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**EMBRACING INNOVATION AND
GAINING “OWNERSHIP” OF THE
SOCIAL STUDIES EXEMPLARS:
A CLASSROOM BASED STUDY**

***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Education
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ABSTRACT

Embracing innovation and gaining ‘ownership’ of the Social studies curriculum exemplars: a classroom based study.

This research supports the on-going national research that has accompanied the development and implementation of the New Zealand Ministry of Education’s social studies curriculum exemplars (2004). A social studies exemplar is a sample of authentic student work annotated to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to levels 1-5 of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (SSNZC, 1997)*. The aim of the research was to support teachers to implement the social studies curriculum exemplars in informed ways by encouraging and promoting the use of the social studies exemplars as models of “quality” social studies teaching. This small scale qualitative research was undertaken by a syndicate of four Years 5/6 teachers and the researcher. The four primary teachers assumed roles of teacher-researchers and worked together collegially with the researcher within a community of practice to co-construct the research process. The research involved incorporating aspects of the exemplars into their social studies programmes during 2006. The community of practice engaged in regular collegial conversations relating to the exemplars. Three of these narratives were taped semi-structured conversations captured in situ. Transcripts of student-teacher conversations were collected, analysed and commented upon to provide some information about student learning outcomes in relation to the exemplars.

The notion of reciprocity underpinned this research, since it involved the researcher being willing to contribute to the research in return for the teachers’ time and involvement in the study. The support and guidance provided by the researcher was provided as an outcome of her experience in teaching social studies for the School of Education.

The research takes into account contemporary ideas about learning and teaching theory, as well as the nature of social studies pedagogy. It examines the implications of sociocultural processes for learning with its emphasis on interaction and collaborative learning

environments. The research context and the methodology were informed by new understandings about the empowerment of teachers implementing their own professional development and conducting research into their own practice.

This research makes a contribution to the field of social studies curriculum and wider professional contexts by informing pre-service teachers' understandings of the intent and use of the New Zealand Ministry of Education's social studies curriculum exemplars. Additionally, it supports in-service social studies professional development, illustrates processes around communities of practice and exemplifies social studies pedagogy.

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INTRODUCTION

Participatory action research ensures that ‘the elusive butterfly of teacher research’ is not caught and pinned. (Rudduck, cited in Hopkins, 2004)

We are currently living in a world that is dramatically different from the world we lived in 8 years ago, the time it takes a child to complete primary school. The rate of change is so rapid that we can no longer teach children what we think they should know, but rather we need to encourage them to learn the skills that will equip them to cope in a world of constant change. This has huge implications for teachers too. These are times of innovation overload, when multiple changes have to be managed simultaneously, and teachers have to learn new strategies to cope with constant and complex change. Teachers are ultimately at the end of the chain of ‘top down’ educational change, it is they who have to put this ‘change’ into practice. It is the contention of the researcher, that teachers take very seriously the link between adopting innovations and the high expectations that they place on themselves in their classrooms. Teachers aim for “best practice” in their classrooms, and as such they are willingly, yet constantly responding to journal articles, examining new classroom resources, attending courses, viewing websites and writing submissions to revised curriculum drafts in their pursuit to keep up-to-date. A steady stream of innovative resources and teaching materials arrives in schools on a regular basis. Teachers are expected to embrace new pedagogies that underpin these. The researcher is of the view, that the expectations placed upon teachers to respond to curriculum innovations is huge, and that more could be done to support teachers in their efforts to achieve professional growth.

Embracing innovation and gaining “ownership” of the social studies curriculum exemplars: A classroom based study is based on the premise that we know too little about how teachers incorporate innovations into their practice and make use of their own experiences and the experiences of others to inform their work. The research study attempts to fill that gap in our understanding by providing a “window of

opportunity” to observe how a syndicate of 4 teachers implemented ideas from a Level 2 social studies exemplar into their social studies programme in 2006. This research study provides the opportunity to step into the private world of the teachers, and to listen to what they say. In so doing, we gain a better understanding of what motivates them and how they respond to the challenges and concerns that confront them. This should help position those who have curriculum implementation and professional development responsibilities, to consider the structures and the support teachers need, and to provide these in the best and most practical way.

This research focuses upon the New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: Social Studies (Ministry of Education, 2004). A social studies exemplar is a sample of authentic children’s work annotated to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to Levels 1-5 of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1997).

Embracing innovation and gaining “ownership” of the social studies curriculum exemplars: a classroom based study has evolved from the researcher’s understanding that for a curriculum innovation to be useful to teachers, they must recognize that it can make a positive contribution to their practice, and only then, will they reach out, use and apply it effectively. Three scoping questions have helped to give direction to this research and have helped the researcher to unpack the research context. These 3 questions are:

1. Can a community of practice assist teachers to embrace and gain “ownership” of the social studies curriculum exemplars?
2. How can the Ministry of Education exemplar model be used to “inform” effective social studies pedagogy in primary classrooms?
3. What professional development do teachers need in order to understand the nature and purpose of the social studies exemplars?

The Research Methodology

Participatory action research within a community of practice was selected for this research study. Four teachers from a Years 5/6 syndicate were invited to become teacher-researchers and to work collegially with the researcher as facilitator to see how the social studies curriculum exemplars could be used to support their social studies teaching in 2006. The research was located and co-constructed within a community of practice to maximize opportunities for discussion and debate. The research methodology is underpinned by contemporary theory about learning and teaching and social studies pedagogy.

The organization of the research

The research is organized within a framework of 4 chapters. Chapter one introduces the major educational reforms that have been influential in determining national social studies curriculum policy. This background information helps position the exemplars in the context of their historical origins and leads to the understanding that there have been many influences leading up to their development. Chapter two, examines the professional development provided following implementation of *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (M.O.E,1997) and shows how this too, contributed to the “call” for social studies curriculum exemplars to be developed. This chapter examines the main findings from the large scale New Zealand Ministry of Education’s Curriculum Stocktake (2000-2002), and outlines the implications of this review for social studies and social studies exemplars. The development of the exemplars for social studies is discussed in this chapter within the wider context of the Government’s national assessment strategy. It traces the development of the social studies exemplars from inception through to implementation.

Chapter three is divided into two parts. Part 1 examines the learning theories and social studies pedagogy that have shaped the research and demonstrates in particular, how constructivist learning gives rise to “quality” social studies. Part 2 takes the learning and teaching theory and pedagogy a step further, by showing how the researcher has applied sociocultural and constructivist pedagogy to the research

methodology. The implications of a constructivist approach to professional development is discussed and the link between action research and the professional development of teachers becomes apparent. The final chapter, Chapter 4, outlines the research design and methodology used to answer three scoping questions. It clarifies the purpose and nature of the research undertaken and justifies the adoption of participatory action research as the methodology for this study. Ethical considerations are outlined and the evolving nature of the research is signaled. The latter section of this chapter reports on the research under each of the 3 scoping questions, expressed as statements. The work of the community of practice is captured in-situ through rich, descriptive and naturally occurring collegial conversations. The student-teacher conversations, recorded for analysis, are discussed and their contribution to the wider exemplar research is explained. This chapter includes an evaluation of the exemplar implementation process by the community of practice. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key findings from the research, and a brief summary of recommendations.

The complexity of the research design

The contemporary nature of this research with its emphasis on sociocultural and constructivist approaches to teaching and learning social studies, has provided an innovative basis upon which to “pin” the research methodology and design. This research can be described as having a multi-layered approach. Participatory action research provided an ideal research methodology through which the teacher-researchers could benefit from the constructivist approach to their professional development. This increased the complexity of the research design and created many challenges for the researcher. By locating the research within a community of practice however, many of the challenges were able to be addressed by the group. For example, procedures for implementing the ethical procedures were determined, by drawing on the shared knowledge and experience of the group.

CHAPTER ONE

The Influence of Educational Policy on a National Social Studies Curriculum

Major educational reviews, reforms and policies have been influential in shaping and determining national social studies curriculum policy. Policy directions mandated by *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Te anga marautanga o Aotearoa* (M.O.E.,1993a) are discussed and the influence that the *NZCF* (1993) had on establishing the Social Sciences Tikanga a-iwi curriculum learning area is outlined. This chapter positions social studies within the wider context of the social sciences in the New Zealand curriculum and examines the diversity of perspectives that exist with regard to the nature and purpose of social studies. The view that these often diverse ideas led to a prolonged and contested curriculum development process (1994-1997) is explored. This chapter introduces *A Position Paper: Social Studies in the New Zealand School Curriculum*(Barr, Graham, Hunter, Keown & McGee, 1997) and provides an account of the major influence it had on the final *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (1997). The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the key aspects of the *SSNZC* (1997) and postulates that many features of this document emerged as a consequence of the *NZCF* (1993a) policy directives.

New Zealand has had a compulsory national curriculum since the 1877 Education Act. The foundations of the contemporary primary school curriculum as set out in *NZCF* (1993) originated from the 1928 Syllabus of Instruction for Primary Schools, while the requirements for a well balanced secondary education are attributed to the Thomas Report (Thomas, 1944). One of the recommendations from the Thomas Report was that social studies become a core subject of the curriculum. This recommendation did not occur immediately, and although the primary school syllabuses of 1948, 1954 and 1958 all used the heading “social studies”, it was expressed as Social Studies through History and Geography (Barr et al., 1997, p.23). It was not until 1961 however, that a first social studies syllabus was developed for

primary schools. By the late 1970's the 1961 primary syllabus was considered dated and was being supplemented by the *Faces* (1970's-1986) project; a series of booklets designed to keep teachers up to date until a new syllabus could be produced. According to Barr et al., (1997) there was also considerable debate in the 1980's over two differing teaching approaches for primary school social studies. This disagreement arose between those who favoured the *Faces* approach (advocated in the Department of Education's *Faces* booklets) and a newer "Feelings for Approach" (Smythe, 1991). This situation forestalled the development of a new primary school social studies syllabus at this time.

It was not until major administrative reforms in education were put in place by the 2nd term of the Labour Government (1987-1990) that any significant changes were initiated. The New Zealand Curriculum Review (1987) was undertaken during this period in response to concerns that greater involvement by communities was needed in the education of young people. Highlighted in the curriculum review was also the need for a curriculum framework, to provide a coherent and integrated structure for a school curriculum design, together with assessment procedures that would focus on improving the quality of the learning (Ministry of Education, 1993). The findings from The New Zealand Curriculum Review (1987) were responded to in the subsequent policy document Tomorrow's Schools (1988) and in this publication decentralization of decision making to New Zealand Schools and their Boards of Trustees was mandated as policy.

The New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Giving Direction to Curriculum.

As a response to the identified need for a comprehensive national curriculum, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework: Te anga marautanga o Aotearoa* (1993) was published and approved as the official policy for the New Zealand National Curriculum from new entrants to Year 11. This document became the foundation policy for learning and assessment in schools and signaled the beginning of a review of curriculum statements for schools. The curriculum principles, as stated in the *NZCF* (M.O.E., 1993a, p.6-7) affirm and reflect New Zealand's identity. They provide

national direction, whilst also making provision for direction at school and community level. The principles embrace the idea that teaching should be high quality, inclusive, and responsive to all students learning needs, irrespective of their abilities, beliefs, social or religious background.

The *NZCF* (M.O.E., 1993) identified 7 essential learning areas which would comprise the New Zealand national curriculum and in specifying these learning areas, it described in broad terms the knowledge and understanding which all students would be expected to acquire. The policy directions mandated by the *NZCF* made it clear that in the planning of programmes, schools needed to understand and make use of the connections between the learning areas. The *NZCF* established the Social Sciences Tikanga a-iwi as a learning area, of which Social Studies is just one of its range of subjects. (p.9). All curriculum statements were unified under one ‘umbrella’, resulting in the integrative nature of the New Zealand national curriculum.

Social Studies sits within the broader learning area of the Social Sciences in the New Zealand curriculum. The *NZCF* description of the learning area (1993a, p.14) refers largely to important elements of the social studies curriculum, with just fleeting mention of the other disciplines, geography, history and economics as contributing to the learning area. As a result social sciences subjects have co-existed as relatively isolated entities, despite the broader category of “Social Sciences” being the all encompassing name for the learning area. (Sinnema, 2004). However, in the introduction to *SSNZC* (1997), there is a clear link made to the social sciences via its definition that ‘social studies is a systematic study of an integrated body of content, drawn from the social sciences and the humanities’ (M.O.E., 1997, p.7). This description helps link social studies to other disciplines within the broader learning area.

In July 1993, the Ministry of Education approved the appointment of an advisory group to develop the policy framework for curriculum development in the social studies. Policy decisions were published in the *New Zealand Education Gazette* (72,

December, 1993) that outlined the unique elements of the 5 knowledge strands, the 8 levels of achievement, and the nature of the fundamental themes that would run across all knowledge strands. Policy directions also made strong links to the *NZCF* (1993) suggesting that programmes based on the social studies statement should develop the essential skills identified in the *NZCF* (1993a). Communications skills, decision making, social and inquiry skills were highlighted as being particularly important to social studies. These skills were to be developed in line with the objectives of the social studies curriculum statement.

New Zealand adopted an outcomes-based curriculum, described in the *NZCF* (1993a) as a curriculum whereby the ‘National curriculum statements specify clear learning outcomes against which achievement can be assessed’ (p.5). The knowledge, understandings and skills that students are expected to achieve are expressed as achievement objectives and are organized according to a progressive series of 8 curriculum levels in each of the national curriculum statements. The achievement objectives are deliberately broad outcomes, designed to signal to teachers, the directions to take, for both learning and assessment.

Social Studies Curriculum Development: A Contested Process (1994-1997)

NZCF (1993a), stimulated the development of a new social studies curriculum. This came with a sense of urgency for primary school social studies, since the 1961 syllabus remained in use at that time, supplemented and supported only by updates of the official publication *FACES*, issued by the Department of Education. The social studies *Draft* (1994) social studies statement was developed by a national writing team led by a combined Auckland and Christchurch College of Education Development Contract for the Ministry of Education. It was based on the set of principles from the *NZCF* (1993) and was to provide the foundations for social studies learning and teaching for the twenty-first century. *The Draft* (1994) was followed by a *Revised Draft* (1996), however it was not until 1997 that the final document *SSNZC* (1997) was published.

Writers subsequently reflecting on the social studies curriculum development process suggest that the writing of the drafts (1994 & 1996) became a strongly contested process, characterized by acrimonious debate. That the process was highly contentious, leading to two quite different curriculum drafts being worked through, before the final document was published in 1997, has been discussed at length in the literature (Benson & Openshaw, 1998; Mutch, 1998; Hunter & Keown, 2001; McGee, 2001; Openshaw, Clark & Waiter-Ang, 2005). Curriculum historians and theorists frequently suggest that *all* curriculum development is highly contested. Lee and Hill (cited in Hunter & Keown, 2001, p.56) note that ‘both political as well as economic and social considerations have underpinned the Social Studies curriculum since 1877’. Barr, commenting on the influences operating during the development phase of the 1997 social studies curriculum, suggested that there were two forces impacting on the process of development at that time. He wrote:

There are two views...the first holds that in a period of economic change there is a need to bolster the traditions of Western society. Proponents of this view argue that this is best done by teaching systematic courses in established disciplines in order to re-establish the bases of the social order and its values... the second view shares the concern of the first, but argues that education should provide students with the knowledge and skills to understand the effects of rapid change. This means that students must develop skills of critical thinking and decision making.

(Barr, as cited in Mutch, 1998, p.73).

Hunter & Keown, both directly involved with social studies developments (1994-1997), suggest that ‘there was an intense struggle between two contrasting interest group blocks seeking to secure the dominance of their ideas on social studies within the development’(p.56). In their critique, they refer to two opposing viewpoints as “dominant voices” and suggest that one ‘contain(ed) voices favouring a more sectarian (neo-liberal) closed (Eurocentric) and educationally conservative social studies, while the other “dominant voice” group called for a more ‘open, inclusive, negotiated, liberal-democracy kind of social studies curriculum’. (Hunter & Keown, 2001, p.57).

The social studies *Draft* (1994), was followed by a call for submissions. This draft met with opposition from the Education Forum, established by the Business Round Table. The Forum (1995) alleged that the document was underpinned by indoctrination. They focused on three main concerns – the neglect of New Zealand’s national heritage, the use of the term Pakeha, and the extent to which the document represented an unacceptable degree of “political correctness”. Teachers’ opinions varied in their reactions to the draft. There were ‘some claims that the document had been well received and counter-claims that there was virtually no sympathy for the Draft’ (Openshaw et al., 2005, p.199). Submissions from the Aotearoa New Zealand Federation of Social Studies Associations (ANZFSSA) argued that the Draft (1994) was ‘a promising statement going in the right direction, but one that needed tidying up in particular areas’. ANZFSSA cited examples of the rather open nature of the achievement objectives, the lack of European culture and heritage and a minimal attention to research skills. (Openshaw et al., 2005).

It was expected that the social studies Revised Draft (1996) would be well received by educators. This draft however, was also subjected to criticism – this time voiced in the *New Zealand Education Gazette*. It was assumed by teachers that changes and improvements to the wording of the achievement objectives and to the section outlining the skills, would make the social studies curriculum more user friendly. Criticism of the *Revised Draft* (1996) seemed to be that it was too specific, lacking in core knowledge and excluded Maori heritage (Mutch, 1998). Openshaw (2005) is of the view that whilst some groups claimed that it was balanced and objective, The Education Forum’s submission on the *Revised Draft* (1996) suggested that it lacked a coherent plan for skills development or assessment, that Maori tradition was to be unquestioningly admired, while European traditions were unrepresented. The Education Forum also claimed that there was no adequate rationale for social studies (Openshaw et al., 2005).

The Ministry of Education commissioned a paper to look at what social studies actually meant in a New Zealand curriculum context. A working party from the

University of Waikato School of Education (1997) researched the development of social studies in New Zealand and drew on available international research. They produced *A Position Paper: Social Studies in the New Zealand School Curriculum* (Barr, et al.,1997). Based on their findings, this publication became a descriptive account of the nature of social studies, providing a rationale and justification for teaching social studies in New Zealand schools. The Position Paper was used by the writing team that completed the social studies curriculum statement and this Position Paper finally proved to have a major influence on *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* (1997).

The Contested Nature of Social Studies

It is important, when using the term social studies as the name for the curriculum, to consider meanings of the term itself. Since social studies concerns itself with social human behaviour in all of its complexities, it is generally agreed that this makes it more difficult to arrive at a consensus about the purpose and significance of social studies, and what content should be taught. Given a range of definitions to describe social studies, it soon becomes apparent that each definition emphasizes the unique way in which important elements of the subject, its purpose and content are perceived. The diversity of perspectives, background and philosophies embedded in these definitions, are often referred to as social studies traditions. These signal the scope, diversity and the approaches that inform curriculum development in social studies. Social Studies has frequently been perceived as a controversial subject area, since it deals with content and issues that are not readily agreed to by everyone and in some cases such views have manifested themselves at classroom level, where teachers have been accused of teaching what they liked, or of giving personal preference to some curriculum content, depending on their orientation, interests or background. This is largely a reflection of the many perspectives and views that exist within society itself.

Aitken (2004), suggests that *some* of the traditions represented in *SSNZC* (1997) include social action, social science, citizenship transmission, social reconstructivism

and values transmission. Other writers, for example, (Barr, et al., 1997), identify four major traditions in their Position Paper (1997) as citizenship transmission, social science, critical and reflective thinking and personal, social and ethical empowerment.

Openshaw (1998), in reflecting on the final *SSNZC* (M.O.E., 1997), concluded that many of the inherent struggles during the development process of the curriculum were attributable to the differing viewpoints and perceptions that contesting groups held with regard to society, and social issues. This influenced the degree to which they believed these ideas should be addressed in the final document. Openshaw (1998) and Barr, (1998) have commented on the contested nature of the social studies curriculum and suggest that there were two philosophies at work. They cite those embracing the citizenship /socialization ideology and claim that this group would argue that the principal task of social studies education is to educate the future citizens of our nation. Proponents holding this view they suggest would promote a social studies model that promotes instruction in democratic rights and responsibilities. Openshaw (1998) and Barr, (1998) also claimed that there was a group promoting the ‘counter-socialisation’ tradition fostering and valuing a critically reflective society, ‘concerned with social inequalities and issues of empowerment and emancipation’ (Barr et. al., 1997, p.37). From this perspective, students are empowered to improve their own lot and be part of a democratic community force that works steadily towards making the world a better place for all. As has already been discussed, *SSNZC* (1997) became a compromise between both of the above mentioned ideologies. That compromise can be seen by way of the wide topic choice within the strands, the inclusion of the achievement objective indicators, and more particularly in the provision made for the perspectives. By avoiding the issue of determining topic description, it left the interpretation mostly up to teachers and schools. According to Openshaw (1998) this effectively devolved responsibility for the new curriculum to schools, teachers and communities’ (p.203).

Key Aspects of SSNZC (1997)

As we approached the end of the 20th century, the focus on educating young people for the 21st century became increasingly important and issues associated with the rapid growth in technology, communications and societal change all became part of a wider debate. *SSNZC* (1997), in responding to the challenge to educate and prepare future citizens to confront problems, issues, and challenges in an uncertain future, identified its contribution as enabling students ‘.. to participate in a changing society as informed, confident, and responsible citizens’ (*SSNZC*, 1997, p.8).

The Perspectives

Through the perspectives *SSNZC* (M.O.E.,1997) reflected more equitable learning’ placing an emphasis on equality – that every human is entitled to respect and dignity regardless of gender, culture or religion. The perspectives are *SSNZC*’s greatest indicator of change since they reflect and project the post modern outlook that social studies should encourage respect for different perspectives in a rapidly changing world. The perspectives serve to emphasize that New Zealand is becoming an increasingly diverse nation, influenced by globalization – geographical distance no longer restricting with whom we interact. Changes in immigration and rapid advances in technology have influenced the way students will need to view the world around them. The perspectives therefore highlight the need to educate students to respond to problems and issues at both community and global levels, but more significantly, the perspectives aim to convince students that they can make a difference, that the future is not something we passively accept, but something we can actively work to shape. The perspectives are bicultural; multicultural; gender; perspectives on current issues, and perspectives on the future. They are designed to provide a balanced programme in social studies:

Bicultural perspective

This perspective emphasizes that New Zealand's bicultural heritage is important to all New Zealanders. It serves to foster the understanding that students will understand the partnership between Maori and Pakeha and know that this heritage contributes to their identity as New Zealanders.

Multicultural perspective

This perspective encourages students to 'understand and respect the different cultures that make up New Zealand society'. (SSNZC,1997, p.21).

Gender perspective

New Zealand's curriculum is a gender inclusive curriculum, hence the gender perspective fosters the experiences of both women and men, equally.

Perspectives on current issues

Opportunities to help students build an interest in current issues and to develop an understanding of these is provided for through the current issues perspective.

Perspectives on the future

Encouraging students to develop the confidence that they can contribute to the future of their society and help to shape it, is reinforced by this perspective. It provides students with opportunities to make informed judgments on current issues that are important to them and their local communities, New Zealand and the wider world.

The Social Studies Strands of Knowledge and Understanding

One of the key features of *SSNZC* (1997) is the way in which the "contexts for study" are organized. The strands of knowledge and their associated achievement objectives are critical in order to develop students' conceptual knowledge and understandings, and to provide a context for the integration of other elements of the curriculum, for example, the perspectives and Essential Learning about New Zealand. To assist teachers in interpreting the achievement objectives in the social studies curriculum document, (though not in other curriculum statements), there is a set of indicators

which give examples of what students may come to know, or understand as a result of their learning experiences at a particular level. The indicators are intended for use by teachers in developing their specific learning outcomes, thus they are couched in specific behavioural terms. They are flexible in that the curriculum document states that ‘...teachers may use these indicators or devise further indicators of their own’ (M.O.E., 1997, p.10). The social studies achievement objectives do not prescribe or contextualize the learning. Teachers need to be able to interpret the achievement objectives with the assistance of the indicators and contextualize the areas for study by incorporating relevant settings, perspectives, essential learning about New Zealand and the processes (skills), into their planning. Considerable expertise is required to fully develop the achievement objectives so that they reflect the knowledge, understandings and skills suggested by the thematic strand. The multifaceted formatting of the social studies curriculum, based on themes via strands, rather than prescribed topics is only viable therefore, in teacher developed contexts for learning. By avoiding detailed topic description, one of the criticisms leveled against the social studies curriculum, has been its ‘failure to give teachers sufficient guidance in structuring programmes and good units of work’ (Barr, Hunter & Keown, 1999, p.5).

In a June 1999 editorial in the *New Zealand Journal of Social Studies* Hugh Barr, noted some potential problems. He commented to the effect ‘that some teachers are misunderstanding the indicators as ‘fixed’ and ‘static’. This, he said ‘will dramatically reduce the flexibility provided in *SSNZC* (1997) and encourage the teaching and assessment of facts, rather than conceptual understanding’ (Barr, Hunter & Keown, 1999 p.3). Similarly in a study undertaken by Mutch (1998) involving teachers, principals, lecturers, school advisors, respondents leveled their main criticism of the document, saying ‘that skills were underplayed and planning and assessment needed actual models...’ (p.77).

The Social Studies Processes

The three inter-related processes (inquiry, values exploration and social decision making) are interwoven within the strands. These three processes embody the essential skills signaled by the *NZCF* (1993). The function of the processes within the

social studies curriculum is to provide choices and opportunities for much “active” learning where students are ‘...challenged to think clearly and critically about human behaviour, and to explore different viewpoints’ (M.O. E., 1993, p.14).

The Settings

The settings suggest that New Zealand students need to understand their own society, but also those of particular significance to New Zealand. The Pacific, Europe and Asia are specified. Other parts of the world are included in “Other settings” and a variety of examples have been given, including North America and Africa. The inclusion of the settings are a significant feature of the curriculum statement, since they signal the focus of New Zealand’s trading relations shifting from Europe to Asia and Pacific regions where ‘the differences of language and culture of these new markets pose a challenge...’ (NZCF, 1993, p.28).

Essential Learning about New Zealand

In the social studies curriculum, Essential learning about New Zealand (ELANZ) encompasses a range of emphases for incorporating and developing New Zealand dimensions into social studies teaching. Hence Essential learning (p.23) includes ideas associated with European heritage as well as influences that have shaped New Zealand in more recent times. Maori heritage, culture and both historical and contemporary perspectives on the Treaty of Waitangi and their influences on current social and political systems are included. ELANZ also considers use of the environment, for both recreational and economic purposes and the consequences of this for New Zealanders.

This chapter provides a background to the political and educational forces at work prior to the publication of *SSNZC* (1997) and shows how the *NZCF* (1993) stimulated development of the social studies curriculum. Chapter 2 examines professional development issues surrounding the implementation of *SSNZC* and suggests that there

were a range of influences leading to the emergence of the social studies curriculum exemplars.

CHAPTER TWO

The Development of the Social Studies Curriculum Exemplars

This chapter discusses the phases of professional development that social studies teachers were involved in, as each published development of the social studies curriculum was disseminated to schools. It outlines some of the implications of the professional development that was afforded to teachers following the *Draft* (1994), the *Revised Draft* (1996) and the Ministry of Education's final publication of *SSNZC* (1997). This chapter also shows how findings from the Review of the New Zealand National Curriculum (2000-2002) influenced the call for exemplar development. This chapter describes how the social studies curriculum exemplars evolved largely in response to educational policies that indicated a need for improved student learning and traces the development of the social studies exemplars from their inception in 2002 through to their publication in 2004. Some questions are raised in relation to the professional development that accompanied their publication and subsequent dissemination of the social studies exemplars to schools. The final section provides a concise account of the format and key features of the social studies curriculum exemplars and discusses relevant links from *SSNZC* (1997) to the exemplars.

Teachers' Professional Development for SSNZC (1994-2003)

According to Bernard Peterson, the social studies co-ordinator at School Support Services Waikato University, this was a time of frenetic professional development for teachers in all curriculum areas. From 1994 - 2003, schools and teachers were faced with more or less continual adjustments to accommodate new curriculum statements. Provision for professional development was forced to keep pace with a pattern that resulted in schools having to implement one new curriculum statement a year from 1994–2003. The social studies curriculum for example, was initially drafted in 1994, re-drafted in 1995/96 and published in its final form in 1997 to be implemented during 2000. The Ministry of Education had the responsibility for selecting 'providers' to deliver the professional development for the social studies curriculum. In Hamilton, for example, the University of Waikato School Support Services was

selected to provide social studies professional development for 580 primary schools and 70 secondary schools. Only six primary teachers and one secondary teacher were employed to work alongside schools implementing the new curriculum during the period 1994-2003. There were three programmes of professional development that schools could opt to participate in:

- A personal professional development programme designed to target teachers with an interest in social studies. It was anticipated that teachers having completed this programme, would then return to their school to assist with school wide implementation of *SSNZC* (1997).
- A school wide professional development initiative, involving all staff.
- A “catch up” programme designed for teachers who had not been able to participate in any other induction opportunity.

The school wide programme provided each school with four days of professional development, two days focusing on the social studies inquiry process and the additional two days linking the social studies achievement objectives to specific learning outcomes and assessment. According to Peterson, School Support Services maintained close telephone contact with schools during this time and facilitators were able to answer questions and discuss problems with schools.

Peterson noted that one of the main problems to emerge during this time was that many schools were not able to respond to the opportunity to undertake the development in the social studies curriculum because they were simultaneously engaging in contracts involving other curriculum areas. This, suggested Peterson, resulted in large numbers of teachers failing to receive any professional development in social studies during this period. Another problem that evolved did so, as a direct result of the *Draft social studies curriculum* (1994) and the *Revised Draft* (1996) preceding the final *SSNZC* (1997). Since some professional development had been provided for both drafts, this meant that some “unlearning and relearning had to be done”. There had been significant changes to the achievement objectives and strands in the final statement which led to some confusion for some of the teachers who had

undertaken professional development to correspond with the 1994 *Draft* and the 1996 *Revised Draft* social studies statements.

On-going Professional Development for SSNZC (1997): Signaled As An On-going Need

In 1999 Sharon Dewar conducted a random sample of New Zealand primary and secondary schools to establish how prepared schools felt they were to fully implement the social studies curriculum in the year 2000 and beyond. This survey served to establish whether schools could identify where they needed further guidance and direction in order to effectively implement the social studies curriculum. An analysis of the 296 questionnaires (out of 377) sent to schools, revealed that over-all schools felt they were progressing very well with the curriculum, although 'lack of time' was cited as a barrier to successful implementation, and this was mentioned by both primary and secondary teachers (30% and 41%) respectively. Respondents highlighted the need for on-going professional development, the need for support from School Support Services, regular staff meetings as well as the provision of exemplars to reflect sound assessment, monitoring and reporting methods. This was mentioned by one third of the primary teachers and one half of the secondary teachers (Dewar, 2000).

Since Peterson (2006) and Dewar (1999) made their observations with regard to professional development relating to SSNZC (1997), there have been some changes to the ways in which teachers of social studies are afforded professional development opportunities. This is attributable to the way in which the Ministry of Education now makes provision for professional development. This was reported on in 2000, by the Educational Review Office. In their report *In-service Training for Teachers in New Zealand Schools*, the ERO drew attention to the fact that 'there are relatively few regulatory requirements for professional development, considering its importance to the Crown' (p.5). The ERO also suggested that it was 'desirable to focus on in-service programmes on specific training for subject knowledge, pedagogy and

classroom management' (p.20), and it also endorsed the sharing of ideas amongst teachers and sufficient release time to participate in training (p.20).

Since the ERO made these observations and published its report in 2000, greater responsibility has been devolved to schools. Revisions made to the *National Administration Guidelines* (NAGS), now require that each Board of Trustees, together with its Principal and staff be required to develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to *The National Educational Guidelines* (NEGS), through their policies, plans and programmes, including those for curriculum, assessment and *staff professional development*. (NAG 2).

Review of the New Zealand National Curriculum (2000-2002)

Spanning the period 2000-2002, a major review of the New Zealand National Curriculum was undertaken. This large scale Curriculum Stocktake involved national sampling surveys along with international critiques of the national curriculum. The purpose of the Ministry of Education's stocktake was to investigate a number of issues associated with the national curriculum and its development which had been raised both inside and outside the education sector. The Ministry of Education's Curriculum Stocktake Report (September 2002) included evidence from the National Educational Monitoring Project, ERO and national sampling surveys along with international critiques of social studies implementation Years 1-10 and the *SSNZC* (1997). *The National School Sampling Survey* (2003), reported on teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation and involved surveying 853 teachers of social studies from approximately 10% of New Zealand schools in 2002. Two significant areas targeted in this survey were those that related to professional development and curriculum implementation. Concerns raised by teachers in relation to these areas included the following:

- Teachers were most interested in receiving professional development to help with planning, about available resources and to gain ideas for greater variety in their teaching topics and student learning experiences.

- One half of the teachers found the strand achievement objectives to be ‘about right’ and one half found them to be ‘too broad’ or ‘sometimes too broad’. Teachers found the indicators for the strand achievement objectives to be ‘helpful’ or at least ‘sometimes helpful’.
- Two thirds of the teachers found the Processes achievement objectives to be ‘about right’ and one third felt they were ‘too broad’. The information on settings, perspectives and ‘Essential Learning about New Zealand Society’ were found to be ‘helpful’ or at least ‘sometimes helpful’.

In regard to curriculum implementation, the *National School Sampling Survey* results suggested that:

Planning to include all of the curriculum statement requirements, such as achievement objectives, strands, learning outcomes, settings, skills and processes was challenging, as was making topics relevant, interesting, challenging and meaningful. (p. 3).

Two International Councils for Educational Research were asked to provide critiques for the Ministry during the New Zealand Curriculum Stocktake (2002). The National Council for Educational Research (UK), and the Australian Council for Educational Research therefore provided critiques on the New Zealand Curriculum Framework and the curriculum statements with regard to international views of educational effectiveness and educational integrity. The focus of the two reports was on the curriculum as specified (the intended and regulated curriculum), rather than the curriculum as implemented. Whilst both reports found the national curriculum to be sound in terms of its educational integrity and its potential for supporting educational practice, both reports featured criticisms leveled against the social studies achievement objectives, suggesting that these may be the most problematical element of the national curriculum.

Ferguson reviewed the New Zealand curriculum (2002) on behalf of the Australian Council for Educational Research (UK) for the Ministry of Education. She commented that the social studies curriculum possessed an excellent set of aims, but

noted that the achievement objectives did not support teachers to implement programmes to fulfil the aims of the learning area. In summarizing her comments she stated that *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* was the most unsatisfactory of all the curriculum statements, that there was no indication of the cognitive processes to be undertaken in the learning and that it would be possible for teachers to adopt a didactic approach to teaching and learning activities (Ferguson, 2002, 7.4).

The Le Metais critique (2002) was commissioned by The National Foundation for Educational Research (UK). Although Le Metais conceded that 'less prescription (would be necessary) in the next version (of the curriculum), it was made evident in the report that 'consideration should be given to providing further support in terms of exemplification and staff development in all curriculum areas, including social studies. Le Metais specifically stated 'That this was particularly important in relation to the Achievement Objectives'.

Two nationally based reports that provided insights into social studies teaching in New Zealand during the curriculum stocktake, were the Education Review Office Report (ERO) and the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) report (Flockton & Crooks, 2001). The Education Review Office Report (2001), was based on reviewers' subject expertise, observations in the classrooms, and reading many schools programmes and plans. ERO felt that the content and structure posed problems for teachers and they lacked knowledge and confidence in structuring quality teaching programmes. The Education Review Office also identified the interpretation and use of the achievement objectives as an area of confusion for teachers in stating:

The achievement objectives can be difficult for teachers to interpret, because teachers are unsure of the intent of the achievement objectives and do not see the social studies concepts buried within them. (p.1).

Furthermore, the ERO report suggested that the examples (indicators) to illustrate the achievement objectives provided good examples to help teachers interpret the achievement objectives, but also conceded that:

They are a good guide to teachers in the intent of the achievement objectives. However, teachers need to know more about the rationale behind them. They have become a distraction for some teachers (p.2).

The National Education Monitoring Project's second cycle of national monitoring (2001) was underway during the period of the curriculum stocktake. NEMP has developed a task framework so that the development of tasks leads to meaningful descriptions of what students know and can do across a wide range of schools. NEMP'S contribution to the curriculum stocktake was to provide information on how well over-all standards were being maintained and to provide a picture of task performance at Year 4 and Year 8. NEMP found that:

- Students understanding of social studies concepts was weak, particularly those to do with aspects of social organization structures, Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand history, and important features of New Zealand's culture and geography.
- Year 8 pupils involved in the survey showed little understanding of the importance of cultural traditions for other cultures.

NEMP also monitors students' attitudes and motivation, considered to be one of the predictors of effective learning. NEMP'S results highlighted that in 2001, social studies was the favourite subject of 4% of Year 4 students and 13% of Year 8 students.

The curriculum stocktake investigated a number of problems and issues associated with the New Zealand curriculum and its development. The stocktake revealed a lack of objective information about the translation of the curriculum from policy to school and classroom level. The need for support materials to help teachers make this transition was one of the key recommendations to emerge and in a brief, but concise

statement, it was noted that ‘the National Assessment Strategy Exemplars will help teachers clarify the learning needs of individual students...’ (Ministry of Education, p. 2002).

The National Assessment Strategy exemplars for social studies

The Ministry of Education’s *New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: Social Studies* (2004) forms part of the Government’s national assessment strategy. A social studies exemplar ‘is a sample of authentic student work annotated to illustrate learning, achievement and quality in relation to Levels 1 to 5 of SSNZC (Ministry of Education, 2004, p.1). The social studies exemplars draw on a wide variety of student learning experiences to exemplify the achievement objectives of 5 content strands and the 3 curriculum processes.

The development of curriculum exemplars was initially proposed in the Government’s Green Paper, *Assessment for Success in Primary Schools* (1989). As with all previous Green Papers on educational matters, this paper was designed to give the public opportunity to give their feedback on various national assessment proposals made by the government. Submissions were called for from the general public as well as those in the education sector. Although the Green Paper acknowledged that teachers developed many of their assessment tools themselves, it was concerned that there was a significant gap in the information about the crucial primary years that needed to be addressed. The Government believed that by setting out a proposal for an integrated national assessment package, that it would strengthen and support assessment activities currently undertaken by teachers, and that it would alleviate pressures arising from duplicating effort unnecessarily. The proposal outlined four assessment tools as part of its package designed to provide the teaching profession with assessment information and guidance to monitor expectations and clarify areas that needed improvement. The Green Paper was distributed to every school and wide ranging consultation followed. Feedback on the proposals showed that whilst there was concern regarding the potential use of tests and test data, there was widespread support for the inclusion of the other assessment tools, including the

introduction of exemplars. According to Poskitt, Brown, Maw & Taylor (2003) the need for National curriculum exemplars occurred in a context of moving away from proposed national testing to improving the quality of teaching and learning. 'Exemplars, along with Assessment Resource Banks, and professional development programmes in assessment, (Assessment for Better Learning 1995-2001) and Assess to Learn (from 2002) became part of an educational strategy to contribute to effective curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices'¹ (as cited in Poskitt, Brown, Maw & Taylor, 2003, p.3).

In September 1999, the Assessment White Paper, *Information for Better Learning*, was published stating that the Government had decided to '...proceed with developing more robust and comprehensive assessment tools, linked to the New Zealand curriculum...as discussed in the Green Paper' (p.13).

Furthermore, the White Paper clarified how these resources would be used:

Teachers, principals and boards will receive assistance to develop their skills in data analysis and interpretation. The information and analysis will help their strategic decision-making about ways of raising achievement, allocate resources and working out development needs (p.14).

It was in the White Paper that the Government announced its intention to develop the exemplars in both English and Maori at levels 1-5 of the curriculum in each of the essential learning areas. In its policy statement, it stated that:

The exemplars will be real pieces of work produced by students which will meet the standards of a particular achievement objective. The exemplars will, therefore, illustrate or exemplify the features which a teacher, parent, or in some cases a student could point to as meeting the achievement objective. The development of exemplars will require a co-ordinated strategy over several years. New technologies will be used to make the widest possible range of material available (p.14).

¹ These refer to Ministry of Education assessment resources and strategies.

International Literature and Exemplars

As part of the background work to assist Ministry officials, a preliminary literature review of the international description and use of the exemplars was carried out. The final report to the Ministry *The Use of Exemplars in Outcomes-Based Curricula: An International Review of the Literature*, (1999), was compiled by a research team from the University of Auckland under the direction of Peddie, Hattie and Vaughan. This review ‘examined how other systems, national and federal have developed exemplar information and how this has been used to inform judgements about students’ achievement against the stated achievement levels in the out-comes based curricula’ (Philips, 2000, p.10). The Review team located some useful material from websites, data bases and journals, however only a small number of research reports were located. Only seven of these evaluated the use of the exemplars to any extent. The team gathered information from England/Wales, Australia, Canada, United States and New Zealand, but concluded that ‘...given the dearth of research in the area, the Minister proceed with caution, and only after carrying out preliminary research in New Zealand’ (Peddie, Hattie & Vaughan, 1999: 1). They concluded that:

- exemplar development needs to include teachers at all stages in the development process,
- use authentic student work,
- that further research be carried out on teachers’ needs for exemplars and how teachers use exemplars.

Based on these recommendations, the Ministry of Education’s curriculum division began work on the national exemplars in October 2001. Two hundred and twenty-five schools and 5 curriculum teams took part: English, Mathematics, Science, Technology and the Arts. A Maori medium team and an independent research team were included. Social Studies, Health and Physical Education joined the development in 2002 and in November 2004 after 2½ years in development the social studies exemplars were distributed to schools.

When the draft exemplars were developed, it was stated ‘that on-going research would accompany the development of the exemplars and help to shape the use of them’ (<http://schools.unitechnology.ac.nz>). A longitudinal action research study began in 2000, at the early stages of exemplar development, continuing until December 2004. This research was conducted through Massey University by Poskitt, Brown, Maw & Taylor. The purpose and scope of this research was to inform the Ministry of Education about the quality and usefulness of the draft exemplars. During term one 2002, 225 school from throughout New Zealand participated in a National Consultation as part of this on-going research study. Research findings reported by Poskitt and published in the October edition of New Zealand Council of Educational Research *Set: Research Information for Teachers*, 2002. Although social studies was not included as one of the curricula to be involved (as there was, at that stage, no material ready for trial), one of the main concerns with regard to the exemplars was that:

Teachers’ understandings of the purposes of exemplars were mixed, indicating an area in need of professional development when national exemplars are implemented in 2003. Rather than viewing exemplars as a nexus to learning, teaching and assessment, some teachers saw them only as an assessment tool, and indeed, often as a test. (Poskitt, 2002, p.7).

The Social Studies Exemplar Project

Alison Sewell’s Position Paper, *Learning & Assessment in Social Studies: theory and Practice*, (2002) was written to “inform” and guide the development of the *New Zealand Social Studies exemplars* over a two year period. Sewell’s Position Paper clearly reflects, and discusses contemporary theories of learning and more specifically outlines implications for assessment within the development of the social studies exemplars. In the introduction Sewell suggests that ‘sociocultural’ views of learning are *not* embedded in mainstream practice, and whilst ‘some teachers have implemented some aspects of it, the practices associated with it, are not easy to unpack’. She describes the ‘sociocultural’ model of learning as:

Providing an environment that builds a sense of community by developing conceptual understanding of active citizenship, identity, rights, roles and

responsibilities in groups (p.2).

She explains that by creating a learning environment in social studies where mutual responsibility, shared activity and dialogue predominates, students will be able to participate as democratic citizens in their classroom learning. To illustrate the *participatory* aspect of the ‘sociocultural’ model for learning and teaching, Sewell highlights Rogoff’s (1998) corollaries for learning:

- that the roles of learner and teacher are shared and their unique experiences interests and expertise are valued,
- that both teacher and students have expectations of learning,
- that social dialogue is an important component of learning,
- that students are involved in the assessment process,
- that progress is assessed while aiding learning,
- that assessment must be viewed as transient, dynamic and fluid,
- that assessment practices be framed to map the transformation of understanding and not some end point in learning.

Sewell’s Position Paper stated that the social studies Exemplar Project would be based on ‘sociocultural’ models of learning and teaching, and that those engaged in the project would work alongside teachers in line with sociocultural participation to develop the exemplars. An emphasis was placed on a shared responsibility for exemplar development that would capitalize on the individual strengths of facilitators and teachers. When shared, this would ‘...lead to valuable professional development in ways that would contribute to the collective goals of exemplar development’ (Sewell, 2002, p.5).

In 2002 a team of social studies professionals encompassing representatives from Schools of Education, Universities, Primary and Secondary schools and a consultant with social studies experience, were appointed by the Ministry of Education to form the Exemplar Development Team. Under the directorship of Graeme Ludeman, the task was to develop a guiding matrix and approximately 50 exemplars at Levels 1-5 of Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum. The project was to involve the team as facilitators, working alongside teachers across a range of New Zealand schools: their task was to work collaboratively with teachers to produce exemplars: ‘examples of authentic student work, annotated to illustrate key features of learning and achievement’ (Sewell, 2005, p.3). The Exemplar Development team was supported by an advisory team, a team of respected social studies personnel, whose role it was, to monitor and provide feedback on the exemplars in development. A chairperson and recorder from the Ministry of Education were also in attendance at meetings, and a research representative from Massey University. Each member of the Exemplar development team took on *facilitator* roles and worked with at least four schools during the project, sometimes trialing as many as eight exemplars. As the facilitators gathered and documented the learning and teaching processes they experienced in schools, they held meetings to reflect on, and report progress.

Prior to working within schools, the team began by reading the literature on the research and theory in Social Studies, and were guided by Mary Chamberlain’s paper *The Development of Exemplars in New Zealand: Background and Rationale* (2001), as well as Sewell’s Position Paper *Learning and assessment in social studies: Theory and Practice* (2002). The team met regularly and held many discussions related to key issues raised by the literature. During the first year, the Exemplar Development team debated issues surrounding ‘What constitutes “quality” learning?’ and ‘What is powerful social studies?’ Development of the exemplars mirrored the ‘*sociocultural*’ model advocated in Sewell’s Position Paper, and very quickly became “work in progress”, with the group collaborating and heavily critiquing one another’s work. Many issues and suggestions were debated at length. Notions about what the achievement objectives could, and should suggest were shared and debated. For

example, How could “quality” social studies be exemplified? Establishing a framework and possible model for the exemplars raised many issues for the team. How could the exemplars build on current contexts? and How will teachers who use the exemplars record and report learning?

Each of the facilitators, worked collaboratively with teachers in a variety of schools that had signaled their interest in becoming part of the project. During this period some schools were dropped from the Exemplar Project, whilst those who were seen to be most responsive to the ‘exemplar process were retained and some new schools were invited to join the Exemplar Development Project as it evolved. In general, the context for learning was selected by the school or classroom teacher, but development of the learning was generally a joint enterprise between the teacher and the facilitator, with the intention being - to produce samples of children’s work that reflected “quality” Social Studies learning in relation to the achievement objectives. The learning experiences, the contexts for the learning, achievement objectives, concepts and processes were discussed at length during the planning and preparation of the learning. In the initial stages of work within the schools, there was no set model or template. However, as work progressed and the exemplars evolved, it was necessary to have some specified framework to maintain consistency. The Exemplar Development Team devoted considerable time to devising suitable headings that could be used as a guide. These were later modified to become important components of the published exemplars.²

The Format and Features of the Social Studies Curriculum Exemplars and Matrices

Teachers’ notes

In 2004 the Ministry of Education distributed the *New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: Social Studies Exemplars* to schools accompanied by a 6 page set of *Teachers’ Notes*. These notes for teachers preceded a full set of 43 social studies exemplars at levels 1-5 of the curriculum (see Appendix M), and they were

² In this section, information was provided by Jill Wynyard, Senior Tutor, School of Education, Waikato University, who was a facilitator for the Curriculum Exemplar Project.

disseminated to schools in a large folder along with exemplars from a range of other curriculum areas. The *Teachers' Notes* although brief, were designed to explain the rationale behind the exemplars, to clarify their purpose and to provide some guidance in ways of using them. The purpose of the exemplars, as outlined in the *Teachers' Notes* was to:

- illustrate key features of achievement and quality at different stages of student learning;
- help students and teachers to identify the next learning steps;
- guide teachers in their interpretation of curriculum levels.

(Ministry of Education, 2004, p.1)

The accompanying *Teachers' Notes* also signaled to schools that the social studies exemplars had been chosen to represent many voices of New Zealand students, and that learning exemplified by them had taken place in many different school settings. Implicit in this description was the fact that they had been chosen not only to represent the achievement objectives of the 5 knowledge strands and the 3 processes of SSNZC (1997), but also because they constituted sound examples of the very best in social studies pedagogy. Endorsed therefore, was the fact that 'each student whose work [was] included, experienced focused, high quality teaching' (M.O.E., 2004, p.1). As explained in the *Teachers' Notes*, the exemplars all follow a set format, with features that are consistent across all social studies exemplars. The features that constitute a typical social studies exemplar are listed and explained succinctly in the *Teachers' Notes*:

What the work shows

The exemplars suggest that for work to be social studies, a student's work sample must reflect one or more of three *key aspects of learning*. These key aspects of learning are:

- developing ideas about human society;
- participating in society as an individual or part of a group in relation these ideas;

- developing an understanding of the personal and social significance of the ideas.

(M.O.E., 2004, p.1)

The exemplar format suggests that social studies comprises these 3 dimensions of social studies understandings and that these can be applied to all social studies achievement objectives within any given context. The *Teachers' Notes* state that the 3 *key aspects* of learning derive from 'on going work on organizing social studies education around important ideas about human society, from exploring the ideas of citizenship, and from the tradition of reflective inquiry in social studies' (M.O.E., 2004, p.2).

Each exemplar illustrates an authentic sample of a child's work in either pictorial or written form, with coloured print annotations to show how it addresses the relevant achievement objective in relation to one or more of the 3 *key aspects of learning*. Coloured text has been used in the work samples to show how it meets the requirements for exemplifying one or more of the key aspects of learning listed above. Green denotes that the work shows evidence of the child's understanding of "ideas about society", blue indicates evidence of an understanding with regard to "participation in society". Red suggests that that the student has been able to identify how the idea examined affects them as individuals or its effects/outcomes on broader society.

The matrices

The *process matrices* and *strand matrices* are printed on separate A3 card and are enclosed as a fold-out insertion with the exemplars.

The *strand matrices* act as progress indicators, showing how the key aspects of learning can be applied progressively to each of the achievement objectives at the various curriculum levels. The implication is that for work to be social studies, it must show that it relates to one or more of the 3 *key aspects of learning*. Each key idea begins with a repeated phrase to ensure the student has an understanding of an idea, rather than simply recalling information about it.

- Ideas about society 'understands that...

- Participation in society ‘knows how...
- Personal & social significance ‘explains how...

The strand matrices are linked to *progress indicators* which have been developed to help teachers understand and evaluate their students’ progress and achievement in social studies. They relate closely to annotations on each exemplar. There are two matrices of progress indicators for each strand, both set out on one A3 page. Each of these matrices is preceded by the relevant achievement aim and achievement objectives. Identified *key concepts* are highlighted in bold within each achievement objective.

Process matrices: The process matrices show the steps that students can work through for each of the three processes of inquiry, values exploration and social decision making. Unlike the leveled progression suggested in the curriculum document, these steps reflect a “pathway” indicating that the steps in the process can be followed in any order, and revisited if necessary. The *Teachers’ notes* suggest that although the steps prescribed are in a logical order, students will not necessarily follow a particular sequence; what makes a process more complex is the context in which it is used, not the particular steps of the process’ (M.O.E., 2004).

The learning context

The *learning context* provides a detailed synopsis of the learning sequence, the teaching strategies and interactions that enabled the students to produce the exemplified work sample. It links the learning context to the achievement objective and so clarifies for the teacher the way in which the context supports and enhances the development of the achievement objective.

What the students did to learn

Here, teachers are shown how the social studies processes of Inquiry, Values Exploration and Social Decision Making can be developed. The flow diagram with

illustrations at the foot of each exemplar, shows how named students have worked through a series of steps to acquire new understandings during the learning.

Where to next?

This section focuses on deepening the children's understanding by extending and enriching the learning within the curriculum level, prior to moving them to the next level. The section also offers teachers a range of suggestions that add depth and breadth to the learning.

Student-teacher conversations

These are short samples of sustained dialogue from an authentic discussion during the learning process. The sample dialogue is preceded by an explanation that explains how the learning was initiated, scaffolded or enhanced by the teacher and in some cases with other students.

Curriculum links

This section lists elements from *SSNZC* (1997) that are reflected in the learning. It therefore makes direct links between the context and learning exemplified in the exemplar to the curriculum document. Links to the learning in *Te Whariki*, the Early Childhood curriculum, are also indicated.

Professional Development for the Social Studies Exemplars

In 2005, the Ministry funded "providers" to organize and provide an exemplar induction programme. School Support Services in Hamilton facilitated a generic Exemplar Expo which provided two days of professional development. According to Diane Smardon, Director of Waikato Support Services, Assessment to Learn Project, this provided teachers with insight into the purpose and use of the curriculum exemplars, including social studies. Some teachers were afforded the opportunity to attend the social studies exemplar workshop, but since workshop attendance during the two days was limited, not all teachers had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the social studies exemplars.

The Ministry of Education allocates professional development funding to schools. In addition to this, it provides funding to assist various curriculum groups and finances projects undertaken by School Support Services. This includes exemplar induction as part of a wider Assess to Learn (2002) project (A to L). This project involves school support services advisors working with 8-10 schools over a period of 2-3 years. Schools apply to become target schools and they work with their advisor to determine their curriculum priorities during this period. Schools may for example, request to include social studies exemplar induction as one of their priorities within the larger focus they identify for professional development.

This chapter has focused upon the introduction of the social studies curriculum, and the professional development that was afforded to it, and discusses the scope of the professional development offered to teachers as the three quite different documents were introduced. The Curriculum Stocktake (2000-2002) suggested that there were issues to be addressed with regard to social studies learning and teaching. By introducing the curriculum exemplars, the Ministry of Education was moving towards addressing the issues raised. A case for teachers implementing their own professional development is explored in Chapter three and the research design is specified.

CHAPTER THREE

Learning Theories and Social Studies Pedagogy: Shaping the Research Method

PART 1

Research Theorizing and Methodology

This chapter examines learning theories underpinning social studies pedagogy that have helped to shape this research and inform its design. Part 1 of this chapter investigates sociocultural perspectives and constructivist theory and its application to the learning and teaching of social studies. The view that learning should be seen as a social practice and the implications of this for the research study are examined and clarified. The case for teachers implementing their own professional development using action research within a community of practice is explained. In Part 2 of this chapter the theory and social studies pedagogy are brought together and their influence on the research design is discussed.

The emphasis on sociocultural processes in learning with its focus on interaction and collaboration has, during the 1980's-1990's gained increasing attention from educators and research. The sociocultural paradigm, upon which other pedagogy (constructivism) is now situated, was reflected in the format, philosophy and content of *SSNZC* (Ministry of Education,1997). At the time of implementation, the social studies curriculum signaled a very contemporary approach and for incorporating innovative ideas into its teaching framework. It has been suggested more recently however, that teachers may not recognize the sociocultural perspectives, or any other pedagogy inherent within the design and that much teaching therefore, is not delivered from a constructivist perspective. Barr (2005) notes that this implies that many teachers continue to embrace a more transmission style approach to teaching social studies, one that depends on teachers delivering information, rather than students 'constructing' their own understandings. It is generally conceded that an approach that encourages students to construct understandings themselves will

prepare them more effectively to respond to the accelerating changes in society and the types of problems they will need to address as future citizens.

Constructivist Pedagogy

Constructivist pedagogy in the classroom supports the notion that new knowledge is best accommodated by building on existing knowledge. Too frequently however, it seems children have been encouraged to learn separate bits of information that have needed to be memorized and have had little application to their lives. It has long been conceded that if children are to develop a sound understanding about their participation and contribution to society, then social studies must be well structured, relevant and based around powerful concepts, such as those made evident via the aims of the knowledge strands in the social studies curriculum. This involves planning learning experiences to enable students to construct knowledge by drawing on a range of information, to allow for greater depth of understanding, and more importantly – to allow for application in new situations. Scheurman defines it as:

A set of related theories that deal with the nature of knowledge. The common denominator linking these theories is the belief that knowledge is created by people and influenced by their values and culture. In contrast to this view is the behaviourist belief that knowledge exists outside of people (as cited by Barr, 2005, p.4).

In the publication *A position paper: Social studies in the New Zealand school curriculum*, (Barr, et al., 1997), suggest that understanding based on a constructivist paradigm can be best achieved by teaching that supports the development of ideas, concepts and generalizations:

Understanding in social studies is expressed as ideas, concepts, and generalizations. A concept is an abstraction which pulls together a number of facts. Concepts group together certain facts together and help organize them and make sense of them by revealing patterns of similarity and difference (p.9).

This means that students need to be exposed to experiences which allow them to construct conceptual understanding through a process of exploring, analyzing, and evaluating factual examples. Jadallah (2000) suggests that through an analytical process, students may subject factual examples to careful scrutiny to determine their source and the validity of its content. Furthermore, he claims that as individuals analyze factual examples for validity, knowledge and insights develop (p.223). Inherent in Jadallah's explanation is the suggestion that when teachers plan for social studies, they should provide a range of resources, experiences and opportunities from a variety of sources, so that students can be supported through the process of constructing understandings. Hence, it is thought that by 'applying concepts to real life situations and transferring these to other contexts, students are able to form generalizations. This, should in turn, facilitate meaningful learning and construction of knowledge. Since the knowledge base in today's world is expanding so rapidly, it is generally agreed that this type of learning is more relevant today than ever - since learners cannot be expected to memorise all there is to learn.

Views that students should construct their own knowledge in this way are based on Piaget's theory of cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky's theory on social constructivism. Piaget's theory of cognitive constructivism is based on the idea that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the individual and that it is an individual's interactions and analyses of the environment that makes it meaningful (Barr, 2005). Vygotsky proposed that there is a close relationship between the use of language as a cultural tool (in social interaction) and the use of language as a psychological tool (for organizing our own, individual thinking) and suggested that '... our involvement in joint activities can generate new understandings which we then "internalize" as individual knowledge and capabilities' (Wells & Claxton, 2002, p.141). The implication for teaching is that, social interactions with the teacher and other students are a significant part of the learning process. Learning is not solely constructed within the mind of the individual, the emphasis is still student centred, but the teacher is more responsible for guiding ideas within a social context, involving learners in sharing, reconstructing their ideas and beliefs (Jadallah, 2000).

Sociocultural Views of Learning

During the process of social studies exemplar development, the Exemplar Development Team found that quality social studies learning, came to be seen in new forms of participation, such as sharing decisions about the direction of an inquiry, instead of being teacher-directed. Quality social studies was also seen when students assumed more responsibility for finding resource material, when they debated ideas and were constructively involved in issues that faced them and their communities. (Sewell, et. al., 2005). The collaborative work between members of the exemplar team, teachers and students led to the understanding that social studies learning and achievement comes about by bringing sociocultural views of learning into the classroom where they co-exist with more traditional transmission pedagogies.

Sociocultural views of learning were identified and highlighted during the 1990's by Rogoff, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown & Campione, 1994; Gipps, 1999; Resnick 1991 and others were suggesting that 'learning should be thought of as less of an individual activity and more as a process of complex sociocultural processes' (McGee & Fraser, 2001, p.51). A central idea underpinning the sociocultural perspective on human intellectual development is that individual development is integrated with the longer-term development of our species and that language plays a vital role in achieving this integration. Wells & Claxton (2002), suggest that research studies of adult-child relationships as observed in many cultures support the view that '...growing up is an apprenticeship in thinking, an induction into ways with words and ways of thinking, which is achieved through dialogue' (p.142).

Rogoff's research studies have highlighted the importance of the role that parents and other people play in helping children learn, in the course of everyday activity. Rogoff's (1990) view fits the general perspective that children's cognitive development is embedded in the context of social relationships and sociocultural tools and practices. In fact she suggests that the child and the social world are mutually involved to an extent that precludes regarding them as independently

definable. Furthermore, she claims that even when we focus attention separately on the roles of the individual and of the social milieu, those roles are defined in terms that take each other into account (Rogoff, 1990). She suggests for example, that ‘when we focus on the actions of the child or of the caregiver at different moments, we define each person’s actions with respect to the context provided by the other’s actions, goals and circumstances’ (Rogoff, 1990, p.28).

In Rogoff’s view therefore children are seen as “apprentices in thinking”, active in their efforts to learn from observing and participating with peers and more skilled members of their society. Furthermore, she suggests that caregivers and parents support children’s efforts to participate in the cognitive activities of daily life and guide them in doing so, as well as managing their interaction to get the help they need. She suggests ‘that in engaging children in an appropriate handling of a task, adults create supported situations in which children can extend current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence’ (Rogoff, 1990, p.93). Children are thereby supported in the construction of new solutions within the context of sociocultural activity. In informal education, this process is referred to as scaffolding and is used to describe a teacher’s efforts to close the gap between task requirements and what the learner can accomplish on his or her own. This collaborative work between the teacher and the learner often advances the learner’s skills as well as accomplishing the task at hand. Vygotsky conceptualized this as the “zone of proximal development” describing it as ‘the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers...’ (Rogoff, 1984, p.118).

The emphasis on sociocultural processes in learning, with its focus on interaction and collaboration has, during the 1980’s -1990’s gained more attention from educators and research. It has been suggested therefore, that it is important to understand the sociocultural paradigm – how it forms a background upon which pedagogy is now situated. Sociocultural theory has particular implications for social studies, since it

implies that if children are to learn to participate with others as confident, informed and responsible citizens, they can do so now – in their school learning environments. Sociocultural perspectives of learning afford children with opportunities whereby they can gain from guided participation with their more skilled partners, teachers and peers. This involves shared understanding and problem solving. In this way children can gain increasingly advanced understandings and skills in managing the intellectual problems of their communities.

The Constructivist versus Transmission style Approach to Teaching Social Studies

Teachers using *SSNZC* (M.O.E., 1997) are expected to base their programmes on a constructivist approach, thereby teaching understanding, rather than facts. Barr (2005) however, suggests that many teachers are not teaching from a constructivist perspective and he cites several reasons why. He believes teachers continue to embrace a more transmission style approach to social studies. To illustrate his claim, he cites the 2001 Educational Review Office report in which it is states that:

It is rare for students to be engaged in a sequence of learning activities that have purpose....students are not taught skills so that they can inquire meaningfully...some teachers lack knowledge and understanding about *how* to construct a successful learning programme

(ERO, 2001, as cited in Barr, 2005, p.5).

Barr furthermore suggests that inadequate professional development programmes following the introduction of the new curriculum may have contributed to teacher confusion with regard to pedagogy. He cites another example from the 2001 ERO report to support this view that teachers may not have understood what was required in order to incorporate constructivist methods into their teaching:

Inadequate quality checks on the professional development programmes have resulted in confusion among teachers as teachers depended upon this support. If the transfer of knowledge and under-standings was flawed or inadequate at this stage, it is not surprising that teachers did not receive good quality leadership. (ERO, 2001, as cited in Barr, 2001, p.5).

Another view raised by the Australian Council's Educational Research (2002), concerns the social studies curriculum. It has been suggested that many teachers may have failed to recognize the underlying "intent" of the curriculum document because the document does not explicitly specify the type of pedagogical practices teachers are expected to employ. The Australian Council's Educational Research, carried out as part of the New Zealand Curriculum Stocktake (2002) stated that:

As for the notion of the inclusive nature of the curriculum there is very little indication of the pedagogy to be applied in social studies programmes... there is no indication of the cognitive processes that are to be undertaken in the learning. It would be possible for teachers to adopt a didactic approach to teaching and learning activities and to technically address all the achievement objectives and indicators.

(Curriculum Stocktake, 2002, 7.4).

Criticism leveled by the ACER, together with the issues raised by Barr would suggest that teachers have needed further support in specifying how they might promote the pedagogy embedded in *SSNZC* (Ministry of Education, 1997). Whilst some have suggested that the social studies curriculum needed to go further in specifying how teachers might promote the types of thinking that are needed by future citizens, others have conceded that exemplars as supporting resources, might fill this gap.

Communities of Practice

It is common practice for teaching syndicates to co-operatively plan their social studies programmes, since this has the obvious advantage of capitalizing on the shared expertise and decision making powers of the group. The notion of *distributed cognition* (Keown & Chalmers, 2006) is acknowledged as an important element within a community of practice and is recognized as beneficial to the planning of syndicate and school wide social studies programmes.

According to Keown & Chalmers (2006) communities of practice (CoP) are a relatively recent phenomenon, ‘but the idea of a dialogue-based and socially situated learning community has a much longer history. Dewey (1901), Friere (1970) and Vygotsky (1978) have all argued that learning begins in a social context and that internal reflection and “monologue” follow’ (Keown & Chalmers, 2006, p.3).

The view of learning as a communal process embedded in communal practices gained impetus during the 1980’s-1990’s and has inspired many educators, practitioners and researchers to explore and define new forms of guidance that can be applied in schools, such as cognitive apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990), community of learners (Brown & Campione, 1994; Rogoff et. al., 1996) and dialogic inquiry (Wells, 1999). In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s two researchers, Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger formulated their idea that learning is social and comes largely from the experience of participating in daily life. Their model of *situated learning* proposed that learning involved a process of engagement in a community of practice and that there is an intimate connection between knowledge and activity. (Smith, 2005).

Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002), argue that the community of practice is not just a collection of ‘best practice’, but a group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment. Furthermore, they suggest ‘that groups of people within a community of practice, in sharing their common concern or passion for something, learn as a consequence, to do it better, as they interact regularly’ (p.1). Although there are a variety of forms community of practices take, Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002), suggest that community of practices all share the same fundamental structure.

Each possesses:

- a *domain* of knowledge which defines a set of issues.

- a *community* of people who care about this domain of knowledge.
- a shared *practice* that they are developing to be effective in their domain.

The *domain* creates common ground and inspires members to contribute and participate and give meaning to their actions, whilst the *community* fosters relationships, and interactions, and a willingness to share ideas, expose one's ignorance, and to listen and ask questions. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. Members of the community of practice are practitioners who develop a *shared* repertoire of *practice* which includes resources, experiences, tools and ways of addressing recurring problems. This body of shared knowledge, sustained interaction and resources enables the community to proceed efficiently in dealing with its domain. According to Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002), 'it is when these three elements work in parallel and when they function well together, that they provide an ideal knowledge structure that assumes responsibility for developing and sharing knowledge' (p. 29).

Communities of Practice as a Site for Teachers' Professional Development

The idea that social studies learning involves a 'deepening process' of participation within a community, suggests that social studies teachers can benefit from professional development afforded within a CoP. The mix of theory and practice, based on their collective experiences with new ideas and approaches within the classroom and syndicate, supports the view that professional development for teachers can be significantly enhanced within collaborative environments. The concept of a community of practice is consistently cited in the literature as an integral factor in supporting teachers in their efforts to achieve effective, sustainable professional development. (Gilbert, 1993; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Roberts & Pruitt, 2003; Schlager & Fusco, 2003; Wenger, 2005).

Schlager & Fusco (2003) suggest that it is not fully understood how communities of practice play a supportive role in teacher development, but it has been suggested that

traditional communities are established in schools as teachers interact during their daily practice of teaching. Little (2001, cited in Schlager & Fusco, 2003) suggests that ‘it is in the daily routine of mundane exchange among teachers, that the resources for improvement of teaching are created and that the professional community is forged and opportunities to learn are created or foreclosed’ (p.8).

The literature identifying the key elements of effective teacher learning within a CoP cites collegiality as a key element. (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997; Roberts & Pruitt, 2003; Schlager & Fusco, 2003; Wenger, 2005). Collegiality involves teachers talking about their practice, observing one another in action, planning work together and teaching one another what they know about teaching. Teachers as a group are concerned with the nature of their practice and continually seek new and innovative ways to enhance student learning. When teachers work together in small collaborative groups where dialogic relationships are possible it raises their consciousness to make explicit and articulate the things they do and why they do them. This enables them to develop a meta-awareness of their practice, to value the elements that have integrity and to reject those they do not see as relevant or meaningful to their practice. Smyth (1991, cited in Gilbert, 1993). Schlager & Fusco (2003, as cited in Chalmers & Keown, 2006) suggest, that shared ideas and perceptions, discussed and debated enable the expertise, skills and strengths of each member of the community to be harnessed to assist in the learning and development of all and that the support and advice offered to one another is flexible, adaptable and draws on *distributed cognition* .

It is argued that an essential component in any teacher development programme is the active involvement of teachers in reflecting on, and possibly modifying their practice. Learning within a community of practice supports the constructivist approach because teacher learning in the field of professional development is a sense-making process where the individual builds new knowledge and understanding from the base of their existing knowledge and perceptions. For the learner, it involves interplay between existing knowledge, ideas and beliefs and new ones embedded in the concepts, content and philosophy of new material and approaches (Chalmers &

McKeown, 2006). This feature draws on Vygotsky's conception of learning as a process of constructing personally meaningful knowledge through the development of understanding negotiated and shared with others. Hence the CoP enhances learning because it is *situated* in a socially collaborative environment. (Gilbert, 1992, cited in Gilbert 1993).

It is also argued that teachers take more responsibility for their own professional growth when involved in such a community. The CoP, enhanced by collegiality and collaboration provides opportunities for conversation, reflection and inquiry built around the ideas that teachers plan their own professional growth focusing on their own perceived needs. (Sparks & Hirsh 1997, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003, p57). Professional development within a CoP offers a promising alternative where teachers can help themselves, but also benefit from the opportunity to gain feedback from one another on new ideas and to further develop and refine those ideas (Gilbert, 1990, cited in Gilbert, 1993).

Within the community of practice there is a mix of theory and practice. Hence the development of a new activity, strategy, or idea can be trialed in the classroom. 'This means that the model for professional development is clearly *'situated'*'. (Keown & Chalmers, 2006). Community of practices are in accord with the principle that adult learners respond best when dealing with authentic situations and problems. This is one reason why task-embedded communities of practice for teacher professional development are so valuable since they are closely connected to the realities of the classroom. They help to make learning both an active and interactive process and give teachers the opportunity to apply new knowledge that emanates from them. Similarly the community of practice allows teachers to put something into practice that they have learnt – straight away. Its relevance is motivating because the learning is located in the real world of the classroom (ERO, 2000, p.16). The Educational Review Office suggests that 'too often in New Zealand, traditional approaches to professional development have failed to take account of context, by offering one off workshops or short training programmes that remove teachers from the classroom

and support of their colleagues' (ERO, 2000, p.16). Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002), claim that the engagement of a community of practice explores both the existing body of knowledge, as well incorporating the latest developments in the teaching field. At times it works to improve some existing practice. The teacher colleagues have a shared understanding of their community's *domain* and via the community of practice they work through ways of extending and improving that domain. Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002), claim that leadership within a community of practice is *distributed*, and this is a characteristic of the whole community. Furthermore, they suggest that recognized experts help to legitimize the community role and make a contribution in terms of bringing outside resources to the community. An important notion with regard to leadership in teaching is that teachers often plan for their own professional growth individually or collectively (Sparks & Hirsh 1997, cited in Roberts & Pruitt, 2003, p.57). Hence many staff organize and conduct their own professional development, rather than calling on outside consultants. 'Teachers are recognized as experts and sometimes are more effective than outside consultants' (Roberts & Pruitt, 2003, p.57).

When teachers collaborate within a community of practice they spend time sharing teaching strategies, planning for instruction and looking for new ways to improve learning. This requires a process of reflection which is an integral part of making sense of what they have learnt. Learning therefore requires an atmosphere of openness – an effective community of practice provides 'a place where it is safe to speak the truth and ask hard questions. Trust is the key to the process. Meetings are intense, rich in content and engage members in good discussion. According to Roberts & Pruitt (2003), the reflection process is critical for three reasons: firstly, the outcome is improved student learning, secondly, as a result of reflection teachers can acquire the working knowledge they need to improve their teaching practice, and thirdly, reflection contributes to the building of the community (p.16). The community of practice is one of a variety of approaches to professional development which serves to address the differences in people, context, and working relationships.

Action Research and the Professional Development of Teachers

Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist is attributed with being the founder of action research. After the 2nd World War Lewin used it as a method for intervening in, and researching the major social problems of the day. Lewin described action research as ‘... proceeding in a spiral of steps, each composed of planning, action, observation and the evaluation of the results of the action through the collective reflection by the participants’ (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p.235). Kurt Lewin’s term action research was coined by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988) and Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) as a useful label to apply to what they considered teacher-researchers were doing. It has been suggested however, that Lewin’s concept of action research is very different to what goes on in the name of contemporary teacher research. Lewin’s conception has been described as:

- an externally initiated intervention designed to assist a client system;
- functionalist in orientation;
- prescriptive in practice (Hopkins, 2004, p.50).

According to Hopkins (2004) none of these features apply to ‘the nature of classroom research by teachers which is characterized by its practitioner problem solving and eclectic orientation’ (p.50). However, if the wealth of educational literature is a predictor, it is possible to conclude that modifications to action research are a popular concept with educators in a range of settings, including social studies research. Since the 1970’s particularly there has been a significant growth in the literature suggesting that teachers find involvement in action research professionally and personally rewarding, as well as contributing to their practice and understanding of that practice (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Oja & Smulyan, 1989; McTaggart, 1997 and Hopkins, 2004). Johnson (2005, cited in Mertler, 2006) believes action research to be perhaps ‘the most efficient and effective way to address the professional development of teachers’ (p.17). He suggests that action research affords teachers the opportunity to connect theory with practice, to become more reflective in their practice, and to become empowered risk takers’ (p.17). The

majority of examples of action research in schools however, seem to be characterized by an external facilitator or researcher who joins a group of practitioners to assist them to focus on their practice and bring about improvements to that practice. Often these examples are part of externally funded research projects.

Although Lawrence Stenhouse makes the connection between action research and teachers as researchers in his influential book *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (1975) there is sufficient evidence in the literature to suggest that a distinction should be made between teacher/ practitioner research and action research. (Stringer, 2004; Atkinson, 1994 & Johnston, 1994). Stringer (2004), emphasizes that when teachers stand back from the class and obtain factual information related to teaching practices, learning strategies and assessment and employ a variety of techniques to analyse issues of interest, teachers are applying reflective analyses to issues of interest. He claims however, that it is not until 'they engage *others* in the process of inquiry, with the intent of solving a problem related to their educational work together, that they are doing *action research*' (Stringer, 2004, p.4).

Related to this idea of collaboration is an interesting point raised frequently in the literature. It is suggested that whilst one of the characteristic features of action research is its collaborative emphasis, teachers generally work in isolation. (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Stringer, 2004; Johnston, 1994). Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), have all stressed the need for action research to be a collective, collaborative process. They claim however, that most teachers spend the majority of their time isolated from professional colleagues in an environment in which decisions and actions are complex and immediate. They suggest therefore that activities whereby an individual goes through cycles of planning, action and reflection can only be regarded as encompassing a very limited composition of collaboration. Carr & Kemmis (1986), also make the point that 'teachers do not naturally form action groups for their own enlightenment' (p.201).

Research is often used to develop theories that eventually help determine best practices in education. These best practices are then used to help teachers develop effective learning experiences for their students. The majority of examples of action research in schools however, are characterized by an external facilitator or researcher who joins a group of practitioners to bring about improvements or change. Often the research findings do not consider teachers' points of view, or take into consideration the complexities of the classroom. Facilitators can be perceived as imposing a process upon teachers, at the same time elevating their status by imparting their knowledge to the teachers. This potential 'tension' for external facilitators to be viewed as manipulators is discussed widely in the literature (Atkinson, 1994; Johnston, 1994; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). A further difficulty highlighted by Atkinson (1994) is the 'language of research', which she believes is analytical and theoretical, significantly different to the language of teachers. She suggests also, that the one-way flow of information from researchers to teachers creates an environment in which researchers expects the practicing teachers to be passive receivers of the newly acquired information.

Carr & Kemmis (1986) offer a solution to these issues, claiming that their impact can be minimized when the teachers participate on equal terms in the research. They offer participatory action research as a solution, suggesting that it is this form of action research that can close the gap between the researcher and the researched, providing there is honesty and openness about the role of the facilitator. They agree with Hopkin's (2004), view that participatory action research enables teachers to be engaged in explaining and understanding their own practice in ways that are less prescribed and constrained by others. Hopkins (2004) takes this notion further, by suggesting that participatory action research frees teachers from becoming trapped within a pre-specified process of steps and cycles over which they have no input, nor any control. He argues that while it is useful to have a guide for action, it appears to be too prescriptive for teachers because the tight specification of the process specified by Lewin does not fit in with the reflective process inquiring teachers use.

This section has highlighted the learning theories and social studies pedagogy that have helped to shape this research and inform its design. Part 2 discusses this theory and pedagogy in relation to the research and explains why the researcher chose to apply this theory to the research design.

PART 2

Research Theorizing and Methodology

This section outlines the context and the approach to research that the researcher has taken. It explains how a range of contemporary learning and teaching theories, as well as social studies pedagogy has helped to inform and shape this participatory action research study, located within a community of practice. (Refer to **Figure 1** Participatory action research within a community of practice).

Research Context This research focuses upon the New Zealand curriculum exemplars for social studies. A social studies exemplar is a sample of authentic student work annotated to illustrate learning, achievement, and quality in relation to Levels 1 to 5 of the Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum (1997).

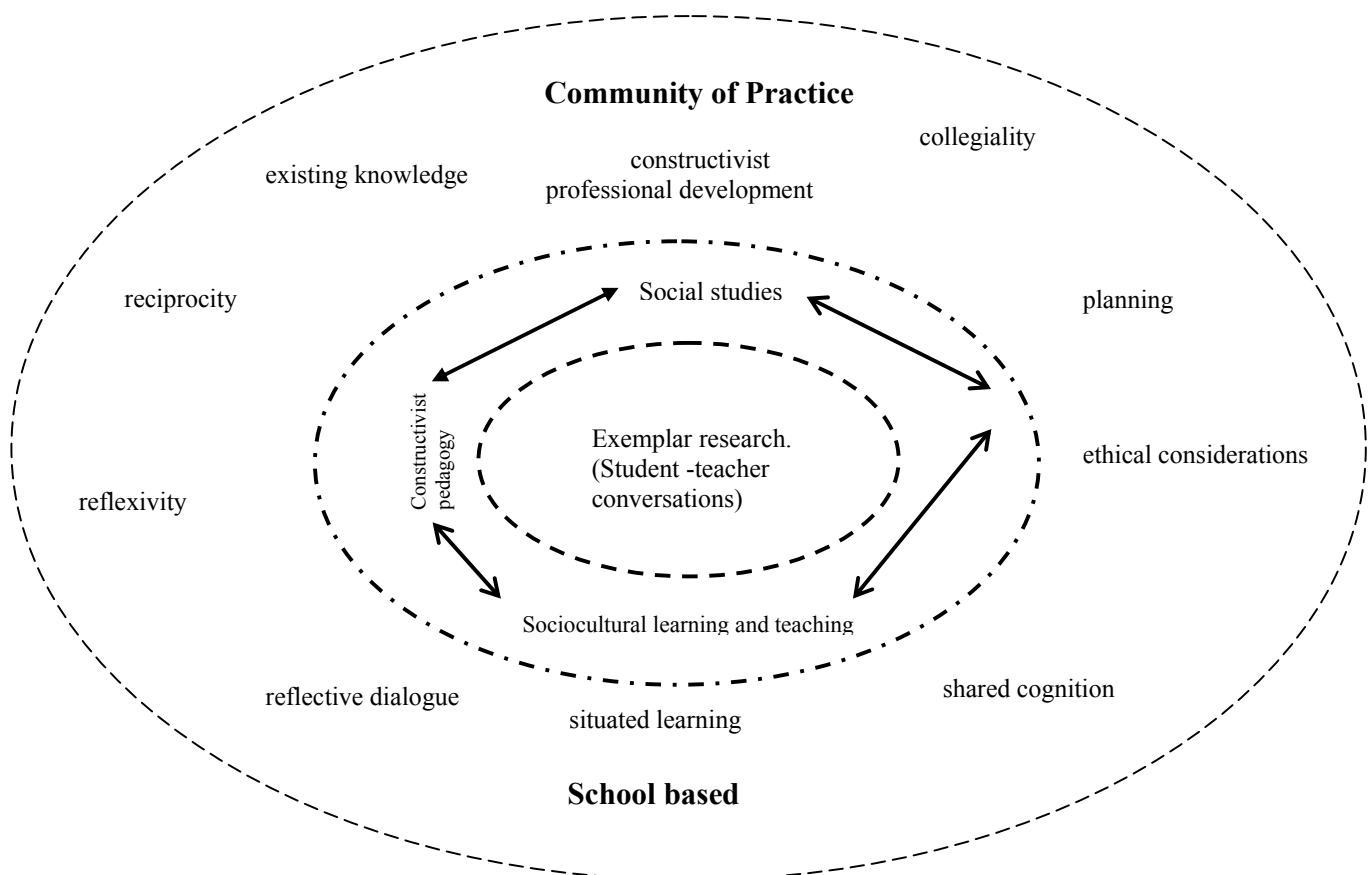


Figure 1: Participatory Action Research within a Community of Practice.

The researcher's interest in the social studies curriculum exemplars evolved whilst teaching social studies with pre-service teachers at the School of Education, Waikato University. When the social studies exemplars arrived in the Policy, Cultural and Social Studies Education Department at the end of 2004, their colourful lay-out and attention to ideas and concepts expressed in *SSNZC* (1997), quickly captured the attention and imagination of the researcher. Recognizing that this new resource could have the potential for promoting quality social studies, the researcher began to consider effective ways of using the exemplars to capture the interest of new teachers engaged in social studies teaching. In finding that pre-service teachers were gaining clearer notions about what social studies looks like in the classroom context, the researcher was prompted to further her interest in the social studies curriculum exemplars by conducting a small research study based upon their implementation. The researcher envisaged that she would focus on observing and reporting on the implementation of the social studies exemplars in 2-3 primary schools. However, when in July, 2005 the researcher conducted a small informal survey of social studies exemplar use in schools, it was not possible to locate a school where the exemplars had been implemented and were in regular use. The researcher felt that an apparent lack of professional development relating to the social studies exemplars, may have resulted in teachers not being motivated, willing or able to use them in their social studies programmes. This perception prompted the researcher to reconsider her research approach to provide teachers with the opportunity to learn about, and use the social studies exemplars. The design of this research evolved therefore, from a perceived *need*, identified by the researcher.

A Community of Practice

One of the key aims of this research study was to develop a methodology which would maximize opportunities for discussion, debate, implementation and reflection. Four teachers from a Year 5/6 syndicate were invited to become teacher-researchers and to work collegially with the researcher/facilitator within their own school (*situated learning*) to see how the social studies curriculum exemplars could be used to support them with their social studies teaching. This study draws on the notion of

'*distributed cognition*' or '*shared cognition*' since it encourages the researcher and teachers to share their professional knowledge and accumulated experience in making decisions about how to utilize the social studies exemplars. Notions of *collegiality* and *collaboration* were vital to the success of the work within the community of practice. Oja & Smulyan (1989) highlight the importance of open communication in any participatory action study and suggest that practitioners and researchers communicate frequently and openly. The research in this study involved the researcher assuming responsibility for two roles: *facilitator* and *collegial partner*. Stenhouse (1975) refers to this latter role as a *critical friend* or *critical colleague*.

Participatory Action Research and the Rationale for Classroom Based Research

Participatory action research within a community of practice has been chosen for this research study because the researcher supports the view that participatory action research can significantly close the gap between the researcher and the researched, providing there is honesty and openness about the role of the facilitator. An interesting point raised in the literature, relates to the fact that the unidirectional flow of information from researchers to teachers often breaks down so that frequently there is a gap between what is learnt by the researchers who conduct and report their research to practitioners. One of the central themes in this study therefore is to try to determine a means whereby this gap might be closed. (p.230). Collins & Duguid (1989 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) describe it as 'situated learning, learning *in* the workplace and *about* the workplace' (p.228). In action research there are four objectives considered by Altrichter, Posch & Somekh (1993) to be important. The researcher in this study draws upon these objectives since these are analogous to the research questions that are central to the investigation here.

These are:

- To develop and improve practice through research in the interests of all those concerned.
- To develop the knowledge and practical understanding of those involved in the research process.

- To develop the professional knowledge of teachers as a whole.
- To develop and improve education as a discipline. (p. 74)

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) support Altrichter, Posch & Somekh's view and suggest also that for practitioners participatory action research is an important part of professional practice at classroom level because it 'allows for reasoned justification of our educational work to others...' (p. 230).

A Constructivist Approach to Professional Development

Considerable emphasis has been placed on a constructivist approach to this research since the constructivist approach reflects and underpins the pedagogy for "quality" social studies. In this approach, learning is viewed as a sense-making process where the individual builds new knowledge and understanding from the base of their existing knowledge and perceptions. It involves (for the learner) interplay between existing knowledge, ideas and beliefs and new ones embedded in the concepts, content and philosophy of new approaches, advocated by professional developers. Bell & Gilbert (1996) identify four key elements consistent with constructivist approaches to professional development:

- the constructed nature of knowledge and beliefs, along with the importance of personal thoughts and reflection about them;
- the social and distributed nature of cognition;
- the situated nature of cognition;
- the importance of sufficient time for these three elements to be worked through.

Reflection and Reflexivity

In considering the presence of reflection in this study, it is important to take into account the views of Atkinson (1994) and Johnston (1994). They suggest that 'although teachers are reflective practitioners who strive to grow as professionals, the reality is that this phase of 'reflection' may not always be as 'neat' and 'tidy' in the reality'. Teacher-researchers are curious about their work and wish to learn from it to

improve their practice, but it needs to be noted that the type of reflection that may occur in this research study, could be more 'reactive' than a carefully and critically considered analysis of practice. The researcher suggests that Schon's (1983) concept of reflection may well be applied to this research – the ability to reflect-in-action. This is the capacity to 'think on one's feet' while recognizing what needs to be attended to. (Schon, 1983, cited in Gilbert, 1993). Much of the literature strongly suggests that the 'critically reflective' component is crucial to the success of professional development.

Reflexivity is central to this study. The use of the constructivist framework was designed to elicit a rich and descriptive account of the implementation process by this particular group of teachers. However, in a study such as this it was necessary to take into account, the self-conscious awareness of the effects that the participants were having on the research process, how their values, attitudes, perceptions and feelings were feeding into the research situation to be studied. The constructivist framework allows the researcher to include her impressions and insights into the group's interactions and findings and to use these as an additional source of data. The facilitator was aware that her values, attitudes and knowledge about social studies would directly inform the kinds of research information collected and how this would be reported.

By locating this research within a community of practice, the researcher sought to encourage and highlight the importance of open communication within the collaborative group. The researcher considered that her own primary teaching experience, would be an advantage in understanding the concerns of the teacher-researchers. The potential success of this research study was based on the nature of the relationship between the teacher-researchers and the researcher, and the understanding that the research process was a co-constructed, joint enterprise.

Part 2 has explained how the theory and pedagogy discussed in Part 1, relates to the research and its design. It justifies the approach taken by the researcher in

undertaking a constructivist approach to the professional development embedded in the research, and also highlights why participatory action research within a community of practice, has been considered the most appropriate methodology for this particular research study.

This chapter has considered the theory and social studies pedagogy that has influenced the researcher's unique method in approaching this research. It has demonstrated that the theory and pedagogy that underpins quality social studies teaching and learning, can also be used effectively to support teachers' professional development in social studies. The following chapter explains how 3 scoping questions were used by the researcher to "unpack" the research title and report the research findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Classroom Based Participatory Action Research Study

The title of this research study is **Embracing innovation and gaining ‘ownership’ of the social studies exemplars: a classroom based study**. Embedded in this research title, is the researcher’s contention that in order for a new curriculum innovation to be useful to teachers, they must recognize that it can make a positive contribution to their practice and only then, will they reach out, use and apply it effectively. The research context has been informed by contemporary theory about learning and teaching, as well as understandings about the empowering of teachers in professional development.

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used to answer three scoping questions. It clarifies the purpose and nature of the research undertaken and justifies the adoption of participatory action research as the methodology for this study.

Since qualitative research has been adopted as the means for reporting the research findings, much of the following chapter is devoted to illustrative accounts of contextualized conversations as they occurred within the community of practice. Since the research was planned in the community of practice but the teaching was carried out in the classroom, the research reporting also includes an interpretation of the teaching and learning observed by the researcher. This small scale research study is an observation and interpretation of a group of teachers engaged naturally in their everyday work, and as such provides a descriptive account of how they co-constructed the research process.

The following research questions form the basis of this classroom based research:

1. Can a community of practice assist teachers to embrace and gain “ownership” of the social studies curriculum exemplars?

2. How can the Ministry of Education exemplar model be used to “inform” effective social studies pedagogy in primary classrooms?
3. What professional development do teachers need in order to understand the nature and purpose of the social studies exemplars?

Research Rationale

It is intended that the research information gathered from researching these questions, may assist educators and curriculum development personnel when making decisions relating to implementing professional development of a new curriculum innovation. It may highlight issues in regard to the support teachers need when they are required to incorporate new innovations into classroom teaching of social studies.

School and Participant Selection: Establishing the Community of Practice

The researcher selected a decile 4 inner city Hamilton school as the locus for the research. This primary school had a roll of 352 pupils at the time the research commenced, characterized by a very multicultural composition. A core of dedicated staff had built up and maintained a long term commitment to the school and had established a strong rapport with the children. The Principal maintains an effective home-school partnership including regular liaison with families.

The researcher had established a long standing collegial friendship with the Year 5/6 syndicate leader at this school. The researcher also considered that the syndicate leader had a sound knowledge of the curriculum, reflected in some social studies curriculum leadership responsibilities within the school. These factors led the researcher to approach her to ascertain the possibility of her teaching syndicate becoming involved in the research study. Contact between the syndicate leader and the researcher was made in October 2005, when initial discussion took place regarding the nature and purpose of the proposed research. The researcher explained that the proposed research would involve examining ways in which the social studies curriculum exemplars could be incorporated into the syndicate’s social studies programme for 2006. Following this meeting the syndicate leader discussed this proposition with the other three teachers and at the end of October she signaled the

intention of her syndicate to become involved in the research. The researcher communicated with the Principal and the Board of Trustees to establish formal contact and to seek permission to undertake the research with the Year 5/6 syndicate. A subsequent meeting was held at the school in November 2005 at which the research was explained to the wider syndicate. The collegial nature of the research and its capacity to evolve was explained and discussed. This meeting effectively established the community of practice. Permission was granted by the Principal and the BOT and as a consequence, the research process was initiated. The evolving research process, (as set out in **Fig. 2**) illustrates how the research process was co-constructed by the researcher and the teacher-researcher participants.

The Researcher's Roles

The role of the researcher was essentially that of co-participant within a community of practice. The researcher however performed two key roles during the research process, as facilitator and collegial partner. As mentioned earlier, Stenhouse (1975), refers to this role as 'critical friend' or 'critical colleague'. The researcher in this study was resolved to create an environment where the teachers felt supported, yet in control, as they worked with the researcher to co-construct the research process. It was important for the facilitator to provide opportunities for the teacher-researchers to develop their own theories of practice in the classroom. The researcher's roles also included the following:

- guiding the research as it evolved;
- fostering joint responsibility for co-construction of the exemplar study and the evaluation of its effectiveness;
- raising issues within the community of practice;
- observing interactions within the community of practice;
- offering support and guidance in the interpretation of the exemplars in accordance with the notion of *reciprocity*;
- ensuring that ethical concerns of the study were adhered to, particularly in relation to the confidentiality issues relating to children and their work samples;

- tape recording collegial conversations;
- maintaining records that monitored the research process;
- interpreting the research process;
- collating and reporting the research findings.

The Teacher-Researchers' roles

Prior to the implementation of this research, the roles of the participants were carefully considered. Issues pertaining to expectations and commitments to the research were discussed collegially with the newly established community of practice. The teacher-researchers' roles did not involve the recording or reporting of the research information, since the researcher wished to be sensitive and realistic about the allocation of work and time that the teachers could reasonably be expected to contribute. This role was therefore assigned exclusively to the researcher. The research in this study was strongly based on the principle that the primary role of the teachers in this study is to teach, and that their role in the research, secondary to that function.

The teacher participants assumed roles as teacher-researchers and engaged in participatory action research within a community of practice. To maintain confidentiality nom de plumes have been used for the teachers' named in the research reporting. The nom de plumes were selected by the researcher in consultation with the Year 5/6 syndicate leader. Their nom de plumes are: Helen, the syndicate leader, Tania, Maria and James. The children whose work has been cited in the research have also been assigned nom de plumes.

As teacher-researchers their role was:

- to meet with the researcher as members of the community of practice and to engage in collegial collaboration with regard to the planning of the research process;
- to support the research by incorporating ideas discussed in the collegial

discussions into their social studies programmes.

Reciprocity within the Community of Practice

The notion of reciprocity was an integral part of the research design. This principle involved the researcher being able to contribute something to the teacher- researchers in return for their involvement in the study. Lankshire & Knobel (2004) claim ‘that reciprocity helps build a sense of mutual identity and demonstrates the researcher honoring the contribution of the participants, rather than taking it for granted’ (p 12). The support and guidance offered by the researcher to the teacher-researchers in this study has involved the understanding that as a result of her experience in social studies education, she has been in a position to share her knowledge of the social studies curriculum exemplars with them. This fulfils the researcher’s obligation to the notion of reciprocity.

The Evolving Nature of a Co-constructed Research Process

The research involved the community of practice in three semi-structured conversations. It was proposed that each conversation would be recorded and that the first would take place at the start of the research. The second was to take place during the middle of the process, with the third and final conversation marking the completion of the research process. It was envisaged that during these conversations pertaining to the implementation of the exemplars, the community of practice would co-construct the research process. In discussion with the teacher-researchers, it was decided that these collegial conversations could be scheduled as part of weekly syndicate meetings, each meeting being a semi-structured 30 minute session. Since this research study was underpinned by the constructivist approach, it was not intended that a research process would be worked out before the research commenced. Developing the research process became part of the on-going work of the community and it evolved in response to the teacher-researchers’ desire to learn about how the social studies exemplars could lead to their improved practice in social studies teaching.

The community of practice initially chose to include a close examination of the social studies exemplars at Level 2-3 (Years. 3-6). It was proposed that discussion would focus on the purpose and intent of the social studies exemplars, their key features and their levels. It was agreed that it might be possible to use the exemplars to assist in the planning of a social studies unit to commence the 2006 school year. The teacher-researchers had signaled early in the research process that they wished to use the social studies L2 exemplar *The Way We Do Things*³ since it reflected the understandings they wished to develop at the commencement of the school year. The community of practice resolved to monitor the effectiveness of the exemplars, hence collegial discussions related to this. It was planned that during a final evaluative meeting, there would be an evaluation of the research process also. At the researcher's request, it was agreed that samples of children's work would be collected during the above process, and used appropriately to support the research findings.

Figure 2 visually represents the 'shaping' of the research process and shows that in the initiation phase of the research, the 'shaping of the process' was very much the responsibility of the researcher. **Figure 2** also indicates that as the community of practice assumed greater responsibility for the evolving research process, control by the researcher was relinquished.

³ A Level 2 exemplar. This exemplar develops ideas related to Culture and Heritage at Level 2 of the SSNZC and can be accessed on TKI or is available in (2004) The New Zealand Curriculum Exemplars: social studies, (2004).

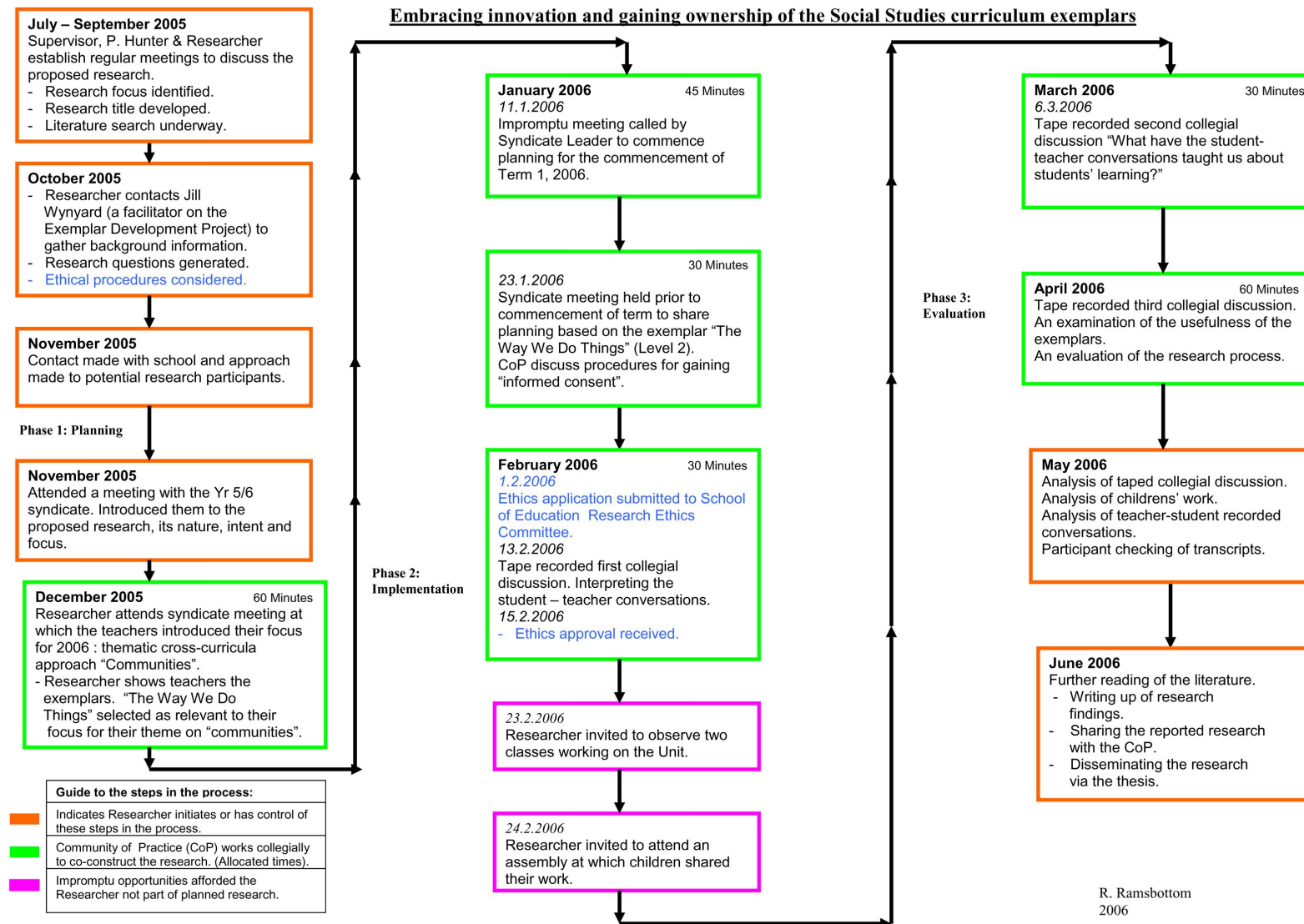


Figure 2: Evolving Research Process July 2005 – February 2007.

Ethical Considerations

In this school-based research study, action research is deeply embedded in the learning environment of the children. Failure to work within the general procedures of the school and apply ethical procedures could have resulted in serious effects on the school, the teachers or their students. Ethical principles for action research studies within schools need to go beyond the usual concerns of confidentiality and respect for the persons who are the subjects of an inquiry. (Hopkins, 2004). The researcher, (a primary teacher herself) recognized that teachers have increasing demands on their time. For this reason, the researcher resolved to avoid placing unnecessary demands on teachers' time or work loads. The research was conducted on the principle that the teacher's primary role is to teach, and any research method should not interfere with, or disrupt the teaching commitment.

Informed Consent

Informed consent has been defined by Diener & Crandall (1978 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), as 'the procedures [by] which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions' (p51). The usual practice is to provide the research participants with a letter providing them with detailed information about the research. A second, and generally separate statement is provided upon which participants give their informed consent or indicate that they wish to decline.

The following is a list of the range of ethics processes used in this research:

- Appendix A Letter of information to the Principal and Board of Trustees. (24/1/2006)
- Appendix B "Informed consent" to seek permission from the Principal and the BOT. (24/1/2006)
- Appendix C Letter of information to the teacher participants. (24/1/2006)
- Appendix D "Informed consent" to seek permission from the teacher participants. (24/1/2006)

- Appendix E Letter of information to parents and combined “informed consent” from the parents. (24/1/2006)
- Appendix F Letter of information to the Year 5/6 students and combined student “informed consent” form. (24/1/2006)

Gaining informed consent from the Principal and the school’s Board of Trustees was the first ethical principle to be considered. The letter of information to the Principal and the BOT, clearly specifies the purpose and nature of the proposed research (see Appendix A). The informed consent pro forma (Appendix B) sought permission from the Principal and BOT to conduct the research within the school.

Each teacher-participant received a letter of information (Appendix C) as well as an “informed consent” statement. The “informed consent” information (Appendix D) gave participants the right to decline to participate or the right to withdraw from the research process at any time. This included the proviso that the teacher-participants had the right to withdraw information from the transcripts that they contributed to, at any time before the completion of the research.

Since it was the intention of the researcher to make reference to samples of children’s work in the research findings, it was necessary to establish contact with the parents and caregivers of the children involved and obtain their permission. Therefore a letter of information (Appendix E) was given out to the parents at parent interviews. The informed consent was included at the foot of the letter of information. This portion was cut from the foot of the form and returned to the researcher via the teacher-participants who collected these at parent interviews. The letter of information and the informed consent form were printed on the same sheet at the request of the teachers who stated that it would be easier for dissemination purposes. Informed consent was granted by the parents at the parent interviews and these were returned to the researcher by the teachers.

Children must be safe-guarded when research is undertaken, hence a key ethical principle to be carefully considered during this research related to the involvement of

the children. This research study involved the use of children's work samples and/or taped conversations, hence it became necessary to seek children's permission since they must not unknowingly contribute to research. To this end it was necessary to create a credible and meaningful explanation of the research intentions. The information sheet and the informed consent" were designed with a coloured border to attract children's attention and the wording of both the letter of information and the "informed consent" was designed to give children a real and legitimate opportunity to say they did not want to take part (Appendix F)⁴. The "informed consent" was included as part of the letter of information. This was again at the request of the teachers, who wished to reduce the quantity of material to be distributed at a busy time of the term. The students read the information sheet and filled out the "informed consent" during class time allocated to this task. The completed forms were collected by the classroom teacher. It was interesting to note that whilst the majority of the children granted permission for their work to be used in the research, five declined to grant permission. Their work samples were therefore carefully excluded by the teachers from any samples used in the reporting of the research.

Responsibilities Towards Maintaining Confidentiality and Visibility of the Research Information

Guaranteeing confidentiality was perhaps the most difficult ethical consideration to address with regard to this study. Since the research was placed within the wider context of the school setting, it was neither possible, nor desirable to prevent other school personnel from being aware of the research being conducted. Since the research was conducted as participatory action research within a CoP, the research information remained open and visible to the research participants throughout. It was stated in the letters of information to the research participants that the research information would be used to form the basis of a thesis and that the research findings would be made available to the school and the participants on completion of the thesis. The researcher also included a clause to the effect that, if the research

⁴ This example of an informed consent form for young learners was used as an example of appropriate ethical procedure when working with young children at a School of Education Colloquium presented by Doctor Rosemary De Luca (2006).

information were to be used in any other future publication, then this would be negotiated at a later date, with the co-participants.

Procedures for Handling Research Information

The idea of the taped learner-teacher conversations was anticipated early in the research, and emerged from the preliminary planning undertaken by the community of practice. This additional information gathering technique meant that informed consent from parents, teachers and children likely to be involved, had to be obtained as part of the ethical procedures. Taped learner-teacher conversations will also be returned to the school on completion of the research.

The researcher was responsible for handling information and material produced in the course of the research. The collegial conversations were taped, transcribed and stored in a secure place in the researcher's home. Prior to this teacher-participants were given copies of their transcripts for comment and discussion and were afforded the opportunity to ask for amendments to be made. Samples of children's work, stored on a CD will be returned to the school on completion of the research.

Consultation Regarding Ethical Procedures

Issues pertaining to the ethical considerations were considered from the inception of the research through to its completion. As the researcher began to predict some of the ethical practices that would need to be put in place, it became clear that there would be challenges owing to the evolving nature of the research process. Not all ethical considerations could be addressed by the researcher on her own at the commencement of the study. For example it was necessary to consult with the teachers as to procedures relating to the gaining of informed consent from parents and children. The researcher advised the Waikato University School of Education Ethics committee in advance, that the copies of letters of information and statements of consent would be forwarded to the committee following consultation with the community of practice.

It is of interest that to note that all parents of the children in the Year 5/6 syndicate granted their informed consent. Five children chose to decline to participate in the research and no attempt was made to analyse the reasons why. Given this choice, they did so without feeling any pressure from peers or adults to comply.

The Year 5/6 syndicate began planning their 2006 programme in Nov/Dec 2005. This was an unexpected development which could not have been anticipated by the researcher. This meant that some information gathering commenced prior to receiving official notification of ethical approval.

The Research Processes and Findings

Research Title

Embracing innovation and gaining ‘ownership’ of the social studies curriculum exemplars: a classroom based study

The Nature of the Research Reporting

This section of the chapter reports on the participatory action research as it was conducted within the community of practice. The three scoping questions did not shape the research, since the research was of an evolving nature, rather they have served to maintain the focus of the research and have provided a way of ensuring that all aspects of the research title were addressed and reported. The researcher has re-stated each of the scoping questions as a statement in the reporting of the qualitative research information.

The Three Scoping Questions

1. Can a community of practice assist teachers to embrace and gain ‘ownership’ of the social studies curriculum exemplars?
2. How can the Ministry of Education exemplar model be used to inform effective social studies pedagogy in primary classrooms?
3. What professional development do teachers need in order to understand the nature and purpose of the social studies exemplars?

A Community of Practice to Assist teachers to Embrace and Gain Ownership of the Social Studies Curriculum Exemplars

The following establishes the community of practice as the locus for the research and discusses the significant steps in the evolving research process. It demonstrates how the community of practice took ownership of the social studies curriculum exemplars and with some support, were able to use them effectively to help plan their social studies programme in 2006.

Establishing Trust as a Researcher

Community of practice theorists make frequent reference in the literature to the structures and frameworks that constitute effective community of practice networks and place considerable emphasis on desirable qualities of shared practice, collaboration, collegiality and an insistence on an open and egalitarian approach. Very few, however offer guidelines, suggestions or even any tentative advice as to how collegiality and trust can be initiated and fostered within the ‘dialogue community approach’. Prior to commencing the research with my co-participants, I was apprehensive, about my role and how I could establish my credibility as a social studies educator, and a facilitator, yet at the same time help to create collegiality within the community of practice. I wanted the teacher-participants to perceive me as a colleague, prepared to contribute whatever I could to our common and joint enterprise. I needed to be able to take “ownership” of the process for it to be at all successful, and so I began to think deeply about how best to introduce the teachers to my proposed participatory action research study. I was aware that my first meeting with them, would be vital in establishing trust, gaining their interest and motivating them to co-construct the research process with me.

Initial Contact Meeting (Nov. 17, 2005)

Our first meeting was planned for the 17 November, 2005. This meeting was initiated by the teacher participants, who having indicated they would be interested in taking part in the research, now wished to learn what it would entail. The challenge for me, at this initial stage, was to describe the focus of the study, outline its evolving nature, and to emphasize its participatory nature. I planned my first meeting with them carefully noting down key points that I would need to address, highlighting the most essential. The administration block’s meeting room was booked for our first meeting an ideal location, spacious and conducive to discussion. The teachers from the syndicate allocated me half an hour within the timeframe of their scheduled weekly meeting which ran from 3.30-5.00pm. Their day’s teaching commitments had been full and still they had more “business” to accomplish after I had finished. I knew that

I had to make an impact in a short space of time, if I was to convince them that their involvement would be beneficial.

Helen introduced me to each member of the syndicate as they arrived at the meeting. James arrived with his lap-top, prepared to take minutes of the meeting for syndicate records. I let them know how delighted I was that they had agreed to help me with my research and then talked about myself, my background in primary teaching, my connections with their school, and my growing interest in social studies education and hence my work with the School of Education. I outlined my research focus and explained how it had evolved from using the exemplars with pre-service teachers in my social studies classes. It was essential to provide concise, yet specific information about the nature of the research and what it would involve. It soon became apparent, that there was a little apprehension about just how much 'extra' work would be generated by becoming involved. I reassured them, saying there would be no 'extra' commitments, that "together we would co-construct the research process" and that we would "see how the exemplars could best support their teaching". I mentioned that the process would be co-constructed and noticed a sense of relief that this was not going to add pressure to a substantial work-load. I also stressed the fact that "I would not be peering over their shoulders, that I was not there to evaluate them" since Helen had warned me by phone, that one or two of the teachers were a little anxious about being evaluate. I emphasized that we would be co-workers and that I would be there fulfilling a support role, helping them with whatever they needed help with.

I explained that we would need to meet over 3 or 4 sessions to examine the exemplars as we worked out how we could use them to help them plan their social studies for the first term of 2006. We discussed whether it would be possible to keep samples of children's work to support our research work. They were in agreement, but this raised the issue of gaining the consent of both the children and their parents. They suggested this be discussed more fully at a future meeting.

Syndicate planning meeting (5 December, 2005)

On the 5th December the syndicate had been given some release time to plan their programme for Term 1/2006. I attended mid-morning for the allocated half hour, taking the social studies exemplars with me. The teachers were engaged in deep conversation when I arrived; a large piece of newsprint was attached to the whiteboard with *Communities* in a large, bold heading at the top of it. They explained with enthusiasm that their “umbrella theme” for the term was going to be *Communities* and how they proposed to develop this theme across the curriculum in science, social studies, English and art. One of them told me they were planning a trip to Mount Maunganui so that they could use that as a context for studying the rocky sea shore community. I made some suggestions about how they might be able to incorporate this theme into social studies, but they had already thought about this.

They explained that they wanted children to learn about their new classroom communities at the beginning of the year, to learn about the contributions individuals could make to their class and for them to recognize that everyone has a special contribution to make. I showed them copies of social studies exemplars L1 *Here's My History*, L1 *Keeping Traditions Alive* and L2 *The Way We Do Things* as these exemplars embodied some of the themes they wished to explore. I asked them if they had seen the exemplars before. There was some debate about whether the exemplars were in the school or not. The syndicate leader, Helen was sure the exemplars were in the resource room - it was thought that they had arrived in a folder with some from other curriculum areas.

A First Look at the Social Studies Exemplars

Interest in the exemplars was immediate, and from the conversation it was evident the teachers were making connections to their social studies practice and visualizing the possibilities. James found a L3 exemplar *New Zealand Responds*. He went out to the photocopier and made a copy for himself. Maria commented on the levels, noting how useful they could be, while Helen spent time carefully considering the inquiry process as it was set out at the foot of one exemplar. We spent time looking over

several exemplars before I finally drew their attention to the social studies exemplars 3 key aspects of learning (Ideas about society, Participation in society and Personal & Social Significance). At this point I briefly mentioned that these related to 3 dimensions of social studies. I pointed out the significance of the green, blue and red phrases highlighted in the work samples and we talked about how each colour, green, blue and red, was linked to each of the exemplars 3 key aspects of learning⁵. This really interested them and considerable discussion centered around these, as they read and reflected upon a number of examples from a range of levels. Unfortunately there was not sufficient time to examine the social studies strand matrices to show the progressions through the levels. Nor did we examine the social studies processes matrices to illustrate how the processes can be worked through as pathways, for the teachers had to move on to the next item on their agenda, and I had to leave.

Planning Meeting (11 January, 2006)

Helen called an impromptu meeting in the school holidays. James and Maria were on holiday, so Helen, Tania and I commenced work and together we drafted a tentative outline of a social studies unit based on the exemplar L1 *The Way We Do Things*. Helen and Tania became very interested in the student-teacher conversations and Helen suggested that these would be an ideal way of offering “feedback to the children and it would [also] give some clarification of their understanding.” Tania thought that “the challenge would be – catching what the children said and following it up effectively”. In response to this Helen added that “you could pre-plan your discussion, that is, you could have some focus questions”. We discussed the difficulties of finding time to spend talking to each child in the course of a day in a classroom. Finally Helen concluded by saying that perhaps “it needed to be thought about - like doing a running record with a child in reading – the others need to learn when it’s not appropriate to interrupt”. We decided to look more closely at the student-teacher conversations at the next meeting.

⁵ The 3 key aspects of learning : The green font highlights Ideas about Society, the blue, Participation in Society and red highlight ideas associated with Personal & Social significance.

Initiating the Planning Process Using the Social Studies Exemplars (23 Jan. 2006)

The CoP met a week before school commenced on 23 January 2006. There was a sense of urgency at this meeting, since the social studies unit needed to be introduced during the first week of term. Having familiarized ourselves with the L2 exemplar *The Way We Do Things*, we were ready to share what we had already planned with James and Maria. Helen was enthusiastic about the way the inquiry pathway was set out, and felt we could use its steps to sequence the unit. We also looked at the *learning context* outlined on the front of the exemplar – this was helpful as it showed how the context as well as various teaching strategies, had been used to meet the achievement objective. The *diverse connections quilt* - a learning activity on the rear of the exemplar caught our attention too, and James commented that “the values and goals in the centre of the ‘quilt’ fitted really well with their Skills for Growing’ programme⁶. Following our previous meeting we again examined the student-teacher conversations on the front of the exemplar. By picking 2-3 children from each class to take part in a teacher-student conversation, we believed we might be able to see how well children had grasped the exemplars 3 *key aspects of learning*. Helen suggested that “if we want the children to make a generalisation about how their uniqueness contributes to the classroom community – then we might need to develop some questions”. James then suggested that “if we were to tape record the conversations, then we could listen to them as a team, and analyse the outcomes - that perhaps we could isolate comments/words that indicated learning had taken place?” We were in general agreement that this would be a good idea – that we would trial the student-teacher conversations with a view to improving the learning. I suggested that we might need a little more information to support us in this, and so volunteered to investigate further and report back to them at a subsequent meeting.

During our collegial discussions, I noticed the frequency with which these teachers drew on their past, often shared teaching experiences, in order to enhance our social studies unit. They talked about a range of professional development courses they had attended, teaching techniques they’d learnt and teaching programmes they were

⁶ Skills for Growing is an American programme that emphasizes the teaching of values. In New Zealand it is sponsored by the New Zealand Lions Club.

familiar with. They regularly conferred with one another, as to whether they should include a particular idea or technique into the social studies unit. I had not anticipated this, so during one of our discussions I commented that I had seen an interesting learning activity, using a set of hoops into which the students were sorting given words and phrases. Tania thought that it had come from Jannie van Hees⁷ course on questioning techniques. Helen corrected her, suggesting that it had been an idea that they'd picked up during a course on inquiry learning⁸. I was gradually gaining the impression that these teachers were particularly interested in the student/teacher conversations as exemplified in the social studies exemplars and I wondered whether it was significant that they had participated in Jannie van Hees' course on preparing children to "share orally". They explained to me how valuable they had found some of the ideas she promoted about "*think, prepare, share*". "It was really about preparing children to share orally...its been a culture we've been trying to promote within our classes over the last year", Helen commented.

The Ministry of Education Exemplar Model Can be Used to "inform" Effective Social Studies Pedagogy in Primary Classrooms

This section reports on how the teacher-researchers responded to their new understandings of the social studies exemplars and demonstrates how they implemented various exemplar features into their social studies programme. It also suggests that teachers draw on a variety of other resources from background experiences and other professional development opportunities afforded to them when planning for social studies.

At the commencement of our research, I introduced the teacher-researchers to the set of *teachers' notes* that accompany the social studies exemplars. Since they had not seen the notes beforehand, they were interested and asked to view them. Although the set of notes gives some direction as to how the exemplars could be used, there is

⁷ Jannie van Hees is Project Director of the Oracy Literacy Learning Initiative at Auckland College of Education.

⁸ Professional Development course conducted by Trevor Bond, I.T. Advisor at this time.

no explicit reference to the fact that they have been created on the understanding that building effective learning environments is more important than developing prescriptive learning sequences for learners. Neither is there mention of pedagogy to be applied; that learning must relate to a students' prior knowledge and to the students' world. In reviewing the *teachers notes* prior to my research, I questioned whether the teacher- researchers, would recognize the implicit, sociocultural underpinnings and the constructivist approach embedded in the exemplars?

When the Exemplar Development team appointed by the Ministry was assigned the task of developing exemplars and a matrix for social studies that would reflect “quality” social studies, they were as equally ‘challenged’ by the responsibility of clarifying and defining ‘social studies’. Their brief was to design exemplars and an accompanying matrix that would reflect effective contemporary pedagogy. According to Sewell et. al (2005) at the beginning of their ‘journey’ team members had only a “tacit understanding” (Olsen, 1992) of what “quality” social studies looked like, but as they worked in a collaborative and reiterative way to reach new and shared understandings, they combined their understandings with the experience of teachers and students in classrooms’. (Sewell, et. al., 2005). Hence, “quality” social studies came to mean sharing in culturally valued activities in the pursuit of new understandings (sociocultural models of learning).

The Community of Practice Approach to Exemplar Implementation

The teacher-researchers wanted to promote mutual understanding in each classroom at the beginning of the school year, and they wanted to raise awareness that everyone has a contribution to make towards a community, including the classroom community. When they examined the exemplars, they found among them the Level 2 exemplar *The Way We Do Things* and were impressed by the fact that this exemplar appeared to embody the very understandings that they wished to develop with their students. I queried the fact that it was a Level 2 exemplar and wondered whether its content would be suitably challenging for a Year 5/6 class. They were quick to point out, this was where their children were at. Initially they seemed to be pre-occupied

with developing a tentative framework for planning – they were anxious to develop a plan on the laptop. They quickly adopted the inquiry process as exemplified in the *What the students did to learn* section of the exemplars as the basis for the learning sequence in their unit plan. It was explained to me how very effective this would be – the steps were clear and logical and they could see the potential in the activities that would help their children to develop understandings signaled by the achievement objective.

The achievement objectives are derived from the achievement aims for each knowledge strand of the social studies curriculum. The achievement objectives suggest to teachers, how students might demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. It was interesting to observe that the teachers in re-wording the achievement objective for their students, couched it in terms the children could relate to and understand. They used this as a focusing statement– and one that the teachers returned to frequently during the course of their teaching. They referred to it as ‘The Big Question: **What makes each one of us unique and how does our uniqueness contribute to the class community?** Although it does not appear on the teachers social studies unit plan, this question was integral to the unit and appeared on a wall chart in each of the classrooms.(Appendix G).

During one of our conversations, I had the opportunity to initiate a conversation that unexpectedly provided some insight into how the teacher-researchers were developing constructivist understandings through dialogue. Maria commented that at the start of the unit, she had done a lot of talking with the children, using the words community, unique, artifacts and other concepts – slotting them into the conversation with them during the first week of term. She explained how they had talked about friends as a Virtue⁹ for that week, and how the class community needed “friends”. Maria also confided in us how surprised she’d been when it became apparent that some of the children did not really understand what a community was.

⁹ The school has a weekly, school wide focus on a given virtue, which supports students in the developing and maintaining of effective relationships with others.

She confessed that she had thought:

*heck... we can't even start to talk about the community we live in...
they don't even know what it is!*

She then told us how she had “scaffolded” by asking children:

“What do we do at Community time?” (the Year 5/6 syndicate’s name for their assembly) and somebody said “presenting”. I said “Are they just presenting?” And soon somebody said “sharing”. So they came to the point where they told me that a community is a group of people who share something in common... but a lot of people [students] didn't know why we called our assembly “community”... a lot of people [students] thought we were just talking about our assembly!

James reported that in his class the children had “drawn pictures in their books of houses and talked about it... and had come up with sentences to describe a community.” One child made the comment that “...actually Mr T our house is a community within a community!” Within our community of practice we talked about how we assume a lot about children’s understandings and concluded that since *community* has such an “umbrella” of meanings – it was hardly surprising that there were some misconceptions.

Teaching Strategies

It was interesting to note that not all the techniques used during the unit came directly from the Level 2 exemplar *The Way We Do Things*. Frequently the teachers decided to incorporate ideas of their own which were suggested by the content and intent of the exemplars, sometimes they incorporated ideas from courses they had attended. For example, during an observation period in the classrooms, I observed the teachers using a teaching technique that they had seen demonstrated on a course on inquiry learning facilitated by Trevor Bond. During one of our meetings we had discussed how this activity might help children to develop an understanding of some of the ideas and concepts related to the unit. Three hoops were set out on the classroom floor (See **Figure 3**). Beside the first hoop the teacher had placed the 7 servants

(who, what, where, why, when, which, how). In the 2nd and 3rd hoop were concepts and words associated with the theme *community*. Children posed questions about communities by taking a word from each hoop and constructing a sentence to express ideas about communities. These questions were recorded by the teachers who used some of these questions as a focus during the unit. Maria also explained that listening to the children’s questions gave the teachers an idea of what the children knew and what they didn’t, ‘so it helped in knowing where to start with their lessons’.

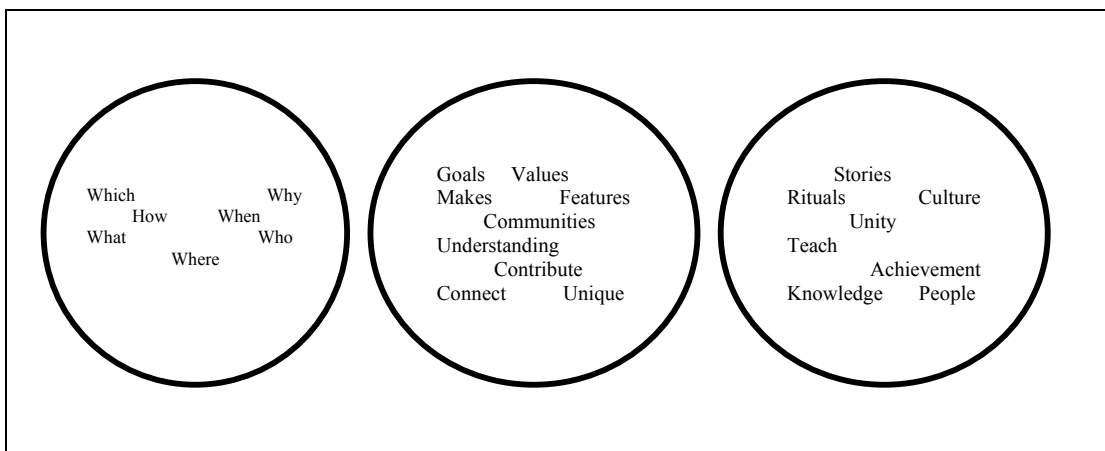


Figure 3: The 7 servants and the three circles.

During the introductory phase of a lesson, Maria held up a very large fish cut from a sheet of old newspaper. She proceeded to tell her story about how the newspaper cut-out represented something that was special to her from her childhood. The students listened with interest as she told them how she had been on a fishing trip with her Dad when she was 9 years old and how she had caught the most *and* the biggest fish. Her paper cut-out represented that *big* fish. As she spoke she reiterated the words *special to me*. She then encouraged the children to think of statements that they could use to introduce their special items, objects or treasures when they brought them to school the following day. The children then sat in pairs, knee to knee and talked with one another about ways they could start their statements. When they reported these back, some of their contributions included the following:

My family have.....

When I go to, I.....

I use this when.....

I collect.....

I own.....

To help children recognize that cultural items and artifacts connect you to other people, Maria brought her Latvian national dress to school. She passed it to one of the children to put on. As the student put the dress on, she talked about how it represented all her extended family in Latvia, how it had been made for her in her homeland and sent to her in New Zealand. She explained that the hand embroidery on the garment was unique as it was only worn by those on her mother's side of her family. Two of the children touched the felt fabric with their fingers and ran their hands over the embroidery to feel its raised texture. Finally the students persuaded Maria to put on the dress herself. This met with a very enthusiastic response.

The students in each of the classes were encouraged to talk with their families about their own culture and heritage. Each student prepared questions to ask their parents and brought items from home that were special to them and their families to share with the class. In one classroom, a student showed a Goldie print, depicting an elderly Maori woman with a moko. The student proudly explained how the Maori woman in the portrait was her Great Grandmother, Ina Te Papatahi, and how her picture is placed over the entrance to their house to protect their family. An Indian student showed his class Om, the symbol of the Hindu faith¹⁰. He explained how this symbol was important to him and his family because they were of Hindu faith. There was a little teacher initiated discussion around the different symbols that various faiths use and the teacher compared this to the different types of crosses the Christian faith observes.

One effective learning activity adopted by the teacher-researchers directly from the exemplar, was the *diverse connections quilt* (Appendix H). This activity involved the

¹⁰ Om is a Hindu symbol of spiritual perfection and appears in almost every Hindu prayer. This sacred symbol is enshrined in every Hindu premise and in some form in every family home.

students considering their own cultures and heritages by asking their families about important things they did together and why they did them. The students shared stories, bringing items from home that were important to them. Each student then illustrated and captioned one section of the ‘quilt’ depicting some aspect of their culture or heritage that helped them make a contribution to their classroom community. The ‘quilt’ sections were then fitted together and formed a classroom wall display. The L2 social studies exemplar *The Way We Do Things* refers to this as a *diverse connections quilt* because it represents the diverse connections of classroom communities. This was a valuable activity at the end of the unit since it gave the students the opportunity to display and share their findings with the syndicate.

The Student Teacher Conversations

Each social studies exemplar models a sustained conversation between a student and a teacher to show how students can be guided towards deeper understandings. Some of the conversations make links to social studies curriculum elements and therefore model how essential learning about New Zealand, the perspectives or the processes can be incorporated into the students’ knowledge and understanding. The student-teacher conversations are located centrally on the front of each social studies exemplar which suggests they have a principal role in supporting “best practice” social studies pedagogy. Research across the curriculum continues to indicate that the skill of the teacher in promoting constructive teacher-student and peer dialogue is vital – particularly around curriculum ideas (Alton-Lee, 2003, p29).

As a group we became progressively more interested in the student-teacher conversations as we began to explore a variety of exemplars across a range of contexts. The teacher-researchers reflected on their own conversations with children and collectively agreed, this was an area they needed to develop. We decided that if each teacher tape-recorded two conversations with children from their own classes, then these could be shared and discussed at a community of practice meeting. This was to provide opportunities to develop skills in raising student achievement through teacher-student dialogue. We also discussed the possibility of using conversations as

formative assessment, guiding students towards generalizations that would suggest the achievement objectives had been met.

The teacher-researchers discussed the difficulties they frequently faced when trying to elicit an effective questioning sequence:

Helen: *It's difficult knowing what to ask. I'm thinking have I asked the right questions?*

Tania: *Yeh, have I asked enough or spoken enough to get the "stuff" I want?*

Helen: *I think have I picked up on this signal – that is indicating a child's understanding of something.*

Tania: *I wonder if we should have some questions in front of us?*

James: *If you think about reading groups and stuff, we do a lot of conversations around...*

Helen: *But there you have a plan in front of you... and if something else happens you take it from there..*

Researcher: *Perhaps what all this suggests is that the teacher needs to have the achievement objective firmly implanted in mind, so that you know where to take the conversation... and even then ... the child can say something quite different to what you expected... and then you've got to try to...*

Helen: *But you don't want them to pick up on the wrong signals – so they feel that they have to say what they think you want them to say... I mean, we wouldn't want them to say "I'm happy in the Year 5/6*

syndicate because... just because they felt that was what our question was leading them to say. It's that balance, isn't it?

Although each student-teacher conversation in the social studies exemplars is preceded by a short statement which directs the reader's attention to the learning highlighted in the dialogue, the teacher-researchers felt that in order to develop their own conversations effectively and lead children towards generalizations that would indicate "deep learning" as opposed to "surface learning", they would benefit from greater support. I therefore offered to meet with them the following week to help unpack the student-teacher conversations. After I had shared my understandings of the exemplars with them, I spent time in each of the teachers' classrooms so that they could tape-record their conversations with their students. Each teacher was able to conduct a short conversation with two pupils each and the following week we met to look at the transcribed conversations and to discuss these.

Interpreting the Student-Teacher Taped Conversations

The teacher-researchers found the conversations with children challenging to conduct and admitted that thinking of the next best question had been difficult and that often they had tried too hard to elicit a profound response from the student. Helen admitted she had a tendency to repeat a child's answer back to them in an attempt to stall for time, whilst thinking up the next question. Sometimes they had to stop the tape recorder to give themselves time to think about how to respond to the child's last comment. They also confessed to asking leading questions which they suggested became like "fill in the gap" type questions.

When we began to examine these conversations in depth, we found significant differences in the conceptual understanding of children within the syndicate. We were able to see the various stages the children were at in their thinking and in their understanding. Some conversations were richer and deeper (Chamberlain, 2001) than others, suggesting deep as opposed to surface learning. Maria's conversation with Manu (Appendix I) provided a good example of using prompts to draw out a little

more of what the student said. It was evident that Manu had a good understanding of what constituted a community and that he could identify that we can all belong to one. His dialogue suggests that he had some basic understanding about how people participate in communities when he said "...you want to be nice and welcoming". It appeared that he had thought about what he could do to make it [the community] better. Manu's comment that "...sometimes they are a bit naughty – but most of the time they're good", suggests perhaps that a community is not always smooth running. Tania said "...he's personalized that, so he's taken on the social significance".

James used very thoughtful questioning in his conversation with Louis (Appendix J) to extend and deepen his thinking. Their conversation reflects how a student can be scaffolded to a much higher level of conceptual understanding. James, in reflecting on his conversation with Louis gave us a summary of the conversation:

He caught on to the symbolism of the quilt... He thought that community was people coming together. I asked him "So how does that affect you?" His response was "Well you mix around with other people, you sort of learn about their culture". So I said "So you do a bit of sharing, so how does that change what is important to you?" He replied "It sort of gives you a little bit of their culture, not all of it, just a little bit.

We commented on the very focused nature of the questioning in James and Louis conversation. It is an impressive example of co-construction, reflecting shared and negotiated meanings, developed through sustained and constructive dialogue. James has been able to scaffold Louis to develop higher order thinking skills through this substantive conversation. There are examples of both critical and creative thinking embedded in this conversation. Throughout the dialogue James is constantly affirming Louis responses, giving him both feedback and feed forward. There is evidence that Louis has developed some sophisticated ideas about society and can express clearly concepts related to participating in a community. What is most clearly expressed via this conversation is that he is making sophisticated connections to the personal and social significance of learning about the cultures of others.

The Social Studies Exemplars and Their Influence on Assessment Practices?

I was aware that, although I had attempted to unpack the sociocultural theory of learning for them, I had not talked with them about the sociocultural implications for assessment, as an interactive, dynamic and collaborative activity. Nor had I explained that unlike traditional forms of assessment, sociocultural assessment is integral to the teaching process and is embedded in the social and cultural life of classrooms. Such an approach can be seen as constructive and enabling because it focuses on assessing the process of the learning, its attempt to elicit elaborated performance, and its emphasis on collaborative activity, whether the collaboration is with the teacher or a group of peers. (Wells & Caxton, 2002). Since it requires a completely new way of thinking about the evaluation of individuals within group performance and has impact on the way that assessment can, and should be used, I sensed that this aspect of the exemplars, if indeed it was noticed, would be something new to my teacher-researchers.

During the exemplar development phase, the Ministry of Education announced that one of the intentions of the exemplars was to ‘signal important features of work to watch for, collect information about and act on, to support growth in learning’ (Chamberlain, 2001, p.3). In considering this statement, I was keen to observe the extent to which the exemplars had informed my teacher-researchers about assessment. We had examined many examples of student work exemplified in a wide range of exemplars and they had regularly drawn attention to the annotations that showed how the authentic student work samples, met the criteria for ‘quality’ social studies. As I considered this, I reflected on whether the teacher-researchers would be able to transfer this knowledge to other contexts in assessment of their own students’ work.

The 3 Key Aspects of Learning

On 5th December 2005, I met with the syndicate to introduce my research to them. It was at this meeting that we first discussed their integrated cross-curricula approach

for 2006. During this discussion they explained that they had selected Communities as a theme. Although they had not committed any planning to paper at this stage, they were beginning to talk about the ideas and concepts they wanted to develop and were discussing some specific learning outcomes for their social studies unit. It was at this point that I decided to show them the L2 exemplar *The Way We Do Things* and they were obviously excited by it – they could see the connections between what they had envisaged for their unit and the pathway of learning exemplified in the ‘What the students did to learn’ section of the exemplar. I quickly turned their attention to the *3 key aspects of learning* (Developing ideas about society, Participating in Society and developing an understanding of the Personal and Social Significance of the Ideas) and explained in some detail, how they represented the “essence” of social studies. We discussed the importance of the *3 key aspects of learning* and I gained the impression that they understood how these concepts of learning underpin social studies in a range of contexts. They were unsure how to incorporate these into their planning and sought some assistance in this. I suggested that perhaps these could become their specific learning outcomes, and they thought this was a commendable idea. I refrained from introducing the exemplar matrices at this time, since I felt this might be confusing and that it would be better to wait until we had more time available.

On the 11 January 2006, I attended an impromptu meeting at Helen’s house during the school holidays. When I arrived, both she and Tania had commenced planning the unit on the lap-top. They confirmed they had adopted the *3 key aspects of learning* from the exemplar *The Way We Do Things* and they showed me where they had placed them on their unit plan (Appendix K). They did not discuss whether there was to be an assessment task linked to their specific learning outcomes.

During my observational visits to the four classrooms on 23/24 February, I observed that a set of learning intentions had been developed for each class. Each was displayed in a prominent place on a classroom wall. When I enquired about these, I was told that they had been created individually by each teacher to suit their own class; that they had been developed from the specific learning outcomes, but couched

in terms the children could relate to. These had apparently been shared with, and discussed with their students at the commencement of the unit, so that the children would know what they were going to be learning.

During a period of observation in James' classroom, my attention was drawn to the learning intentions for his class. They were written on the white board at the front of the room. They read as follows:

We are learning to understand that a community reflects the culture and heritage of its people...

You will see us:

- sharing our family cultures, heritages and artifacts with the class;
- describing how we bring our family influences, ideals, uniqueness to the class;
- defining what is important to us;
- demonstrating classroom values related to our individual families;
- making a personal paper class quilt about each student's uniqueness and writing about it;
- respecting the diverse connections of our community.

Although I had been told that the learning intentions had been couched in terms that the children could understand, it seemed that in fact, the language used represented a higher level of sophistication, that might prove challenging to the Year 5 & 6 students.

On the 6th April, at the conclusion of the research, our community of practice met to evaluate our work. As part of this evaluation, I wanted to find out how the teacher-researchers had proceeded with assessment during the unit. I wanted to elicit from

them whether the use of the exemplars and their accompanying pedagogy, had helped ‘inform’ them about their approach to assessment. I began by saying:

With the assessment side... how did you get on with that? I felt I had good ‘global’ idea of what the children knew and could do... but I wonder whether... the thrust is assessing along the way... but I wonder when you have to come up with some individual comments for profiles, parent interviews, reports and accountability – how do you get on?

The conversation that followed revealed some confusion:

Helen: *I never did get to that point. I’ve got a page in my date...at the beginning...*

James: *In all honesty I set it up, but boom!*

Tania: *You’re saying?*

James: *Our assessment?*

Tania: *For community.* [Blank look on her face]

James: *Yes, that’s my look too.* [responding to Tania’s blank look]

Helen: *I set up a page... on the day that they shared... I had one or two things I was looking for.*

Researcher: *I saw you doing that.*

Helen: *I do find that easier. It’s more effective. It’s happening right there in front of you and you can’t forget... if you do it later...*

James: *Having those student-teacher conversations... that was good Assessment.*

Researcher: *So do you think then, that there could have been something more to help you more with individual assessment of students, or do you think that what is there is adequate?*

James: *I think having those student-teacher conversations is really good, but its the practicality of being able to cover everyone in the class... its just not practical.*

This very open and honest conversation, indicated to me that although they had all fully intended to gather anecdotal formative assessment during the unit, they felt they had done so, with varying degrees of success. Helen attested to having set up a page in her data book because she found it easier to record as it happened ‘right there in front of her’. She explained how she had tried to make notes about her students as they were presenting their family “treasures” and artifacts. Similarly, James and Tania had intended to record anecdotal evidence, but admitted that in fact, they hadn’t managed to do so. James acknowledged that the student-teacher conversations had been a useful form of assessment and suggested that although there were difficulties with the practicalities of assessing all students, they were a potentially useful assessment item.

Later, during the discussion Helen raised the issue about whether it was desirable or necessary to write something for everybody in the class. She suggested that:

...if it’s a gem that’s happened, or a concern that you have – good...but if you are sitting there, forcing yourself to contribute something about James T. and you can’t think of what his contribution to the unit was, then...

Here, she seemed to be making a good point regarding authentic assessment. My response to her was:

So if you write a comment on the report, then you’d go to another unit, where hopefully you would have something to record...

Helen responded indirectly to my question, saying:

...and sometimes by the end of the year, I do highlight some kids who I think I really need to focus on those six...

Helen clearly seemed to be suggesting that by the end of the year she had built up a picture of those students who need additional support. She went on to explain how she had kept a learning journal during the unit which also helped her observe student progress. She had encouraged students to contribute to it, and read it whenever they had finished their work. She described it as a book containing entries in response to The Big Question: *What makes each of us unique and how does our uniqueness contribute to our community?* Helen referred to the journal as “Our journey towards becoming a learning community”. I was interested that she had referred to her class as a learning community, but time did not allow me to pursue this with her any further – but it did indicate to me that perhaps she saw her students were endorsing the community of learners concept by contributing to a joint enterprise – the journal.

Tania drew my attention to the students’ personal record books and showed me how they were set up so that in these there were samples of individual children’s work from across the curriculum. She explained how each student had completed an assessment sheet. *I am Unique* that had been glued into their personal record book. This task, seemingly brief and simple, appears to target the learning outcomes appropriately by asking children to respond to four short relevant statements (see Appendix L).

Maria chose to hold conferences with her students while she read the written work that had contributed to the ‘quilt’. She explained how the personal time she had, as she sat with them, was ‘like a personal interview’, and she said:

...I knew some of them just didn’t GET it! Some of them didn’t write about it but I knew they’d got it through the conversation. I felt that personal time, and their work was what I had to go against. So I had my little sheet there and afterwards I wrote little things down.

Here Maria is undoubtedly stressing the value of being able to hold conversations with children to assess their understanding. The little personal time that she could spend with individuals allowed her to discover that children who were unable to express it in writing, often had the understanding when asked to speak about their understandings.

During our community of practice's evaluative discussion, I learnt that although the teacher-researchers had felt disappointed with their efforts to gather anecdotal evidence about children's learning, they had monitored their students in a variety of other ways. In listening to them talk about their students, it became very clear to me also, that much of what they *know* about their students' learning, they keep in their heads. Some of this they share with their students in the form of feedback and feed forwards. It would appear that quality teaching is optimized in social studies when teachers have the skills to help students engage in substantive conversations that help scaffold students to deeper understandings. The information gathered from talking with students will rarely be recorded, as are anecdotal records, but it is intrinsically valuable to those teachers who have the immediate responsibility for determining the next learning step for their students.

From observing the teachers in action in this research it would seem that there is a move towards sociocultural forms of assessment. Teacher-researchers used learning intentions, conferences, journals and personal record books to record student learning. When teachers begin to use these forms of assessment, they are moving more towards sociocultural forms of assessment practice. The achievement objectives are then being assessed more in terms of the group, than in terms of the individual. This may conflict with more traditional forms of assessment that focuses on individualistic approaches. It may mean also that teachers need to learn new ways of using the sociocultural assessment information to inform teaching and learning.

Teachers Need Support and Professional Development to Fully Understand the Nature and Purpose of the Social Studies Exemplars

The suggestion that teachers need support and professional development if they are to fully understand the social studies exemplars is discussed here. This section examines the professional development that became an integral part of the research process.

The promise that professional development would accompany the distribution and implementation of the exemplars, has been a frequently reiterated statement, both prior to exemplar distribution and in subsequent reports that have been written post implementation. (Chamberlain, 2001; Poskett, 2002 & Poskett, Brown, Maw & Taylor, 2003). An action research project, involving 225 schools throughout New Zealand accompanied the exemplars from their inception in December 2000 until December 2004. National consultation in 2002 formed part of that research and was designed to inform the Ministry of Education as to the quality and usefulness of the exemplars. Following National Consultation, a paper was presented to the NZARE/AARE conference (2003), by Poskett, Brown, Maw and Taylor. The paper - New Zealand national curriculum exemplars: mist or must for teachers, suggested that there were problematical areas for teachers surrounding implementation and these related to ambiguity over their purpose, the extent to which exemplars needed to be adopted or adapted, their classroom use and the on-going professional development needs of teachers. This paper emphasized that a framework for the National Curriculum Exemplars was a common request of interviewed teachers who had received no professional development on exemplars' (p.12). They concluded that 'It would seem that a concerted professional development programme is likely to be needed across the curriculum for New Zealand primary teachers if the potential of National Curriculum Exemplars is to be realized in quality learning and teaching.... it is essential to clear the mist, and enable more teachers to view National Curriculum Exemplars as a vehicle in the journey to quality teaching and student learning' (p.13).

The Social Studies curriculum exemplars did not feature in the national consultation since they were not ready for trialing in 2002, but it was intended that the research findings would help shape and influence the provision of professional development for the exemplars still to be developed and disseminated. This included social studies.

During the fourth term of 2004 I learnt that the social studies curriculum exemplars had been distributed to schools after a 2 -3 year development period. Since I had planned to focus my research study on the implementation of the exemplars, this was encouraging news. My understanding was that professional development would soon follow distribution of the exemplars and I would be able to undertake my research by observing and interviewing teachers about their use of the social studies exemplars. I began to contact teachers to see if they had commenced any professional development relating to the social studies exemplars, but found that none of them had undertaken any steps towards implementing the social studies exemplars, nor had they attended any courses. Most teachers confessed that they had not had time to open the social studies exemplars and many teachers claimed that they were still familiarizing themselves with the English and Mathematics curriculum exemplars.

By mid 2005 I had not located any local schools using the social studies exemplars or receiving professional development in these. I soon recognized that I had made huge assumptions that professional development would immediately follow distribution of the exemplars for social studies; rhetoric surrounding their development and heralding their dissemination had led me to believe this. I decided therefore to change my anticipated approach and work instead, within a community of practice with four teacher-researchers to see how we, ourselves could incorporate aspects of the exemplars into their social studies programme for 2006. In accordance with the notion of reciprocity which I wanted to build into my research, I agreed to support the teacher-researchers with interpretation of the exemplars when, and if they should require this. My role therefore became a dual role; that of a facilitator initiating the research study, and that of a collegial partner offering support and advice.

In working with the community of practice, I observed that the teachers were resolved to make sense and gain meaning from the exemplars examined. As the research evolved, there were clear indications that there were features of the exemplars that they adopted or adapted with little or no hesitation, but clearly there were areas where they need support beyond that offered in the *teachers' notes*. It became apparent the teacher-researchers needed help to recognise the following features:

- the social studies exemplars are underpinned by constructivist and sociocultural pedagogy;
- that the social studies matrices show an interpretation of learning progressions through the knowledge strands;
- the social studies exemplars *3 key aspects* of learning link to SSNZC achievement objectives;
- that there are both deep and surface features of the social studies exemplar model for the student-teacher conversations;
- that the colour coding in the social studies exemplars highlights the *3 key aspects of learning*.

As the research evolved I found myself responding in two ways to the needs of the teacher-researchers. I was providing on-going spontaneous and incidental input which involved answering questions, clarifying points with them about the exemplars and making suggestions about how features of the exemplars could be incorporated into their planning. Secondly, a more formal approach was provided at the teacher-researchers' request when I was asked to provide professional development relating to the student-teacher conversations. To make it clear when these two types of support were given, I have divided the research findings that relate to my contribution to professional development, into three phases to show the emphases of my support during these stages. These phases are shown on **Figure 2**, thereby illustrating their positioning in relation to the wider research:

<p><u>Planning phase:</u> (November 2005 – early February 2006) This phase of the research involved offering incidental support and I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduced the exemplars to the CoP. - supported the teacher-researchers as they developed the unit. 	<p><u>Implementation phase:</u> (mid February until early March, 2006) This phase of the research involved me providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal professional development for the student-teacher conversations to be undertaken. - incidental advice and guidance during the analysis of their student-teacher conversations. - Collegial conversations 1 and 2 were conducted and taped during this phase. 	<p><u>Evaluation phase:</u> (April 2006) This phase of the research involved evaluation of exemplar implementation and of the research process. Although this phase effectively constituted one day, I learnt that there were areas that needed further clarification as we evaluated our work.</p> <p>Collegial conversation 3 was conducted and taped during this phase.</p>
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The following phases describe both the nature and purpose of the professional development provided during the duration of the research:

Professional Development and the Planning Phase

This was a critical stage in the research since I was aware that the teacher-researchers had not seen the social studies exemplars at my first meeting with them and I wanted them to see that they could be a useful resource for their teaching. My approach was to introduce the notion of social studies exemplars by disseminating copies within the community of practice. This gave them time to talk about them with one another, as well as to reflect on their potential usefulness. I was also available to answer questions. During the planning stage there were many elementary features of the exemplars that needed to be explained. One of these, was the nature and purpose of the social studies 3 key aspects of learning. It was necessary to explain to the teacher-researchers that the exemplars are based on these 3 key aspects of learning and that the social studies exemplars suggest that for work to be social studies, it must feature ideas that relate to one or more of these:

- ideas about society;
- participation in society;

- personal and social significance.

It was then necessary to outline how these key aspects of learning were colour coded on the samples of student work. We looked at a range of social studies exemplars and examined how the red, green and blue font had been used to show how the work samples met one or more of the key aspects of learning, thus indicating “quality” social studies. I explained that there were copies of all the exemplars on the Ministry of Education’s on-line learning site Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI), but warned them the colour coding on the TKI exemplars differs from that on the hard copies distributed to schools. I felt it was important to clarify this ambiguity since I felt it could make considerable difference to interpretation of the key learning areas. The following table of comparison illustrates the differences:

Hard copies	TKI copies
Ideas about society - highlighted in green	Ideas about society – highlighted in red
Participating in society – highlighted in blue	Participating in society – highlighted in blue
Personal & social significance – highlighted in red	Personal & social significance – Highlighted in green

Using a TKI copy of the social studies exemplar L2 *Uluru, Rock of Then*, I directed the teacher-researchers attention to the conversation amongst Darshika, Arslan and their teacher in the *What the Work Shows* section of the exemplar. We read the conversation and I pointed out that because this was an exemplar from TKI, parts of the conversation relating to *ideas about society* were highlighted in red, rather than green as it would be on the hard copies. Once I had discussed the anomaly in the colour coding with them and eliminated the confusion resulting from this, we discussed the ideas embedded in the conversation. This conversation shows that Darshika is able to make a statement about society by suggesting that there are places that should be respected. Helen’s comment suggests that Darshika’s remark showed that she was able to make a generalization:

James: *The red?*

Researcher: *The red has some significance here – it highlights ‘ideas about society whereas in the hard copies sent out to schools, the red highlights ‘personal and social significance’. So they are reversed. The ‘blue stands for ‘participation in society’ on both hard and TKI copies.*

Researcher: Let’s look at this exemplar ‘Uluru, Rock of Then’ The one about Ayers Rock. See the ‘red’. Darshika is saying ‘**they tell what places they should respect, and why**’. This reflects that she understands something about why places where there are cave drawings should be respected by society.

Researcher: *Have a quick read through this conversation.*

[long pause as teacher-researchers read the conversation]

Helen: *Is she making a generalization? An informed generalization?*

Researcher: *Yes. Making a generalization about sacred places – do you think?*

Tania: *To make sure that people understand its significance.*

James: *And that they respect it.*

I decided to produce the social studies strand matrices on the 23 January 2006, during one of our meetings in the planning stage. I was interested to learn what the teacher-researchers knew about the use of them. These clearly created some confusion in the community of practice. Firstly, the teacher-researchers were unsure where these had originated from, and wondered whether they had been issued as appendices to *SSNZC (1997)*:

Helen: *... if we were to use these in conjunction with social studies*

activities, then it [the matrices] should have come as an attachment to put in our curriculum – at least then... the lead person would have had something that was in their face.

It soon became apparent to me that they hadn't seen them before, nor had they any idea about their use or purpose. I asked them when they were first aware of the social studies exemplar matrices.

Researcher: *Well, did you get them [the matrices] separately, or did you get them in with the exemplars?*

Helen: *We got them with... two or three curriculum areas... that might come at a time.*

Researcher: *So, they came separately from the exemplars for social studies?*

Helen: *Look, I couldn't tell you.*

Tania: *I don't remember either.*

[slight pause as they try to reflect on the arrival of the matrices]

As the discussion continued, it became clear that they simply didn't know when the social studies exemplar matrices had been received and they expressed their frustration at having so little information available to them:

Helen: *Even a ½ day course... to unpack the exemplars. You know. I know we are supposed to have read it all, but there aren't enough hours in the day.*

James: *Did you hear that government? [laughs]*

Researcher: *No, but in the teachers' notes it mentions this [the matrices], but in about three sentences!*

Helen: *Isn't there research that shows we don't read the teachers' notes – we go straight to lesson 1?*

Researcher: *Ye...ees [dubiously]*

Helen: *I read that once – teachers DON'T read pp1-5 – we should... we absolutely should!*

Researcher: *Well, what do you THINK should happen, OK. What would you suggest should happen – if they want teachers to take this on board and the exemplars, what should happen?*

James: *I think, like NUMPA¹¹, that if they are really passionate about us using them – like NUMPA – they've set up a course for ½ a day or something. Just to get the basics of it - may be something like that.*

Helen: *Or – Or something like, I mean...you've...what you've done with us.*

Following this conversation I explained that the social studies exemplar matrices had been developed in conjunction with the exemplars, and I showed them how they linked both to the exemplars and the achievement objectives in the SSNZC strands. I also pointed out that the key aspects of learning were structured as progress indicators on the strand matrices and we discussed the levels and how these were consistent with the strands and levels in SSNZC (1997). Towards the end of our conversation on the strand matrices we looked at the process matrices and I showed them how the processes were no longer linear as they were in the curriculum document, but rather pathways of learning where the learner could re-visit steps in the learning process.

Implementation Phase

During this phase of the research, I found that I still needed to provide incidental support with the understanding and interpretation of various features of the social studies exemplars. However, the teacher-researchers had become increasingly more

¹¹ Ministry of Education mathematics initiative (Numeracy Assessment Project).

interested in the student-teacher conversations and suggested they would like to know more about these before embarking upon their own conversations with students. To help them become more familiar with the nature and purpose of the exemplified conversations, I offered to “unpack” the student-teacher conversations for them during a collegial discussion during the next community of practice meeting. This professional development discussion was taped recorded during our community of practice meeting on February 13th. I provided each teacher-researcher with a guide sheet “Unpacking the Student/Teacher Conversations” which I had planned and prepared in the format as seen on the following page. (Refer **Figure 4**).

“Unpacking the Student/Teacher Conversations”
- A collaborative discussion.

Introduction:

Brief look at contemporary theory – Sociocultural model and links to constructivist model

- emphasizes a shared responsibility for the learning
- guided participation
- importance of social context of the classroom “Community”.

Key ideas:

- that peer dialogue has the potential to enhance achievement
- that the skill of the teacher in initiating this is important
- sustained conversations help students reach a higher level of thinking
- ‘future citizens’ being encouraged to think for themselves by thinking with others.

Exemplar Project – discuss

The learning and conceptual understanding was embedded in these conversations where T’s really listened to responses and supported the thinking that was happening. Richer than the Q-R-E style.

Can we find evidence that the exemplars support the following:

- * highlight the key aspects of learning **colour code differs on on-line exemplars)**
- * illustrate how teachers might provide feedback and feed forward
- * encourage students to broaden or deepen their understanding
- * lead children to identify HOW they learnt e.g. At Our Kura (L1)
- * encourage children to ‘reason’ based on evidence
- * lead children towards making ‘informed’ generalizations
- * to address curriculum elements e.g. ELANZ and perspectives e.g. futures, gender
- * developing critical thinking, creative thinking - higher order thinking skills
i.e. asking questions that ‘take students somewhere’ (Deep as opposed to surface)
- * developing skills of argumentation and applying criteria to help form judgments
- * provides opportunities for students to raise questions
- * peer interaction

Figure 4: Unpacking the student teacher conversations

I thought it was important to provide a little background to the social studies exemplars, so I spoke briefly about how they had been developed nationally, using authentic samples of children’s work. I hoped to create a picture for them of teachers, students and facilitators working together. I was keen to introduce the notion of a sociocultural theory of learning, but it was clear that they were unfamiliar with this.

The following conversation however, gives an indication of their prior knowledge and I was able to build on this as a means to developing ideas about sociocultural learning and teaching:

Researcher: ...*they* [the exemplar development team] *focused on a sociocultural theory of teaching. Have you heard of this at all?*

James: *Anything to do with Piaget and Vygotsky?*

Researcher: *Yes, it feeds in from Piaget's cognitive theory and Vygotsky's emphasis on the importance of socialization on learning.*

James: *Scaffolding?*

Researcher: *[excitedly]. Yes! Scaffolding!*

[members of the community of practice all nod in agreement]

I thought it was important for the teacher-researchers to understand how the social studies exemplars drew on sociocultural theory. By asking them to draw on their own experiences as learners at school, I encouraged them to contrast this with how their own contemporary classrooms operate. They were able to tell me that learners today are generally more active, whereas in the past they had been more passive, with the teacher being the transmitter of all information. I explained that research now indicated that children who participate as a community of learners – develop certain ways of talking, of reasoning, listening and questioning and in the process of communicating their thoughts with others, make meaning and ‘construct’ knowledge. The following excerpt of dialogue reflects how I explained this to them and furthermore, how I moved the conversations towards the student-teacher conversations:

...the learner becomes a member of a community of learners and the teacher and the learners are both responsible for the learning. Teachers and learners together are both ‘active’ in the learning process... the

teacher initiates the reflective dialogue... and encourages children to think and talk about their learning... making connections to real life experiences. So conversations are sustained – children learn with the teacher and with other students. This is conducive to learning – this occurs within the social context of the classroom... so that's the sort of background the exemplars are built on.

During the planning phase we had looked at many examples of student-teacher conversations and the teacher-researchers had become very adept at recognizing surface features of the social studies exemplars. For example they were able to identify examples of peer interaction, teachers moving students towards making generalizations and they could cite examples of teachers providing feedback to their students. So as to be effective and gain the most from the conversations they wanted to conduct with their own students, they needed to be able to recognize the deeper features of the exemplar conversations. They needed to be able to identify and model examples of sound pedagogy where the teachers were really listening to the responses of the students and responding to the thinking that was happening. To help them do this, I provided a list of some of the more readily identifiable features (surface features) and also some of the less easily identifiable features (deeper features) of the student –teacher conversations and I discussed these briefly. I then provided them with a practical activity during the professional development, which involved them searching for evidence of such features embedded within the student-teacher conversations. The list was as follows:

Can we find evidence that social studies exemplar conversations support the following?:

- highlight the key aspects of learning
- illustrate how teachers might provide feedback and feed-forward
- encourage students to deepen or broaden their understanding
- lead children to identify how they learnt
- lead children to make informed generalizations
- develop critical and creative thinking – higher order thinking skills i.e asking questions that ‘take the students somewhere’ (Deep as opposed to surface)
- developing skills of argumentation and applying criteria to help form judgments
- provides opportunities for students to interact with others (peer dialogue)

In designing the professional development I selected student-teacher conversations principally from the following exemplars as a focus:

At Our Kura (Level 1)

The Way We Do Things (Level 2)

Uluru, Rock of Then (Level 2)

Haere Mai Nga Manuhiri (Level 2)

New Zealand Responds' (Level 4)

Firstly I drew attention to the L2 social studies exemplar *Haere Mai Nga Manuhiri* (Level 2), to show an example of a conversation where a teacher was using prompts to help a student develop understanding about the importance of waiata and its significance within Marae protocol. Helen observed that in this conversation, the teacher scaffolds the student to a new level of understanding by providing feedback and feed forward and James suggested that not *all* the answers were coming from the teacher, that the students were answering questions raised by their peers. Tania made an astute observation when she noted that the conversation was actually *encouraging* the students to ask questions, that the questions were not simply initiated by the teacher. During the following collegial conversation, I became very aware that the teacher-researchers were beginning to observe the deep features of the exemplar conversations:

Helen: *Feedback and feed forward is linked into this one, as well as encouraging the student to broaden or deepen understanding through dialogue.*

Maria: *She's encouraging the students to give reasons here too.*

Tania: *And its giving them opportunities to raise questions.*

James: *But that could be part of the class environment too that she feels safe to ask...*

Researcher: *I guess this one is mainly concerned with the teacher encouraging the student's understanding of marae protocol and showing respect. The teacher asking relevant questions.*

James: *The answers though, are not just coming from the teacher.*

Researcher: *No. No.*

James: *The teacher is acknowledging the student's response.*

James: *The teacher is doing the clarifying.*

Researcher: *Yes, That's right.*

Researcher: *I think that's one of the things, the conversation are highlighting That its not the teacher and one student, but the interaction of peers.*

We looked at a level 1 *At Our Kura*, social studies exemplar to provide a comparison with the mainly Level 2 social studies exemplars we had focused on. In this exemplar the emphasis is on roles. It compares the roles people have in different groups to the roles people had in the school concert. Helen suggested that in this conversation the teacher was trying to encourage the children to tell her that watching (observing) is a way of gathering information. We concluded that encouraging children to identify *how* they have gathered information is a first step towards understanding the inquiry process.

Helen: *She perhaps wants them to 'know' that they can learn by watching?*

- Tania: *She had to do a lot of talking to get them to respond!*
- James: *And there's not the idea of the questions coming from the kids here.*
- Tania: *No.*
- James: *Not at that level.*
- Helen: *Which is what you would expect.*
- Researcher: *The teacher twice says to the children- "so you learnt about those different roles by watching". Then she says it again "You learnt a lot about peoples' roles by watching". I think that she's trying to reinforce the means by which they've learnt, what they've learnt, don't you?*
- Helen: *Yes, so by the end the kids will know they can learn by observing and by watching.*
- Researcher: *And of course those are key inquiry skills aren't they?*

The teacher-researchers began to see that the sequences in the exemplified conversations were different to a question, response, evaluation model, and in doing so, were able to identify deeper features of the substantive conversations. They acknowledge their recognition of this in the following discussion:

- Researcher: *So what we see in the conversations – the construction of knowledge taking place – in the conversations... the idea is.. that the teacher does this well... indicators of good practice – getting away from the question, response, evaluation type of questioning and trying to elicit deeper understanding.*

Researcher: *Does that make sense?*

James: *Yep, because in a conversation like that... each child gets a chance to give good feedback of information and it is just like a chat.*

Helen: [addresses her comment to James]. *It's like in conversations I've had with you... it took us a while to realize that learning can be demonstrated through oral language... putting value on oral language... [it] doesn't need to be a pencil/paper thing.*

The dialogue in the above excerpt from our conversation also suggests that for these teachers, it had been a gradual process of recognition that “quality” learning could be achieved and demonstrated during sustained conversations with students

Professional Development and the Evaluation Phase

The evaluation phase constituted the final stage in our social studies research study. During this phase we held a community of practice meeting to evaluate the effectiveness of exemplar implementation and to evaluate the process we had used to conduct our research. The evaluative conversation was taped recorded, and became the third and final recorded collegial conversation. The teacher-researchers were released from their teaching commitments on the morning of 6th April to participate in our evaluation which we held in the school's administration block, meeting room.

I had prepared a schedule of questions “Evaluation of the Research” to provide us with a focus and to ensure that I gathered the information I needed to complete the research effectively. I planned that we would use these as prompts, rather than as a formal set of questions to be worked through. I found that even as we worked collegially during the evaluation of our work, I continued to offer advice and guidance and clarified points of confusion that arose. I discovered there were issues relating to the social studies exemplars that needed to be re-visited. The evaluative

phase was integral to the research study. I asked them to share their impressions, their feelings about the exemplars generally. Maria was first to comment:

Maria: *I enjoyed using the exemplar – it gave you a flow of the procedure. Often when you're planning a unit you get your achievement objectives and things and you think what are you going to do? So, just the planning time...*

Researcher: *You used the steps in the inquiry process to plan your learning outcomes.*

Maria: *Yeh, we did. It looked more specifically at what we were trying to teach and what we wanted to get out of the learning.*

Researcher: *Do you think it deepened your ideas of the social studies concepts at all? Do you think?*

Tania: *It had the things... what were they... those three things?*

Researcher: *The three key aspects of learning.*

Tania: *I hadn't actually seen them before, so when they were there and I actually used them, like I went back to them quite a bit like in the planning and stuff... they were quite good.*

Researcher: *OK*

Helen: *I think as primary classroom teachers, we're expected to be familiar with a huge range... number of documents... and we just can't be... we just physically can't be, so I think the exemplars made getting back into the document, rather than going through all the strands, levels and the concepts and the different approaches – it honed us in on one particular part,*

which is probably better than being swamped by the whole document.

This conversation suggested to me that the social studies exemplars had supported their unit effectively, had helped focus them on the achievement objectives. Tania said that she had “actively gone back to the key aspects of learning quite a bit during the unit”. Heather’s comment suggested that they had found the exemplar *The Way We Do Things* useful because it had helped them to focus on elements of the curriculum document and the concepts that they wanted to use and develop without having to go through the whole document.

Helen explained how she had been impressed with the exemplar inquiry process, and described how she had recently attended a School Management Team meeting focusing on “what planning looked like across the school”. She had taken the social studies exemplars with her to make her contribution to the discussion which focused on the dilemmas of “trying to reach a compromise between having a plan, but not planning too far ahead in case the students want to take you in another direction”. At the team’s management meeting Helen had shared the social studies exemplar model as a means of striking this compromise. She told us what she had said:

... it’s a nice in between because its GOT a sequence... it gets an end to it because for any learner it gets frustrating just floating along... there needs to be an endpoint..

Helen explained to us how she demonstrated to the team meeting how we had followed the inquiry process set out in *What the students did to learn* section. She described to them how it provided a sequence to follow, but “that it didn’t mean that you’ve got to get this done in week 1 and that in week 2”. Following her contribution at this meeting, Helen found that teachers in the school began to approach her with questions about the social studies exemplars and were beginning to show interest in them.

During the process of our final evaluative meeting, I established that there was still confusion relating to the social studies exemplar matrices. When I asked the teacher-researchers to show me how they would use the matrices when they came to plan their next social studies unit, they were hesitant and I gained the impression that they needed to re-visit these. Since they had told me that their next unit was to focus on *Community Service Groups*, I suggested that we use the social studies exemplar matrices to find which strand and achievement objective it could be situated within. We found it linked well to SSNZC's Social Organisation strand at Level 2. From here I was able to show them how to identify the corresponding key aspects of learning on the social studies matrix. I explained that they could then use these to inform their specific learning outcomes for the new unit. At this point we talked briefly about how they might devise some assessment tasks from each of the 3 key aspects of learning for the unit. I showed them an example of a unit planned by a team of teachers at another local school where they had developed their learning outcomes from the key aspects of learning, and had then designed suitable assessment tasks linked to each of these.

I began to feel that the teacher-researchers were now clearer about the purpose and use of the matrices, but I shared my initial concerns with them:

Researcher: *I'm feeling that these matrices could be so easily over-looked... and they're a valuable document.*

Tania: *I think they were [overlooked].*

Helen: *Well in our case they certainly were! And quite honestly if we had taken... sat down and taken time to read about them, I don't know whether we'd have taken it all on board.*

James: *Yes, not if it hadn't been practical. It would not...*

Helen: *Ten minutes of reading this in meetings would not have had any effect.*

Researcher: *You've been able to operate on it – that's why it's worked.*

Maria: *Now I'm on the English curriculum group.*

Researcher: *Are you?*

Maria: *Yes, so, one of our goals for next terms is looking at them (exemplars), and then in term 3-4 we are going to actively use them for English.*

Researcher: *Oh right? And this is a result of this?*

Helen: *Of us talking with you about this... and getting excited about it... and other people hearing about it.*

Maria: *Exactly.*

Researcher: *That's good then!*

Tania: *And the others have seen the finished products of what the children have created.*

Helen: *I think seeing how we've felt about doing it... It hasn't been onerous!*

Maria: *No*

Tania: *No*

Helen: *And the other great thing is that it's better – rather than one of us being sent off to a little course to come back and share it, it has been US doing it TOGETHER. That's another big factor. It's all very well, the 'lead' person going off to a ½ day work-*

shop, but then you still have to share it, and that sharing is often in the corridor as you whizz past, or even a written up unit... written by that person... is dutifully followed... but it doesn't add anything to our learning and understanding of this.

Researcher: *No?*

James: *And I think the other thing about it – is that I haven't come away from it, feeling that it's something else we HAVE to do! It's just part and parcel of WHAT we do!*

Researcher: *And that's what I'd hoped you'd feel in the beginning. I didn't want it to be – just another thing you felt you had to achieve... so that's...*

Helen: *Exciting! On reflection.*

Towards the end of this conversation the teacher-researchers made some very insightful comments about the benefits of their experience. Candidly, they shared their views about the benefits of working collegially on the social studies exemplars in a practical way and suggested how beneficial this has been in contrast to a staff member going to a half day workshop. They acknowledged too, that their enthusiasm inspired other teachers within the school to use the exemplars in other curriculum areas.

Helen again reiterates this:

...You know, LOOK the spin-off Ros, has been that the whole school is asking about the exemplars and asking us to get them into it.... not just for social studies, but for other subjects too! And there's been next to nothing... there's two things I know of... and I've been to each of them – about exemplars. One was run by the Hamilton Reading Association, 2 years ago, and the other was run by School Support Services last year in the first two days of the holidays.

She went on to explain just how difficult that had been:

At our school, we had the first Saturday of the holidays with Jannie Van Hees. So those of us that went ... I know most of us only went to one of the days because it was the end of term one and we were exhausted. I went to two of those sessions and by the end of that afternoon ,I was... I'd taken very little in... none of us in that group that I was with were focused on our task. We were tired...That was not the ideal learning time for us.

On hearing this I asked the group what professional development they would recommend as useful to teachers. Helen suggested that the sort of support I'd given them had been helpful:

... you coming here for little half hour sessions... at our meeting. Not a two hour session after we've tried to have a [syndicate] meeting.

Researcher: *Yes. Slotting in?*

Helen: *Little snippets. Then we go away and have a go with it.*

Researcher: *Yes.*

Helen: *And then you give us a bit more... supporting us is a spin off.*

Researcher: *You've really done the work and I've sort of said...well this is what it is, you can do this...*

Helen: *But you've given us a focus.*

Tania: *You made us go into the exemplars, because they sat in a folder on our filing cabinet, and...*

Helen: *We would be wandering around in the dark, basically.*

In this dialogue the teacher-researchers are clearly reflecting on the benefits of support and having someone to initiate their use of the exemplars. This idea corresponds with Vygotsky's conception that learning is a process of constructing personally meaningful knowledge by developing understandings that are shared and negotiated with others. A constructivist approach to their professional development is also evident as they acknowledge the benefits of learning in incremental steps; of being able to learn a little about the exemplars and then having the opportunity to implement those ideas in their classrooms before taking the next step.

This final section of the chapter lets teachers speak for themselves, it is a candid and honest account of the work that was undertaken by the community of practice and reflects how the teacher-researchers were able to share their inspiration with their colleagues.

This research has been able to respond to, and offer answers to all three research questions. It has suggested practical solutions, and has shown that **Embracing innovation and gaining "ownership" of the social studies exemplars** became a reality. The conclusions to this classroom based research are developed in the concluding section of this research where the researcher has endeavoured to draw on the findings to offer recommendations and advice to those who have responsibilities in the field of curriculum implementation.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The Research Method:

The researcher believes that this small scale, participatory action research study has been innovative; that it has departed from more traditional forms of action research. Situated within a community of practice, this research has effectively captured teachers' feelings, attitudes and their theories about practice in a unique way. It has empowered teachers to research their own practice. More importantly it has enabled teachers to speak for themselves and allowed their voices to be heard. The dialogue has been rich and informative and the research findings have exceeded the confines of the 3 scoping questions.

In the reporting of the research, the complexity of the research process and its evolving nature becomes apparent. As co-participants working collegially, our time together was limited and the teacher-researchers had many issues and responsibilities that needed to be attended to. Our work seemed to reflect what McNiff (1988, cited in Atkinson, 1994) calls 'generative action research'. That is, 'action research that enables researchers to address many different ideas and issues at one time, without losing sight of the main issue'. I soon found that our pattern of activity did not relate closely to the neat, cyclical pattern of many of the action research models because teaching does not fit with a functionalist orientation to problem solving.

One of the central themes in this research has been to try to close the "gap" between what is learnt by researchers who conduct the research and the teachers who then have to apply it to their practice. The researcher/facilitator believes that the teacher-researchers were empowered by working collegially within the community of practice because there was joint responsibility for co-constructing the research. The teachers as active participants within the research process were able to make decisions about how they would implement the exemplars into their syndicate's social studies programme. The participatory nature of this research ensured that they did not become trapped within a pre-specified process of steps over which they had

no control. At the same time, they were aware that the facilitator was fulfilling her obligation to the notion of reciprocity by offering to support them. An additional factor that helped close the perceived “gap” between the researcher and teachers, was that the researcher having been a teacher herself, was effectively speaking the same language. Hence, the barrier that sometimes exists in more traditional forms of research was removed.

The 3 research scoping questions are not discrete which makes it challenging to address the implications of the research strictly within the limitations of each. To assist in organizing the research findings, each of the three questions has been addressed through a statement. The first of these statements relates to the community of practice.

A Community of Practice can Assist Teachers to Embrace and Gain Ownership of the Social Studies Curriculum Exemplars

The community of practice model clearly endorses the situated and practical nature of teaching, and this, I believe, was a defining factor in assisting the teacher-researchers to “gain ownership” of the social studies curriculum exemplars. The research study strongly suggests that adult learners learn best when new concepts and skills are related to real life experiences. The teacher-researchers had the opportunity to put into practice in their classroom, what they had learnt in-situ. This endorsed the value of the classroom based research.

The teacher-researchers were aware of my determination to support, yet not dominate their activities, and this had the effect of building collegiality within our community of practice. As the collegial component of our community became more intense, we became increasingly more willing to answer and ask questions. The teacher-researchers moved closer, to a deeper-rich understanding of the social studies exemplar model. This enhanced our learning and supported the learning theory that maintains that learning is enhanced within collaborative environments.

The community of practice model promoted reflective dialogue, this enabled us to talk through our ideas with the thoughtful attention of all members of the community. This new form of reflection I would like to call “dialogic reflection”, since it enabled us to clarify concerns around the exemplars, identify questions and articulate our thinking as we talked and worked through the implementation process. This proved invaluable in supporting the teacher-researchers to gain insight into the intentions of the social studies exemplars, and again, moved them towards “ownership”.

An outcome of our work not anticipated within our community of practice was that it began to create a whole school vision. Teachers from outside our “community” began to show interest in the social studies exemplars and increasingly other staff members began to explore the exemplars, not only in social studies, but in other curriculum areas. Furthermore, the syndicate leader was able to share her thoughts about the exemplars with the School Management Team, showing them how the exemplars had supported what they were trying to achieve.

The Ministry of Education Exemplar Model can be Used to “Inform” Effective Social Studies Pedagogy in Primary Classrooms

The social studies exemplars have the potential to act as a powerful stimulus for teachers. The *What the students did to learn* feature in each exemplar provides a pathway of steps that teachers might adopt or adapt in developing a pedagogy. They provide some sound suggestions for activities within these pathways, but also allow for flexibility. Consequently, the teachers in this study were able to incorporate some of their own activities into the lessons.

Since the social studies exemplars are models, they are useful in helping to signal to teachers how conceptual understanding can be developed in relation to a specific achievement objective, within a given context. In all of the social studies exemplars, the graphic pathway of learning, showing *What the students did to learn* helps to reinforce the idea that conceptual understandings lead to “quality” social studies learning.

The student-teacher conversations are perhaps one of the strongest features of the exemplars in terms of exemplifying sociocultural and constructivist pedagogy in social studies. The teacher is a “connectionist”, getting students to think and talk about their learning, making connections with earlier learning and real life experiences and problems. The student-teacher conversations have enormous potential for supporting teachers in the development of collaborative learning, but as suggested, they have both surface and deeper features. This research strongly indicated that teachers need professional development to gain the deeper understandings from the student-teacher conversations. Without this guidance teachers are more likely to rely on the question, response, evaluation style of questioning in social studies. The student-teacher conversations help teachers to understand that dialogue is an integral part of social studies and that by conducting substantive conversations with their students, they can enhance their learning potential.

The need for exemplars to assist with assessment has been suggested in a wide range of papers, reports and the curriculum stocktake. This research study suggests that while the social studies exemplars provide a resource to help teachers develop the achievement objectives in a given context, they do not make ideas about assessment explicit. If teachers are to use the *3 key aspects* of learning to help them develop their specific learning outcomes and their associated assessment tasks, they need to understand how these *3 key aspects* of learning can help them do this. Additionally, any professional development involving the use of the social studies exemplars also needs to take into account sociocultural perspectives on assessment, since this may well conflict with reporting student progress in traditional ways, e.g. anecdotal records or personal profiles. Teachers need to be encouraged to see that new approaches to assessment enable assessment to be made in the social setting of the group. This requires a whole new way of thinking about assessment practices.

Teachers Need Professional Development in Order to Understand the Nature and Purpose of the Social Studies Exemplars

The research findings strongly suggest that the Ministry of Education's social studies exemplar model is sophisticated, because it appears to provide on the one hand, explicit teaching support at a surface level, as well as a range of implicit, pedagogical information. The research findings suggested however, that although teachers are able to recognize the surface features, they need considerable help to see the deeper features embedded in the social studies exemplars. The curriculum related features of the exemplars were readily identified by the teachers – they recognize it, since it links directly to their regular classroom practice and to their knowledge of the curriculum. *Curriculum Links*, the *Learning Contexts* and the *Where to Next features?* are examples of some of the surface features that were readily identified by the teacher-researchers. The *Teachers' Notes* provided insufficient support for them to be able to interpret the 3 key aspects of learning and to understand their application to the planning and teaching process. Practical experience using the strand and processes matrices was found to be essential to a full understanding of these. The Teacher-researchers needed some professional development to help them become aware of sociocultural pedagogy and its implications for social studies teaching and learning. This research also indicated that more work needs to be done with the social studies exemplars to help teachers recognize the deeper features of student-teacher conversations and how this applies to “quality” social studies teaching.

Finally

This research **Embracing innovation and gaining “ownership” of the Social Studies curriculum exemplars: a classroom based study**, indicated that teachers bring a wealth of knowledge and background information to their social studies pedagogy, and they call upon professional development opportunities afforded to them from a wide range of curriculum areas. However, this social studies research also suggests that teachers strongly attest to being frustrated in their efforts to implement curriculum innovations with little, or ineffective outside support.

This research demonstrated that the social studies exemplars are rich in sociocultural and constructivist pedagogy and as such they have the potential to greatly enhance “quality” social studies learning and teaching. This study also highlighted the importance of how mindful we must be, to the fact that teachers have a wide range of curriculum and administrative responsibilities and this makes it very challenging for teachers to keep abreast of all innovations in every learning area. The demands on teachers’ time are phenomenal, the pressures increasingly more complex – we owe it to them to provide as much assistance as we can to advance their understanding of curriculum innovations that they are expected to implement.

This research has shown how the social studies curriculum exemplars were “embraced” by the teacher-researchers in this study and it has signaled that the way forward for professional development through school based communities of practice. It would appear that the Ministry of Education endorses an increasing devolution of responsibility for professional development to schools. This assumes schools will ‘lead’ their own professional development. This study has shown that this has the potential to be effective. However the Ministry of Education must find ways of funding schools more effectively so they can access the necessary expertise from support people to work alongside teachers within communities of practice.

As I come to the end of my research journey I begin to reflect on where I have ‘traveled’ and what has been learnt. At the beginning, I believed I had mapped out a short and fairly pre-determined route, and that at the journey’s end, I would be able to speak on behalf of teachers. Instead, my four colleagues have enabled me to travel further than I could ever have imagined – the pathway has widened into a myriad of unexpected directions. I have learnt more about social studies within the complex sociocultural world of teaching and learning than I could have ever imagined - but more importantly our journey together has enabled *me* to let teachers speak for *themselves*. Their voices are significant ones, for what they have said has helped to inform our understanding about their social studies professional development needs. It is for *us* to listen – now.

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Teacher Research Participants
c.c. Principal, B.O.T.

Appendix A

9 Sunset Close
Hamilton
Phone: 8465344

24 January 2006

The Principal
Hamilton

Dear ... & BOT members

With reference to my letter to... of 14 November, 2005, I now have specific details outlined below, relating to my intended research. I have also enclosed an attached form which requires me to obtain your "**informed consent**" prior to the commencement of my research. If you could return this to me as soon as possible, this would be much appreciated.

A similar description of the information below has been given to the research participants in C Block together with **informed consent** forms.

As a graduate of the University of Waikato, I am undertaking this research thesis as a component towards my M.Ed. Having worked with pre-service teachers at the School of Education, I have become interested in how teachers implement new curriculum innovations into their regular classroom programmes. The teachers in C Block have agreed for me to work alongside them as they seek effective ways of incorporating the Social Studies exemplars into their current classroom programme. In return for their participation in my research, I have agreed to offer any help or support that they may require.

The process will involve recording three discussions with the participant-teachers during regular meetings of the C Block syndicate. It will also involve collecting a few samples of work children have done and some taped extracts of learner/teacher conversations.

I recognize that procedures will need to be put in place with regard to obtaining **informed consent** from parents and the children whose work/ conversations are to be used in the reporting of my research.

I will make every effort to ensure that the teachers, students and the school are not able to be identified in any way in my thesis. All material for the study, together with taped discussions and student/teacher conversations will be kept secure in my own home. If there is an opportunity to disseminate research findings in the future, I will negotiate this with the teacher-participants and yourself regarding acknowledgments.

The proposal for this research study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the School of Education and is to be completed under the supervision of:

Philippa Hunter
School of Education
Dept. of Policy & Cultural & Social Studies Education
Waikato University

Should you have any questions about this research study, I may be contacted at the above address and phone number.

Yours sincerely

Rosamund Ramsbottom

UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Informed Consent: Researcher's copy:

**I as Principal of.....School,
give my consent together with that on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to allow
Rosamund Ramsbottom to undertake her research as proposed within this school.**

**I understand that all information including the identities of the teachers, pupils and
school, will be kept confidential.**

Signature.....

Date:

University of Waikato

Informed consent: Principal's copy

**I..... as Principal of..... School,
give my consent together with that on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to allow
Rosamund Ramsbottom to undertake her research as proposed within this school.**

**I understand that all information including the identities of the teachers, pupils and
School, will be kept confidential.**

Signature

Date:

INFORMATION SHEET

The University of Waikato School of Education

Department of Policy & Cultural & Social Studies Education

Information sheet: (project name): Embracing innovation and gaining “ownership” of the Social Studies curriculum exemplars: classroom based research.

This project will investigate: the process by which a syndicate of teachers incorporate elements of the new curriculum exemplars into their Social Studies programmes.

I am currently a Masters student at Waikato University engaged in a research study that will contribute towards completion of a M.Ed. The educational research involves investigating how one group of teachers choose to implement and use the new social studies exemplars in their classroom programme. The intended process is for me as the researcher to work collaboratively with you as the teacher-participants to find useful ways of incorporating the social studies exemplars into current classroom practice.

As discussed at your syndicate meeting on 17 November, I would be grateful if you could assist in this study by agreeing to become a participant in the group discussions during the research process over March – June 2006. At least 3 of these discussions will be taped, and will last for approximately ½ hour. These collegial conversations will be held during normal syndicate times and we will negotiate these in advance. Any information you provide during these discussions will be treated as confidential. The research has been approved by the School of Education ethics committee. You are of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation in the group at any time during the research process.

As part of the research information gathering, it will be necessary to collect small samples of learner’s work and taped extracts of learner-teacher conversations. Children’s confidentiality will be maintained by avoiding the use of names that would identify individuals. “Informed Consent” will need to be obtained from both parents and the pupils whose work is to be used in the research report.

Should you wish to contact my supervisor regarding this study, she can be contacted at:

Philippa Hunter
School of Education
Waikato University
Hamilton
Ph: (07) 838-4500

If you agree to taking part in this research study, could you please read and sign the “consent form” and return it to me in the attached envelope after our next meeting. Any questions regarding this research study, please contact me on Ph: 846 5344.

The University of Waikato

CONSENT FORM

Research Title: Embracing innovation and gaining “ownership” of the Social Studies curriculum exemplars: classroom based research.

Research organizer: Rosamund Ramsbottom

1. I have read the **Information Sheet** and the nature and purpose of this research study has been explained to me.
2. I understand that the benefit of the research is in terms of it contributing towards possible co-authored publications and potential professional development.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from the research process at any time.
4. I understand that the collegial conversations will be taped and transcribed. These will only be accessible to the research participants.
5. I am willing to provide samples of learners’ work and/or extracts of learner/teacher conversations that will contribute to the research information.
6. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out on the **Information Sheet**.

Signature:

Name:

Date:.....

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS

Dear Parents/caregivers,

I am currently undertaking some research in Social Studies which will contribute towards a thesis for my Masters degree in Education. This research involves working with Year 5/6 teachers who will be planning the unit on 'Communities'. I will be working alongside the teachers to observe how Social Studies is planned for, and taught.

During February-March, your children will be studying 'Communities' and as part of this, they will be completing written work and contributing work towards a wall display. Some of the children will also be asked to discuss what they have learnt by taking part in a taped conversation with their teacher.

So that I can find out how children think and learn in Social Studies, I would like to be able to view some samples of children's work and discuss these with the teachers. I would also like to listen to the taped discussions to help me with my research.

No child will be named or identified individually in follow up research writing.

If you are able to grant your permission for me to view your child's work and listen to a taped pupil/teacher discussion, could you please indicate below and return that portion of this form to your child's teacher.

Rosamund Ramsbottom
Teacher & Research student

Cut-----

Informed consent:

Parent/caregiver to complete with name and signature:

I..... grant my permission for samples of my child's work and/or a possible taped pupil discussion, to be used by the researcher, Rosamund Ramsbottom, for the purpose of her research about learning and teaching in social studies.

Signature.....

Date.....

INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT

Year 5/6 students at ? School

Dear Year 5/6 Students

Your teachers have told me that you are doing an interesting study about 'Communities'.

While you are doing your study, I am doing a study too. Mine is about how teachers help Yr 5/6 students learn Social Studies.

Would you be able to help me with my study, by letting me borrow some of the work you do on 'communities'?

I would also like to listen to you talking on the tape recorder with your teacher.

This would help me with my study which is to go into a large book, called a thesis.

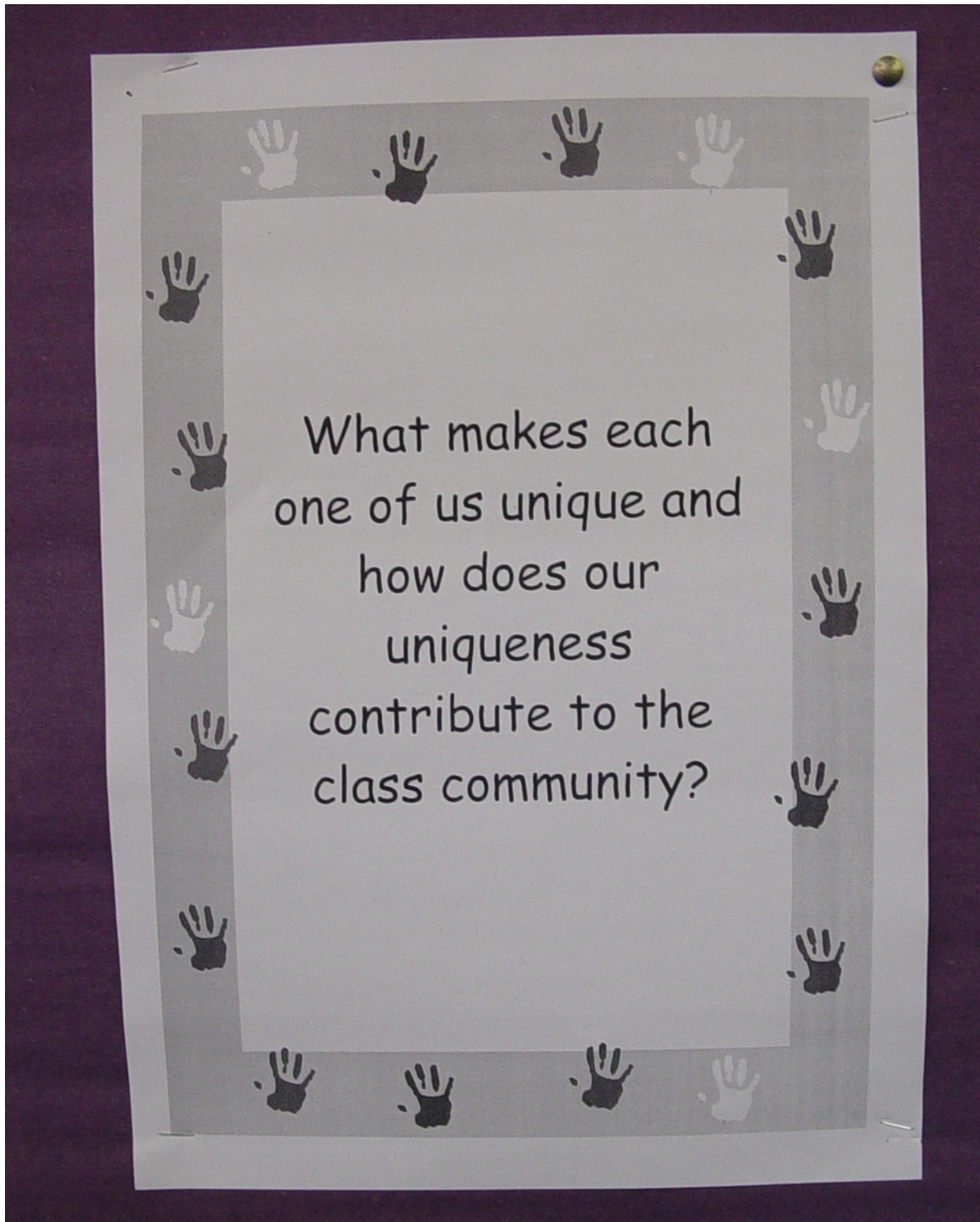
If you are happy to let me borrow your work and listen to your taped voice, to help me with my study, can you write **YES** in the box or **NO** if you would prefer not to share your work with me.

NAME _____



From Mrs Ramsbottom.

The Big Question – refer page 79.





23/24 February 2006

Student-Teacher conversation between Manu and his teacher - refer page 86.

Teacher: So tell me what a community is.

Manu: A group of different people who work together.

Teacher: Is it just about working together?

Manu: No sometimes they live together usually they work together.

Teacher: So what are the people like in these communities?

Manu: Sometimes different, mostly different but unless they are twins.

Teacher: Ah good point. Do you belong to any community?

Manu: Yes.

Teacher: What community do you belong to?

Manu: Five of them, New Zealand community, Hamilton community, (name of suburb) community, (school) community and (class) community.

Teacher: Tell me about your class community, what's it like?

Manu: Cool.

Teacher: Why?

Manu: Nice teachers and cool things to do.

Teacher: What about the people, what are they like?

Manu: Sometimes they can get a bit naughty but most of the time they're good.

Teacher: Yep, are they all the same?

Manu: No.

Teacher: In what ways are they different?

Manu: Lots of different ways, I could go on forever.

- Teacher: Give me a few examples.
- Manu: Some people come from different countries, some people like different things.
- Teacher: Do you think it would be better if we were all the same in a community?
- Manu: No, because everyone would be doing the same work, and it would be boring because you would be doing the same marking over and over and over again and the same thing every day.
- Teacher: What skills do you think you need to be part of a community? Or do you need any skills to be part of a community?
- Manu: Not really. Only not much, because you want to be nice and welcome people even if they don't have any skills to add to the community.

23/24 February 2006

Student-teacher conversation between Louis and his teacher – refer page 86.

- Teacher: What does the quilt tell us about our class?
- Louis: That we all have different things that we all bring together. We join the things together. People of different cultures are joined together.
- Teacher: What joins us together? I mean we are all separate but what actually joins us together?
- Louis: Unity and we listen to each other and we get to know each other.
- Teacher: So what is a community?
- Louis: A group of people coming together.
- Teacher: So how does this community and the heritage and culture that we talked about, how does that affect you?
- Louis: Well when you mix around with other people you sort of learn about their culture.
- Teacher: OK so you do a bit of sharing so how does that change what is important to you?
- Louis: It sort of gives you a little bit of their culture not all of it but just a little bit.
- Teacher: So how do people share some of their culture?
- Louis: Like Merewan in our class he is from Iraq and he talks Iraq and so he can share that with us.
- Teacher: So that may affect your view of the world.
- Louis: Yeah you learn a little of that culture.
- Teacher: Gives you more experience eh (L) Knowledge (T) Yeah
- Teacher: Ok so community has different pieces. We talked about how we're different but we're all together things like skills and values and attitudes. They fit together don't they?
- Louis: Yeah.

Teacher: So what can you say about that?

Louis: I sort of say that you learn about others cultures and so that becomes part of another's knowledge and you can use that knowledge.

Teacher: So you talk about using that new found knowledge. What can we do with that new knowledge to show other people how important different cultures are?

Louis: If there is someone in your class or community that does know the language, the rest could show them and talk about it and show how important it is to that group.

Teacher: And I guess if we got a new person in our class and we have this quilt how could we help them to be part of the community?

Louis: We could get them to look at or do heaps of group activities.

Teacher: So by doing group activities we are sharing our group's community feelings. Do you think they would feel more at ease or would still feel scare or...?

Louis: They might feel a little bit scared but they might feel a little bit better to talk with other people.

Teacher: Once the quilt has been up for 2 to 3 weeks what should we do with it?

Louis: We could save it somewhere and use for a special time may be if you do a time of class memories.

Teacher: Thank you Louis for your discussion.

This is a copy of the lesson plan the teachers wrote for their social studies unit - refer page 88.

A.L. L2 Culture and Heritage

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understandings of ways in which communities reflect the cultures and heritages of their people.

Process: Inquiry

Setting: NZ

Perspective: Multicultural

Essential learning about NZ Society:

Contributes to the development over time of NZ's identity and ways in which this identity is expressed.

Concepts: Cultural; heritage; community.

Three key aspects of learning:

Ideas about society

Understands that a community reflects the cultures and heritages of its people.

Participation in society

Knows how people contribute aspects of their culture and heritage to their community.

Personal and social significance

Explains how their community's culture and heritage affect them.

Processing information

Brainstorm – some of the different things they (we/you) do together in C.....

Discuss the unique ways we do things in C....and the 'artefacts' we use, e.g. class greetings

Karakia	group points (popcorn)
Mihi	star pillow waiata

Discuss the words unique/artefacts come to an agreed definition – could record this in modeling book.

Introduce through discussion the first big problem.

Do 3 hoop activity.

Developing questions

Students develop questions to ask their families about features of their culture and heritages (info for mihi/from mihi activity/homework)

- What special things does our family do together?
- What do we use when we do these family activities?
- Do we have special treasure that tells a story about our family?

Collecting information

Incorporate information into homework.

Friday sharing time within class.

Students will talk with their families to find out about their cultures and heritage. Then they would bring artefacts from home that reflects their cultures/heritages. (What about things that make them unique within the class?)

During this week teachers would bring things to share with the class i.e. providing a detailed model for the Friday sharing time. Share with children the attitude, action achievement phases found in the exemplar.

Example: HR would bring kilt, Lachlan's family koru, trowel and pack of cards.

Processing information

Students talk about how some features of their cultures/heritages are reflected in the C...community.

Sharing – Jannie style model – model on Fairfield school question lesson she shared...I brought along my...*to be finalized*.

Illustrate and caption these features on a diverse connection quilt. Take a photo of the children individually with their artefact to be used as part of the quilt display as a frame or top and bottom like a tassel.

Enlarge C...is a place of Attitude, Action, Achievement and place inside the quilt.

While class is working on quilt piece, aim to see two children that you can have a teacher/child conversation with (one very oral child and one not) – see model in “the way we do things” exemplar. Aim to get the child to reach a generalization. Tape conversation and then try to identify any element(s) that suggest that the student has reached a generalization or shows understanding of the 3 key aspects of learning. Bring tape to next block meeting to share.

Suggestions:

Do this Friday week 3, so the children have a whole day to share and create their quilt pieces.

A4 size piece of coloured paper, so children have a higher chance of completion and quilt piece is framed. Could give children white pieces to glue onto coloured piece for writing and drawing.

Making Generalizations

The students arrive at a generalization about their community through teacher-student conversations.

Communicating Findings

Share quilts by having a viewing prior to week 4 community

- Model book?
- Student journal?

Reflecting

Encourage children to reflect on the big question and their individual hoop questions. Children come up with a class statement that relates to last part of the big question. See exemplar.

- Could have a model book to record statements/the journey, photos etc.

Follow-up

Think about features of families' cultures/heritage that you DON'T bring to C.....
Think about how C....could embrace other features of student cultures/heritages (greetings in Maori or Indian).
Show new children our model book (kids show).
Revisit the model book.
Leave a few pages for children to illustrate/add to.

This is the assessment task the students completed at the conclusion of the unit - refer p. 92.

I am Unique

On 24 February I shared with my class some things that are special/unique to me and my family.

I chose to share

Because

I discovered

The special contribution I believe make to my class is

Appendix M: The Social Studies Exemplars Levels 1 – 5 and their associated achievement objectives from NZSSC (1997).

		Social Organisation	Culture & Heritage	Place and Environment	Time, Continuity and Change	Resources and Economic Activity
Level 1	A.01	Fabulous families Why people belong to groups.	Here's My History Features of the culture and heritage of their own and other groups.	Friends of Cox's Bay (Part 1) Why particular places are important for people.	Ways in which time and change affect people.	What Falekava Uses Different resources that people use.
	A.02	At our Kura The different roles people fulfil within groups.	Keeping Traditions Alive Customs and traditions associated with participation in cultural activities.	Stories Along The River How and why people record the important features of places and environments.	Important events in their own lives.	On the Job Different types of work that people do.
Level 2	A.01	How and why groups are organised within communities and societies.	The Way We Do Things Ways in which communities reflect the cultures and heritages of their people.	Friends of Cox's Bay (Part 2) How people's activities influence places and the environment and are influenced by them.	Enter the Motor vehicle How past events changed aspects of the lives of communities.	How and why people work together to obtain resources.
	A.02	How participation within groups involves both responsibilities and rights.	Haere mai Ngā Manuhiri How people interact within their cultural groups and with other cultural groups.	Uluru: Rock of Then How and why people describe places and environments in different ways.	Honouring Athena Family Treasures (Part 1) How and why the past is important to people.	Playing A Part How people participate in the production process.
Level 3	A.01	How leadership of groups is acquired and exercised.	At the Marae How practices of cultural groups vary but reflect similar purposes.	We Need a New Hall How different groups view and use places and the environment.	Galileo's legacy How the ideas and actions of people in the past changed the lives of others.	Putting Our Future on the Line How and why people manage resources.
	A.02	How and why people make and implement rules and laws.	Ways in which the movement of people affects cultural diversity and interaction.	Emily Sweet of Whakarongo How and why people express a sense of belonging to particular places and environments.	Monuments & Memorials Taonga Family Treasures (Part 2) How the past is recorded and remembered in different ways.	How and why different systems of exchange operate.
Level 4	A.01	September 11 New Zealand Responds Biosecurity alert How people organise themselves in response to challenge and crisis.	Pass the Clootie Dumplin' My Nana's Story Why and how individuals and groups pass on and sustain their culture and heritage.	How places reflect past interactions of people with the environment.	Causes and effects of events that have shaped the lives of a group of people.	People in the Rain forest How and why people view and use resources differently and the consequences of this.
	A.02	A New Look (Level 4/5) How and why people exercise their rights and meet their responsibilities.	A Big Wired World The impact of the spread of new technology and ideas on culture and heritage.	Why and how people find out about places and environments.	Signing The Treaty Raid on Lindisfarne How and why people experience events in different ways.	How and why individuals and groups seek to safeguard the rights of consumers.
Level 5	A.01	Different Democracies How systems of government are organised and affect people's lives.	02 B An Allblack The Key to Me Ways in which cultural and national identity develop and are maintained.	From Norway to Norsewood Why people move between places and the consequences of this for the people and the places.	How past events have influenced relationships within and between groups of people and continue to influence them.	Water Woes Factors that influence people's access to resources, goods and services.
	A.02	Mississippi Burning How and why people seek to gain and maintain social justice and human rights.	Parihaka, Past & Present The effects of cultural interaction on cultures and societies.	Places of Peace Why particular places and environments are significant for people.	How the ideas and actions of individuals and groups that have shaped the lives and experiences of people are viewed through time.	A Question of Work The changing nature of work and the consequences of this for individuals and for society.

R. Ramsbottom (2006)