills of this culture.

5.2.1 Taking an individual part

Several children were observed taking individual roles during the morning tea routine. At Rimu, Judah (4.2) was confident to sing to the other children and adults by himself. Throughout this experience, Judah was aware that he knew something that others did not, and that it would be good to share the song with others. He exhibited an understanding that taking an individual role was acceptable. Taking individual roles came through clearly as a cultural more of this centre. During this, he was supported in his role, with two other adults singing with him, and the children listening to him.

> *Four children are involved in preparing food for morning tea: bread dough is being kneaded and then moulded into buns. Some buns have the imprint of a sun on the top (applied with cookie cutter). Pamela (adult) begins singing '5 sun-buns in the baker's shop' (variation on 5 currant buns). Pamela follows this with 'Mr Golden Sun'. Only one child, Judah (4.2) is familiar with this, and he sings some of it.*
>
> *Later in the session all the children and two adults are sitting round three tables participating in some songs before morning tea. After two well-known songs, Cara (the adult leading this part of the session) says, "Now we're going to sing Mr Sun, Mr Golden Sun." Immediately Judah begins singing the first line. His voice is very clear and the words distinct. Cara interrupts after one line "That's great, Judah. Would you like to sing it for us?" Judah stands and starts the song again. Cara and Pamela sing it with him. It is a new song for the other adults and children, who all quietly watch Judah throughout. As Judah finishes and sits down Cara thanks him and says "We'll try that again on another day and everyone can join in."*

This centre often stressed the importance of people (both adults and children) taking on individual roles, with the support of others. At times when one adult was speaking to the group and it became noisy, another adult would step forward and ask the children to be quiet: *"I'm finding it really hard to hear, with lots of people talking at one time. Can we just have one?"* Or *"I can't hear ___'s voice. It's important to listen".*

The children were expected to ask to leave the table (individually) and clear their plate and cup. On every session when the roll was called, it was expected that the children (and adults) reply to the adult calling the roll, and that the rest listen. At the focus group in both centres, members spoke about their growth in confidence through taking on new roles in playcentre, and being supported in this. Self-confidence for children and adults was talked about as being an important goal in the centres.

Other occasions in this centre showed children portraying courage and confidence in taking individual roles. This excerpt is of Evan (3.6) taking the role of a herald. When queried, he was quite definite he had been asked to do this. In both this example and the previous one, Judah and Evan showed confidence in taking on an individual role, in a large group situation. Their participation shows their appropriation of the cultural mores of the centre.

> *Most children are washing their hands or sitting down around the tables. Evan is standing on a chair, and 'blowing a trumpet' (plastic cone) (making a toot toot to to toot toot fanfare).*
>
> *Lorene (adult) comes up to Evan: "Time for morning tea, sit down."*
>
> *Evan: "No, because my mum told me to stand here."*
>
> *Lorene: "Your mum told you to stand up there?"*
>
> *Evan: "Yes, I'm the..... what did you say I was, Mum? I'm blowing the trumpet."*
>
> *Gillian comes over and explains that he was the herald, blowing the fanfare before the important announcement was made.*

The interaction between Lorene and Evan was very positive and respectful on both sides. Evan seemed quite comfortable saying no to Lorene and giving a reason, and Lorene accepted it. When viewed on the community plane Evan is showing understanding of one of the underlying beliefs of the centre: individualism. If the same episode is viewed through the plane of interpersonal relations then the communication and coordination between Evan and Lorene shows a shared endeavour. Adjustments by both were involved to allow their common understanding to fit with new perspectives in the shared concept. The adjustment by each, to accomplish something together, was development.

5.2.2 Knowledge of adult and child roles

A major part of the morning tea routine at Rimu Playcentre was the gathering of the children, with one or two adults, to sing some songs and have a group discussion about a topical subject, before the sharing of food. There was often some time lag between the first mention to the children to come to the tables, and the start of the singing. Frequently children were asked to help put the chairs around the tables. Sometimes some of the children would put some chairs out, and then choose their places. However it was also obvious that to do so, then meant waiting for some time for something to happen. On this occasion, Colin and Tessa waited nine minutes for the group talk to begin, and 18 minutes before the food was served.

> *Three main tables were set out down the middle of the playcentre with some chairs around and children are being quietly told to come in for morning tea. Terry (adult) asks Colin (4.8) and Tessa (3.7) to put some chairs out and directs them to a couple of gaps at the table. Colin and Tessa move some chairs from the collage area to the morning tea table and then both sit together at the far end of the tables. The two children remained sitting quietly, with some chat happening between them, as others came from the basins having washed their hands. After nine minutes an adult begins speaking to the whole group, about cold weather and ice (there had been ice in the water trough earlier that morning). Tessa and Colin show no interest in the talk, preferring to continue their own conversation.*

The demarcation between the child's role in the centre and that of the adult was quite clear to the participants. Both Tessa and Colin chose to put some chairs out, then to socialise with each other while waiting for the others to join them. Had they chosen to remain away from the table for some minutes more, that also would have been acceptable. On occasions where children were asked to help, but they either ignored the request, or put a few chairs out and did not stay at the table, the expectation was the same. On their return, the chairs were in place, usually by an adult.

> *Cara (adult) is in laundry room changing a child "Alice (4.8), I need help to put the chairs by the table. Can you help?" Alice walks off (I didn't see her reaction). "Kezia (4.1), I need help to put the chairs by the table. Can you help?" Kezia does so with two chairs closest to her. There is no feedback to her and she walks off towards kitchen.*
>
> *Cara comes out: "Where's all the chairs? We need lots on the other side" (motioning to other side of table). No interest on Kezia's face.*

Cara: "Shall I help you?"

Kezia picks up one. Cara: "Well done."

Kezia moves towards playdough table.

Cara: "How about some of those chairs?"

Kezia moves one more and walks off. Cara puts rest around the table.

The use of the work 'help' was obvious in these situations, meaning the child could assist in the adult task but was under no obligation to do so. It was defined as less important than the play the child wished to continue, and not a joint responsibility of all people in the centre. The only tasks children were expected, and strongly encouraged in, was clearing their own plate and cup, described later in this chapter. By the children's actions, it was clear that both they and the adults understood this part of the centre culture, that the emphasis was on play, and children's choices were respected.

5.2.3 Toddlers have a unique status

Just as the older children had learned the routine of morning tea consisted of music and discussion before food, so also had two toddlers at Rimu learned that the routine for them was to be served food first. Once in the highchairs, or at the tables with some food, they were very much a part of the main group, actively observing all that was going on as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The playcentre community ideas of coming together as a group for morning team had variances for children, of which they were aware.

Both Ben (1.4) and Seth (1.2) were aware that they could get their chairs out, and would be given food as soon as they were seated.

Five minutes before the children are called for morning tea. One adult is in the kitchen preparing food. Ben (1.4) was standing by the door into store cupboard, reaching for handle, grizzling a little and looking concerned. I looked for someone to explain what he was wanting. Lorene (his mother) asked me to open the door for him, saying that he wanted to get a high chair out. I open the door and we go in. He heads straight for the nearest high chair. It has books on the tray. Ben's face shows puzzlement, as though he's not sure what to do next. I move the items off, and 'steer' it out of the door with the main propulsion coming from Ben. He manoeuvres it over to the end of the morning tea tables. Seth begins climbing up the high chair

(to get in). An adult gets a second high chair and both toddlers are lifted in. A piece of fruit is offered to both of them.

None of the older children ever queried that the younger children were given food before them, whether they were at the main tables, or in a high chair. When I inquired about when children moved from being a toddler in this respect, the adults found it hard to define. It seemed to depend on the child's asking for the food, as one toddler, Lane (1.10) was always seated at the main tables, and rarely expected to be offered food early. The older children had learned that even if they got chairs out, and sat down, they still needed to wait for others, the group talk, and then food. Rogoff (2003) also found infants' and toddlers' actions and responsibilities regarded as being of a different sort than those of older children. They "seemed to be in a period of moratorium" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 163) in which they were not expected to follow the same rules or hurried to do so. This belief in the playcentre communities was accepted by adults and children for some rules. However, in one instance at Kauri, a mother spent some time and energy in encouraging her toddler to remain seated, while he drank.

The above themes are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Community plane - Apprenticeship examples

Description of apprenticeship	**Specific examples**
Taking on an individual role.	Judah singing to the group. (Rimu) Evan being a herald. (Rimu)
Knowledge of the child and adult roles in the centre.	Colin and Tessa choosing to begin the morning tea routine early, and choosing to do adult task. (Rimu) Kezia choosing not to help. (Rimu)
Unique status of toddlers.	Toddlers able to get highchair out, (Rimu) and be served food before the main group. (both centres)

5.3 Interpersonal plane

Both centres provided examples of how learning was a social occurrence that developed through interaction between children and peers or children and adults. Rogoff (1993) used the concept 'guided participation' to refer to this process of involvement of an individual with others, as they "communicate and collaborate in carrying out culturally valued activity" (p. 132). In some instances, an adult took the lead, in face-to-face interactions to guide the children's understanding of the situation. In others, there was side-by-side joint participation.

5.3.1 Learning rules

At Rimu Playcentre when food was offered to children, it had been a spoken rule for some years that they might take two pieces of food at a time. This was explained to me as manageable for the children as it meant one piece for each hand. However, as the children had individual plates on which to put their food, this point was not always relevant. On two occasions when comments were made by children, they both showed their adherence to the rule, and then accepted that other children may not yet know the rule, that some were still learning and that that was an acceptable situation.

> *After the singing and karakia, one adult gives out individual plates to children while two other adults carry out the plates with a selection of food. As the plates are put on the table, the reminder is given: "just two pieces each". Curtis (2.10) and Max (3.3) are sitting next to each other and the plate is put down in front of Curtis. He begins taking some food while Max waits his turn. Curtis has four pieces of food on his plate when Max realises this. He calls out, not overly loudly, "Hey, hey, hey" in Curtis's direction. Max then stands up and repeats "hey, hey, hey" in a more aggrieved tone, not to anyone in particular. Max then turns to Jo (adult who is seated further down the table) "hey, hey" he says while waving in Curtis's direction. Jo looks at Max. Max explains (looking quite agitated) "he's got more than two". Jo stands up and comes to the end of the table. She looks at Curtis's plate and notes: "Oh, yes, that's more than two pieces. One, two, three, four" – counting them with Curtis and quite matter-of-fact. Curtis begins eating one piece of fruit and Jo moves the main plate towards Max who is quite mollified once the plate is offered to him.*

All children and some adults are seated round the tables, and the plates of food have been placed, two per table. Pamela (adult) speaks clearly: "Can I remind people just to have two things on your plate at a time. Otherwise your tummy might get too full, and then we waste it." Judah (4.2), with a full mouth makes a noise "Aaargh" while pointing at another child with more on his plate. Pamela replies "that's OK, sometimes we forget." Judah appears to be not worried at all anymore and turns away and begins a conversation with the child sitting on his left.

Both Max and Judah, while showing some understanding of the rule, requested feedback from adults as to its applicability. Their actions in these instances can also be seen in relation to the other child's learning. By their actions they were hoping to aid the other child's understanding of the situation. They were also aware that their understanding of the situation was different from that of the other child. The communication between Max and Jo, and Judah and Pamela were shared moments, where the children stretched themselves to understand the actions and ideas of others, through the cultural tool of a rule. Participation is "always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51).

5.3.2 Learning through concerned care for siblings

Interactions between siblings showed concern and care for each other (both older for younger, and younger for older). Chairs were saved for them, and often they would choose to sit together. In this excerpt, Joshua (3.8) is concerned that his younger brother Keegan (1.8) is unhappy. He watches as his mother guides Keegan's learning about needing to sit down to drink.

Most of the children are at the tables and eating from their own lunch boxes. Keegan (1.8) is walking round with feeder cup. Ann (Keegan's mother) leads him by the hand back to the table. Ann is trying to impress on Keegan that he needs to sit, while drinking. She has sat him on chair next to her a couple of times – he keeps getting off. Keegan grizzles a little. "Come and sit on my knee then" and pulls him onto her knee. His grizzles attract the attention of Joshua, his older brother who looks over to his mother and Keegan. Keegan is still not happy to sit and drink and slides off Ann's knee. Ann walks to the kitchen and leaves his cup on the bench saying "you need to sit down to have milk". Keegan begins to grizzle again, interspersed with squeals. He takes a couple of steps, then grizzles. Joshua comes over to see what he wants. Ann explains (quite exasperated tone) "he's not walking

round with it." Ann and Joshua go to puzzle area. Keegan follows, and becomes involved in play after a minute.

Although Ann did not see hers or Keegan's actions as contributing to Joshua's learning, by his following up his concerns for his brother, his understanding was widened. Even without parents' focus on helping children, children take initiative and become involved in ongoing activities (Rogoff, 1990, 2003). This episode of Joshua's shows the collaborative nature of learning that can occur outside of explicit instructional situations. Also seen is the "mutual bridging of meaning" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 285) between Joshua and Ann, that Keegan was not happy, but it was a learning situation for him. This understanding is somewhat different to that being shared by Ann and Keegan, that of the social rules of the centre, whereby food and drink are only consumed when sitting down. The centre routine (and the centre as a whole) is structured for the children's involvement, built on structures provided by the predecessors of the current participants. The children's and adults' engagements in the current cultural practices contributed to the continual modification of these.

5.3.3 Morning tea routine as a time regulator

At times adults were observed talking through the children's thinking with them. Most sessions were held in the morning, however one session at Kauri was observed in the afternoon during their snack time. The children and adults every morning refer to the snack time as morning tea, and as shown in this example the words 'morning tea' have the meaning for the children of a snack, not necessarily relating to the time of the day when it is eaten.

Robbie (4.10) comes inside to the kitchen.

Robbie (to Julie): "Can I have morning tea now?" He had asked for it earlier, but had been asked to wait because the adults had all been involved in a sewing activity.

Julie (quite definitively): "No. Because it's not morning. What could you have?"

Robbie (looking a little put out): "But I haven't had any morning tea." Julie: "You have morning tea in the morning, but it's afternoon now. What do you think you could have?" Robbie thinks for a moment.

Robbie: "afternoon tea".

Andrea (adult) chant in a fun way: "All those who want afternoon tea, go and wash your hands". Most children head for the bathroom.

Five minutes later. Robbie: "I'm going to get my morning tea out". Has the conversation with Julie from a couple of minutes ago about morning or afternoon tea forgotten?

Further on in the same session Sammi's (4.1) mother returns to the centre during the snack time. The child's comment was about the mother coming at morning teatime, and alluding to the idea that she should not be returning so soon. Because the afternoon session begins straight after lunch, the snack is held towards the end of the session, but for Sammi, her time keeping was thrown into awry.

The children are sitting in a group under the oak tree just inside the front fence. A car drives up and stops.

Lea (3.11): "Oh, look Sammi, there's your mum."

Sammi: "Oh, not, not my mum at morning teatime?" Paula hops out of the car and overhears this comment.

Paula: "You're having afternoon tea, aren't you?" No reaction from the children that they realise there is any difference between morning and afternoon tea.

5.3.4 Children learning by intent participation

Joining in with the singing was a major part of the routine at Rimu. On many instances it was noted that children watched the adults or other children very carefully for clues as to the words and actions, or the younger children watched to learn what the whole process was about.

Linda holds up the words for Paki Paki. Gillian: "now we'll have to stand up guys, to sing this." Children mostly all stand and some push chairs in. Comment from Linda as to this being a good idea. Lane (1.10) pushes chair in. Half of the children join in actively, others watch. Lane is watching everything, big smile as he watches another Mum holding a toddler, doing actions (and turning round). Two children are sitting but stamping. Lane joins in with stamping.

On another occasion when the adults did not do all the actions, neither did the children.

Gillian: "We're going to sing Wind the Bobbin up." Most children join in. There is some watching of adults, although it must be a familiar song, as most are joining in without needing guidance.

Gillian: "Now, how about E tu". She begins singing, and most children do also. There are five other adults around the table, but all are standing. On the words e tu, the adults don't move. Tessa, Colin and Alice stand up, but no other children do.

The history that the centre has inherited includes the notion of having some music, mainly singing and rhymes, while the children are seated around the tables, and before the food is served. The adults involved had little awareness of why they carried out music there and then. Musical instruments were available throughout the session, and were frequently in use, and dancing was noticeable. However, the seating arrangement impacted on the actions of songs, and the choice of songs quite markedly. With the adults not usually sitting down before the food was served the opportunity for role modelling the action to stand, and then to sit, was lost.

5.3.5 Learning through direct adult attention

At Rimu Playcentre the children were encouraged to take their plate and cup to the kitchen as they left the table. For some children this was a regular habit. Ryan (3.2) and Michael (2.8) were both fairly new to the centre and had, during the research, not cleared their places. On this occasion, Ryan is sitting near to two children who regularly clear their own plates without being asked. By both watching them, and with the help of an adult scaffolding his learning, he carried out this task amenably.

Two adults and four children remain at one end of the table.
Judah (4.2) leaves the table and takes his plate and cup. Curtis (4.8) leaves straight after him, also taking his cup and plate with him. No words are spoken. Ryan stands up.
Terry (adult): "Did you see how Judah and Curtis took their plates to the kitchen?"
Ryan picks his cup and plate in each hand.
Terry: "That's great, now you can take them to the kitchen."
Ryan moves off towards the kitchen. Terry: "Well done."

A few minutes later Michael (2.8) begins to leave the table.
Terry: "Everybody's put their cup and plate on the bench, except Michael." There is no reaction from Michael. Terry comes over and explains quietly to him: "I'll put your plate over, so you can see where it goes." As she goes to put it down, she asks, "is this where it goes?", and Michael nods his head.

For Ryan and Michael, their being part of a group for whom this is a regular habit, and having an adult point out explicitly what is required, meant their participation was increasing. For Ryan the experiences he had had on previous sessions, and the guidance received on this occasion meant he was able to carry out this task through guided participation.

Being an expert in the centre included understanding the language used by adults, usually for instruction, or to question, direct or prompt. Understanding what the educator means is a task in two ways for a child. Initially it involves a child coming to understand the actual vocabulary and structure used. It also means coming to understand how these words and structure are used, in the morning tea discourse, generally. For example when Terry asked Ryan "did you see how Judah and Curtis took their plates to the kitchen?" Ryan had to know what is expected of him. He had to understand whether the rhetorical question should have been answered directly or whether there was a message to heed. In this instance, Ryan showed he was familiar enough with this discourse, to accept that it was a reminder to him, to clear his own plate. The language belonging to the community was a tool, and its use was part of the organisational culture.

In situations such as these, the community plane is not focussed on, although its effects are still present. The existence of low tables and chairs, light cups and plates; the expectation that children clear their own plates when they have finished; and the presence of adults nearby to encourage them, are parts of the wider view of the situation.

The learning that happens is a communal process, situated within the organisational culture. The new members, or novices, of the community are not simply lacking skills, but rather are needing to negotiate their participation in the community practices (Wenger, 1998). When examining the learning processes, emphasis must be placed on the learner, educator, and the organisational processes, as all of these create pressure, through which the learning occurs.

The above five examples of learning through guided participation are summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Interpersonal plane - Guided participation examples

Description of guided participation	Specific examples
Learning rules.	Max and Judah both gaining understanding of a rule, and how it applies to themselves and others. (Rimu)
Learning through concern and care for siblings.	Joshua entering into a shared understanding with his mother, initiated by Joshua because of his concern for his brother. (Kauri)
Morning tea as a time regulator.	Robbie and Sammi's confusion over the phrases 'morning tea' and 'afternoon tea', and when in the session they occurred. (Kauri)
Learning by intent participation. Active watching and listening.	Evan, and other children, watching others for clues about the singing. (Rimu)
Learning through direct adult attention.	With Ryan and Michael individualised verbal direction and support creates a learning situation. (Rimu)

5.4 Personal plane

The personal plane of analysis examines how individuals change in and through their participation in an event, whilst still keeping in mind the children's learning to be part of the organisational culture of the playcentre (community plane), and the learning that occurs through interaction with others (interpersonal plane). This plane concentrates on the individual participation. What is considered is how individuals change in their understanding of, and responsibility for, activities through their own participation. Rogoff (1993) uses the term 'participatory appropriation' for this plane.

Morning tea in both centres was the one time during each session when the whole collection of people present gathered as a group. It could have appeared, to a casual observer, that all were involved, as all children and some adults were gathered round central tables, or (as

happened at Kauri on two occasions) joined as a group on a picnic rug outside. However closer inspection showed differing involvement and changes in the roles of children during this togetherness.

5.4.1 Understanding others' needs

On several occasions, Lane (1.10) was seen interacting with other children (older and of a similar age to himself) in ways that showed his understanding of what another child needed:

> *Lane (1.10) is watching two other children on the opposite side of the table. Seth (1.2) reaches out for the plate of food, but it is not close enough for him. Gerard (2.5) has no food in front of him either. Both are looking at the plate of food. Lane moves the plate over towards Seth. No words are spoken.*

Lane's understanding of and responsibility for this action was transformed through his participation, and in the process he would become prepared to be involved similarly in the future. However, on a session two weeks later, Lane came to realise that others did not read his needs in a similar way, for some minutes.

> *Lane (1.10) has three efforts to reach a water jug. One adult is near him but doesn't notice. He stands on his seat, and slips off. "Whoops" from near adult, who helps him up, but not realising why he slipped.*
>
> *Two minutes later Lane reaches out towards the jug again. He picks up his cup; puts it down, and has another bite of food. The roll is being called throughout this. Lane has another attempt to stand on his chair to reach the jug. He falls off the chair and is helped up by an adult. During all of this, Lane hasn't said a word; neither has anyone spoken to him.*
>
> *Several children are leaving the tables. Dara (3.0) and Anita (2.7) remain with Lane. There is some chat between the children, and laughing about having food in the mouth. ... Anita climbs on her chair to reach the plate of food. Lane reaches out for the jug. Dara passes it to him, and pours for him. Jo (adult): "Well done, what a helpful thing to do..." Lane pours a little more for himself. The drink was over ten minutes in the getting.*

Lane's ideas about his needs and those of others, and how they could be met were increasing. Few encouragements were given by adults in this centre to children to offer food to others, or to ask for food to be passed. Often they served the children and

anticipated their needs. Lane had picked up on this, in helping the others, and in finally being helped. In the final part of this episode, Lane and the two girls were interdependent: their roles were active and changed during the episode. Around the morning tea table children learned to join in an activity that had been defined and organised by the community. Their own role and changes in their role and understanding, simultaneously contributed to changes in the activity itself.

5.4.2 Learning competence in self-care skills

In both centres, children were encouraged in different ways in self-care skills, for example washing hands, toileting, changing clothes. At Kauri, Zac (3.6) showed his competence in changing clothes, and in the housekeeping parts of this task (fetching the change, putting cast-offs into plastic bags). The scene was just before morning tea when two girls came from the fingerpaint table, with wet and messy clothes. They decided to change them before morning tea on the carpet square where a group, including Zac, was involved in singing and music.

> *A group of children and two adults, Clare and Paula, are involved in music. Sammi comes to Paula (her mother) with her backpack. Paula takes it and gets dry clothes out. Lea brings her bag to the mat, in the midst of the music and begins getting clothes out. Paula changes Sammi quickly. Lea: "I can do it myself" (Comment relating to the fact that Paula is helping Sammi?). She undoes her overalls, and pulls them down. ...*
>
> *Zac watches all this for a few minutes, then goes to the lockers and brings his bag back. He succeeds at taking his trousers off, then runs to kitchen, and comes back with a plastic bag (supermarket type - tied in knot middle). He gives the bag to Clare, who undoes the knot. Zac takes the bag back and puts trousers into it. He pulls his T-shirt off ... and puts it into the bag. Clare reaches over and starts to take dry clothes out of Zac's bag. Zac begins to take his undies off.*
>
> *Paula: "I don't think you need new undies do you?" No response from Zac.*
>
> *Clare: "We've got spares in the bag, and the girls did, so of course we have to."*
>
> *Zac puts his undies on. Clare holds Zac's trousers till he has one leg in, then he takes over. The whole time Zac is watching the others playing music. He gets another T-shirt out and gives it to Clare, who holds it, so he can get arms in. He puts the plastic bag with the wet clothes into his backpack, and puts his backpack to*

the side of the room. Picks up drum – ready to play. All the housekeeping (with plastic bags, etc), was unprompted.

Zac's understanding of the change process was quite complex, involving getting the dry clothes first, getting a plastic bag from the usual playcentre supply to put the wet clothes into, knowing what he needed help with (an adult to undo the knot in the plastic bag, and then to hold the T-shirt so he could get his arms in), and that it had to be a complete change, even though it was only his sweatshirt sleeves and bottom of track pants that were a little wet. He showed no indication that a change was necessary until he saw the girls changing. Zac showed an increasing participation in and managing of the cultural activities that surrounded him in the centre, with the guidance of the adults and other children there.

Facets of the culture facilitated this learning: that the children were able to change themselves in the midst of a music time, that adults were readily available to give necessary help, that the children were encouraged to learn from each other, and that the children's personal belongings were accessible to them.

5.4.3 Sharing knowledge

As children became confident in the culture of the centre, their participation broadened to their sharing what they knew with others.

At Kauri Playcentre, the children brought their own food in lunch boxes. Although the centre encouraged parents not to use gladwrap or have pre-packaged food for children in their boxes, much of this was in evidence, with adults usually having to open these for children. On this day, Krystal showed her ability to open a packaged muesli bar, which on a previous session she had allowed an adult to open for her. This time she took charge of the packet, opened it competently, and showed the adult.

Krystal (4.3) has a muesli bar, and holds it up for Catherine (adult) to see. Catherine: "Mmm, that could be hard to open." She reaches out to help. Kim (Krystal's mother) is standing behind them: "I showed her a trick to open them." Krystal pulls the muesli bar back towards herself and attempts to open it. The two adults discuss how to open the packets easily. The packet opens and Krystal: "Hey, hey, hey" and waves the open packet in Catherine's direction. "See." Catherine: "Oh, you opened that fine."

By engaging in this activity and by being part of its meaning, Krystal made an ongoing contribution, to the routine of morning tea, and to Catherine's understanding of her.

In this excerpt about Max, it is pointed out by an adult, that in order to have a piece of birthday cake, he will need to remain seated with his plate. Not only does Max do this, but also he passes on this information to another child, helping to build a relationship with him.

> *It is nearly the end of morning teatime, however it is one child's birthday and a cake is being prepared in the kitchen, to follow the usual sharing of food. Max (3.3) and another child stand, and go to leave the table.*
> *Cheryl (adult): "We're going to have a birthday cake; you might want your plates soon." Both children sit down again.*
> *A few minutes later the cake, with lit candles is brought out by André's Mum.*
> *Cheryl: "Are we going to sing to André?" and begins singing Happy Birthday. ...*
> *At the end of the singing André's Mum asks all the children to help blow the candles out. The cake is taken back to kitchen to cut.*
> *There is some chat between children about the cake. Max is watching kitchen intently. The child next to him stands up and starts to move.*
> *Max: "no ..... don't ..... you'll need it" – looking at plate (meaning he will need his plate to put the cake on).*

In these two episodes, the children's learning is seen as the transformation in their involvement in the activity. How Krystal and Max participated characterised their contributions to the centre culture and to others' learning in the centre.

The above themes and examples are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Personal plane - Participatory appropriation examples

Description of participatory appropriation	Specific examples
Understanding others' needs.	Lane moving plates of food to others. (Rimu)
Learning competence in self-care skills.	Zac copying others, but able to show more skills. (Rimu)
Sharing knowledge	Krystal in opening the muesli bar. (Kauri) Max in knowing to retain the plate for a piece of cake. (Rimu)

5.5 Summary

This section analysed learning experiences of the children, in their home playcentre during the regular routine of morning tea, using the structure explained by Rogoff (1993, 2003) and viewing the situation through three planes of analysis. The community plane related to the overall environment of the playcentre, examined in the previous chapter as the organisational culture of each centre. The interactions between children and children, and children and adults involved in the learning experience were considered by using the interpersonal plane of analysis. Finally, how the individual child changes because of their participation in the learning experience with others was examined through the personal plane of analysis. The child was considered, with the social world, which provides reality and is the context in which the child makes sense of the world.

Children in the centres were learning what it meant to be a playcentre child during the routine of morning tea: learning about rules, self-care skills, child and adult roles, and the necessity to plan their play around a mid-session break. Their understanding of the culture was deepening in regards to the value of taking an individual role, sharing knowledge with others, and that other people, especially toddlers, have different needs. The analysis showed learning occurring through intent participation and through guided participation by adults, and through familial relationships with siblings.

In line with socio-cultural theory, as discussed previously, this learning happened through, and because of, the community in which the children were participants. The adults in the centres worked in cooperative teams with both centres being communities of practice, around their core function of education. The concept of them being communities of learners is discussed in the following chapter.

The analysis suggests that children's learning experiences are affected by the organisational culture of a centre. In this regard, the results are quite consistent with other investigations (Hatherly, 1997; Kiley & Jensen, 2003; McLeod, 2002) into the organisational culture of an early childhood centre. For educators to see themselves as creators of situations for children's learning experiences, then the holistic nature of the situation requires collaborative reflection.

By being a part of the activity, the individual is contributing to it. All those taking part are interdependent and by their engaging in participation, they are both changing their role and understanding of the activity, and indeed changing the activity itself. The following chapter discusses this intertwining of learning and the organisational culture in which it occurs.

Chapter 6

Discussion and conclusion: The intertwining of organisational culture and children's learning

6.1 Introduction

"People develop as participants in cultural communities" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 3). When considered from this point of view children's development and learning can be understood only in light of the communities in which they participate. The basis for this argument draws from socio-cultural theories, where individual and social factors are mutually constitutive (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, the appropriate unit of analysis is one that involves neither individual nor social factors alone but rather one that encapsulates both. The activity of the members, in each of the playcentres of this study, constitutes such a unit.

At the beginning of this thesis the aims outlined were to

- explore what happens during the routine of morning tea that indicates each playcentre's distinctiveness; and
- investigate how children's learning experiences are affected by the organisational culture of the centre in the context of the routine of morning tea.

These have been researched through the two case studies and dual analyses of the data gathered. This chapter discusses the findings in an endeavour to make explicit the relationship between the organisational culture and the children's learning experiences. The claim of this thesis is that the children's learning is shaped and defined by the organisational culture of the early childhood centre.

The concept of organisational culture has been useful in determining similarities and differences between the two playcentres: Rimu and Kauri. In the world of early childhood settings in New Zealand, the two playcentres would be seen as alike, and yet, because of the combination of the families who constitute the centres, the histories and environmental factors, the study indicated differences. It was the points of difference and similarity of these centres that characterise the effect of the organisational culture on the experiences of

the children and adults who belong to the centres. It was clearly shown that the patterns of behaviour that were seen during the morning tea routine, indicating the organisational culture, impacted on children's learning experiences. Learning from a socio-cultural perspective involves consideration of the learner in their cultural milieu.

6.2 Morning tea as a setting for learning

The results in Chapter 4, as summarised in Tables 4.1 – 4.5, show that the facets of the organisational culture of each centre had a varied impact on the routine of morning tea. The physical arrangements for the routine, the components of the routine, and the roles adults and children fulfilled during the routine were shaped by the organisational culture. Primarily the morning teatime was seen by educators to provide the social purpose of building a sense of group and physical nourishment for children and adults, although other aspects such as literacy and numeracy entered the routine at Rimu.

The routine, while being seen as very necessary, and about which all the educators spoken to had ideas and opinions, was not, in either centre, planned for as a whole. Some parts were focussed on for individual children, but the existence of the routine, within the large picture of the centre was so much a taken-for-granted, that the adults rarely considered its place in the learning environment for the children. However, snack times are one of the recurrent events in the lives of children where they experience the culture of their early childhood centre in its full complexity (Ben-Ari, 1997). Routines and rituals, as part of a centre's culture show the members of the centre what is expected of them, and provide "powerful, visible examples of what the organisation values" (Kiley & Jensen, 2003, p. 80). The values that became obvious through the current study are discussed in the next section.

As Wells (1999) points out "the practices that were used can be thought of as ... another form of collective memories" (p. 60). The routine of morning tea and the practices it involved in each playcentre are such 'memories'. Every human context is composed of artefacts, or tools, of prior generations, through which they connect with each other and the physical world. For every new member in each playcentre there was the passing on of cultural practices, and the 'right way of doing things around here'. The technical artefacts, or tools, such as the equipment, furniture, plates, lunch boxes and name cards, and the psychological tools such as the language, curriculum, problem-solving techniques and the

routine itself, embodied the values of the culture, and had the function of supporting the recreating of knowledge-in-action (Wilson & Meyers, 2000). The learning for all members, adults and children, was mediated by the artefacts (Cole, 1999), with the differential use of those tools indicating the differences between the playcentres.

6.3 The influence of tacit assumptions on children's learning experiences

To enable discussion of the commonalities and disparities of the two sets of data from chapters four and five a further table (Table 6.1) is presented. Several facets from each data set can be linked on a thematic basis.

Table 6.1 Tacit assumptions and children's learning experiences

Tacit assumptions (from chpt. 4)	Learning experiences (from chpt. 5)
Children learn through intent participation.	Learning by intent participation.
Children learn through being actively involved.	
All adults on session are in a teaching role.	
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	
Many types of learning are possible in a large group.	
Literacy and numeracy practices can be a part of the morning tea routine.	
Coming together, physically as a group, is a part of emotional and social wellbeing for children and adults.	
Children learn through being actively involved.	Taking an individual part.
Individuality is important.	
Belonging is necessary before contribution can be made.	
Independence is valuable and should be encouraged.	
Planning for morning tea is important.	
Diversity can be managed and be a strength.	
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Sharing knowledge.
Playcentre is a place to make friends and build relationships.	
Playcentre is a place to make friends and build relationships.	Understanding others' needs.
Children learn through being actively involved.	
Independence is valuable and should be encouraged.	
Planning for morning tea is important.	Morning tea routine as a time regulator.
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Learning through concern and care for siblings.
Children learn through being actively involved.	
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Learning rules.
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Learning competence in self-care skills.
Children learn through being actively involved.	
Children learn through intent participation.	
Communication is necessary between team members.	Knowledge of adult & child roles.
Children are at playcentre to learn through play.	
Children are respected	
Some adults' work requires separation from children.	
Toddlers require more care than older children.	Unique status of toddlers.
Playcentre is for learning, for adults and children.	Learning through direct adult attention.
All adults on session are in a teaching role.	
Planning for morning tea is important.	
Children learn through being actively involved.	
Literacy and numeracy practices can be a part of the morning tea routine.	

The incidents already presented in chapters fours and five are now linked in new ways. The discussion following is structured according to the categories in the learning experiences column in Table 6.1.

The concept of children learning by intent participation (Rogoff et al., 2003) is useful to use within the playcentre setting at morning teatime. Rogoff and colleagues, define it as children "observing and listening-in on activities of adults and other children" (p. 176) with the expectation that they will participate eventually. This concept was apparent in both data sets, showing the setting, with adults and a mixed age range of children, offered opportunities for children to become involved in learning in this way. The toddlers in the high chairs at Rimu Playcentre were noticeably involved in this way during the whole process of morning tea. It was also noticeable during the singing, as children actively watched adults or other children for clues about the words and actions. For the younger children, or the new children to the group, there were others who had been in the centre for longer that they could learn from. Adults accepted the responsibility of being role models, both for the children and other adults. During the literacy practices at Rimu, the opportunities for children to actively observe others participating were plentiful.

Taking an individual part during the morning tea routine was part of the children's learning about their roles in the playcentre. At Rimu, Judah and Evan's individual contributions as a singer and a herald were encouraged by the adults. They were both comfortable to take a leadership role, and to share with others what they knew. When Alice was sorting the name cards, used as place cards around the tables at Rimu, she independently decided to place her name card with that of two of her friends, hence nurturing their friendships. The adults in the centre planned for, and worked alongside the children taking on these roles, through the process of guided participation (Rogoff, 2003) and by offering support. In both centres, the children were able to make decisions about what and how much food they ate and to leave the tables as they finished. It was also noticeable that the children were settled into the overall routine before being encouraged to take on an individual role. The accepting that a person needs to feel a sense of belonging before they can contribute was also evident in the way adults were eased into taking on responsibilities in the centre. Goals for children and adults were aligned in this way, showing results similar to that of Goldman (1998) who found that where goals for children were part of a school culture and were fostered in the teachers, then they became a reality for children.

However, there was tension between encouraging individuality and building a sense of community. The analysis categories about teamwork and the importance of gathering as a group were in many ways in opposition to children being encouraged in individualism. This is discussed later in this chapter.

The fostering of individualism did allow for the diverse background of the families who chose to belong to both these playcentres. As Terry explained, the regular playcentre meetings provided a forum for discussion of individuals' ideas, and a structure for all to make decisions. Because each playcentre frequently admitted new people to the group, being adaptable was a necessary part of the playcentre culture. In business organisations, it was found that where the organisations had core values pertaining to continuous change, their adaptiveness led to high performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

Sharing knowledge with other children and adults was seen on several occasions in both centres. As the children became confident in the culture of the centre, their participation broadened into taking on an 'old-timers' position and being able to pass on to others what they knew. Lave and Wenger (1991) termed this "community reproduction" (p. 56). Max showed his understanding that sharing information could be useful for others, when he alerted his friend not to clear his plate away, because he would need it for a piece of cake. He was becoming an expert in the culture (McNaughton, 2002) through his participation and coming to understand the roles and responsibilities of being a member.

Children understanding the needs of others and acting on this was seen occasionally. Lane, a toddler, realised that two children sitting opposite him were unable to reach the plate of food. With no words spoken, he moved the plate to them. Because a lot of focus was on children making individual moves, the notion of looking after each other, in the group, did not arise often. Relationships with other children were not strengthened by adults fostering empathy and caring for each other. However, friendships were encouraged around the morning tea tables through children being able to choose to sit beside friends, and as in the case of Robbie and Krystal, to invite friends to sit beside them. They also interacted in fun ways with each other. In this, the current research concurs with that of Hännikäinen (2001) and Holmes (1992) who found that children used play and humour to make connections with each other.

The morning tea, as an event, split each playcentre session into two parts. Frequently it was used as a time regulator, with children learning to plan their play for before or after morning tea. Whilst Aitken and McAllister's (2003) research showed children's planning around morning tea was more evident when they were able to choose the time for their snack, the current research showed children's capabilities to plan for a defined break in their play, at approximately the same time every session. That children expected morning tea to be in the middle of the session was made obvious on the afternoon session at Kauri that was part of the research. When the snack routine happened towards the end of the session, the children's time-keeping was confused.

Concern and care for siblings was facilitated through the playcentres operating sessions for all children of a family up to school age. Learning through actively watching and being aware of their siblings, older or younger, participating in the programme was evident, with the familial relationship advantaging this over learning through other peers. The care shown to siblings was also frequent at the morning teatime. The 'specialness' of their family members carried over from the home to the centre.

The morning tea routine was an ideal vehicle through which to observe children's learning of rules, as with many routines events the process has its own regulations (Wien & Kirby-Smith, 1998). At Rimu, where children were frequently reminded about the number of pieces of food to begin with, Max and Judah both pointed it out to an adult when another child did not follow the rule, and then followed the adult's lead in accepting that the other child's understanding of the rule differed from theirs. Their learning was not only about the rule, but also about its function for other children, and about other children's understanding of it. Their learning was also more deeply social, than simply about the rule. In cultural learning (Kruger & Tomasello, 1996) the child "does not learn from the adult's actions ... but through the adult's perspective in a truly intersubjective fashion" (p. 371). The children learned something about the adult and their intentional state; what their intentions were in dealing with the situation as they did, or the thought behind their strategy. The children's learning was more than about the surface activity.

Children's learning competence in caring for themselves was apparent in both centres. The ability to be independent in washing hands prior to eating, finding a place to sit, and then helping themselves to food was encouraged. In Kauri, being able to cope with a lunchbox

and drink bottle was part of this time, although, as discussed previously, the wrappings used by some parents obviated this in some instances. Good food habits were easily nurtured in Rimu, where communal plates were prepared with a selection of healthy foods. Being a part of a group partaking in this and actively watching other's choices meant that some children ate a wider variety of fruit at the centre than they did at home.

The children's knowledge of their role as child members of the playcentre was explored during the morning tea routine. As previously mentioned, children were encouraged by adults to take an individual part such as holding song sheets, singing a song, or placing the name cards in position. Judah and Evan's taking on of leadership roles was encouraged and supported by adults, and accepted by the other children. Equally clear in both centres was the role that adults played. The arranging of the routine was usually not part of the child's day. Adults took on the responsibility for putting tables and chairs out, and putting them away at the end, wiping tables, the main preparation of food and cleaning up afterwards. Sometimes the children at Rimu were asked to help put the chairs out for morning tea, but whether they chose to or not, the adults involved treated the children with respect for their autonomy.

In terms of the 'household' tasks, the children were not expected to be involved, their learning through play being regarded as more important. Participation of the children in this way, in learning about the meaningful tasks of their community, did not happen. The children were also able to see their own parents in a position as educator of themselves and others. Watching their parent involved in a variety of ways during morning tea highlighted the value of their own family's input.

Accepting toddlers as having a different status from the older children was seen in different ways in the two centres. At Kauri, the children requiring highchairs were frequently placed away from the tables, and given food before or after the main group, so that the adult in the care-giving role could ensure their food intake was appropriate and for their safety from the older children knocking them. At Rimu, the toddlers were able to be a part of the main group, through the placement of the highchairs, and they were offered food as soon as they were seated, while the older children needed to wait through the discussion part of the routine. In both instances, the precedent was for their physical needs rather than their social or cognitive development.

Adults working with children by giving them direct attention, working with them through guided participation (Rogoff, 1993), was indicative of the adults' belief that this was an important teaching technique within the playcentres. It was particularly obvious when the adults wished to engage the children's attention to clear their own plate and cup at Rimu, in sharing literacy and numeracy understandings at Rimu, and in caring for themselves at Kauri. The literacy practices planned for included opportunities for the children to see and identify their name, address and telephone number, and those of other children. Also at Rimu, the adults shared scientific concepts and language as the focus for the talk part of the routine, although usually during this time it was an adult sharing information, with children placed in the role of respondent, and not encouraged to build on other children's contributions.

While the above commonalities could be made, the analysis of the organisational culture also showed assumptions relating to all adults being valued as team members and cooperating in this way towards a common goal. These formed the basis for much of the adults' actions. However, because the research was not focussed on adult relationships or teamwork, they have not been discussed here as being directly linked to the categories relating to children's learning.

6.4 Learning as a socio-cultural happening

Rogoff (2003) describes learning as the way children manage to understand what is required of them as members of the group, through their engagements with others, and a transformation of their participation. Some early childhood centres encourage certain types of activities and behaviour in the children, while others encourage quite different activities. Therefore, the children are simultaneously engaged in interpreting the messages, and deciding what the appropriate practices are. Within each society, within each early childhood centre, differing cultures exist. The child's development results from the interactive processes through which adults and children are structuring and responding to the social environment.

The children in the study were growing into the world, the early childhood centre that surrounded them, through interacting with it, a process whereby both they and the centre

were changed (Lave, 1993). As learners, the children dealt with the morning tea routine in the best way they could, employing what different strategies they were aware of, for interacting with and understanding the routine and the other participants. In considering children's cognition as an active process, comprising thinking, planning, remembering (Rogoff, 1998) rather than a collection of information, the role of the other children and adults who interacted with the child, and the organisational culture of which they were a part, become significant. This active view of cognition places the child's learning as a function of participating in shared events within the early childhood centre. During morning tea the children changed as they "took on new roles, appropriated group values and behaviours for their own and became a part of a fluid, open-ended process of learning" (Mallory & New, 1994, p. 328).

The analysis using Rogoff's (1993, 2003) three planes enabled such changes to be studied on a personal level, in interaction with others, and through participation in the cultural routine. When Max queried the amount of food another child was serving himself at the morning tea table at Rimu, his participation was considered through the three lenses. Max's involvement in the morning tea table, as part of the usual centre routine and using the cultural tools of the setting, was considered apprenticeship into the ongoing activities of the centre. The way he participated depended on and supported the activity. The concept of guided participation referred to Max's interaction with the other child and the adult. His observing the other child, reacting to his actions, and guidance by the adult in understanding the situation constituted the process. The individual appropriation (Rogoff, 2003) refers to how Max's understanding of one of the rules of the morning tea table changed and his knowledge of others' understanding of the same rule and situation. It is within this context of meaningful and satisfying interpersonal relationships in the playcentre that Max and other children were most likely to actively engage in constructing understandings of the setting and their place in it. The complexities of the teaching-learning process based on these ideas have yet to be thoroughly explicated and discussed although ideas have been presented by several writers (Dockett, 1995, 1998; Fleer, 1995; Hine & Newman, 1996; Lambert, 1995; Smith, 1996; Spodek & Saracho, 1990, 1991). However, the learning that takes place must be seen as a basic function of the early childhood community, and its organisational culture. Organisational theory (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bush, 1995; Ott, 1989; Schein, 1992; Sergiovanni, 2000) describes the culture of a setting as being pervasive in all the learning activities of the setting, while socio-

cultural theory (Farver, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1999) uses the term community or institutional level as being the source of meaning for learning experiences. Both views concur that the context or community in which the learning occurs is not a self-contained entity. It is inflicted by larger contexts, historical, social, cultural and institutional with all of these bearing constraints (Wenger, 1998). However, the day-to-day reality for participants is their response to the conditions, and therefore is co-constructed by them.

Practice is inseparable from the organisational culture (Kiley & Jensen, 2003), and what the educators did in the daily morning tea routine sessions inescapably had a powerful cultural meaning, inevitably reflecting what was happening around them (Penn, 2000). The educators' knowledge base drew from both early childhood theory, as articulated by playcentre philosophy and practice, and local knowledge of the children and the centre's culture. Their daily actions were continually modified in line with their ever-changing understanding through their own experiences. Both children and adults were developing through participation in the centre, with both co-constructing the centre culture continually.

6.5 Community of Learners

A focal point arising from this research was that both centres had characteristics of being communities of learners. A community of learners has shared practices around a core activity of learning (Rogoff et al., 1996) and assumes each person has a differing area of expertise that can help others in the community. Both adults and children are regarded as learners, developing in their respective roles.

Brown (1994) identified five principles of a community of learners. The first considers active and purposeful learning with the learner aware s/he is engaged in learning. Rimu and Kauri Playcentres presented themselves as communities focused on learning for both children and adults. During the singing children showed their awareness of using adults and other children as role models from whom they could learn actions and words to songs. Other children showed awareness that they could ask adults for clarification about the routine, about rules they were abiding by and that, seemingly, other children were not. Krystal was delighted to show an adult how she had learned to open a packet of food. The

adult participants spoke about their learning in early childhood education and how it enabled them to take on new roles. They also spoke of encouraging others to take active roles and to consider each situation as having possibilities for learning. When Ron wanted to leave the focus group, suggesting that his partner had more experience on session to share, the others quickly said his viewpoint was valuable, and that his being there would add to the learning experience for them and him. During the research, adults often spoke to the researcher about their learning; however, adults' talking with children about the children's learning was infrequent. Both centres exhibited cultures that were open to learning and encouraging in sharing ideas between members and implementing new ideas. In Kauri, small parts of the routine of morning tea changed during the research, because of initial questions to the adults by the researcher, which led them to reflect on the activity. After discussion among themselves, changes were made in the planned interactions between adults and children, for effectiveness for children's learning. Had their centre culture been different, the changes may not have occurred. In both centres, beliefs and expectations for learning existed for the parents and the children.

The children's learning was about what it meant to be a playcentre child during the morning teatime, how to act, what to do and say, and the broader meanings of the setting. The adults' learning was about how to become members of the playcentre and in doing so to support children's learning and each other as learners. Just as young children learn about their world by using scripts, educators learn about teaching and learning by playing the teaching script, observing what happens and in collaboration with other adults amending their ideas (Spodek, 1993). In these playcentres, the educators came to see themselves as part of their centre and capable of making appropriate choices for themselves and children.

The second principle identifies the educational setting as a place for multiple zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Brown (1994) identified that every learner learns at a different rate and in different ways, and therefore the programme needs to plan for this. A mixed-age setting, as these playcentres were, expanded the heterogeneity of children in the same centre, creating conditions that support Vygotsy's idea of more competent children motivating the development of others. At the morning tea table the age and experience spread was five years. There were many guides for all, and learners were encouraged to reach towards accomplishment they would not have been able to do alone. For children at Rimu, the clearing away of their plate and cup at the end of morning tea,

was, for some, part of their usual repertoire, for others something that needed a reminder, and for others an activity that needed direct verbal or physical guidance from an adult. Alice was able to put out the name cards for all the children, through discussion with an adult, both about what the name was, and whether the child was present on that day.

The third principle is that of legitimisation of differences, both recognising and valuing differences, and building mutual respect (Brown, 1994). In building children's individuality and areas of strength, the diversity of knowledge and skill in the centre was increased. By asking children to share their expertise, there was enrichment of the whole community. By Judah's singing others could learn the song itself, and gain insight into the belief that sharing something of yourself is worthwhile. For adults the organisation of the teams of educators, in both centres, was indicative of valuing people's differences. The essence of these teams was pooling expertise.

A community of discourse is the fourth principle, whereby members are encouraged in discussion; newcomers are encouraged to adopt the discourse structure, along with the beliefs, goals and values of the community (Brown, 1994). The morning tea routine itself was organised around the need for members of each playcentre, child and adult, to gather for socialising reasons and talk. The older children, 3-4 year-olds in both centres. readily partook in conversation with each other at the tables with the younger ones actively watching the social interaction, listening to the conversations, and learning how people exchanged ideas and the place of all of these in the routine.

The final principle Brown (1994) identified is that a community of learners is a community of practice, within which members are interdependent. The learning occurring between and through each other is collaborative. Children looked to both adults and other children as role models. Brown's (1997) words "no one is an island; no one knows it all; collaborative learning is necessary for survival" (p. 41) are very similar to Grey's (1975) words about Playcentre: "the interaction is the core of learning. No one is teacher, all are learners ...no one knows, all are enquiring" (p. 2). The essence of teamwork was part of the historical influences of the organisational culture on Kauri and Rimu.

The playcentres were each based on relationships between the members held together by common endeavours. The cultural practices that made up each centre transcended the

particular individuals involved (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Many of the underlying beliefs about the operation of morning tea in both centres were about the well-being and belonging aspects for children and their families. A culture of care for each other was evident in both centres. Members had varying roles and responsibilities, but the multifaceted relations among them involved relating to each other as people as well as collaborating in providing for early childhood education for their children. As Bolman and Deal (1997) explained, different organisations need different structures to be effective in their respective environments. Each organisation must tie the different elements of their organisation together and "there is no one best way to organise. The right structure depends on an organisation's goals, strategies, technology and environment" (p. 57). A community of learners, based on teamwork, worked well for both playcentres.

In both centres, (Brown, 1994) adult participants spoke of why they belonged to the centre and why their sense of belonging was important to them and their children. Being accepted on their own terms, in their own time, was important. Being able to join in at their own speed for some meant calling the register at morning tea within a month of joining, and for others this came after a year. Likewise with the children, gentle encouragements to join in and follow the group routine were given, with each child able to contribute and join in when the time was right for them. The learning through participation in the routine of morning tea led to acceptance of varying roles for adults, younger, and older children, some similar and some clearly defined as belonging to just one group. Within this environment a diversity of people of varying ages could be nurtured with each bringing their own personality and strength into the centre culture.

6.5.1 Place of parents

McCaleb (1994), in arguing for a transformative education system where children and their families are involved and where parents are valued as equal contributors to the educative process, described settings very similar to the two playcentres in this study. Each centre's operation as a parent co-operative was part of their existence, part of their organisational culture. All parents participated on session as educators, as well as holding administrative roles. Parents feeling empowered in decision-making is of importance (Kiley & Jensen, 2003). The culture of the centre was maintained and sustained by, and influential on, the parents. McCaleb advocated for schools to be a learning community where adults modelled authentic and positive learning behaviours, by being learners, while supporting the

children's growing academic skills. Similarly, it was made explicit in both centres of the current study that adults were in a learning situation. There were occasions when educators said they were new to a particular task and asked children for help, and when they admitted they had made a mistake and needed to try something again. It was also implicit with different people taking turns to call the roll and lead the discussion, at Rimu, and in the way all adults, new and experienced, joined in the singing and actions as role models for the children. Because of the close contact between home and the centre, and the authentic incorporation of the child's reality into the curriculum, the parents were contributors to their children's education.

Fleer (2003b), raises the issue that much of the Western notion of child-centredness, in having separate toys, equipment, and early childhood centres, serves to separate children from the real world. While these playcentres were physically built upon this premise, the participation of the parents goes some way to authenticating the setting as the real world. The children were involved with their parents, in the home, in the community, and in the playcentre, as differing facets of the family's life.

The playcentres were parent-led early childhood centres, however the term 'parent involvement' was not mentioned during the research by the participants, as the families being the centre was very much a taken-for-granted. This inclusion of the parent of each child, in the management and supervision in the centre from the beginning of their participation, was a noticeable feature of this research.

6.5.2 Becoming a member

As in other communities of learners (Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlett, 2001), for newcomers to understand the community's culture and belief about learning, requires becoming involved through observing, discussing and participation, not just being informed about them. This is consistent with the socio-cultural concepts that learning, understanding and personal roles transform through participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As Teresa explained, her becoming a member of Kauri was through her working alongside Christine, and having her explain the routine.

The sense of being a learner within a community is a key aspect of playcentre for adults and children. The parents shared the learning and teaching roles. This in itself was a learning

experience, as they moved from being able to support their own child's learning, to engaging a small group in participation, to being aware of the whole group. As noted previously, for some parents in each playcentre of the study this was a rapid movement, and for others a slower journey. For all, it was learning to be a part of the centre, perceiving him or herself as a learner, and being willing to take risks. The learning at each step was supported by someone who had been in the centre longer, until when the time was right s/he took over the role as guide for others. The acceptance of all adults and children within the community as learning partners acknowledged the potential in all for growth. This potentiality was a core belief in both centres.

Anning and Edwards' research (1999) concluded that "children learn to love learning through being with adults who also love to learn, and are themselves in contexts that encourage their learning" (p. 145). To take this one logical step further is to argue that children's learning is supported by a community that has the learning of both children and adults as a priority, a major facet of both playcentres in the current study.

6.5.3 Individualism

In line with most of the Western world's general encouragement for children's independence in being and acting autonomously (Ritchie, 2001), much of the children's involvement during the morning teatime, was as individuals. Both playcentres defined their morning teas as a 'time together as a whole group' and that the group togetherness was important. They sat as a group, and at Rimu they shared food that was prepared on session. However within this, was acceptance of individual's preferences to leave the table when finished, to join in the roll calling when comfortable to do so and encouragement to take on individual roles. At Kauri the children ate from individual lunch boxes, and at Rimu, where shared plates of food were placed on the tables, there was little encouragement for the children to offer food to each other. Any planning around morning tea was done on an individual child basis and observations of children were done individually, not taking into account modelling or guidance by adults or peers. An individualistic society view was more prevalent than a collectivist society view as the value base for educational practice (Rosenthal, 2003).

Fleer (2003b) furthers the issue raised by Dahlberg et al. (1999) as to whether the Western early childhood assumption of individualism should be viewed as universal and desirable.

Ritchie (2001) calls for a reactivation in New Zealand early childhood centres of a shared social responsibility to counter the individualism that seems endemic in most centres. She contributes this to the play-based, child-centred pedagogy based on Piagetian theory that has been in existence for several decades. *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) encourages enhanced relationships between children and expects educators to play an active role in supporting young children to empathise with others and in building a sense of responsibility to the group. However, as can be seen in the two centres in the current study, while the educators spoke of a group ethic, their practices encouraged individualism.

As a community, the contributions of individuals were necessary, and a healthy respect for the individuals and what they could bring to the centre was a source of renewal for the community. In all instances of children or adults taking on new roles or trying out new actions, they were supported in their learning. The level of mutual support freely offered and the belief of others' potential and current capabilities united the participants into a community. However, moving beyond following one's own desires, and developing a sense of self that is interdependent with others, not separate, is vital (Fleer, 2003b). Consideration of the situation, as a continuum from individualism to collectivism orientations (Rosenthal, 2003), would clarify for educators the basis of their educational practice, and allow adjustments if desired. Being a part of the organisational culture of the centre, these values shaped the children's learning experiences.

In the ways that children were encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions, they were not encouraged to see themselves as a part of a group and responsible for group maintenance. The western (and predominantly American) notion of individualism was strong in both centres with the assumption that humans can and should work toward individually oriented actions.

6.6 Challenges of the research

As well as the expected challenges of intensive time requirements for fieldwork and transcribing, and the large amount of identifying names to master there were also some unexpected challenges. Initially I had expected the participants to respond to reading the transcripts and my notes with enthusiasm. I became aware of having made this assumption

when the interest was not forthcoming. During subsequent sessions and at the focus groups, participants read the accounts of their own sessions, noting their actions in them, but were only marginally interested in the others, or in the overarching analysis that was emerging. Interest was shown in changing their practices in line with what they interpreted as being critical of their practices, or recognised as needing change, but not in the descriptions of their usual practices. Similarly, Hatherly (1997), in her research into organisational culture in an early childhood centre, found the expectation of the participants was that the research would 'fix' problems in the day-to-day running of their centre, but her overall focus of organisational culture was 'her problem' not theirs. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) write of such feedback as being "yet another valuable source of data and insight" (p. 230). For the majority, their participation in the day-to-day running of the centre, accepting my being there, answering my questions and for some attending the focus groups, was all the energy they had to spare at that time. Being an involved parent at playcentre, running the home, and in many instances working part-time outside of the home made for a busy life, and further engagement in the research was not appropriate or possible for them. At first I found this lack of time for involvement in the research disappointing, but realised it was a situation I had chosen to research within and had, in part, created. When I was asked at Kauri whether I was going to give them a list of recommendations, I realised both their detachment from the research, but also their interest in my findings, if it could lead to improvement. The interest was there, and some frustration that they had neither the time nor energy for much self-evaluation. Hedges (2002) found a similar situation in her research in a kindergarten and emphasised the need for time to be made for such reflective practice.

Another challenge was how much to share my ideas. Educators frequently asked 'what I thought'. For example on a few occasions I asked different educators what they thought was the role of the educator at the morning tea tables. Often they would reply, and then ask 'what do you think?" To not have answered would have been rude, and not building on reciprocal relationships with the educators, but to share too much, may have been seen as criticizing them, or challenging them to change. This balancing continued throughout the research.

The use of morning teatime as a keyhole through which to study the organisational culture was problematic in an unanticipated way. Many ideas were expressed at the focus groups,

in informal interviews, and through the documentation in the centre that encompassed the wider centre culture. Because these were not directly evident in or linked to the morning teatime, they could not be incorporated in the study. In not doing so, I may have portrayed the centres in an incomplete way. Whilst the morning teatime episodes were useful to gather some data about children's learning, I found them not wide enough for a complete consideration of the centre's organisational culture. Because I have only described certain elements of the cultures of the two playcentres as they pertained to the morning teatime, it cannot be assumed that these findings describe the whole culture. It must also be realised that the findings belong to each centre, as it existed at the time of the research.

The underlying values and beliefs of centre members required direct discussion with the participants on the topic. Although I validated much of my findings with the participants, I had not planned for any in-depth discussions directly about the values on which their centre was based. Whilst this was raised in the focus groups using questions such as 'what makes this a good place to belong to' a further time on delving into their shared beliefs and values would have added consensual data. The tacit beliefs identified in this research, therefore are rather suggestions on my part taken from espoused values, documentation and practice, rather than thoroughly worked through ideas on the part of the participants.

The groups from neither centre wished to meet for a second time. In my not wishing to impose on them, I did not stress the importance of a joint exploration into their organisational culture, which in, hindsight, would have strengthened the data. Possible mechanisms for co-ownership in the research were not considered until partway through the fieldwork. Had the research, or at least the research focus, been initiated by the centre members, or had it been devised as action research, the involvement of the educators would have been greater. Like Hatherly (1997) I felt the research was my project, which the centre was willingly allowing to happen, but was not owning.

From a positive perspective, the settings of these playcentres were appropriate for the researcher, in that during the whole time I felt very at ease in both centres. The adults and children accepted my presence on session, with the main issue being my constant awareness to be present, but not to become involved in ways that would have affected the normal flow between participants. However, my prior commitment and involvement with playcentre is likely to have influenced my interpretation to an unknown degree.

The case studies, using ethnographic methods were ideal for searching out the peculiarities of each centre. However, to reach the essence of each centre would have taken several more hours in deep discussion and reflection with the participants, and taking into account the wholeness of the centre operation, not merely the keyhole chosen.

6.7 Contributions of the research

The present study has added to the body of literature considering organisational culture within the early childhood sector. Most of the organisational culture within education is linked to improvement, but there is a small (Hatherly, 1997, 2000; McLeod, 2002) discussion beginning as to the relevance of considering organisational culture within early childhood in New Zealand as having underlying importance in the functioning of a centre. The present study contributes to this in linking organisational culture with curriculum for children.

The dual perspectives of organisational culture and socio-cultural theory and their coalescence in the community of learners discussion highlights the multiplicity of views that are now apparent within the early childhood education field. Early childhood centres are now planned to provide not only education for children, but also learning for adults (Kiley & Jensen; Whalley, 2001). This substantiates the historical Playcentre foundation of centres providing education for adults and their young children. It is an argument for providing education for adults because it benefits the children's learning; that the children's learning is affected by the adults learning around them.

Edwards (2003) applauds Fleer's extension of Rogoff's planes of analysis to the field of early childhood. She notes that it is a "theoretical springboard from which the issues arising from a postmodernist critique of developmental theory may be addressed" (p. 258). The current study adds to the body of research which can be used for this purpose.

The five filters that guided analysis of the organisational culture have added another methodology for those wishing to investigate the culture of educational settings. They

provided specific ways of considering the culture, that were appropriate, especially where the present study was conducted on just one routine happening within the centre.

6.8 Implications of the research for early childhood education

The current research has implications in the early childhood field for practitioners, policy makers and theorists.

6.8.1 Implications for practitioners

A key implication of acknowledging that young children's learning is embedded in a social situation is that practitioners must become reflective with regard to the contexts in which children learn and the organisational cultures of their early childhood centre. The organisational culture shapes how participants behave, and therefore the experiences provided for children; and is, in turn, modified or maintained by these actions. Because every centre is a product of its members' thoughts and actions (Senge et al., 2000) time must be set aside for members to engage in critical analysis of their behaviours, espoused values and underlying assumptions.

It is also important that practitioners actively seek for time to reflect collectively on their practices, to consider why things are done the way they are, what tools (Vygotsky, 1978) are in use, and to be able to justify why they are doing it: to link theory and practice. Both centres enjoyed talking about the morning tea routine, but in both it was obvious that the routine as such had not been the subject of reflective thinking for some time. At Rimu, some the educators were quite disturbed when the length of the morning tea routine was made obvious to them. Several educators admitted they had not considered the reasons for some of their actions, and it became obvious that extended time for communal or individual reflection of practice was lacking.

The four foundation principles of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b) require practitioners to consider the totality of young children's learning. The routines in a centre are a significant part of the child's day. However, as this study showed, much learning was occurring during the morning teatime that educators were not always aware of, nor had

taken into account in their planning. The opportunity for children's learning, thus, may not have been as effective as possible. The place of routines, such as morning tea, requires careful consideration.

In summary, the early childhood settings in New Zealand, where there are distinctive or culturally defined social environments that determine children's opportunities for social interaction and activity require practitioner reflection. In Kauri, where the emphasis for the whole session was on children learning through play, the morning tea routine was held to a minimum, with the goal to refresh the children (and adults) physically and socially. In contrast, at Rimu, consistent with their aim to develop children's cognitive skills through group activities as well as play, the educators planned for literacy, numeracy, and oral activities during the morning tea routine. Such facets in each centre need careful thought about their place in the centre.

6.8.2 Implications for policy and theorists

This study demonstrates the need for scholars and policymakers in the field of early childhood education to explore the place of organisational culture in the quality debate. Such studies can surface the context for the children's learning, which, from a socio-cultural view, is implicit. A query for debate is whether organisational culture of the centre makes more difference than the traditional quality indicators. As Wiltz and Klein (2001) found, traditional quality measures did not capture the essence of a centre, and the either/or simplicity of the high-low quality paradigm was problematic. The worth of a centre needs to be defined more broadly than by quality indicators and be inclusive of its organisational culture.

A debate needs to be initiated and freely argued about the strength of the diversity of early childhood settings in New Zealand. If, as has been indicated in this study, learning experiences for children are interwoven in a centre's organisational culture, then the experiences will differ from centre to centre. The worth of this in supporting a diverse society in New Zealand merits attention, as do mechanisms for describing and justifying such differences.

The centre culture is steered and maintained by leaders within the organisation (Schein, 1992). While leadership has not been a part of this study, with the rising interest in

leadership in early childhood education in New Zealand (McLeod, 2002; Scrivens, 2003; Thornton, 2003) it is relevant to point out that the link between organisational culture and leadership needs thorough examination. Where change in a centre is warranted to improve children's learning experiences, the person leading the change needs to be aware of the organisational culture, and whether being open to change is a taken-for-granted, or whether stability and history are valued more. In a similar vein, McLeod posits the idea that the requirement to have more fully qualified staff members may not have any effect on practices, if the centre culture works against the implementation of new or different ideas that these teachers may bring. The existence of organisational culture is real and warrants attention.

In summary, the findings of this research, along with those of McLeod (2002), indicate that the organisational culture of an early childhood centre has a major influence for the provision for children's learning, and the quality of this provision. This point needs to be taken into account by policy makers, and informed by further research, for future policies in early childhood education.

6.9 Further research

The findings of this research provide support for more research into organisational culture within early childhood in New Zealand. This study comprised two very small case studies in Playcentre; therefore, research into other types of service would provide a variety of insights into the characteristics of organisational culture in early childhood settings in New Zealand. The research further requires more studies into the relationship between organisational culture and children's learning experiences. Through this, leaders and practitioners can become familiar with the permeating facets of organisational culture in order to understand it in their early childhood community and for curriculum implementation. In this way changes, if necessary, can be made so that the culture of the early childhood service creates a positive learning environment for children.

In line with Smith et al. (2003), this research also shows the necessity for early childhood education to be looked at more widely than just in provision for children. From an ecological perspective, the child's family and community must be taken into consideration.

In the current research, both playcentres, in operating as a community of learners, had goals not only for the children but for the parents also. Overall plans for learning for both were in evidence. Because of the intimate involvement of parents in the daily running of sessions, the relationships that existed, expectations and values were very different from other centres. If centres are to be more reflective on their practices and the basis for these, then research is needed to identify the means for this.

Although this study highlighted the dichotomy between sociocultural philosophy and the individualism seen in the centres, the issue was not fully investigated. Studies of how early childhood centres, especially those that were in operation before the educational reforms of the late 1980s, have adapted or adopted the philosophical basis of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b), would add further to our knowledge of early childhood settings in New Zealand.

Finally, consideration needs to be made on how educators' practice changes or develops. If the answer to this lies within the organisational culture of a centre, as this thesis has argued, then mechanisms within centres need investigating, which allow effective implementation of government policies and new early childhood theoretical positions.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the two analyses and discussed a cultural theme that underpinned happenings within the two playcentres that was developed from the fieldwork within each centre. The concept of a community of learners was used to explain the organisational cultural meaning underlying much of the behaviour of adults and children within the two playcentres. In Chapter 4, analysis of the organisational culture identified some of the surface and underlying assumptions of the members of each centre. The analysis in Chapter 5 described children's learning during the morning tea routine from a socio-cultural perspective. However, these two analyses separately did not provide an adequate basis for an interpretation of the children's learning experiences in a culturally meaningful way. By focussing on the routine of morning tea, and by using a cultural theme, it was possible to understand the effect that the organisational culture had on the learning experiences. More importantly, considering the children's learning within the

culture of the organisation validates it for that group of families, rather than through a comparison with other early childhood settings.

The issue arose of the tension in the centre between child centredness and community. The early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996b) is based on socio-cultural philosophy, stressing learning through community. Requirements under the current regulations, as written in the *Desirable Objectives and Practices* (Ministry of Education, 1996a), refer mainly to the learning of the individual child. Developmental theories, used in the centres in the past, stress the importance of learning based on the needs of a child. In practice, the centres showed elements of all viewpoints with some confusion between.

The strength of this work lies in the contextualised data sets from two playcentres, sharing some aspects, but also differing from each other. Observations of children and adults and conversations with adults directly tapped into the day-to-day lived experiences in each centre, providing a contextualised picture of them as learning organisations. The adult participants spoke about what was important to them and their families. The children and adults were the ones that were both operating in, and adding to, the centre culture. They provide the evidence that a centre culture does affect the learning of all involved in the centre.

The links between the individual and the sociocultural and physical context are multidirectional; the culture or context does not cause or 'explain' development any more than individuals create culture. Instead, the causal link between these is one that is transactional or co-constructive. Each playcentre, while nationally funded, and regionally organised, was locally administered and shaped by the local community to meet its needs and to fit its beliefs.

If, as this thesis argues, the organisational culture affects young children's learning, then quality not only rests with the qualifications of teachers and other legislative requirements, but also on the group ethic, the organisational culture of the centre. The contexts of the child's experiences must be taken into account. Playcentre has long relied on parents, involved in on-going learning, rather than trained teachers. The priority has been on creating and maintaining a positive learning environment for all involved, rather than a few 'knowledgeable others' sharing with children and their parents. The learning by the adults

within each centre was positively based on the centre culture. In basing learning within the socio-cultural model, then the organisational culture is all-important in determining the experiences children have within the centre. By definition, consideration of organisational culture is unavoidable.

Competence is culturally relative (Smith, 1996; Wenger, 1998). The relational interdependency of people and their world, the activity they are engaged in, and the meanings inherent in it are emphasised in a theory of social practice (Vygotsky, 1978). The world in which children and adults operate and learn is socially constituted and it is within this and through this that the learning occurs. The present study has identified that the organisational culture of an early childhood centre does impact on learning experiences for young children and thus the meanings and knowledge inherent in an early childhood community are critical.

Reference Document

Agee, J. (2002). "Winks upon winks": multiple lenses on settings in qualitative educational research. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 15*(5), 569-585.

Ainscow, M., Hargreaves, D., & Hopkins, D. (1995). Mapping the process of change in school: The development of six new research techniques. *Evaluation and Research in Education, 9*(2), 75-90.

Aitken, H., & McAllister, T. (2003, September). *Re-examining routine.* Paper presented at 8th Early Childhood Convention. Palmerston North.

Anning, A. & Edwards, A. (1999). *Promoting children's learning from birth to five: Developing the new early years professional.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Austin, M., Peat, A., Riddell, A., Cooper, I., Tait, J., & Edwards, W. (1999). *Review of the length of the school day and the school year.* Wellington: Working party on the school day and the school year.

Bartlett, L. (2001). Seeing the big picture. In B. Rogoff, C. Turkanis & L. Bartlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community* (pp. 49-57). New York: Oxford University Press.

Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Beare, H., Caldwell, B., & Millikan, R. (1989). *Creating an excellent school: Some new management techniques.* London: Routledge.

Bell, N. (1990). *Theorising practice in early childhood education.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Ben-Ari, E. (1997). *Body projects in Japanese childcare: Culture, organisation and emotions in a preschool.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.

Birch, L. (1980). Effects of peer model's food choices and eating behaviours on preschoolers' food preferences. *Child Development, 51,* 489-496.

Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001). *Focus groups in social research.* London: Sage.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bolman, L., & Deal, L. (Eds.). (1997). *Reframing organizations: artistry, choice and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bourke, R. (2000). *Students' conceptions of learning and self assessment in context.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Branen, L., Fletcher, J., & Myers, L. (1997). Effects of pre-portioned and family-style food service on preschool children's food intake and waste at snacktime. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 12*(10), 88-95.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs.* (Rev. ed.).Washington, WA: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Broekstra, G. (1998). An organisation is a conversation. In D. Grant, T. Keenoy, & C. Oswick. (Eds.), *Discourse and organization* (pp. 152-176). London: Sage.

Brown, A. (1994). The advancement of learning. *Educational Researcher, 23*(8), 4-12.

Brown, A. (1997). Transforming schools into communities of thinking and learning about serious matters. *The American Psychologist, 52*(4), 399-414.

Burton, J., & Lyons, M. (2000). When does a teacher teach? The Queensland early childhood profession on trial. In J. Hayden (Ed.), *Landscapes in early childhood education: Cross national perspectives on empowerment. A guide for the new millennium* (pp. 271-290). New York: Peter Lang.

Bush, T. (1995). *Theories of educational management* (2nd ed.). London: Paul Chapman.

Carr, M. (2001a). A sociocultural approach to learning orientation in an early childhood setting. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 14*(4), 525-542.

Carr, M. (2001b). *Assessment in early childhood settings: Learning stories.* London: Paul Chapman.

Coady, M. (2001). Ethics in early childhood research. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 64-72). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Cole, M. (1985). The zone of proximal development: Where culture and cognition create each other. In J. Wertsch (Ed.), *Culture, communication and cognition: Vygotskian perspectives* (pp. 146-161). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cole, M. (1996). *Culture in mind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cole, M. (1999). Cultural psychology: Some principles and a concrete example. In Y. Engström, R. Miettinen & J. Punamäki (Eds.), *Perspectives on activity theory* (pp. 87-106). Cambridge: University Press.

Corbett, H., Firestone, W., & Rossman, G. (1987). Resistance to planned change and the sacred in school cultures. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 23*(4), 36-59.

Corsaro, W. (1992). Interpretive reproduction in children's peer cultures. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 55*(2), 160-178.

Cullen, J. (1997). The use of group and individual interviews with young children. *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education, 1,* 15-22.

Cullen, J. (1998). Emergent learners: Making the transition to school learning. *Childrenz Issues, 2*(1), 69-72.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1999*). Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Densem, A., & Chapman, B. (2000*). Learning together the Playcentre way*. Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Department of Education. (1988a). *Before five: Early childhood care and education in New Zealand.* Wellington: Government Printer.

Department of Education. (1988b). *Education to be more: Report of the early childhood care and education working group.* (Meade Report). Wellington: Government Printer.

Denzin, N. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Depree, L., & Hayward, K. (2001, December). *Creating changes to culture: Using the Quality Journey resource as a reflective tool.* Paper presented at New Zealand Association for Research in Education Conference.

Dobbert, M., & Kurth-Schai, R. (1992). Systematic ethnography: Towards an evolutionary science of education and culture. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy & Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 93-159). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Dockett, S. (1995). Children as theorists: Developing a theory of mind. In M. Fleer (Ed.), *DAP centrism: Challenging developmentally appropriate practice.* (pp. 55-70). Watson, ACT: Australian Early Childhood Association.

Dockett, S. (1998). Constructing understandings through play in the early years. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 66*(1), 105-116.

Dockett, S., & Fleer, M. (1999). *Play and pedagogy in early childhood: Bending the rules.* Sydney: Harcourt.

Doxey, I. (2001). The kindergarten landscape. In J. Hayden (Ed.), *Landscapes in early childhood education: Cross national perspectives on empowerment. A guide for the new millennium* (pp. 409-426). New York: Peter Lang.

Edwards, A. (2000). Research and practice: is there a dialogue? In H. Penn (Ed.), *Early childhood services: Theory, policy and practice* (pp. 184-193). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Edwards, A. (2001). Qualitative designs and analysis. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 117-135). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Edwards, S. (2003) New directions: Charting the paths for the role of sociocultural theory in early childhood education and curriculum. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 4*(3), 251-266.

Egan-Robertson, A., & Willett, J. (1997). Students as ethnographers, thinking and doing ethnography. In A. Egan-Robertson & D. Bloome (Eds.), *Students as researchers of culture and language in their own communities* (pp. 1-32). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Escobar, A. (1999). Factors influencing children's dietary practices: A review. *Family Economics and Nutrition Review, 12*(3/4), 45-55.

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation*. London: Routledge.

Farrar, M., & Goodman, G. (1990). Differences in scripts and episodic memory. In R. Fivush & J. Hudson (Eds.), *Knowing and remembering in young children* (pp. 30-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Farrell, A., Tayler, C., & Tennent, L. (2002). Early childhood services: What can children tell us? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 27*(3), 13-18.

Farver, J. (1999). Activity setting analysis: A model for examining the role of culture in development. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Socio-cultural perspectives* (pp. 99-127). Cambridge: University Press.

Fasoli, L. (2003). Reflections on doing research with young children. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 28*(1), 7-12.

Fleer, M. (1995). Does cognition lead development, or does development lead cognition? In M. Fleer (Ed.), *DAP centrism: Challenging developmentally appropriate practice* (pp. 11-22). Watson, ACT: Australian Early Childhood Association.

Fleer, M. (2003a). Post-Vygotskian lenses on Western early childhood education: Moving the debate forward. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 11*(1), 55-67.

Fleer, M. (2003b). Early childhood education as an evolving 'community of practice' or as lived 'social reproduction': Researching the 'taken for granted'. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 4*(1), 64-79.

Fleet, A., & Patterson, C. (1998). Beyond the boxes: Planning for real knowledge and live children. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 23*(4), 31-35.

Flick, U. (1992). Triangulation revisited: Strategy of validation or alternative? *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 22*(2), 175-197.

Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Gaskin, S. (1999). Children's daily lives in a Mayan village. In A. Göncü (Ed.), *Children's engagement in the world: Socio-cultural perspectives* (pp. 25-61). Cambridge: University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* New York: Longman.

Goldman, E. (1998). The significance of leadership style. *Educational Leadership, 55*(7), 20-22.

Goldschmidt, J. (1998). How leadership emerged in playcentre. In S. Stover (Ed.), *Good clean fun: New Zealand's playcentre movement* (pp. 39-46). Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2003, September). *Bridging cultures with understanding and sensitivity.* Keynote Address at 8th Early Childhood Convention, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Goodwin, W., & Goodwin, L. (1996). *Understanding quantitative and qualitative research in early childhood education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Gordon, S. (2004). *Professional development for school improvement: Empowering learning communities*. Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Greenwood, M., & Gaunt, H. (1994). *Total quality management for schools.* London: Cassell.

Grey, A. (1975). Playcentre focus on family. *Playcentre Journal, 33*, 2.

Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (1997). *The new language of qualitative method.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Guerra, M. (1989). Verbal swaggering: Lunchtime grotesqueries in the child care centre. *Play and Culture, 2*, 197-202.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Hanks, W. (1991). Foreward. In J. Lave & E. Wenger, *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation* (pp. 13-24). Cambridge: University Press.

Hännikäinen, M. (2001). Playful actions as a sign of togetherness in day care centres. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 9*(2), 125-134.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hargreaves, A. (1997). Cultures of teaching and educational change. In M. Fullan (Ed.), *The challenge of school change. A collection of articles* (pp. 57-84). Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight.

Hargreaves, D. (1995). School culture, school effectiveness and school improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 6*(1), 23-46.

Harms, T., & Clifford, R. (1980). *Early childhood environment rating scale.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hatch, J. A. (Ed.). (1995). *Qualitative research in early childhood settings.* Westport: Praeger.

Hatherly, A. (1997). *Phoenix Rising? A case study of the organisational culture of a childcare centre.* Unpublished research project, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Hatherly, A. (1999). Digging Deep: But who gets the pickings when the researcher goes home? *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education, 3*, 3- 13.

Hatherly, A. (2000). Organisational culture: Quality's soulmate. *Early Education, 23*, 27-32.

Hedges, H. (2001). Knock, Knock! Who's there? A researcher! *Early Education, 25*, 7-12.

Hedges, H. (2002). *Subject content knowledge in early childhood curriculum and pedagogy.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Hill, D., Reid, R., & Stover, S. (1998). More than educating children. The evolutionary nature of Playcentre's philosophy of education. In S. Stover (Ed.), *Good clean fun: New Zealand's playcentre movement* (pp. 30-38). Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Hill, S. (1994). Co-operative communities in early childhood. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 19*(4), 44-48.

Hine, A., & Newman, L. (1996). Empowering young children's thinking: The role of the early childhood educator. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 21*(4), 39-45.

Holmes, R. (1992). Play during snacktime. *Play & Culture, 5,* 295-304.

Hurst, K. (1995). *Monitoring quality in early childhood education.* Dunedin: University of Otago.

Hyson, M., Hirsch-Pasek, K., & Rescorla, L. (1990). The classroom practices inventory: An observation instrument based on NAEYC's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices for 4- and 5-year-old children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 5,* 475-494.

Jacob, E. (1987). Qualitative research traditions: A review. *Review of Educational Research, 57*(1), 1-50.

Jacob, E. (1992). Culture, context and cognition. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 293-336). San Diego: Academic Press.

Janesick, V. (2000). The choreography of qualitative research design. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 379-399). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Johnston, M. (2001). Constructing ourselves: The beginning of an evolving philosophy. In B. Rogoff, C. Turkanis & L. Bartlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community* (pp. 21-32). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jordan, B. (2002). *Co-constructing learning: Empowering children and teachers.* Paper presented for Early Childhood Associate Professional Development. Massey University College of Education, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Joyce, A. (2000). *Effectiveness in changing a primary school's culture: A case study.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Keesing-Styles, L. (1999). Playcentre and the holy grail: The quest for educational quality management. *New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning, 27*(1), 16-31.

Kieviet, F., & Vandenberghe, R. (Eds.). (1993). *School culture, school improvement, and teacher development.* Leiden University: DSWO Press.

Kiley, T., & Jensen, R. (2003). Assessing the climate of an early childhood centre by using key features of organisational culture. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 11*(2), 77-100.

Kirshner, D., & Whitson, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Situation cognition: social, semiotic and psychological perspectives.* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Klein, E., Kantor, R., & Fernie, D. (1988). What do young children know about school? *Young Children, 43*(5), 32-39.

Knox, H. (1995). *Feminism, femininity and motherhood in post-world war II New Zealand.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Konzal, J. (2001). Collaborative inquiry – a means of creating a learning community. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16,* 95-115.

Kotter, J., & Heskett, J. (1992). *Corporate culture and performance.* New York: The Free Press.

Kruger, A., & Tomasello, M. (1996). Cultural learning and learning culture. In D. Olson and N. Torrance (Eds.), *The handbook of education and human development* (pp. 369-387). Cambridge, MA: Backwell.

Lambert, B. (1995). Reasoning and problem-solving: Contemporary theoretical perspectives. In M. Fleer (Ed.), *DAP centrism: Challenging developmentally appropriate practice* (pp. 71-86). Watson, ACT: Australian Early Childhood Association.

Lave, J. (1993). The practice of learning. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding practice: perspectives on activity and context* (pp. 3-34). Cambridge: University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: University Press.

Lewis, D. (1994). Organizational Change: Relationships between reactions, behaviour and organizational performance. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 7*(5), 41-55.

Lidington, T. (2000). *'Mat weaving.' Factors influencing the implementation of Te Whāriki.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Lubeck, S., Jessup, P., deVries, M., & Post, J. (2001). The role of culture in program improvement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16*, 499-523.

Lubeck, S., & Kezar, A. (2002). Constructions of Head Start as an organisation: Views from the field. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 3*(1), 3-18.

MacNaughton, G. (2003). Eclipsing voice in research with young children. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 28*(1), 36-43.

Madrid, E. (2003). Focus groups in feminist research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (2nd ed.) (pp. 363-388). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Magarian, V. (2001). Respect from respect. In B. Rogoff, C. Turkanis & L. Barlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community* (pp. 106-107). New York: Oxford University Press.

Mallory, B., & New, R. (1994). Social constructivist theory and principles of inclusion: Challenges for early childhood special education. *Journal of Special Education, 28*(3), 322-337.

Massey University. (2000). *Code of ethical conduct for teaching and research involving human subjects.* Retrieved November 11, 2001 from http://www.massey.ac.nz/muhec.

May, H. (1997). *The discovery of early childhood.* Auckland: University Press with Bridget Williams Books.

May, H. (1999). The price of partnership: The 'before five' decade. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 34*(1), 18-27.

McCaleb, S. (1994). *Building communities of learners: A collaboration among teachers, students, families, and community.* New York: St Martin's Press.

McDonald, G. (1982). *Working and learning: A participatory project on parent-helping in the New Zealand Playcentre.* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J. (2001). *Professional communities and the work of high school teaching.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McLeod, L. (2002). *Leadership and management in early childhood centres: A qualitative case study.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

McNaughton, S. (2002). *Meeting of minds.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Meade, A. (2000). The early childhood landscape in New Zealand. In J. Hayden (Ed.), *Landscapes in early childhood education: Cross-national perspectives on empowerment – a guide for the new millennium* (pp. 83-93). New York: Peter Lang.

Meade, E. (1978). *An organisational study of the free kindergarten and playcentre movements in New Zealand.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ministry of Education. (1993). *Te Whāriki: Draft guidelines for developmentally appropriate programmes in early childhood services.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1996a). *Revised statement of desirable objectives and practices.* Wellington: GP Print.

Ministry of Education. (1996b). *Te Whāriki: Early childhood curriculum.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (1999). *The quality journey: He haerenga whai hua. Improving quality in early childhood services.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education. (2002). *Pathways to the future: Ngā huarahi arataki. A 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education.* Wellington: Learning Media.

Moll, L., & Whitmore, K. (1993). Vygotsky in classroom practice: Moving from individual transmission to social transaction. In E. Forman, N. Minick, & C. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's development* (pp. 19-42). New York: Oxford.

Morgan, D. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Morris, B. (1982). Foreward. In G. McDonald, *Working and learning: A participatory project on parent-helping in the New Zealand Playcentre* (pp. v-vii). Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Morris, B. (1999). Young children's right to time for play. *Early Education, 20*, 23-28.

Moyles, J. (2002). Observation as a research tool. In M. Coleman & A. Briggs (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management* (pp. 172-195). London: Paul Chapman.

Murray, C. (2000). Learning about children's social and emotional needs at snack time – nourishing the body, mind, and spirit of each child. *Young Children, 55*(2), 43-52.

New Zealand Playcentre Federation. (1999). *Vision document.* Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Nias, J., Southworth, G., & Yeomans, R. (1989). *Staff relationships in the primary school: A study of organisational cultures.* London: Cassell.

Nivala, V. (1998). Theoretical perspectives on educational leadership. In E. Hujala, & A. Puroila (Eds.), *Towards understanding leadership in early childhood context* (pp. 48-61). Oula: Oula University Press.

Ott, J. (1989). *The organisational culture perspective.* Pacific Grove: Brooks / Cole.

Owens, R. (1995). *Organizational behaviour in education* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park: Sage.

Penn, H. (Ed.). (2000). *Early childhood services: Theory, policy and practice.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Peters, T., & Waterman, R. Jr. (1982). *In search of excellence.* New York: Harper & Row.

Peterson, K., & Deal, T. (1998). How leaders influence the culture of schools: Realising a positive school climate. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 28-30.

Playcentre Education. (2000). *The Playcentre Education Diploma.* Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Podmore, V. (1992). *Meeting their needs: A national-level collaborative study of Playcentre children aged under two and a half years.* Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Poskitt, J. (1989). *An ethnographic study of two schools: Some aspects of school culture and the significance for change.* Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Prosser, J. (1999). The evolution of school culture research. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *School culture* (pp. 1-14). London: Paul Chapman.

Ritchie, J. (2001). Reflections in collectivism in early childhood teaching in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In S. Grieshaber & G. Cannella (Eds.), *Embracing identities in early childhood education* (pp. 133-147). New York: Teachers College Press.

Rodd, J. (2001). Building leadership expertise of future early childhood professionals. *Journal of Early Childhood Teachers Education, 22,* 9-12.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B. (1993). Children's guided participation and participatory appropriation in sociocultural activity. In R. Wozniak & K. Fischer (Eds.), *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments* (pp. 121-153). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rogoff, B. (1996). Developmental transitions in children's participation in sociocultural activities. In A. Sameroff & M. Haith (Eds.), *The five to seven year shift: The age of reason and responsibility* (pp. 273-294). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rogoff, B. (1998). Cognition as a collaborative process. In W. Damon (Ed,), *Handbook of Child Psychology, Vol 2* (5th ed) (pp. 679-744). New York: John Wiley.

Rogoff, B. (2001). Becoming a co-operative parent in a parent co-operative. In B. Rogoff, C. Turkanis & L. Bartlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community (*pp. 145-155). New York: Oxford University Press

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B., Baker-Sennett, J., Lacasa, P., & Goldsmith, D. (1995). Development through participation in sociocultural activity. In J. Goodnow, P. Miller & F. Kessel (Eds.), *Cultural practices as contexts for development* (pp. 45-65). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rogoff, B., Bartlett, L., & Turkanis, C. (2001). Lessons about learning as a community. In B. Rogoff, C. Turkanis & L. Bartlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community* (pp. 3-17). New York: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B., Matusov, E., & White, C. (1996). Models of teaching and learning: Participation in a community of learners. In D. Olsen & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The handbook of education and human development: New models of learning, teaching and schooling* (pp. 388-414). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Rogoff, B., Paradise, R., Arauz, R., Correa-Chávez, M., & Angelillo, C. (2003). Firsthand learning through intent participation. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54,* 175-203.

Rogoff, B., Turkanis, C., & Bartlett, L. (Eds.). (2001*). Learning together: Children and adults in a school community.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosenholtz, S. (1991). *Teachers' workplace: The social organisation of schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Rosenthal, M. (2003). Quality in early childhood education and care: A cultural context. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 11*(2), 101-116.

Roth, W-M. (2001). Situating cognition. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 10*(1&2), 27-61.

Sallis, E. (2002). *Total quality management in education* (3rd ed.). London: Kogan Page.

Sameroff, A., & Haith, M. (1996). (Eds.). *The five to seven year shift: the age of reason and responsibility*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schein, E. (1991). The role of the founder in the creation of organisational culture. In P. Frost, L. Moore, M. Louis, C. Lundberg & J. Martin (Eds.), *Reframing organisational culture* (pp. 14-25). Newbury Park: Sage.

Schein, E. (1992). *Organisational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schensul, S., Schensul, J., & LeCompte, M. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews and questionnaires.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Schratz, M. (Ed.). (1993). *Qualitative voices in educational research.* London: Falmer Press.

Scrivens, C. (2002). Redefining leadership for early childhood services. *Delta, 54*(1&2), 43-56.

Scrivens, C. (2003). Educational leadership: What might we learn from research in schools? *Early Education, 31,* 29-35.

Selman, R. (2001). Talk time: Programming communicative interaction into the toddler day. *Young Children*, 56(3), 15-18.

Senge, P. (1990*). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation.* New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn.* London: Nicholas Brealey.

Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building community in schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. (2000). *The lifeworld of leadership: Creating culture, community and personal meaning in our schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Singer, E. (1996). Prisoners of the method. Breaking open the child-centred pedagogy in day care centres. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 4*(2), 28-40.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Siraj-Blatchford, J. (2001). An ethnographic approach to researching young children's learning. In G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe, & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 193-207). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Smith, A. (1996). The early childhood curriculum from a sociocultural perspective. *Early Child Development and Care, 115*, 51-64.

Smith, A. (2003). What is special about early childhood education in New Zealand? Editorial. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 11*(1), 3-6.

Smith, A., Duncan, J., Marshall, K., Carr, M., Jones, C., & Lee., W. (2003, September). *Children's perspectives on their learning: Dispositions in social context.* Paper presented at the 8th Early Childhood Convention. Palmerston North.

Somerset, G. (1990). The beginnings of parent involvement. In *Hugs and Hassles: Parents and children growing together: He awhi he porearea* (pp. 9-14). Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Sorin, R. (2003). Research with children: A rich glimpse into the world of childhood. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 28*(1), 31-36.

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1992). Cultural process and ethnography: An anthropological perspective. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 53-92). San Diego: Academic Press.

Spodek, B. (Ed.). (1993*). Handbook of research on the education of young children.* New York: Macmillan.

Spodek, B. & Saracho, O. (1990). Early childhood curriculum construction and classroom practice. *Early Child Development and Care, 61*, 1-9.

Spodek, B. & Saracho, O. (Eds.). (1991). *Issues in early childhood curriculum.* Columbia University, NY: Teachers College Press.

Staessens, K. (1993). The professional culture at "the Cornflower". In F. Kieviet & R. Vandenberghe (Eds.), *School culture, school improvement and teacher development* (pp. 7-43). Leiden: DSWO Press.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stanek, K., Abbott, D., & Cramer, S. (1990). Diet quality and the eating environment of preschool children. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 90*(11), 1582-1585.

Stoll, L. & Fink, D. (1996). *Changing our schools.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Stover, S. (1998a). Fellow travellers- adult education amongst children: Part two: Playcentre as a social movement. *New Zealand Journal of Adult Education, 26*(2), 34-46.

Stover, S. (Ed.). (1998b). *Good clean fun: New Zealand's Playcentre movement.* Auckland: New Zealand Playcentre Federation.

Stover, S. (1999). *The role of parents in early childhood education: Case studies in consultation.* Unpublished master's thesis, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Surman, L. (2003). Listening to teachers listening to children: One child's story. *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education, 6,* 135-140.

Tammivaara, J., & Enright, D. (1986). On eliciting information: Dialogues with child informants. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 17*, 218-238.

Thornton, K. (2003, May). *Pathways to the future: Breaking the drought.* Paper presented at the Autumn Research Day: Strengthening Leadership. Wellington College of Education, New Zealand.

Vandenberghe, R., D'hertefelt, M., & de Wever, H. (1993). Schools as implementers of an externally proposed improvement program. In F. Kieviet & R. Vandenberghe (Eds.), *School culture, school improvement, and teacher development* (pp. 55-75). Leiden University: DSWO Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Walker, R. (1993). The conduct of educational case studies: Ethics, theory and procedures. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Controversies in classroom research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 163-195). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Watson, M., & Fischer, K. (1980). Development of social roles in elicited and spontaneous behaviour during preschool years. *Developmental Psychology, 16*(5), 483-494.

Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Towards a sociocultural practice and theory of education.* Cambridge: University Press.

Wells, G. (2001). The development of a community of inquirers. In G. Wells (Ed.), *Action, talk and text: Learning and teaching through inquiry* (pp. 1-24). New York: Teachers College Press.

Wells, G. (2002). Inquiring as an orientation for learning, teaching and teacher education. In G. Wells & G. Claxton (Eds.), *Learning for life in the 21st century: Sociocultural perspectives on the future of education* (pp. 197-210). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge: University Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Wertsch, J. (1991). *Voices of the mind: A socio-cultural approach to mediated action.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Whalley, M. (2001). *Involving parents in their children's learning.* London: Paul Chapman.

Wien, C., & Kirby-Smith, S. (1998). Untiming the curriculum: A case study of removing clocks from the program. *Young Children, 53*(5), 8-13.

Wilkinson, S. (2003). Focus groups. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 184-204). London: Sage.

Williams, P. (2001). Preschool routines, peer learning and participation. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 45*(4), 317-339.

Wilson, B., & Myers, K. (2000). Situated cognition in theoretical and practical context. In D. Jonassen & S. Land. (Eds.) *Theoretical foundations of learning environments* (pp. 57-88). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wiltz, N., & Klein, E. (2001). "What do you do in child care?" Children's perceptions of high and low quality classrooms. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16*(2), 209-236.

Wolcott, H. (1992). Posturing in qualitative inquiry. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 3-52). San Diego: Academic Press.

Woods, P. (1986). *Inside schools: Ethnography in educational research*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Woods, P. (1992). Symbolic interactionalism: Theory and method. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 337-404). San Diego: Academic Press.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Description of the centres

Rimu Playcentre

The first of the playcentres in the study was a thriving early childhood centre with children from 35 families, attending from one to four sessions per week. The main sessions were the focus of the research, and I did not include the Starter Session, which operated once a week, with another 15 families. Rimu Playcentre had operated from the purpose-built centre for 24 years having begun in the local community hall. Its ties with the local primary school stemmed, in part, from its being sited next-door to the school, but also because of a strong community support of local facilities.

The centre comprised one main playroom, with kitchen alcove separated by a half-door, children's toilet area, sleep room, storeroom and adult toilet off the lobby.
Spacious grounds allowed for much large muscle play. There were soft fall areas, with moveable boxes and planks, swings, climbing bars, a fort and amphitheatre (used for stories and picnics); a 'natural area' with long grass and shrubs, a flat, hard area used for carpentry, water troughs, painting easels, tables, etc. There was a large sandpit, half of which was undercover and could be used all year round.

Inside, the variety of play areas available was wide, with the entire interior being well organised and attractively presented. Over the past few years, several areas had been updated with new equipment and fresh layouts. A variety of equipment was displayed at the children's level and available to them to choose from: collage, music, fantasy and family play, blocks, manipulative, books, science equipment, playdough, puppets. A covered area adjacent to the main building was well planned to include part of the sandpit and space for a range of activities during wet weather. The use of vinyl drop-down sides to this area meant the children could move freely to this area on all sessions. There was a good range and variety of equipment and resources to stimulate and enhance the children's learning.
Parents prepared refreshments for each morning session, consisting of a variety of fruit, (fresh and dried), cheese, sandwiches, raw vegetables, and often some baking that had been done on session.

The sessions operated for 2½ hours on a self-selected play-based programme, with a group gathering at morning teatime, and briefly (5-10 minutes) again at the conclusion of the session. For the rest of the time the children chose the activity they wished to be involved in, and the adults supported their learning in each area.

The centre was running seven sessions per week (at the time of the research) ; five general sessions, with mixed age groups; a starter session, for younger children, who attended only this session each week; and an extra session for the older children. Families chose up to five sessions per week for their children to attend.

Communication between all the adults of the centre took place in many ways: monthly newsletters, centre meetings held twice every term, minutes of the centre meetings circulated, several notice boards in use, and chatting between adults on session, or when children were dropped off and picked up.

When the centre was built 24 years ago it was a landmark in that it was the first purpose-built playcentre in the Playcentre Region. All the existing centres of the time were in old or renovated buildings.

The centre had close ties with the next-door primary school, with regular visits of those children about to turn five noted from 1978 to the present. Often older brothers and sisters of those at playcentre would chat with them during school morning teatime over the fence, and those who had recently begun school glanced over and perhaps came to talk with their 'old' friends. A newspaper article (unpublished centre history collection) reported the principal of Rimu Primary School describing the construction of the playcentre on the school grounds as a new trend in education. The close proximity and networking between the two was thought to make the transition to school a lot easier for the children.

Over the past 20 years, the centre had moved between operating five to seven sessions per week. The number of families had been generally around 30 – 35, with the session numbers reflecting this. Extra sessions were opened or closed to cater for the current need. Waiting lists had likewise fluctuated. In common with other playcentres, because parents operate the centre there had been a steady turnover of families, as children left for school or other early

childhood services. The centre had systems in place for new families, including an Introduction Booklet for all families explaining playcentre ways, routines, and ideas particular to this playcentre. One parent, who held the centre management position of Introductory Officer, gave appropriate information to new families and helped them settle into the centre.

The centre, from time to time, employed supervisors (usually parents whose children had moved onto school) although usually each session was run by a team of current parents (who received a small remuneration per term, based on their level of playcentre training). Every parent was required to take a weekly turn on the supervision team, however families were permitted time away from this because of pregnancy, a new baby, or health problems. The supervision teams were adjusted as required to allow space for new parents to join in, and to fill in any gaps left by those leaving. There was always one or two on each session with much experience, and higher levels of playcentre training. The employed supervisors were often employed for the Starter Session (younger children who do not go to the general sessions) and for the Fourth Session (an additional session for older children).

Statistics of children & families attending Rimu Playcentre

		Numbers
Age of child	Under 2	30
	2+	19
	3+	16
	4+	10
	Total children	75
	Number of families	49

Figures as at July 2002. (Annual Return 2002) (RS61P = Annual Return of Children and staff at licensed Playcentres at 1 July 2002).

The average number attending each session was 20 children, although the centre was licensed for maximum of 28 children, with 15 under-2s.

Kauri Playcentre

The building that this playcentre was housed in began life as a Presbyterian Church hall. It had been in use as a playcentre, and then had been moved to the current site in the mid 1960s. The original part of the building still had unique arched windows and a high-pitched roof. Additions on both sides had opened out more play space and the centre was in the process (at the time of the fieldwork) of having plans drawn up for major renovations, especially concerning the kitchen and toilet areas. Both these areas, while adequate, were very small making it difficult for adults and children to move freely within them. The desire was to retain the main play space (the old hall) with the openness and airiness maintained. At the time of the research, the centre was painted in light yellow and white, which accentuated the high roof and made for a very light building.

The two years before the research saw large changes in the outside area. Extra land was obtained by a new lease from the city council, and therefore the outside playing areas doubled in size. This enabled a large swing set (with changeable equipment) to be erected, the sandpit to be replaced and a large area of flat land left grassed with a mound. The remaining outdoor area consisted of bark-chipped area around a fort, with moveable boxes and planks and other climbing equipment. Two large covered areas enabled carpentry and water play and messy play to continue in all weathers. Before the sandpit was relocated, it was under cover and plans were being made to enable the new sandpit to be used in all weathers.

The centre (at the time of the research) was running six sessions per week. Four were general sessions catering for mixed age ranges from birth to school age; one was for younger children (who often attended only this session each week), and one for older children, usually four year olds, who wanted to attend an extra session. Most children began attending one or two sessions per week, and built this up to four or five sessions per week, as the family wished and as it fitted into the family pattern.

The centre did not employ supervisors, with all parents being on a roster, for one day per week. The supervision teams were formulated around adults with higher levels of playcentre training working alongside those who were just beginning. These supervision

teams were arranged at the end of each term for the following term, to allow for movement of families. Parents with higher levels of playcentre training had a reduction in the amount of the termly donation they were asked to make. The decision to do this had been made several years ago, as an incentive for parents to further their own education and to acknowledge the benefit of this for all the children and other adults.

The centre was bright and clean with much clear floor space, and an uncluttered look. One side room was cosy with carpet, couch, and cushions. The books, adult library and puzzles were located here. A separate sleep room had a cot available for babies, and a change table in it. Another change table was available in the adult toilet. The main room had equipment set out for music, collage, blocks, puzzles, fantasy and family play, science, playdough, puppets and clay. The programme in action was based on the playcentre philosophy of self-selected play. The children made choices about where they wished to play, with whom, and their level of involvement. On each session, there were some adult-guided activities, and some spontaneous play.

Communication processes in the centre were open and clear. Several large and well-organised notice boards were in evidence, with notices changing as necessary. The centre meetings were held twice a term, with the timing of these varied to cater for all families. Minutes were distributed to all families shortly afterwards. The adults on session made a special effort to chat between themselves, and with those who were dropping off or picking children.

Statistics of children & families attending Kauri Playcentre:

		Numbers
Age of child	Under 2	13
	2+	17
	3+	8
	4+	10
	Total children	48
	Number of families	39

Figures as at July 2002. (Annual Return 2002) (RS61P = Annual Return of Children and staff at licensed Playcentres at 1 July 2002).

The average number attending each session was 20 children, although the centre was licensed for maximum of 30 children, with 15 under-2s.

Appendix 2: Transcripts of coded field notes

Key at end of field notes

Observation notes	Analysis categories
6 children are 'walking' plastic animals on the puzzles table. (The idea came from a book read earlier, about a dinosaur 'stomping'). Some children outside. 4 in block corner.	
Food has been prepared in the kitchen (by one adult) – bread rolls, made earlier on session by adult and children (5 chose to join in this activity), French loaf, sliced. Fruit selection – oranges, banana, red and green apples – all cut, plus small crunchy things (nuts and bolts). There is a selection of fruit and bread attractively laid out on each of 6 large plates.	S1. Nutritious selection of food. Prepared mainly by adult. Chn involved in baking Use of large platter O' culture – pedagogy – presentation of food - valued
1 child is upset – plastic animals were being 'stomped' across the table, and then onto his hand that was resting on the table. Lorene comforts the child, then encourages the group to morning tea table (as distraction?)	S1. MT used as distraction. S1. MT = time interval OC - structural
10.20 Lorene (to the group at the puzzles table): "time to wash hands for morning tea". She goes quietly to the group in the block corner, and tells them its time to wash their hands.	S1. Respectful – adult – child R2. Rules - washing hands S1. 'washing hands' = time for MT
2 girls have sat down at the table, one with a dinosaur. Lorene (walking past): "You need to wash hands first". Children – no reaction. Lorene comes back, and checks one girl's hands, and gives more encouraging words to go and wash. Still no reaction. Lorene carries the child to the basin. The child doesn't protect and appears quite OK with this, almost a joke. The other girl follows to wash hers.	Play continues at the table S2 Health emphasis R2. Learning through direct adult attention R2 Learning through observing others OC - pedagogy - actively involved, adult encouragement S1 adult-child relationship - easy
10.22 5 children sitting ready for morning tea. 5 are washing hands. The rest are moving towards the tables and bathroom, except 4 who continue playing outside. 2 adults are also outside. Cara goes to the door and calls: "Morning tea. Everybody come and wash your hands"	OC – social S1. children waiting S1 encouraging everyone to join
10.23 8 children sitting down, 4 with dinosaurs on the table in front of them. There is a bit of 'walking' of them on the table, but calmer than the previous 'stomping'. Pamela asks adults about their drink preference. Other adults are with those who are washing hands, and one is assisting a child to change wet clothes.	S1. Care for adults. All adults involved, varying roles

10.24 Cara sits down – (middle of tables opposite side to bathroom). 15 children + Ben in highchair. Cara asks that the dinosaurs are put under the chairs during morning tea "Because the table is for eating". Evan, Amy & Judah hold song charts that they had chosen themselves from the large selection available. Cara to Judah: "Would you like that one?" (song). Nod. "OK, but you need to blow your nose first". Judah looks diffident. "I'll hold this (meaning the song card) and wait for you". Judah moves off quickly, blows nose beside the rubbish bin, drops tissue in, and washes hands. Comes back to table (it appears as if this happens often)

OC. Structural. all 1 group

R2. Rules – tables for eating only
S2. Stated rule

S1. artefact song sheet

OC – social – independence, self care

S1. health practices

Cara gives 2 more reminders about dinosaurs, and the remaining ones are put on the floor.

R2. rules

10.27 Cara: "Can you touch your taringa?" She waits a few seconds, then touches her ears. "Where's your puku? Where is your ihu? What about your waewae?" She touches each body part a few seconds after naming it. Most children listen and follow her actions. Alice & Kezia, and one other child, respond to the word, before the action.

OC – philosophical. Use of Te Reo
S1. Te Reo

Adult role model
R2. learning through observing

Pamela is in the kitchen.1 other adult is crouching beside her child at the table. New mum (Sarah) has just put her child (Aden) in highchair. 2 high chairs in use, close to main tables.

S1. all chn round tables, not all adults
OC Structural

Lots of chatter by children. Cara: "Who knows 'Sally the camel'? and immediately begins singing. 2 adults are standing round (singing). Cara sitting. Lorene is standing behind children in sight of those on opposite side of the table. All adults singing. The children's chat stopped immediately, and most joined in singing. 5 children hold up fingers to show the number of humps. 15 children at the table – all watching Cara. 2 in highchairs, one in Mum's arms.

S1. All adults positioned round table

S1. adult starts song, expects chn to follow

OC environmental all adults as role models

R2. Learning through intent participation

Cara: "Is it sunny today?" 1 minute is spent talking to the children about weather. Some children begin to chat. Cara: "Can we be quieter? My throat hurts if I talk loudly." Lorene (standing behind children, by bathroom door, opposite Cara): "hey, let's be quiet. It's a bit rude not to listen to Cara."

OC – pedagogy. listening
S1. brief talk by adult

S1. Adult supporting adult
R1. Taking an individual part, adult

Cara: "Now we're going to sing Mr Sun, Mr Golden Sun". Judah starts singing the first line. His voice is very clear and the words distinct. Cara: "Great! (to Judah) Would you like to sing it for us?" Judah stands, and starts singing from the beginning again. Cara and Pamela (adults) sing with him. This is a new song for other children. (Pamela had sung it while kneading bread earlier). The rest of children are quiet, watching Judah. Cara thanks Judah as he sits down. "We'll try that again on another day and everyone can join in."

R1 taking an individual part – child Supported by others

R2 intent participation

Cara begins singing: "I hear thunder", and begins to beat on the table. Lorene bends over children on her side, and does actions. 5 variations are done. (regular, slow, quiet, loud, whisper). All children involved.

R2. learning through observing, and participation

Ryan has been in the block corner so far, and comes over when whispered variation is done. He sits down in a space (chair left for him?)

OC – social – belonging
Child allowed to come when ready
S1. Enough room for all – space left

All children at table involved in actions and singing. Toddlers in highchairs – have food. Watching others intently.

OC pedagogy - observing
R 1 toddlers unique status – fed first

The song finishes and Cara: "Can you remember what we say?" Nothing else is said to children that the singing is over. Cara's words must also be part of the known routine. Most (if not all) children chorus: "Please may we have some morning tea" (not very loud or enthusiastically). Lorene gives out piles of plates – 4 children each have a pile to distribute to those sitting near them. Lorene gives out cups. Some children immediately begin playing with the cups and plates.

S1. Language – ritual chant
S1. Language – question by adult

S1. Artefacts – cups and plates

OC – social - play at tables

There is 1 minute between plates given and food arriving. Jugs of water are put on the tables, for children to pour their own drink. 2 plates of food are on each table. These can be reached by all - no needing to pass to others. As soon as the food is put on the table the noise from the plates ceases. Children appear quite used to helping themselves. None look to help others.

S1. Artefacts - jugs, chn to pour own drinks

OC – social
Independence
R3. learning competence in self-care

10.32 2 spills of water – all OK – cloths come out, wiped up by adults, as though a common occurrence and no big deal. It's not suggested to children to do the wiping.

S1. Artefact. Adults 'doing for children.
OC – social – independence (not)

Lorene is still standing, and bending over to pour drinks for children. Cara sitting. One Mum is at the far end of the tables, and behind children, baby on lap. Pamela is standing near the kitchen, 2 mothers are by the highchairs, with hot drinks.

S1. Artefact. Adults 'doing for children.
OC – social – independence (not)

S1. Adult bending over child to help

Cara stands and walks round and pours more drink; checks to make sure all children have a drink. Pamela: "can I remind people to have just 2 things on your plate at a time. Otherwise your tummy might get too full, and then we waste it". Judah, with a full mouth makes a noise: "aahhh" – pointing at a child with more on plate. Pamela: "That's OK, sometimes we forget." Judah appears to be not worried anymore and turns and begins a conversation with the child on his left.

R2 Learning rules
S1. Language – '2 things'

Most children are eating. There is no offering to each other, or encouragement to do so. There is little chat between children, and none between adults and children. Cara stands and goes to the kitchen and gets herself a hot drink. Remains standing in the kitchen.

S1. Concentrating on eating
OC. social – independence, self care

10.41 Lorene carries clip board (register) to other side of table (Opposite kitchen). She bends over Judah, and moves his plate, pushes his chair in (said something to him). She sits down in the chair that Cara used. Lorene: "Does anyone know what I'm going to do now?" Evan answers: "do the names" Lorene: "And today we'll say tena koe. It's Māori for hello". Each child is greeted by name, and tena koe. Eye contact and smile by adult. If no response – hello + name, then tena koe. 1 child (Judah) whispered his response, and Lorene whispered back. 1 child (Finn) no response, even after prompting. Cara kneels down by him (extra support?). She talks with him about another language he knows, Danish. There is still no response. The greeting continues to all children and adults. There is a special introduction of the new children and their mother to the others.

S1. changeover of adult in 'lead'
S1. artefact – register

S1. Calling roll

OC – philosophical. Use of Te Reo

OC – social – independence
R1 individual responses required

OC – social – belonging
Allowing child to feel comfortable before requiring participation
S1. adult moving to give support to child

10.45 All children still sitting. Most still eating. 2 adults sitting – Lorene and another, with baby on lap. 3 adults hovering.

S1. adults not all 'in group'

Scott stands and looks around. The adult near him says something to him. He carries plate and cup to kitchen. (Was it a reminder to clear his plate?)

S1. clearing own plate. Able to leave when ready
R1 individually leaving table
OC – social – independence, self care

Cara sits down at the table again. Judah stands: "Please may I be excused?" Adult: "Certainly" (tone of admiration). Another boy stands and watches this, says nothing, and leaves with plate and cup.

S1. artefact - language

R2 learning through intent participation
OC – social – independence, self care

Key
R = Rogoff. Analysis based in Rogoff's (1993, 2003) three planes
R1 = community plane
R2 = interpersonal plane
R3 = personal plane

OC = organisational culture
MT = morning tea

S = Schein. Analysis based on Schein's (1992) three levels
S1 = visible artefacts, structures, processes
S2 = articulations, espoused values
S3 = shared tacit values (not shown in this analysis)

Appendix 3: Focus group consent forms

Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

Learning and Teaching
Private Bag 11 222,
Palmerston North,
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 356 9099
Facsimile: 64 6 351 3383

Group Morning Tea at Playcentre

Focus Group Discussions

The purpose of these focus groups is to share data gathered from the observations at the centre, to discuss any trends or interesting points which have arisen from the research to date, and for centre members to ask questions of the researcher or add further information pertinent to the research. It may also be a beginning forum for the centre members to reflect on why things happen the way they do in the centre.

What is discussed will be confidential to those attending. Each discussion will be recorded for accuracy. These tapes will be transcribed as soon as practicable, with the raw data held for five years after the completion of the research project. At this point the tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed.

Consent

I have read the above information and have had any queries answered to my satisfaction.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from this group at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions. I understand my name will not be used without my permission. I understand that the information gathered will be used only for this research and publications or conference papers arising from this research project.

I will uphold confidentiality within this group, and not speak with anyone else on matters discussed here.

I agree to participate in the focus group discussion under these conditions.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 4: Focus group questions

Focus group questions

The following questions were posed, unless during the discussion arising from other questions, the point was covered. Each point has several questions, in case expansion was needed.

At both centres:

1. Tell me about your playcentre. Why have you chosen to belong here with your children? What make this place worthwhile? What good things happen here?

2. Tell me about your playcentre, in terms of morning tea. What happens, and who does it? What are the steps that lead up to it? What happens during it? Why do things happen the way they do? If a new person came into the centre, from another playcentre, how would you explain your routine (enough so they could join in fully).

3. How do you feel about morning tea? Do you enjoy it? If you had a magic wand, what if anything, would you change? Why?

4. What is the value of morning tea? What do you want children to get out of morning tea?

5. Routines can be hard to change, because often they're taken for granted, and not included in evaluations. Has anything changed (or is in the process of changing), concerning morning tea – from the time when you first began at the centre?

6. Is the morning tea time ever mentioned or talked about in planning meetings? If so, how?

7. What celebrations happen at the morning tea time? How do these come about? What happens?

8. Does your child/ren eat differently at playcentre, than at home? – In the amount or the type of food eaten? In the time they stay sitting down? What do you think this is influenced by?

9. How do you know when to begin morning tea? By the clock? Or when play has reached a natural break? Do you consider what is going on around, before you call people to the tables?

10. Why do you call the roll?

11. At what 'stage' do adults begin taking a turn – calling the roll, leading the singing, etc?

12. How similar is morning tea time at playcentre, to meals at home? Does everyone sit down together? Do the children leave when they've finished? What conversation happens?

13. What is the group culture of this learning environment? What can you take for granted about each other? What do you consider is OK behaviour, and what is not? How has the current group come up with these guidelines?

14. What else would you like to know from me and my research?

Questions specific to Rimu

1. How do you choose what to talk with the children about? (At the morning tea tables – either in the group talk part, or casual chat).

2. Some sessions have the children pouring their own drinks. Is this expected? Encouraged? What about the handing out of plates to others? What about the passing of food to others?

3. If a toddler is given a biscuit or piece of fruit before the main plates of food come out – do any other children comment? How would you answer? At what stage would you ask the child to wait? – ie when do they change from being a toddler (allowed to have some), and not?

4. Is there an optimal time-length for morning tea? How long do you think the morning tea time lasts for? (Between the first mentions of morning tea, and the first child sitting, before something happens). If the children are involved - does it matter?

Questions specific to Kauri

1. What is the role of the adult during morning teatime? As a role model for children, what do you think you need to do at morning tea time? (role model eating habits? Conversation, manners, sitting down,...)?

2. What values are the children learning – what do you think you are getting across to children? How do you do this?

3. How long does it take new children to become familiar with (to fit in with) the routine of morning tea? How about the parents?

4. At what 'stage' do toddlers graduate from high chair to sitting at the main table? Does anyone 'steer' them towards the chairs with arms? Why are the high chairs are set back from the tables? What is the place of infants / toddlers? (in that they're not brought in to be part of the group at morning tea). Whose responsibility are they?

Appendix 5: Initial permission from Playcentre Association

Playcentre Association Inc

18 February 2002

The Ethics Committee
Massey University
Private Bag
PALMERSTON NORTH

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is to confirm the Association's approval for Paulene Gibbons to observe children on session at any of our 19 playcentres whilst she is working on her masters degree.

Approval was made at our Executive Meeting last Tuesday 12 February 2002 at the Playcentre Associations Depot Office.

We look forward to having Paulene visit our centres in the near future.

Yours sincerely

PRESIDENT

Appendix 6: Initial letter to centres

Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

Learning and Teaching
Private Bag 11 222,
Palmerston North,
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 356 9099
Facsimile: 64 6 351 3383

30 May 2002

To the families within playcentres in the XX Playcentre Association,

My name is Paulene Gibbons and I have belonged to playcentre in the XX area for 16 years. I am hoping to conduct research within playcentres to understand more about what happens during the children's morning tea time, and the learning for children during and related to this routine. This research is for my thesis as part of my Masters in Education degree through Massey University.

The XX Playcentre Association is giving me support for this research and approaching centres to gauge interest in this project.

I wish to visit two playcentres between June and December 2002 for 10 session visits each. The research will involve:

- Initial interviewing with a few adults about the routine of morning tea
- Observing on session
- Informal chatting with children
- Photographs of the morning tea time
- Informal interviewing with adults
- Two focus group discussions when I can share with centre members (as many as choose to come) my findings, and check out any further information I may need to know, and to answer any questions from centre members

At this point the Association is approaching a few centres and asking them to consider taking part in this research. If there is general agreement by a centre to consider the research project, then a detailed information sheet will be made available. If the centre agrees then I will be pleased to come to your next centre meeting and answer any questions relating to the research. Individual members can decline to take part and members can also choose that their children not be observed.

Please consider this request, and let XXX, the XX Playcentre Association President, know of your response.

Thank you

Paulene Gibbons

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN protocol 02/06. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Sylvia V Rumball, Chair, Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5249, email S.V.Rumball@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix 7: Information sheets for participants

Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

Learning and Teaching
Private Bag 11 222,
Palmerston North,
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 356 9099
Facsimile: 64 6 351 3383

22.07.2002

Greetings to the families at Rimu Playcentre.

My name is Paulene Gibbons and I have belonged to playcentre in XXXX for 16 years. I am hoping to conduct research within your playcentre to understand more about what happens during the children's morning tea time, and the learning for children during and related to this routine.

This research is for my thesis as part of my Masters in Education degree through Massey University. My research supervisors are:

Dr Joy Cullen ph (06) 356 9099 ext 8955
Cushla Scrivens ph (06) 3505799 ext 8831

You may contact my supervisors if you have any concerns regarding the way in which the research is being carried out.

The XXXX Playcentre Association has given me support for this research and any queries for me can be directed through the Administration Centre, ph XXXXX.

I wish to visit your playcentre between June and December 2002. The research plan is to visit twice initially to familiarise myself with your routines, and so that the parents and children feel comfortable with my presence. I will then visit for 6 sessions in succession to carry out full observations. This will be followed by 2 further visits over subsequent weeks, to gather more data. (A total of 10 visits on session).

While I am visiting the centre I hope not to influence the children's play and participation but to observe it as it happens. As a playcentre person I understand the flow of sessions and adult's responsibilities to nurture children's learning.

My research involves:

- Initial interviewing with a few adults about the routine of morning tea
- Observing on session (leading up to, during, and following morning tea)
- Informal chatting with children (about any points which may have arisen from my observation)
- Photographs of the morning tea time (to use for a conversation starter with children and adults, and for added data)
- Informal interviewing with adults (about the morning tea time, their role in it, etc)
- Two focus group discussions when I can share with centre members (as many as choose to come) my findings, and check out any further information I may need to know, and to answer any questions from centre members.

I would like to pass on to the centre any observations of individual children, or small groups which could be of benefit for the children's profiles and planning for them. Copies of the photos will also be given to the centre. At the conclusion of the research I will share with centre members my findings (either at a centre meeting or in writing – whichever the centre prefers), and a final summary of the research findings will be given to the centre.

At this point in time I am inviting the centre to take part in this research. The XXXX Playcentre President, XXXX, initially asked your centre if I could proceed with this project. Because the centre agreed I am pleased to be at your centre meeting to answer any questions relating to the research. Individual members can decline to take part, in which case I will not observe when they are on session. Centre members can also choose that their children not be observed. If members choose to take part they can withdraw at any time throughout the research, and choose not answer any particular questions at any time. However, for the research to proceed there can only be one or two members who decline to take part.

It is not foreseen that there are any potential risks to the centre from the research and it is hoped that the knowledge gained will add to our understanding of children and their learning, and the ways in which playcentres operate. Anonymity of the centre cannot be guaranteed, as a description of this playcentre may lead to others recognising it, although its name will not be used, unless the centre wishes.

I will take notes during the main observations and will use a tape recorder when talking with children or adults to provide accuracy. These will be transcribed and the tapes and notes destroyed at the end of the project. Should somebody other than me be involved in the transcription they will be required to sign a confidentiality form. During the focus group meetings I will bring the raw data to date, and centre members are welcome to view this as it relates to themselves or their children. At all times confidentiality will be maintained as to the identity of the persons involved through the use of codenames.

At each focus group discussion an agreement will be made with those present regarding the confidentiality of information given. Participants may withdraw from these groups at any time, and any recorded participation will remain anonymous. All information gathered will be confidential to the researcher and only used for the research, and any publications or presentations resulting from it.

The rights of participants in any research are as follows. The right to:

- decline to participate;
- refuse to answer any particular questions;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded,
- anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. If, at this centre meeting, the centre agrees to participating in this research consent forms for individual permission will be circulated.

Yours

Paulene H. Gibbons

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN protocol 02/06. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Sylvia V Rumball, Chair, Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5249, email S.V.Rumball@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix 8: Consent forms

Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

Learning and Teaching
Private Bag 11 222,
Palmerston North,
New Zealand
Telephone: 64 6 356 3099
Facsimile: 64 6 351 3383

Research on Group Morning Tea at Playcentre
Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw, and to withdraw my child/ren from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name, and that of my child/ren will not be used without my permission. The information gathered will be used only for this research and publications, or conference papers, arising from this research project. The photographs will only be used in publications or presentations arising from this research project.

I agree / do not agree to being observed on session.

I agree / do not agree to my child / ren _____ being observed on session.

I agree / do not agree to being informally interviewed, either during the session or after.

I agree / do not agree to my child/ren _____ being interviewed informally on session.

I agree / do not agree to such interviewing being audio taped

I understand I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree / do not agree to being photographed during the session.

I agree / do not agree to my child/ren _____ being photographed during session.

I agree to participate, and for my child/ren to participate under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet provided by Paulene Gibbons dated 22.7.2002.

Signed:

Name:

Date: