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**EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENT TEACHERS'
BELIEFS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER
AND HOW YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN**

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Waikato
by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was, firstly, to explore early childhood student teachers' beliefs about the role of the teacher and how young children learn. Secondly, it was to examine formative influences on participants' beliefs and, thirdly, to ascertain any changes or modifications over a three-year period. Seventeen students completed five questionnaires and of these seven, who were the case study students, were interviewed and observed on teaching practice. Stories were written with each of these seven participants and their case studies prepared. Data were coded, analysed and grouped into themes. Changes or modifications to beliefs were charted for group and individual data for all 17 students. The results indicated that the beliefs student teachers' construct are powerfully informed by experiences prior to the teacher education programme and that the family is perceived as particularly influential. Beliefs were dynamic; they developed and changed over a three-year period. Some of these beliefs were reflected in practice. To demonstrate the dynamic nature of beliefs, a taxonomy was developed to explain the status of the different beliefs held by students. It is argued that it is simplistic to speak of student beliefs as though they all have the same degree of tenacity, power and influence over how a student teacher thinks and acts. Implications for teacher education and further research were discussed.

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When I began this research there was little readily available research on student teacher beliefs. It has been exciting to see interest in this area flourish. Discussions with many people at national and international conferences have been influential. My colleagues in the Department of Early Childhood Studies at the University of Waikato have not only been supportive but have also helped me clarify some of my ideas. Corinne Nicholson provided invaluable assistance with formatting.

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Particularly important to me during the whole process has been the understanding of my family. While I have produced a thesis, both Janet and Grant have married and produced families. The arrival of three grandchildren, Ayaka, Kiki and Tane, has truly embedded my passion for quality early childhood education. Janet at various times has typed for me, assisted in finding references, and completed some proofreading. Finally, I wish to thank and acknowledge my husband David for his encouragement and for sharing with me a life that is never dull, but is intellectually stimulating and adventurous.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

Mother Therese, Nelson Mandela, Adolf Hitler and Galileo Galilei are but a few examples of how significant beliefs can be in a person's thinking and actions. Just as important is the impact they have on others in the world. Beliefs can be used for good or evil, to enhance the lives of others, or as a justification for destroying them. They can be used as a means of increasing knowledge or of stifling new developments.

As individuals we each hold beliefs. These beliefs are powerful in determining how we interpret or make sense of the world and our interactions with others. They are frequently strongly held and are influential in deciding what we take as useful from new knowledge and experiences (Abelson, 1979; Bruner, 1996; Nespor, 1987). They influence the positions we adopt, sometimes on quite trivial matters, and at other times on matters of great significance. Their strength or power acts like a protective shield making changes in thinking, attitudes and values difficult to bring about.

For these reasons, the study of beliefs and their influential nature on thinking and behaviour has intrigued writers in a range of disciplines and contexts. Their research and thinking is documented in the next chapter in a review of the literature on beliefs. Of particular interest has been a growing conviction that, for people working in teacher education, belief change is an important goal (Tillema, 1997). If we are to bring about conceptual change and facilitate development toward becoming an effective teacher, there is a need to understand the beliefs students bring to a programme and the influence these have on their actions (Pajeres, 1992).

As a teacher of students aspiring to be early childhood teachers, the centrality of the influence of their beliefs on what they would gain from an early childhood teacher

programme, was of interest to me. Not only did I believe this knowledge was important in enhancing my own teaching, but also that it would play a role in evaluating and planning future early childhood teacher education programmes. My teaching in the programme at the University of Waikato offered me the opportunity to study beliefs within the context of the programme itself. It provided me with the chance to consider what students were bringing to the programme, as well as the influence the programme was having on their ways of thinking. In addition to conducting research within the university, I was able to visit participants as they worked in early childhood centres with children, families and staff.

My own interest in beliefs was of a longstanding nature and was stimulated by my teaching and research in special education and my interest in parental beliefs and roles. Firstly, my work in special education led me to research on beliefs about disability. I studied whom students in one secondary school perceived as different. I have often reflected on the origin of beliefs about disability and their influence on behaviours. Secondly, my interest was further aroused by numerous studies of parental beliefs (Campbell, Goldstein, Schaefer & Ramey, 1991; Podmore & Bird, 1991; Sigel, 1985). For some time, I had been intrigued by the distinction between the role of the teacher and that of a mother. In my dual role as a mother to my own children, and as a teacher to others' children in the 1970s and 1980s, I was aware of differences that existed between these two roles. I conceived of myself as both a mother and teacher with my own children. I was, however, aware that there were differences in our affective relationships that made the nature of my teaching with my own children different. There were times when the mother/teacher role was easy and other times when it was more difficult and challenging. It was different from working with a larger group of children with whom my role was solely that of teacher without the strong affective component that characterised my parental role.

My thoughts about this led to the decision to study early childhood teacher education students in a longitudinal three-year study in the New Zealand university in which I taught. In the next sections of this introductory chapter I will

- identify the issues in the study of student teacher beliefs
- describe influences on the research framework
- explain the context of the study

- present an overview of the research and its principal aims
- describe the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Issues in the Study of Student Teacher Beliefs

I have referred somewhat blithely to 'beliefs' as though it is a term commonly understood. It is a word whose meaning is commonly taken-for-granted, although this is not the case in the research literature and in philosophical writings where its definition is widely debated. At issue has been the relationship between belief and knowledge (Abelson, 1979; Cohen, Peters & Willis, 1988; Scheffler, 1965) and the role of beliefs in determining behaviour (Nespor, 1987; Rokeach, 1979). Evidence of the complexity of the field, is apparent in the various ways in which beliefs are defined, and the debates over their organisation, both within and across disciplines. The degree to which belief change occurs, and how this might be brought about, is another focus of interest. These issues are explored more fully in Chapter Two.

Suffice to say at this point, that for this study, beliefs were regarded as views held by the participants about the role of the teacher and how young children learn. This narrowing down of the focus of the research is something advocated by Pajeres (1992). After a careful review of the literature on teacher belief, he maintained that research into educational beliefs should be directed at specific areas rather than being diffuse and context-free. For these reasons, the research is directed at students who were undertaking their study in one programme and is focused on particular areas of belief.

1.3 Influences on the Research Framework

Although the research literature on teacher belief has burgeoned, that on student teacher belief has followed rather more slowly. The roots for a knowledge base on student teacher beliefs are now becoming well established but the focus is seldom on the beliefs of early childhood student teachers. At the time of determining the research framework, there was little to indicate that a body of knowledge on early childhood student teacher beliefs was well formulated. Yet, early childhood

teachers' professional work touches at the core of how children are reared and the way in which children are perceived in relation to adults. Furthermore, very few longitudinal studies were reported.

The challenge was to establish a framework that would enable me as the researcher to understand, over a three-year period, what individual student teachers believed a good early childhood teacher would be like and how young children learn. The research framework needed to be such that it enabled the detection of changes and differences in participants' thinking. This effort to understand another's subjective world (Cohen & Manion, 1987) signalled the need to adopt an interpretivist research paradigm as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). Such an approach can employ a wide range of qualitative methods of data collection in an attempt to gain meaning. Furthermore, I wanted to ensure that participants in the research had voice.

The methods of inquiry included questionnaires, interviews, observations and the development of stories through the use of a case study approach. These are explained in Chapters Three and Four.

1.4 Context of the Study

The research began with a preliminary study to determine the usefulness of a survey questionnaire and to explore means of coding and handling questionnaire data. It was a comparative study involving a group of students in Japan and another group in New Zealand in 1992/1993. This study highlighted for me beliefs in my culture that I take-for-granted and enabled me to explore issues a longitudinal study would have a greater chance of answering. The following year the main study, which is the focus of this thesis, commenced.

1.4.1 Research participants

The students who participated in the main body of the research were enrolled in an undergraduate early childhood teacher education programme at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. In New Zealand, the term "early childhood education" refers to the non-compulsory provision of education and care for young infants and children before they begin school (Ministry of Education, 1994). When

this study commenced the students were enrolled concurrently for a Diploma of Teaching, which was awarded after three years, and a Bachelor of Education awarded after a fourth year of successful study.

The main part of this research followed one group of 17 early childhood student teachers as they proceeded through their teacher education programme. From this group, a smaller group of seven students were randomly selected for more intensive case studies, to enable their beliefs to be explored in greater depth.

The student intakes, in the early childhood teacher education programmes are diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, academic qualifications and the life experiences they bring. The majority are over the age of 20 years and a number have parenting experiences. As Director of the Early Childhood Teacher Education programmes within the university at the time of the research, and teaching in a number of courses, I had relatively easy access to these students. While there can be no doubt that my own role and the perceptions that students had of that role will have some influence on the outcomes, it was heartening to find that this effect appeared to be minimal. The case study participants became more like colleagues and friends. This is outlined in more detail in Chapter Four.

1.4.2 The early childhood teacher education programme

The teacher preparation programme from which these students were drawn is typical of teacher education programmes in New Zealand, in that it involved coursework and practical work over each of the three years. Students were required to have practical experience in both full day childcare, serving children from birth to school entry, and sessional kindergartens where children from three and a half years of age to school entry attend for half a day. During the first two years, students were on placement in a centre for one day a week in year one, and half a day in year two. The time spent on full day practicum ranged from four weeks in year one, five weeks in year two, to six weeks in year three. While on placement and practicum, students worked under the guidance of an associate teacher.

Student teachers are prepared for working in a range of early childhood centres. Most will find employment in childcare (both sessional and full day), and in

sessional kindergartens. Some graduates are offered positions in *Te Kohanga Reo* (Māori language immersion) and in other services such as Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) and the Specialist Education Services (SES). People with the equivalent of a three-year early childhood teacher qualification and a Bachelor of Education are in high demand, and many of the graduates move rapidly into positions of responsibility.

The programme at the University of Waikato was designed to enable students to move with confidence into their first teaching position and to assume the responsibilities that would be thrust upon them (Carr, May & Mitchell, 1991). The programme was conceptually divided into three areas:

- Personal and professional development which included liberal studies for personal growth, a focus on communicating effectively with parents and families, working within the community, and working with colleagues in shared decision making. Underpinning the development of a competent communicator was an understanding of cultural differences.
- Learning, caring and development which involved having a theoretical and practical knowledge of children. This meant, for example, such things as providing a stimulating environment and programme, developing and extending skills for life, and providing a healthy and appropriate environment for different age groups.
- Understanding family and cultural issues which entailed exploring political, philosophical, social and historical contexts of early childhood care and education, and understanding one's own beliefs and attitudes on such matters as cultural diversity, sexism and violence. Knowledge about the wider world of education and the politics of education, both from its historical and current perspective, were addressed (Carr, May & Mitchell, 1991).

The programme thus aimed to develop competent, reflective practitioners who could take initiative within the field of early childhood education and who would question ideas frequently taken-for-granted about the education and care of young children. It was anticipated that, for many students, changes or modifications to their beliefs would occur. What was less well known was how students constructed their reality,

the nature of the beliefs they held on entry and how much these were retained, slightly modified or dramatically changed over the course of their study. The beliefs of the students had not been studied systematically and longitudinally and few attempts had been made previously to rigorously chart changes as they occurred over the three or four years of the programme.

1.4.3 The use of Māori language

Māori language or terminology is increasingly used in New Zealand in educational contexts as one small way of acknowledging the significance of the Māori culture in New Zealand. The words that are used in this thesis include:

Te Kohanga Reo	“language nest”, an early childhood facility with Māori language immersion
Māori	the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand), increasingly known as tangata whenua
Whānau	family
Te Whāriki	the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. Te Whāriki is a woven mat
Treaty of Waitangi	signed in 1840 by representatives of Māori tribes and the British Crown, the Treaty sets out rights and responsibilities inherent in the signatories partnership.

1.5 Overview of the Research and its Aims

The research involved a qualitative approach in order to understand the beliefs held by a group of early childhood students about the role of the teacher and how young children learn. Unlike many earlier studies, this research was longitudinal and was able to chart the development of beliefs over three years.

Over this time period, all 17 students completed a total of five questionnaires, which included open questions and the selection from a list of three or four teacher characteristics believed to be the most important, along with a justification for the choice. In addition, other questions sought information about such matters as experience with children, perceived efficacy as a teacher and prior knowledge.

The seven students who agreed to participate as case study participants were interviewed throughout the three years and observed when working in early childhood centres. In their final year, a story was written collaboratively about their experiences and beliefs. This formed the basis for each case study.

Throughout the research, data were coded, analysed and themes sought. Belief development was charted in the questionnaire data for the group and for individual participants. This was complemented by the case study data. More extensive information on this process and the phases of the research is provided in Chapter Four.

In light of the very limited research information on early childhood student teacher beliefs, the questions raised for this study were:

- What are the beliefs or views about the role of the teacher that early childhood students entering teacher education bring to that programme?
- How do they believe young children learn?
- What do students report as being influential in the formation of beliefs?
- Do these beliefs or views (about the role of the teacher and how young children learn) appear to change or become modified as they progress through the programme?
- What methodological problems do a study of beliefs present?

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis has a total of 14 chapters. The introduction is followed by:

- Chapter Two: a review of literature which examines debates on the nature of beliefs and reviews teacher and student teacher belief studies and their significance for teacher education.
- Chapter Three: the construction of the research identifies the research paradigm and the inquiry framework, addresses the selection of research method and explains how the quality of research outcomes may be judged.

- Chapter Four: the description of the study includes information on the aims of the research, the research participants, ethical considerations, the phases of the study, and coding categories.
- Chapter Five: reports the results of the questionnaire data under a number of themes which demonstrate the developments that occurred in participants' beliefs.
- Chapters Six to Twelve: the case studies for the seven participants present their stories and dominant beliefs.
- Chapter Thirteen: the results of the research are discussed with attention directed at the formative influences on participants' beliefs, the development of teacher identity, themes that were present in participants' beliefs and a discussion of a taxonomy that was developed to help understand the evolution of participants' beliefs.
- Chapter Fourteen: this chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the findings, describing the limitations and exploring implications for future research and for teacher education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Over the past 15 years there has been an increasing research interest in student teacher beliefs. This interest developed from research on the nature of teachers' thinking and the role beliefs play, both in teachers' thinking and in their subsequent teaching behaviours. By the late 1980s, this focus extended to student teachers and the beliefs they bring to, and develop during, their teacher education programmes.

Research on teacher's thinking and, more recently, student teachers' thinking is itself a comparatively new endeavour. The lack of interest in this area, prior to the 1960s, was attributed to the dominance of the behaviourist tradition which eschewed anything that was considered too "mentalistic" and unable to be directly observed (Carter, 1990). By the late 1960s, a growing interest in cognition and context in the social sciences saw the development of qualitative or interpretive studies of classroom teaching. It was not, however, until the 1970s that there was a widespread recognition, as reported by Brown and McIntyre (1993) and Carter (1990), of the need for a systematic study of teachers' thinking. Accompanying this was a growing realisation that "what teachers do depends a great deal on what they think" (Brown & McIntyre, 1993, p.3). This was conceptualised by Thompson (1992) as a shift from a process-product paradigm, in which the object of study was teachers' behaviours, to a focus on teachers' cognitions, on their thinking and on their decision-making processes. It was this shift that encouraged the interest in beliefs as a significant and influential component in teachers' and student teachers' thinking.

The significance of teacher beliefs is encapsulated in a statement from Kagan (1992). She claimed that how and what teachers think about teaching may be regarded as an

intrinsic component of their knowledge of the education profession. This knowledge, according to Kagan (1992), is situated

... in context (it is related to specific groups of students), in content (it is related to particular academic material to be taught), and in person (it is embedded within the teacher's unique belief system). (p.74)

The focus of the present study is on the third of these aspects, the ideas that are embedded within, in this case, early childhood student teachers' individual belief systems. It is argued that student teachers each bring to their teacher education programme a unique belief system that will influence and form a component of their professional knowledge in education.

The review of the literature that follows is divided into three parts. The first comprises an examination of the literature and the issues surrounding the definition of belief. This provides a philosophical background to the nature of beliefs. Included is an exploration of the relationships that are perceived among beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and values; the organisation of beliefs; belief change; and the relationship between beliefs and actions. The second part reviews the literature on student teacher beliefs, along with the relevance of belief knowledge for teacher education programmes. The final section examines approaches to investigating student teachers' beliefs. A rationale for investigating early childhood student teacher beliefs will be presented and the chapter will conclude with the research questions for this study.

2.2 The Nature of Beliefs

"Beliefs" is a word in common usage in English. The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (Procter, 1995) defined beliefs as "the feeling of certainty that something exists or is true" (p.115). While this definition may suit an everyday meaning of the term, the connotations and underlying meanings inherent in it are more complex. As Needham (1972) stated, "It is not just a word that is at issue, but a concept; for a word can acquire serially or by accretion, a number of meanings in its history..." (p.44). In terms of the word "belief", there is a lack of consistency in

definition in the research literature and in philosophical debates. These inconsistencies occur both among and within disciplines.

There have been many attempts to define the elusive nature of beliefs and their relationship to attitudes, values and knowledge. Coming from a variety of theoretical perspectives, these debates have been characterised by a richness in the reasoning underlying attempts to define the various nuances of the term belief and its implications for research. Nevertheless, they have failed to provide definitive characteristics of belief and knowledge that distinguish one from the other (Alexander & Dochy, 1995; Laird, 1930; Pajeres, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Indeed, Scheffler (1965) referred to the defining of belief as "one of the most perplexing problems in the theory of knowledge" (p.75).

While belief may be an elusive term, there is a need to understand some of the thinking that underlies its usage in the literature, rather than simply assuming that a taken-for-granted meaning results in common understanding. Berger and Luckmann (1966) pointed out that the questions asked by the different disciplines can be quite different and distinct. While philosophers, for instance, are interested in determining criteria for concepts such as knowledge and belief, sociologists are more concerned with conceptualising sources of variation in terms of the social context or attributes. In this section, the review of the literature on beliefs will draw upon writings from different discipline areas under the following headings:

- beliefs as dispositions, as propositions or as conceptual systems
- beliefs as distinct from knowledge
- beliefs, values and attitudes
- beliefs as dimensions of knowledge
- the organisation of beliefs
- changing beliefs
- the relationship between beliefs and actions.

2.2.1 Beliefs as dispositions, as propositions, or as conceptual systems

In attempts to determine the nature of the beliefs, there have been debates about whether they should be regarded as dispositions, as propositions, or whether they are more appropriately classified as conceptual systems. This section will outline these different perspectives and address a point many writers agree upon, that is, that there is a value in studying beliefs and, indeed, that further research is warranted. The implications of this agreement for belief studies will be considered.

Beliefs as dispositions

Beliefs have been viewed as dispositions or patterns of responding. When this is the case, beliefs may be conceptualised as dispositions "not simply to this or that specific sort of response but to a variety of sorts of responses under a variety of conditions" (Scheffler, 1965, p.84). Scheffler (1965) used this approach in differentiating between knowledge and beliefs. He maintained that "belief" encompasses a narrower range of possibilities than "knowledge" for we can only speak of *believing that* whereas we speak not only of *knowing that*, but also of *knowing how to*. Furthermore, Scheffler argued that knowing is incompatible with being wrong or mistaken, for it has an independent reference to some state of the world. Believing, however, has a purely psychological reference, requiring only some state of mind. From this perspective, it can be inferred that a belief or disposition will mean a person is disposed, or inclined to act or to think, in a particular way in a variety of different situations. Such thoughts and actions will not necessarily be guided by knowledge, but more by some state of mind. Scheffler (1965) suggested that rather than there being a particular belief or disposition that influences actions or thinking, it is more likely to be particular combinations of beliefs that come into play and have this effect.

Beliefs as propositions

Beliefs are sometimes regarded as propositions (Needham, 1972; Rokeach, 1968). Rokeach (1968), who argued strongly for this perspective, conceptualised belief as being propositional. He maintained, "A belief is any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the word or phrase I believe that...." (p.13). He argued for three types of beliefs. The

first kind, a descriptive or an existential belief, may describe the object of the belief as correct or incorrect, or true or false. The second kind, an evaluative belief, evaluates the object of the belief as good or bad, while the third kind, prescriptive or exhortatory, advocates a certain course of action or a certain state of existence as desirable or undesirable (Rokeach, 1968). Furthermore, unlike Scheffler (1965) who differentiated between knowledge and belief, Rokeach (1968) argued that beliefs have a cognitive component. He did not see them as distinct from knowledge. Rather, he subsumed knowledge as a component of belief.

Beliefs as conceptual systems

While beliefs can be conceptualised as propositions, Nespor (1987) suggested that this perspective is too narrow. He conceived beliefs “as conceptual systems which are functional or useful for explaining some domain of activity” (p.318). He outlined four features which distinguish beliefs from knowledge, namely “existential presumption”, “alternativity”, “affective and evaluative loading”, “episodic storage” and two other features that he suggested were useful for characterising the way beliefs are organised as systems, namely “non-consensuality” and “unboundedness” (Nespor, 1987, p.318).

A brief synopsis of each of these characteristics follows:

- Existential presumption occurs in belief systems when propositions or assumptions about the existence of entities or non-entities are held. These may include, for example, beliefs about such things as “ability” or “laziness”, and although they may be transitory or ambiguous, they are reified into stable concrete entities.
- Alternativity refers to conceptualisations of ideal situations and serve as a means of defining goals and tasks. Using Abelson’s ideas of “alternative worlds or realities”, Nespor (1987), in a research study of teachers, noted that several had visions and attempted to implement instructional formats, or systems of class relations, of which they had no direct experience or knowledge. These ideal situations served as a means of defining goals and tasks and preceded the coming into play of knowledge systems.
- Affective and evaluative aspects, such as feelings, and subjective evaluations are more heavily loaded in belief systems than in knowledge systems.
- Episodic storage refers to the way in which experiences, in particular, are stored in memory (Abelson, 1979). Whilst recognised as controversial, and a weak

basis for distinguishing beliefs from knowledge, Nespors (1987) supported the idea that beliefs are likely to derive their subjective power, authority and legitimacy from particular episodes or events. Thus critical episodes or events may well produce what he referred to as “a richly-detailed episodic memory” which serves as template for later practices (p.320).

- Non-consensuality refers to the position that exists within belief systems where there is recognition, both by others and by those holding the beliefs, that they contain material that is disputable.
- Unboundedness refers to the way in which there are no clear logical rules for determining the relevance of beliefs to real-world events and situations, that is, they are unbounded.

What is important in the model presented by Nespors (1987) is the significance assigned to beliefs in determining the tasks to be performed or in the defining of problems. He maintained there are qualitatively different levels of cognitive processing, or categories of thought, that come into play, but that it is belief systems which perform the function of defining the task or problem at hand. Nespors regarded beliefs as distinct from knowledge and maintained they are more influential in determining behaviour. It is this feature that makes them worthy of research in the current study.

A point of agreement

Although the perspectives adopted by Scheffler (1965), Rokeach (1968) and Nespors (1987) contain differences, they agree that beliefs warrant further research. All express caution in always assuming that a person's specific verbal responses or statements will represent their beliefs. What people express verbally may not be what they believe. Furthermore, they note that individuals will not always act according to their beliefs. Explaining this, Rokeach (1960, 1968) stated that, at times, a person might wittingly, or unwittingly, misrepresent what they really believe. Hence, there is a need to infer what beliefs underlie a person's thinking and behaviour, rather than simply relying on what they say or do. These perspectives raised issues for the current study. One-shot questionnaires that attempt to plumb people's beliefs on their own may have limited value, as respondees may have a number of agenda they may be following when completing such a task. Intentionally or unintentionally, they may misrepresent what

they believe. When a mixed methodology approach is employed over a longer time period, it is likely that this misrepresentation would be more difficult to sustain. Determining what beliefs a person possesses, then, is just as complex as trying to clarify the nature of beliefs.

To summarise, beliefs have been conceptualised by various writers as:

- dispositions requiring a state of mind that disposes one to act or think in a particular way
- propositions of different types that can be inferred from what a person says and does
- different from knowledge or
- having a cognitive component and being conceptual systems that perform the function of defining the task or problem at hand.

Regardless of the perspective taken, there is general agreement that understanding a person's beliefs is a complex task and requires more than administering a one-shot questionnaire. It will be necessary, on occasions, to infer what beliefs underlie statements and actions. This was considered to be a crucial approach in the current study.

2.2.2 Beliefs as distinct from knowledge

As can be seen from the preceding section, grappling with the place of belief in relation to a theory of knowledge has resulted in debates on the nature of beliefs and their relationship to other aspects of thinking. The major arguments for conceptualising beliefs as entities, either in their own right distinct from knowledge or as another dimension of knowledge, tend to focus on the place of affect and on the role of conviction. This section will examine these aspects.

The role of affect

In the literature, affect or emotion is more frequently associated with belief than with knowledge. It is claimed that it is this feature which makes beliefs more disputable than knowledge (Abelson, 1979; Cohen, Peters & Willis, 1988; Goodnow, 1985, 1988; Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Rokeach, 1968; Sigel, 1985). Indeed, some maintain that belief relies heavily on affect and personal evaluation (Grossman et

al., 1989; Nespov, 1987), for "belief systems have the ability to stir and express the passions of believers in a way that is not to be found in knowledge systems" (Abelson, 1979, p.364).

Related to affect is the involvement of "self", which was regarded by Abelson (1979) as one of the particularly differentiating features of beliefs. He maintained that the content of beliefs is usually highly open, as beliefs always necessarily implicate the self-concept of the believer at some level, and the boundaries of self-concept are very wide indeed. This is in direct contrast to knowledge that he suggested excludes self (and affect) and relies more on evidence, logic and truth. This suggested, then, that beliefs might be more disputable than knowledge. Furthermore, as the validity of beliefs does not depend on whether or not they are believed, valid or logical grounds do not have to be presented for their defense or explication (Needham, 1972) and the believer appreciates that others may think differently (Abelson, 1979).

Laird (1930) proposed a contrasting view. He suggested that the establishment of belief and knowledge as a dichotomy appears somewhat tenuous. He claimed that belief is not necessarily confined to affect and might equally well be logical. A belief then may be influenced by affect, or even be affective in its nature, but it may also be arrived at by logic. On the other hand, if, as Pajeres (1992, p.313) stated, "knowledge is regarded as based on objective fact", then the equally difficult question of what it is that differentiates a logical belief and genuine knowledge still remains unresolved. Indeed, earlier in the same article, Pajeres (1992) speculated on the role of affect in knowledge, suggesting that

The conception of knowledge as somehow purer than belief and closer to the truth or falsity of a thing remains a mechanistic outlook not easily digested. ... sifting cognition from affect, and vice versa, seems destined to ... [be] fence straddling. (p.310)

Generally, there is support for including affect as a characteristic of beliefs but, in saying this, it should not be taken to mean that cognition is totally divorced from an individual's formulation of beliefs.

The role of conviction

Conviction has been described as another defining feature of belief. This, too, has been a point of conjecture. Laird (1930), for instance, believed conviction should be regarded more appropriately as a component of knowledge, for

... knowledge occurs whenever a conviction is fully evidenced (or certified in a logical sense) and ... mere belief occurs when a conviction is not fully evidenced. (p.157)

Neither Laird (1930), nor later Needham (1972), went as far as excluding conviction as a component of beliefs. Rather, they claimed it was not a distinctive feature and, therefore, should be regarded as an uncertain feature to rely on in belief investigations. There are others who dispute this, maintaining that conviction is an important feature and that an individual will have varying degrees of conviction for the different beliefs they hold (Abelson, 1979; Alexander & Dochy, 1995). These convictions may not necessarily be based on any substantial evidence and, if evidence is used, it forms the basis for the belief but is not the belief itself (Sigel, 1985). Hence, like Rokeach (1968), Sigel claimed beliefs could be based on conviction as well as on evidence, suggesting once again an interaction between knowledge and belief.

The acceptance of conviction as a feature of beliefs led Goodnow (1988) to explore the use of the term belief. For example, in accepting conviction as a belief feature, she found that the term belief did not then adequately match the descriptions of material collected in her research on parent beliefs. Some of the so-called beliefs of parents, she claimed, lacked conviction. On this basis, she maintained that if she continued to employ the term this would necessitate the rejecting of useful data. Instead, she adopted the term “ideas”, suggesting this gave a better explanation of the point of her study and the information she was seeking. On the other hand, researchers into teachers' thinking, Calderhead and Gates (1993), referred to beliefs as “entrenched” ideas, supporting the role of conviction, and continued to use the term beliefs, although sometimes interchangeably, with ideas. This is typical of what may be seen as either confusion or flexibility in this area of research.

At this point, it is worth acknowledging that, historically, philosophers have attempted

to distinguish beliefs in one of two ways with respect to the certitude with which they are held:

One way is to distinguish between beliefs that are certain or at least very probable and beliefs that are less certain, and then to use the more certain beliefs as a support or foundation for the less certain beliefs. (Orton, 1996, p.135)

The challenge researchers face if they adopt such a stance is how “certain” and “less certain” beliefs can be distinguished as well as the degree of conviction with which they are held. A study by Cohen et al. (1988) examined the relationships between early childhood education student teaching practicum and programme preference, beliefs, and behaviours. They claimed that “only the more deeply held feelings were categorised as beliefs” (p.16). They gave no indication, however, of how these were determined. This raises the question of whether different researchers might perceive the certainty, or conviction, underlying beliefs quite differently.

2.2.3 Beliefs, values and attitudes

While affect and conviction have been postulated as being present in either beliefs or knowledge (or in both), the relationship between attitudes and beliefs has also been the subject of ongoing debate in the literature. There are two schools of thought: firstly, those who maintain beliefs should be differentiated from attitudes and values and, secondly, those who believe attitudes and values are fundamental components of our knowledge system, but should be recognised as particular types of beliefs.

Beliefs as an informational base for attitudes and values

In some instances, beliefs are regarded as the fundamental components in our conceptual structure, and the inner source of true knowledge (Ajzen, 1988; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Guerin & Foster 1994). From this perspective, it is maintained that the totality of these beliefs serves as an informational base for attitudes, intentions and behaviours. Beliefs are not regarded as synonymous with attitudes and values. The affective and evaluative components are perceived as falling in the domain of attitudes, rather than beliefs. The characteristic attribute of attitude “is its evaluative (pro-con, pleasant-unpleasant) nature” (Ajzen, 1988, p.4) or “the expressions of preference contained therein” (Guerin & Foster, 1994, p.155).

Writers who have adopted this position are critical of the way in which the concepts of attitudes (and values) have been subsumed under the category of belief. There has been a warning that “the concept ‘attitude’ should be used only when there is strong evidence that the measure employed places an individual on a bipolar affective dimension” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p.14).

Values and attitudes are also excluded from the definition of beliefs when beliefs are viewed as conceptions of reality (Johnson & Martin, 1985; Kelly, 1963; Miller, 1988). In such instances, beliefs are seen as being more closely tied to cognitive processes than to affective or personality variables.

Attitudes and values as particular kinds of beliefs

In contrast to the above view, attitudes are sometimes defined as particular types of beliefs, or as the outcome of interrelated beliefs. Abelson (1986), for instance, claimed an attitude is an evaluative belief ordinarily accompanied by an affective response, while Rokeach (1968) defined an attitude as "a relatively enduring organization of interrelated beliefs that describe, evaluate and advocate action with respect to an object or situation ..." (p.132). In addition, he maintained values are centrally located within one's total belief system and “may be thought of as global beliefs about desirable end states, underlying attitudinal and behavioural processes” (Rokeach, 1979, p.72). In other words, Rokeach viewed both attitudes and values as beliefs.

2.2.4 Beliefs as dimensions of knowledge

As can be seen from the previous sections, arguments are sometimes presented for regarding beliefs as distinct from knowledge. On the other hand, there are writers who have contended that beliefs hold a key role in our cognitive or thought processes and should be conceptualised as a dimension of knowledge. In this section, some of the latter views will be presented.

Beliefs and knowledge

There are two ways in which it is argued that beliefs are tied to knowledge. Firstly, it is maintained that beliefs have a cognitive component and may be a subset of knowledge, and secondly, it is argued that beliefs are conceptual systems and a domain

of knowledge. Table 2.1 (p.22) presents a summary of the views of some writers who have adopted these perspectives, as well as others who regard beliefs as being distinct from knowledge.

Reference has already been made to some of the views of beliefs as dimensions of knowledge, although these references have not necessarily emphasised how fundamental to knowledge beliefs are sometimes regarded. Polanyi (1962) emphasised the fundamental nature of beliefs when he wrote, “the learner must believe before he can know” (p.208). As mentioned earlier, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) described beliefs as fundamental components in our conceptual system. In this sense, they are viewed as “a subset of all possible cognitive products and processes” (Wellman, 1992, p.108) and very much a dimension of knowledge (Guerin & Foster, 1994).

It cannot be taken for granted, however, that all beliefs are “knowledge”. Orton (1996) referred to Gettier, a philosopher, who argued that three conditions must obtain before one can say that a person knows something. Firstly, the person must believe that something is the case, secondly, the person has reason, justification, or support for the belief, and thirdly, the person agrees that something that is the case is in fact true. Those beliefs that are not supported by the promise of justification or support would fail to meet Gettier’s conditions for knowledge. From this standpoint, it would appear that if the belief was to be accepted as knowledge, the justification or support would need to be accurate and logical, rather than simply a matter of conviction.

The form of beliefs

Returning, then, to the notion that beliefs are a dimension of knowledge leads on to the question of what form beliefs take. Different research paradigms have been adopted to investigate beliefs and each has its own distinctive view of how beliefs are formed and produced. In this section, the work on personal constructs, constructivism, social constructionism, the role of discourse, and the cultural context will be explored briefly.

Particularly influential in providing a rationale for a large body of research in this field has been the work on beliefs as personal constructs, or constructive alternativism, emanating from Kelly (1963). According to his view, individuals have the capacity to represent the environment, not merely to respond to it. In doing so, they develop

Table 2.1: A summary of different research perspectives on beliefs and their relationship to knowledge

A. Beliefs are distinct from knowledge	
Beliefs are distinct from knowledge in that they may lack logic and consensus.	Laird, 1930 (conceded some beliefs may be logical)
Beliefs are distinct from knowledge in that they may be held with varying degrees of certitude.	Abelson, 1979 Goodnow, 1988 Laird (1930) and Needham (1972) (did not totally exclude certitude from belief, although regarded conviction more appropriately as a component of knowledge)
Beliefs are distinct from knowledge in that they contain attitudes and values and are more frequently associated with affect, or have a purely psychological reference.	Abelson, 1979,1986 Cohen, Peters and Willis, 1988 Grossman, Wilson and Schulman, 1989 Scheffler, 1965
B. Beliefs are tied to knowledge	
Beliefs have a cognitive component and may be a subset or source of knowledge.	Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975 Guerin and Foster, 1994 Johnson and Martin, 1985 Kelly, 1963 Miller, 1988 Polyani, 1962 Rokeach, 1968, 1979 Sigel, 1985 Wellman, 1992
Beliefs are conceptual systems useful for explaining some domain of activity and are a dimension of knowledge.	Alexander and Dochy, 1995 Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975 Guerin and Foster, 1994 Nespor, 1987 Polyani, 1962
Beliefs incorporate attitudes and values or are the basis for them.	Ajzen, 1988 Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975 Guerin and Foster, 1994 Johnson and Martin, 1985 Kelly, 1963 Miller, 1988 Plamentz, 1970

constructs through which the world is viewed and interpreted. As new and conflicting information is received, alternative constructions can be placed upon reality and beliefs changed. Hence, beliefs are perceived as conceptions of reality.

The idea that beliefs and knowledge are individually constructed has been the presupposition of scholars conducting research in qualitative modes of inquiry. A number of research traditions, such as interpretivist, phenomenological and constructivist paradigms, are aimed essentially at understanding how people construct meaning. They are interested in eliciting phenomenological data and representing the worldview of the participants in the research process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The constructivist movement, as one example, is diverse and, as Klein (1996) stated,

Constructivism might best be thought of as a family resemblance concept in which each version of the theory shares some features with other versions, but no one feature is common to all, except the metaphor of building implicit in the term constructivism itself. (pps. 361-362)

Views vary on how the building or construction of meaning occurs. Constructivists maintain that there is no independent, objective reality but that individuals construct or create their own meaning of the world of everyday life, resulting in multiple realities within a society (Lincoln, 1995). These are worlds or realities that originate in thoughts and actions, and are maintained as real by these thoughts and actions (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Hence, the learner actively constructs knowledge rather than passively receiving it from the environment.

The role of social interaction in the establishment of meaning is regarded as contentious. One school, that of social constructionism, however, maintains it has a major role in the formulation of understanding, meaning and beliefs (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1985). From this standpoint, the terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts or products of historically situated interchanges among people (Gergen, 1985).

A perspective in post-structuralist thinking about knowledge argued that “knowledge is produced by individuals from what exists within the possibility of their language or discourse” (Delandshere & Petrosky, 1994, p.12). Drewery and Monk (1994) used

the term discourse to “signal a framework of understandings or set of meanings which loosely hang together in some form of interaction” (p.304). Not only do individuals using language create knowledge, but individuals are also the creations of the language they use. The discourse can set boundaries that influence and constrain the individual. The question that this raises is whether beliefs and knowledge must always be governed by and be a product of language. It also suggests that a person must be able to articulate a belief before they can be said to hold it. One can speculate whether there might indeed be things one believes in that have never been expressed in language.

There are other writers who maintain that it is the life experiences, especially experiences in a cultural context, that impact most heavily on an individual’s knowledge and beliefs (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996a, 1996b; Cohen, 1971; Hamilton, 1993; Van Fleet, 1979). A relationship, it is maintained, can be expected between the beliefs a person holds and the situations in which these beliefs are acquired. However, these beliefs will not necessarily be consistently held across contexts for, as Pajeres (1992) noted, beliefs are context-specific. He considered that it may well be the context-specific nature of beliefs and their connections to other beliefs that makes them appear more inconsistent than they perhaps are.

Taking into account the range of perspectives that have been adopted, Pajeres (1992) examined their application for work on educational beliefs. In doing so, he cautioned against using terms such as “educational beliefs” which he maintained, are too broad and encompassing. When applied to research he maintained they are “diffuse and ungainly, too difficult to operationalise and too context free” (p.316). Rather, research should be focusing on *educational beliefs about* specific or more clearly defined areas of interest. This is the perspective that was adopted for this research. Thus, rather than exploring students’ educational beliefs generally, the focus was on *beliefs about* the teacher’s role and how young children learn. During interviews and the administration of questionnaires, the focus was on particular beliefs, rather than on beliefs in general.

To conclude this section, the relationship between beliefs and knowledge and the

different conceptions of the ways in which beliefs are formed and produced, are summarised:

- Beliefs are accepted by a large group of writers as having a cognitive component and conceptualised as a dimension or domain of knowledge. Whether all beliefs are “knowledge” is still debatable. It may be that beliefs are a way of knowing for an individual, even though support for the belief may lack the justification or support that others regard as reasonable or logical.
- Different research paradigms have been adopted to investigate the ways in which beliefs are formed and produced. These have variously focused on, for example, beliefs as personal constructs, as conceptions of reality, as the products of social interactions between people, and as the products of discourse and the language people use. Impacting on these, it has been argued, will be a person’s life experiences in a cultural context.

2.2.5 The organisation of beliefs

Just as there are different ideas about what constitutes a belief, and the most appropriate way of investigating them, there is also speculation about the way in which beliefs are organised. This section will examine ideas on:

- the interlinking of beliefs
- the quasi-logical nature of beliefs
- the notion of ideology as a system, or complex, of beliefs.

The linking of beliefs

Many writers regard beliefs as being linked in some way. They are referred to variously as “structured sets of knowledge” (Bacon & Ashmore, 1986); as “connected cognitions” analogous to “schema” (Sigel, 1986); as “complexes” (Scheffler, 1965); as “systems, sets, or groups” (Abelson, 1979; Green, 1971), and as “conceptual systems” (Nespor, 1987). With the development of Gardner’s (1983) work on multiple intelligences, there was reflection on the nature of this linking and its possible impact on beliefs (Schommer & Walker, 1995; Sigel, 1985). While some form of connecting may occur with beliefs, the question that arises is whether they are like intelligences, and may be more domain-specific than has previously been postulated.

Consistent with the concept of beliefs organised within systems is the idea that a belief cannot be held in total isolation from other beliefs but will always occur in sets, or groups, within a belief system (Green, 1971). This would suggest that a new belief forms with reference to a previously held belief or set of beliefs. These have been referred to as primary beliefs which provide a basis for the new, or derivative, beliefs (Green, 1971). The centrality of any belief, then, will be dependent on the degree to which it is connected and related to other beliefs; the more central the belief, the more psychologically important it will be and the more implications and consequences it will have for other beliefs (Green, 1971; Rokeach, 1968). It is possible to conceive of a derivative belief becoming a central or primary belief, and a primary belief becoming less central and less significant within the system. A person may hold, for example, strong religious beliefs that are central or primary beliefs. Changes could take place and an individual's religious beliefs lose their potency. Some aspects of the beliefs may be retained as derivative beliefs. Or, on the other hand, a person might develop religious beliefs that begin as derivative beliefs. As they become more connected and related to other beliefs, they may become more significant to the individual and develop a centrality within a person's belief system, resulting in the development of a primary belief.

The quasi-logical nature of beliefs

People do, however, hold conflicting beliefs so, unlike knowledge systems, which are logical, belief systems are regarded as quasi-logical (Green, 1971; Sigel, 1985). Explanations for this quasi-logical nature focus on the way in which beliefs are organised within belief systems and the nature of the boundaries between them. Green (1971) maintained, for example, that beliefs within a system are in clusters with "a protective shield that prevents any cross-fertilisation among them or confrontation between them" (p.47). In spite of this, Green postulated that there was nothing to suggest that such systems are stable or immune to change. In contrast, Abelson (1979) suggested the boundaries between these clusters or domains may vary in their permeability and are usually highly open, so it is unclear where boundaries around them can be drawn. Nespor (1987), with reference to Abelson's writing, described belief systems as being "loosely-bounded systems with highly variable and uncertain linkages to events, situations and knowledge systems" (p.321). He proposed systems that have stable core applications that can be extended in radical and unpredictable

ways to apply to very different types of phenomena. In this sense, they would serve a valuable purpose, for they could be mapped onto a vast range of new events and experiences. An alternative way of dealing with some discrepant and/or contradictory beliefs was proposed by Sigel (1985). He suggested the possibility of individuals constructing overarching principles to handle contradictions and/or reduce conflicts. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that another means of adapting to discrepancies or contradictions is to deny that they exist.

The notion of ideology as a system, or complex of beliefs

Not all researchers conceive of belief systems as coherent in their operation. O'Loughlin (1990), for example, supported Billig, et al. (1988) and their claims that belief systems are inherently dialectical and present competing and conflicting dilemmas for individuals. Within their belief systems, people are faced with ideological dilemmas. If it was not so, it was suggested, individuals would not puzzle over aspects of their social world or experience dilemmas which challenge their thinking. Furthermore, it is conceivable that the beliefs a person espouses may be influenced, not only by the varying context in which these beliefs are held, but also by the domain of belief that is being drawn on, and by the conflicting and competing dilemmas inherent in belief systems. An early childhood teacher education student, for example, may be aware of Wood's (1986) work on teacher child interactions and the role the adult should take in their interactions if they are to encourage a child's thinking and language. They may be well aware of and believe in the need to ensure that the power in an interaction should frequently lie with the child if equity and development are to be ensured. Yet, there will be times when they find themselves in a position where they must manage behaviour and believe they need to adopt a more "power on" or authoritarian approach. At such times, they may well be faced by competing and conflicting dilemmas within their belief system.

If this is the case, the notion of ideology represents a significant application of the concept of belief systems. An ideology may be defined as a system or complex of beliefs characteristic of a group of people, or it could be a set of ideas peculiar to one person (Plamenatz, 1970). Using the analogy of ideologies as maps, developed by Geertz (1964), Scarborough (1990) maintained ideologies have several functions. They include defining the situation and the actors within it, identifying destinations and

routes by defining the assumptions, values and goals held within a particular ideology, and proposing principles of actions that should follow.

Students enter a teacher education programme with their own particular beliefs about a range of matters that it is thought will influence their actions and their thinking. As they proceed through their programme of study, they are introduced to particular ideas and to various theoretical perspectives relating to their participation as early childhood educators. The question that arises, then, is whether their beliefs undergo any change and whether particular ideologies are developed, or adopted, as a result of participating in an early childhood teacher education programme - important aspects to be considered in this research.

2.2.6 Beliefs and change

The ways in which beliefs are conceptualised strongly influences the views held about their formation, their organisation, their stability, their resistance to change and their openness. Thoughts about the possibility of bringing about a change in beliefs range from pessimistic to optimistic. Even when belief change is regarded as a possibility, the difficulty in bringing about this change is acknowledged. A study conducted by Alexander and Dochy (1995) demonstrated that this is a view commonly held by lay-people, as well as those researching the field. Their study of adults in the United States and the Netherlands explored the participants' tacit notions of knowledge and beliefs. They found an overwhelming perception among respondents that beliefs are indeed changeable, but also a recognition that such a process is by no means straightforward or inevitable. Studies such as this are particularly relevant for teacher education. Not only do teacher educators anticipate that they will bring about belief change in their students, but it is anticipated that their students will, in turn, develop the skills to bring about change in those whom they teach. The issues that then arise and need addressing focus on the resistance of beliefs to change and conditions that facilitate belief change. It is these two matters that will be discussed in this section.

Beliefs and their resistance to change

Literature in many knowledge domains consistently suggests that personal beliefs function as a filter and foundation of new knowledge (Kagan, 1992; Posner, Strike, Hewson & Gertzog, 1982). These have been described as tenacious, even in the face

of contradictory evidence (Kagan, 1992). When faced with an anomaly in their existing conceptions, the individual has several alternatives, according to Posner et al. (1992). One is to recognise the need for fundamental revisions to eliminate the conflict, an approach that they maintained is both difficult and unlikely. Acknowledging the influence of Piaget they suggested other approaches an individual may adopt, including

- rejection of the observation
- a lack of concern with the conflicting information on the grounds that it is irrelevant to one's current conception
- a compartmentalisation of knowledge to prevent the new information from conflicting with an existing belief, and
- an attempt to assimilate the new information into existing conceptions.

It should be noted that Posner et al. were referring to concepts, a broader construct, when they outlined these approaches, but it is highly likely that they also apply to beliefs (Pajeres, 1992).

An appealing theory to explain why beliefs are resistant to change and frequently face non-acceptance was proposed by Abelson (1986) in his Belief-Possession Theory. He maintained that beliefs are adopted by individuals because of their personal or social appeal, or are received in the childhood period “before one had much say in the matter.” (p.231). They are regarded as possessions. Hence, we develop a proprietary sense toward them in much the same way as we do to other possessions. We are likely to respond defensively if they are attacked and having a belief under threat is likely to increase its value. This means it is insufficient to simply show people that a belief they hold is inaccurate, unsatisfactory or disconfirmed. Rather, this may have opposite to the desired effect, and encourage the person holding the belief under threat to adopt a more extreme position (Abelson. 1986).

Changing beliefs

While beliefs are resistant to change, it is, nevertheless, obvious that change does occur. Green (1971), referred to earlier, noted that if belief systems were stable or immune to change, then teaching would then become a fruitless activity. A number of

conditions that may assist in bringing about belief change have been suggested:

- The people with whom the new belief is being shared need to be valued by the individual. A person needs to be able to identify with others who hold the belief and feel they are gaining more than they are giving up (Abelson, 1986).
- They must feel some dissatisfaction with their existing belief and perceive the new proposition as intelligible, plausible and fruitful. Presenting contradictory examples may not necessarily achieve this as people interpret the event to accord with their own belief (Posner et al., 1982).
- They must be provided with a safe learning environment in which “they are comfortable in taking the risk of sharing themselves and engaging in public examination of deeply held beliefs and practices” (O’Loughlin, 1992, p.339).
- Teachers change their practices only when they implement a procedure and find it successful (Guskey, cited in Pajares, 1992).

This last point raises the important question of the relationship between beliefs and actions and how much they guide people in their work with children. Might a person, for instance, hold a belief but not exercise that belief in practice? This is of interest in this research and will be explored in the next section.

2.2.7 The relationship between beliefs and actions

There is little doubt that clear relationships between beliefs and actions can be demonstrated. However, there are also findings that demonstrate this is not always the case. This section will explore

- the link between beliefs and actions, and
- situations when beliefs and actions are discrepant.

The link between beliefs and actions

There is general acceptance of the view that what people believe in, and the understandings they have, will influence how they interpret their experiences. It may also affect their actions in some way (Clark, 1992; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Kagan & Smith, 1988; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Spodek, 1988; Spodek & Rucinski, 1984).

Pajeres (1992), in a synthesis of the findings on beliefs, described them as

... instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding such tasks; hence, they play a critical role in defining behaviour and organizing knowledge and information. (p.325)

Furthermore, he noted strong support for the powerful influence beliefs have on behaviour.

Studies of both teachers' beliefs across the different educational sectors and parental beliefs have reported some clear links between beliefs and actions. Spodek (1988) reviewed a number of studies of teachers working in early childhood education and reported that, in each instance, "the teachers' thought processes determined the actions that were taken in the classroom" (Spodek, 1988, p.165). An example of a study with similar outcomes was that reported by Kagan and Smith (1988) who found that kindergarten teachers who identified themselves as child-centred actually shared a common set of observable behaviours. Working in a New Zealand context, Bell (1991) found that two of the six teachers in her study made mention of intellectual development of children as one of the goals of their educational programme:

Both of these teachers expressed the belief that adults could and should promote children's intellectual development by approaching busy children and inviting them to extend what they are doing. (p.8)

The beliefs of these teachers were reflected in their practice. For example, those teachers who did not mention intellectual development among their goals did not demonstrate an interest in extending children in their work with them.

In extensive work on parental beliefs, Sigel (1985) found that not all beliefs translated into actions but those that did contained the potential for action. In these cases, the teaching strategies, or preferred teaching strategies parents would adopt, could be predicted. If, for example, the parent stated that they believed children learn through direct instruction, then they would employ direct instructional teaching strategies. This has been supported by other research with mothers and children which found evidence of the predictive values of maternal beliefs for maternal control interactions with their

children, particularly for the prohibitive versus autonomy-granting maternal styles (Kochanska, 1990; Kochanska, Kuczynski & Radke-Yarrow, 1989).

Situations when beliefs and actions are discrepant

Care should be exercised, however, in assuming beliefs will always translate into action. Sigel (1985), for example, expressed caution about assuming strong links between all beliefs and actions. He maintained we hold an intuitive belief that what and how one thinks influences one's actions. However, by adopting such a "taken-for-granted" stance, the mental steps leading to the intended action are overlooked. He claimed the likelihood of a one-to-one correspondence between a belief and behaviour should be regarded as problematic as much can happen between the holding of a belief and an action. Writers adopting a symbolic interactionist perspective have attempted to capture the complex nature of this process by referring to it as "a stream of unfolding action" (Charon, 1985, p.117).

In Sigel's (1985) study of parental beliefs, as previously noted, those beliefs that contained actions were evidenced in practice. Those that stated global strategies and did not contain clear-cut direct behavioural strategies were not. If a parent, for instance, believes that children learn through exploration, these beliefs have options for behaviour and so are not good predictors of behaviour. Sigel (1985) argued a need to explore more fully what parents believe is the most effective way of ensuring their belief is realised, by finding out, for example, how they believe children learn through exploration. He cited the work of Scheibe (1970), to whom he subscribed, who maintained that beliefs are guides to action only because they are never free of situational constraints. If, for example, a parent expects a lack of acceptance from the child then the parent's intentions may be to act in a way that is contrary to what they (the parent) believes. Apparent inconsistencies between belief and action may then occur.

The situational constraints apparent in parent beliefs are also reflected in the teacher belief literature. Some teachers experience no conflict between their beliefs and their practice while others have difficulties in reconciling new ideas with existing beliefs and learn to live with unresolved conflicts (Shealy, 1994; Thompson, 1992).

Where there are inconsistencies between espoused beliefs and behaviours, it has been argued that this may be explained by the way in which beliefs have been measured (Pajeres, 1992; Sigel, 1985; Thompson, 1992). Critical of reliance on verbal responses to questions posed at an abstract level of thought, Thompson (1992) noted a need to take account of motivation and social climate. This again emphasises the difficulty in ascertaining beliefs and the problems inherent in establishing an appropriate methodology for any study of beliefs. These issues were considered and presented challenges in the planning of the current research.

2.2.8 Summary of the literature on the nature of beliefs and the perspectives adopted in this research

The literature on the nature of beliefs and their relationship to knowledge is vast and frequently challenging. Researchers have speculated on the way in which beliefs are formed and organised. Inherent in much of the discussion are issues which present questions for the methodology employed in belief studies. This section presents a summary of this material, along with a statement of the perspectives adopted in the current study.

A summary of the literature presented

- The research literature demonstrates that the defining of beliefs has presented many difficulties for researchers and writers. Beliefs have been viewed as dispositions, with an affective reference, or as propositions which have a cognitive component. In both instances they can be inferred from what a person says and does.
- Affect is frequently regarded as a component of belief and from this perspective, the involvement of self is seen as differentiating it from knowledge. Some, however, maintain beliefs are not necessarily confined to affect and may equally well be logical.
- Beliefs are generally regarded as more disputable than knowledge for they do not require others to believe them, or to be defended or explained using logic. Others maintain they hold a key role in cognitive processes and may be conceptualised as a dimension of knowledge.
- Some writers regard attitudes and/or values as evaluative beliefs or as the outcome of related beliefs. Other writers differentiate attitudes from beliefs,

maintaining it is attitudes that are affective and evaluative in nature, not beliefs. Beliefs, in this case, are viewed as more closely tied to cognitive processes and knowledge, and serve as an informational base for attitudes.

- Conviction, varying in its intensity, is believed by some to be a distinctive feature of beliefs, although others maintain it is an uncertain feature. Sometimes it is seen as the basis for the belief but not the belief itself.
- Constructionists maintain that beliefs and knowledge are individually constructed and that each individual creates their own meaning of the world. Social constructionists add social interaction to the equation, maintaining it has a major role in the formulation of understanding and beliefs.
- Influencing people's beliefs will be their life experiences and experiences in a cultural setting. Beliefs will not, however, necessarily be consistently held across all contexts.
- Many writers regard beliefs as linked in some way, although questions have been raised about whether, like intelligences, they may be more domain specific. There is disagreement over the nature of the boundaries between different beliefs, with some seeing the boundaries as more yielding than others.
- Not all researchers conceive of belief systems as coherent in their operation, but maintain that they are inherently dialectical and present competing and conflicting dilemmas for individuals.
- A system or complex of beliefs characteristic of a group of people, or a set of ideas peculiar to one person, has been defined as an ideology. Particular ideologies introduced within education programmes may influence beliefs.
- Bringing about changes in beliefs presents challenges, as individuals tend to support the beliefs they hold using a variety of different strategies. There are, however, conditions that may assist in facilitating change.
- There is support for a strong relationship between beliefs and actions. They are not, however, free of situational constraints.
- The methodologies employed in the study of beliefs are still open to question and may be responsible for some of inconsistencies in outcomes.

The perspectives adopted in this research

In view of the complexities and diversity presented in the definitions of belief and knowledge, both within and across disciplines, it is necessary to define the usage of the term belief in this research. In this study, beliefs will be regarded as views that students have on specific areas, namely the role of the teacher and how children learn. The position adopted is one that has regard for the various perspectives discussed and one that also takes into account the context in which the term belief is being explored, namely that of early childhood teacher education.

In some instances, student teachers' beliefs may be informed by knowledge and, in other instances, affect may play an important role. As the relationship between belief and knowledge is unclear, attitudes and values will be accepted as part of an individual's belief system. To separate them from beliefs would appear to be envisaging the construction of mental structures that are probably more illusionary than real. Reality is no longer seen as something that exists "out there" and something that can always be defined as a truth. Rather, like knowledge, it "is inherently partial and positional because it is grounded in an individual's interpretation of the world" (O'Loughlin, 1992, p.336). This justifies exploring the social influences on an individual's thinking.

2.3 Student Teacher Beliefs

With the rapidly developing research interest in student teacher beliefs, the roots for a knowledge base has been established. Student teacher belief research owes much to the earlier and continuing work on teacher belief. (A summary of selected teacher belief studies is presented in Appendix A.) Researchers of student beliefs have been inspired by the dissemination of research findings on teacher belief, and the more widespread debate on the implications of beliefs for practice. In their work, they have focused, firstly, on the possible constraining effects of belief on the acceptance of new ideas and practices during the teacher education process, and, secondly, on beliefs and changes that occur during the socialisation of student teachers. Student belief studies cannot always be neatly unpackaged as an entirely separate entity from the substantive teacher belief research and, on occasions in this review, reference will also be made to teacher belief research.

The bulk of the research on student teacher belief has been conducted with people entering the primary and secondary education teaching sectors (see Appendix B). Research focusing on the beliefs of students preparing to enter the early childhood field (indicated by an asterisk beside the author/s name/s in Appendix B) is still relatively novel and the focus of only a few writers (see, for example, Lin & Spodek, 1994; Sumsion, 1995; Weinstein, 1990; Yonemura, 1991). There are clearly large gaps in the knowledge in this specific area. This is not to discount other research findings on teacher and student teacher belief overall, for much of it has relevance. In this section, student teacher beliefs will be explored under the following headings:

- the significance of belief for teacher education programmes
- the terminology encompassing student teacher and teacher beliefs
- aspects of belief studied
- student belief and change
- approaches to investigating student teacher belief.

2.3.1 Significance of beliefs for teacher education programmes

There is general agreement in the research literature that preservice student teachers enter their teacher education programmes with well established belief systems (Britzman, 1986; Calderhead, 1989; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). These systems provide a background against which preservice teachers view the world in general, and for early childhood teacher education students, the field of early childhood education and care in particular. Students' beliefs may include ideas about the teacher's role in working with young children, parents, caregivers and whānau (family), the nature of an appropriate curriculum, the role of society and its responsibilities for providing early childhood education, and beliefs about the ways in which young children think and learn. The basis of student belief and the rationale for taking them into account in teacher education programmes will now be considered.

The basis of student teacher belief

Beliefs develop as individuals experience life. They are exposed to knowledge, skills and ideas embedded in a social and cultural context (Lasley, 1980; Pintrich, 1990). Beliefs will be formed early in life through exposure to the ideas and mores of parents

and others with whom individuals are interacting. As noted by Pintrich (1990), they are also “acquired and fostered through schooling, through the informal observation of others, and through the folklore of a culture ...” (p.38).

Students thus bring to their programme beliefs that incorporate prior knowledge and experiences that relate to many facets of their future career and to their own functioning within it. Many of the beliefs about teaching are fostered through literature, the media and popular folklore and culture (Lasley, 1980; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Students have also had a long educational experience, often within a variety of educational institutions (Lortie, 1975). For the most part, these experiences have been as pupils in the process, not from the perspective of one taking sustained major responsibility for children in terms of their care and education. In the majority of cases, preservice students have not experienced a role where their task is to facilitate learning within a curriculum framework. It is their "apprenticeship of observations", that Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991, p.88) claimed, makes the preparation of teachers so different from the preparation of professionals in other fields. Generally, other professional trainees have not experienced immersion in aspects of their future professions before they enter professional schools. On the whole, they have had little or no personal history, with reference to the profession they are entering, to bring to their formal study. The experiences of preservice teachers are, however, very different and this "introduces a tension unique to teacher education" (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991, p.88).

For those entering the early childhood profession, the tensions may be even more pronounced. The approaches and practices of working with young children from birth to school entry are markedly different from those adopted in most of the classrooms early childhood teacher education students have experienced in their pupil career. These may well have overshadowed some of their own early childhood experiences and created misconceptions. These may include misconceptions about it as a field in which to work, about how young children learn, and their own role within the field as caregivers and facilitators of learning (Mitchell & Matsukawa, 1995). For this reason alone, further study of early childhood students and their beliefs is warranted.

Taking belief into account in teacher education programmes

There is general agreement among researchers that students' past experiences exert a powerful influence on their beliefs (Goodman, 1988; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; LaBoskey, 1993; Lin & Spodek, 1994). There is also agreement that "... teacher education programmes must be responsive to student teachers' prior beliefs in order to increase the impact of their professional preparation and broaden the knowledge base for teachers" (Rodriguez, 1993, p. 213).

The arguments in support of these perspectives draw heavily upon the literature on the nature of beliefs cited earlier and, in particular, that literature which explores the resistance of beliefs to change. Attention is directed to the misconceptions people have of the teaching role that may, in effect, govern what people will take from a teacher education programme. LaBoskey (1993), for example, went as far as claiming that some of the beliefs held by pre-service teachers are likely to be inaccurate, inappropriate or incomplete, distorting or blocking any new information presented in the programme. These beliefs may act as a "filter" or as a "screen" (Hollingsworth, 1989; Spodek & Rucinski, 1984; Weinstein, 1989) through which the world is viewed. It is possible, therefore, to conceive of a situation where an individual's views are taken-for-granted (Schutz, 1970) or regarded as universal. These may go unquestioned as they proceed through a teacher education programme and enter into their teaching career. For, as Clark (1992) stated,

Our beliefs and personal theories set frames around what we see and how we interpret experiences. Our attention is selective; we cannot attend to everything, and our beliefs determine what is foreground and what is background; what we attend to and what we ignore. (p.78)

Coupled with a growing interest in beliefs, and their effect on an individuals' thinking and behaviour, has been an increasing emphasis on the role of personal reflection in teacher preservice and inservice education. The process of reflection is regarded as an essential element in assisting student teachers on the pathway to growth as creative, responsible, thinking teachers. Reflection involves developing an awareness of one's own beliefs (both explicit and tacit) and questioning how these beliefs, once they are clarified, influence one's professional role. If student teachers are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and beliefs and to examine them critically, it is argued change is

more likely to occur (Britzman, 1986; O'Loughlin, 1992; Rodriguez, 1993; Weinstein, 1989). Overall, then, it is argued that teacher education programmes will become more effective if student teacher beliefs are incorporated into programmes. Teacher educators, rather than reinforcing existing ideas, should be ensuring that both their own and their students' beliefs, and their outcomes, are made more explicit (Brousseau & Freeman, 1988; Bullough, 1991a; Clark, 1988; Weinstein, 1989).

At the time of writing, there is little to suggest that a body of knowledge of early childhood student teacher belief is well formulated. It is clear that early childhood student teachers bring with them beliefs that have been influenced strongly by their experiences as individuals growing up in their culture and in society. An assumption could be made that all student teachers, regardless of their teaching ambitions, will bring similar background knowledge and experiences to a teacher education programme. There is, however, no certainty in this assumption. Neither are there clear indications of how the beliefs they hold will influence what they gain from teacher education, nor how these beliefs will be demonstrated in practice. It is clear that studies of early childhood student beliefs are still too sparse to make bold generalisations and to make assumptions lightly on the possible outcomes of beliefs.

2.3.2 Terminology encompassing student teacher beliefs

What is clear is that different terms are used to describe the knowledge and beliefs student teachers and teachers bring to the task of teaching, how they think about teaching, learning and the educational context. These terms present challenges for both the users and the readers. They result from researchers grappling with words or terms to encapsulate and name forms of thinking. Each represents an effort to symbolise how student teachers and teachers use beliefs, knowledge and ideas as they go about their everyday professional tasks. They are an attempt to more accurately define what it is the researcher is exploring and to portray the nature of teacher thinking in words that express the writer's intent and understanding of the process. In a comprehensive review of teacher beliefs and knowledge, Calderhead (1996) outlined the variety of content and forms that teachers' knowledge and beliefs can take. Table 2.2 (p.40) presents a summary of selected terms along with brief definitions.

Table 2.2: Selected examples of the terminology incorporating beliefs and knowledge and used to describe teacher thinking

Researcher/s	Terms used	Brief description of term
Brown and McIntyre, 1993.	craft knowledge	the knowledge that teachers acquire within their classroom practice
Calderhead, 1989. Calderhead and Robson, 1991. Lin and Spodek, 1994. Lowell Krogh and Niikko, 1994. Mahlios and Maxson, 1995.	images metaphors	used to describe teacher knowledge and general metaphors about teaching. the practical knowledge, teachers have derived from their experience
Carter, 1990. Clark, 1988. Spodek, 1988.	implicit theories or theories in use	conceptions of the personal values, beliefs and principles that seem to guide action
Bell, 1991.	operational theories	beliefs, both implicit and explicit, that inform practice
Tann, 1993.	personal theory	a person's set of beliefs, values, understandings, assumptions and ways of thinking about the teaching profession that are usually implicit
Clandinin and Connelly, 1986.	personal practical knowledge	knowledge embodied, biographical, historical, cultural and in teaching practice

All of the terms specified in Table 2.2 include belief as a component to some extent. With Brown and McIntyre's (1993) "craft knowledge", the emphasis is on the knowledge acquired as part of classroom practice. Beliefs receive less emphasis. On the other hand, the terms "images" (Lin & Spodek, 1994), "metaphors" (Mahlios & Maxson, 1995), "personal theory" (Tann, 1993) and "implicit theories" (Spodek, 1988) are more embracing and are employed to convey the interactive nature of practical experience and professional and personal knowledge. Sometimes the terms are synonymous. Lin and Spodek (1994), for example, used image "to refer to students' beliefs, values and knowledge of teaching" (p.2), while Tann (1993, p.55) used personal theory with reference to the same attributes. Irrespective of these inconsistencies, both the implicit and explicit nature of student teacher and teacher thinking are accorded a role. Likewise, regardless of the term used, there is an underlying, if not explicit, assumption that these theories, images, or form of knowledge will influence or guide actions. The range of terms employed can be regarded as indicating a looseness in the work on student teacher and teacher thinking although, some would argue, this is the nature of the field of enquiry:

Research on teachers' personal knowledge, by focusing primarily on idiosyncratic forms and expressions of knowing and acting, tells more about the characteristics of teachers' knowledge than about what teachers know. The results of this inquiry do not add up to a codified body of teaching knowledge. Indeed some investigators (e.g., Clandinin and Connelly) explicitly reject this general conceptual level of understanding in favour of experiential understanding of teaching that does not separate knowledge from knower. (Carter, 1990, p.302)

It is a personalised view of knowledge that is presented in much of the research, particularly when beliefs and perspectives are the focus of interest. As Carter (1990) noted, the issue then becomes one of how settings affect the development of personal perspectives and one that should be taken into account when changes occur. Furthermore, as our understanding of teacher belief advances, it would be hoped that these understandings would inform practice in teacher education (Calderhead, 1993).

In light of the information cited in Table 2.2, it could be argued that terms such as images, personal theories or implicit theories could have been used in this research, rather than defining beliefs as incorporating views or ideas and knowledge. However,

the terms beliefs and views or ideas were selected in order to situate them firmly within the knowledge and belief literature.

To reiterate, beliefs will be regarded as views or ideas that students have on specific areas, namely the role of the teacher and how children learn. In some instances it is expected that they will be informed by knowledge while, in other instances, affect may play an important role. Attitudes and values are accepted as part of an individual's belief system and the effect beliefs and views may have in influencing or guiding action is acknowledged.

2.3.3 Aspects of student teacher belief studied

In attempting to determine the nature of student teacher beliefs and their influence on an individual's actions, a number of different aspects of belief have been studied. Ways of organising these studies into some framework presents numerous challenges. Borko and Putnam (1996), using cognitive psychology as their starting point, developed a framework for classifying student teacher beliefs which contained three domains, namely: general pedagogical knowledge and beliefs, subject knowledge and beliefs, and pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs. They acknowledged their categories as being somewhat arbitrary and having considerable overlaps from one to the other. What should be noted is that their linking together of beliefs and knowledge is yet another indication of the difficulty in viewing beliefs as distinct from knowledge.

While the categories Borko and Putnam (1996) delineated have value, it was decided for this study to focus on the first of their categories, namely general pedagogical knowledge. As a result of this decision, this section will attend to:

- students' knowledge of what teaching as a career involves, their conceptions of themselves as teachers and the learning process (see, for example, Bullough & Stokes 1994; Burgess & Carter, 1992; Cachevki Williams, 1996; Doliopoulou, 1995; Gunstone, Slattery & Baird, 1989; Knowles, 1988; Lin & Spodek, 1994; Rodriguez, 1993; Serow, Eaker & Forrest, 1994; Weinstein, 1989; 1990).
- changes that occur in the development of knowledge and the reorganisation of beliefs as students proceed through their teacher education programme (see, for example, Lin & Spodek, 1994; Mayer & Goldsberry, 1987; Morine-Dersheimer, 1989; Williamson, 1993; Yon & Passe, 1990).

Regardless of the classification used, overlaps are inevitable and the areas outlined above are not exclusive in their content. An overview of the two areas will be presented. Reference will also be made to the research focusing on early childhood teacher education students, although, as noted earlier, there is a paucity of research in this field.

Students' knowledge of what teaching as a career involves and their conceptions of themselves as teachers

Student teachers bring to their teacher education programme general beliefs and expectations about teaching and the characteristics of the ideal teacher that they aspire to become. They bring beliefs of how effective they will be as teachers, beliefs about children as learners and of the learning process itself. These aspects will be explored under the following headings:

- student teachers' general beliefs about teaching and what they believe to be the characteristics of a good teacher
- their beliefs about their efficacy as a teacher, and
- beliefs about children as learners and the learning process.

General beliefs and expectations about teaching and the characteristics of the good teacher

In terms of the general beliefs and expectations about teaching, the research focus has been on what student teachers perceive is involved in the practice of teaching. Their views originate in their life experiences, particularly from their sustained participation as pupils in the education system. In educational settings, student teachers are what Schutz (1970) has referred to as "insiders". They have no need to redefine their situation, for much of what they experience in their teacher education programme "differ little from the classrooms and people they have known over the years" (Pajeres, 1992, p.323).

These earlier experiences act as powerful determinants of beliefs, providing students with ideas about teaching, learning and education. They also play a role in shaping the student's sense of identity (Smith, 1991). Accordingly, some student teachers, it has been reported, view teaching as intuitive or commonsense (Burgess & Carter, 1992).

This is well illustrated by a metaphor, often selected by students, in which the teacher is likened to a nurturer or a mother/father to the children in their care. In such instances, the ideal teacher is described as one who is warm, loving and caring (Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Burgess & Carter, 1992; Lasley, 1980; Mahlios & Maxson, 1995; Renwick & Vize, 1993; Richardson-Koebler, 1988; Weinstein, 1989). In their work with 22 secondary student teachers, Bullough and Stokes (1994), for example, found that although most of the students began with “the teacher as expert” metaphor, a large subset generated metaphors that centred on the affective dimensions of teaching in variations of “the teacher is nurturer” or a carer. Initially, these affective attributes of the teacher are cited as frequently as cognitive or professional competence attributes (Gunstone, et al., 1989). Likewise, students often explain their motivation for selecting teaching as a career in similar terms (Burgess & Carter, 1992; Cachevki Williams, 1996; Doliopoulou, 1995; Renwick & Boyd, 1995; Serow, et al., 1994).

Evidence suggests the affective qualities student teachers see as desirous may be linked to their views on classroom management (see for example, Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Hollingsworth, 1989). In Hollingsworth’s 1989 study of 14 elementary and secondary teacher education students, 13 entered the programme with the belief that management was synonymous with relating equally with their classroom students. In their practice they “struggled with classroom control, gaining respect, and teaching lessons to students who were simultaneously engaged in other forms of social dialogue” (p.173). Similarly, Calderhead and Robson (1991), in a report of a case study subject, noted that the student repeatedly mentioned the importance of a good relationship between the teacher and the students she was teaching. They contended that this belief influenced her interpretation of classroom practice, particularly in the area of classroom management.

While the research on teacher education students studying early childhood education is much sparser, some similar findings have emerged. Cachevki Williams (1996), studying undergraduate students enrolled in an early childhood course in Wyoming, and Doliopoulou (1995), researching kindergarten students in Athens, reported that it was the affective qualities of an early childhood teacher that were viewed as significant by participants in their research. Weinstein (1990), in a study which included both early childhood and elementary student teachers, found that they placed a heavy

emphasis on affective and interpersonal aspects in describing their preconceptions of teaching. A striking lack of change in this perspective over the semester of their study was found. This work by Weinstein (1989; 1990) was particularly influential in providing and raising issues for this research. It was the lack of change she reported that influenced the decision to adopt a longitudinal design. This was done in an endeavour to ascertain whether beliefs relating to nurturing and caring maintain their potency and significance over time.

This widespread valuing of nurturing and affective qualities by student teachers has not been without its critics. Burgess and Carter (1992, p.349), for example, refer to it as the “Mumsy” ideology. They concluded that students in their own research in England delineated primary teaching as “a conscious and articulated version of mothering”. Qualities regarded as necessary by the students included the principally socially approved feminine virtues of caring and nurturing.

The role of caring and affect in early childhood education, and what students perceive to be their role in relation to such beliefs, has not been fully explored. Influential in addressing this issue for early childhood educators has been Katz (1984). In a discussion of the differences between mothering and teaching, she highlighted the distinctions that need to be made between the two. These distinctions illustrate the difficulties that those preparing to work in early childhood will encounter as they prepare to work at the interface of mothering (or parenting) and teaching. Probably at no other time in the child's education will the teacher or carer be expected to shoulder so many of the responsibilities of the role of caregiver, and yet maintain their status as a professional educator. What Katz (1984) clearly demonstrated was that while the teacher may in a sense be replacing the parent for the time the child is in the early childhood centre, they can never entirely “step into the parent's shoes”. They must keep a distance affectively if they are to maintain a professional stance, a situation that is different for a parent. Howes, Whitebrook and Phillips (1992) supported this view stating,

It is unrealistic to expect teachers to provide unconditional love for each child in their group, as it is to expect mothers to have skills of group management while individualising care. (p.400)

Beliefs of efficacy as a teacher

It could be speculated that the beliefs some students hold that teaching is intuitive, and an extension of the parenting role, guide their beliefs about how effective they will be as a teacher. On the other hand, this may be a tenuous link to make. One frequently cited study demonstrating students' optimistic beliefs in their efficacy as a teacher was that conducted by Weinstein (1988) with 118 students enrolled in an elementary teacher education programme at the University of Arizona. The students had completed all formal course work, and were about to begin student teaching, when they completed a 33 item questionnaire on expectations about the first year of teaching. The majority of students believed the work of teaching would be less problematic for them than for their peers. Furthermore, they were most optimistically biased about their ability in areas that beginning teachers found most problematic, including the ability to instruct children from different cultures, to maintain discipline, to relate to parents and to deal with individual differences.

Conflicting research findings suggest closer scrutiny of the studies. Weinstein's research should be examined within the context in which it was undertaken. It relied on a single questionnaire for its source of data and it was not clear whether students had any previous student teaching experiences, which could have earlier challenged their beliefs about their self-efficacy as teachers. These factors may help to explain the different outcomes found in research conducted in New Zealand in which Gibbs (1995) studied 50 third-year student teachers, and the associate teachers in whose classes they worked, on the last six-week student teaching practice in their teacher education programme. The student teachers had previously completed 10 weeks of teaching practice over a two year period. Gibbs explored students' and associates' beliefs about their self-efficacy, prior to and after teaching practice experience, using traditional measures, as well as questionnaires requiring responses to vignettes developed for the study. His results disconfirmed the belief that students were unrealistically optimistic. Rather, he claimed that student teachers perceived situations involving groups as significantly more difficult than did associate teachers. He interpreted this to reveal a sense of realism on the part of the students. There was little evidence of them being overly optimistic about their own performance and, furthermore, they appeared to have realistic expectations of others' performances.

Overall, it should be noted that while beliefs have been isolated and categorised, there is some evidence to suggest links between beliefs. This would support the hypothesis that beliefs are conceptual systems with features such as non-consensuality and unboundedness, as suggested by Nespor (1987). For instance, general beliefs about teaching have been found to be closely tied to the conceptions student teachers hold of the effective teacher, and to the attributes they believe they themselves possess. Calderhead and Robson (1991), in a study of 12 primary students they followed through the first year of a Bachelor of Education course at a college of education in England, discovered this to be the case. For some of the student teachers, the image of teaching they held acted as a powerful organising framework. It influenced the way in which they interpreted video material of teaching, the practice of their supervising teacher and their own attempts at teaching. This raises the question of whether any similar links can be found in the beliefs of early childhood teacher education students and whether any links that do exist serve as an organising framework.

Beliefs about children as learners and the learning process

While Gibbs (1995) suggested that student teachers may have more realistic expectations than they have previously been credited with, there is little to suggest that they possess realistic beliefs of the child as a learner and of the learning process generally. Overall, they tend to refer back to their own personal learning experiences as guides for their beliefs and actions, and to view children as affective learners who are compliant and submissive. While student teachers speak of wishing to bring about growth in the children with whom they work, they express few ideas about how this may be achieved or measured.

Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) described the countless stories students tell in research activities, in classrooms and in informal discussions. What is particularly noteworthy in many of these stories is the way in which students frequently related back to their own learning experiences as a guide. Thus, when they were considering the child as a learner, they considered what was effective for themselves when they were learning (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991, p.91). What needs to be remembered is that for many of the students the teaching they have experienced as pupils has been

of a traditional nature, and referring constantly back to their own experiences may hinder the development and acceptance of new ideas on learning and learners.

Overall, reference to the learner and the learning process are generally not explicitly stated in statements of belief; rather, they are subsumed or implicit in their ideas about teaching (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Burgess and Carter (1992), for example, maintained that the ideology of Mumsy, referred to earlier, was evident not only in first year primary student teachers' discourse on the teacher's role, but also in relationship to children's learning. The students spoke of "needing to bring out the best in each child" and of "knowing" children. The focus on what and how children learn was regarded as less important than knowing the children themselves and shaping their personalities (p.356). Furthermore, part of the appeal of primary teaching for the students related to their chance to mould the child and to "shape their personalities" (p.355). Hence, their model of the young child included a willingness to accept what teachers offer. This view of children as submissive, compliant, happy and responsive, is supported by other studies of both primary and secondary student teachers (Goodman, 1988; Gunstone, et al., 1989; Mahlios & Maxson, 1995; Mcneely & Mertz, 1990).

Along with the belief that children will happily do as the student teacher wishes, is a strong desire, emanating from the students, to be liked by their pupils (Mcneely & Mertz, 1990). Put simply, many seem to see a very strong correlation between being liked and achieving learning outcomes in children. This may help to explain why Serow et al., (1994) found most of their participants conceived of teaching as effecting observable change in pupils but provided little evidence of the means by which this could be achieved or measured. A cause and effect relationship was implicit in research participants' responses.

To summarise, many student teachers preparing to enter the different sectors of education, view teaching as intuitive or commonsense and perceive the teacher's role as nurturer. The affective qualities they ascribe to a good teacher are cited as frequently as cognitive or professional competence attributes and influence how they interpret classroom practice. It is unclear whether the emphasis on affective characteristics of the good teacher may relate to the way in which they regard their self-efficacy as a

teacher. The beliefs student teachers subscribe to about children as learners, and the learning process generally, are less apparent and are more frequently subsumed in their beliefs about teaching. Overall, the relationships that exist between different beliefs is lacking in clarity. When students consider children as learners, they use affective terms and generally hold images of children as compliant and submissive. They wish to bring about change but express few ideas about how this may be achieved and measured.

As noted earlier, research on student teacher beliefs has been predominantly undertaken with secondary and primary student teachers. It should not, therefore, be assumed that the results can be generalised across all sectors, although similarities may well exist. What is clear is that different contexts may produce different outcomes. This was suggested, for example, in the comparisons of different outcomes in self-efficacy studies. It should be taken into account when comparisons are made or efforts to chart change undertaken.

2.3.4 Changes or shifts that occur in student teacher beliefs

Earlier in this chapter, the nature of beliefs was explored. It was noted that beliefs have their core development early in a person's life. They can be compared to possessions and, hence, people develop a proprietary sense toward them and are likely to respond defensively if they are attacked. They are resistant to change, although a number of conditions are known to assist in the change process. According to Posner et al. (1982), conceptual change takes place when learners experience dissatisfaction with their existing ideas and when new propositions are perceived as intelligible, plausible and fruitful. The literature on student teacher belief change presents both negative and positive outcomes with regard to the possibility of change. The issue of change will be addressed in two sections:

- from no change to substantive change in student teacher beliefs
- belief change in the teacher socialisation process.

From no change to substantive changes in student teacher beliefs

Earlier studies of beliefs were satisfied with "one-shot" attempts to determine student teacher beliefs. Now, it is more usual to find interpretive research studying participants

over longer periods of time. This has not necessarily produced evidence of change but the probability of doing so becomes more likely.

Overall, some researchers have reported no substantive changes. For example, Zeichner and Liston (1987) examined student teacher beliefs on the perceived role of the teacher, and Rodriguez (1993) investigated students' personal philosophies of learning and teaching. They all concluded that the beliefs investigated remained basically the same. In the latter study, however, while entry beliefs were maintained, it was reported that these were not necessarily rigid. It was noted that the six science student teachers studied adjusted and readjusted their perspectives to fit into the restraints encountered in the school context.

Generally, some degree of change has been reported although, on occasions, this change is referred to as slight. Furthermore, the degree of change may vary from one individual to another. The path an individual follows may look quite different for different individuals and with different contexts for learning (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). Cautious comments from Lin and Spodek (1994) stated that they found "some change" in beliefs of self perception as a teacher in case studies of two early childhood student teachers. The students changed their beliefs in different ways. Brantlinger (1996) noted variations in the type and degree of change in a study of preservice teachers and beliefs that would mitigate against inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. The beliefs went through three somewhat distinct stages. While growth was evident in many of the students, in others anti-inclusion beliefs expressed in their discourses seemed entrenched, resilient and resistant to change.

Encouraging findings have been reported in some studies that have explored student belief in terms of their knowledge base for teaching (Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Gunstone, et al., 1989; Jones & Vesilind, 1996; Morine-Dershimer, 1989; Yonemura, 1991). Using concept maps and a case study approach, Morine-Dershimer (1989), for example, reported substantive shifts in conceptions of pedagogy and content. Jones and Vesilind (1996), using similar data collection approaches, concluded that student knowledge became less like a list of topics and more coherent and integrated from the beginning to the end of the programme. These findings were in line with results reported by Yonemura (1991) in a case study approach with Kate, a graduate early

childhood student. Developments were apparent in Kate's personal knowledge about children, teaching and the curriculum.

It is changes such as these that caused Bullough and Stokes (1994) to raise the issue of what counts as change. In their research with 22 secondary teacher education students at the University of Utah, they noted evidence of change in nearly every student's conception of teaching, with five of the student teachers becoming less traditional. Some of the changes were subtle but not inconsequential. Bullough and Stokes were led to ponder not only on what constitutes change but also to consider how one knows when it is significant. They also suggested that changes may be overlooked that are subtle but significant.

Some of the lack of change reported in belief studies may be attributed to the relatively short time span of some of the research. Longitudinal studies are less frequently undertaken and yet, as Clandinin and Connelly (1986) who are involved in such studies argued, learning to teach takes time and "means, in part, learning to live in a certain cultural, historical and uniquely defined cyclic situation." (p.386) This view is supported by Borko and Putnam (1996) who reminded us that, because the change process is slow, it is preferable to study student teachers for more than one year.

Other reports of lack of change relate to methodological issues. Gunstone et al. (1989) raised this as a concern. Questionnaires used in their study of secondary student teachers revealed little change in student responses overall. However, when the questionnaires were taken in conjunction with interview data and responses to other tasks, significant student change was evidenced. They claimed that "the complexity of individual change means that questionnaires should be treated with caution" (p.29). Findings from the various measures employed in their project indicated that detailed self report and interview data are essential for understanding the nature of individual change, a view echoed by Borko and Putnam (1996). Furthermore, they cited the other advantage of using more than one research strategy, namely the use of triangulation. By using multiple methods one is able to support claims from a number of different sources in research where a high level of inference and interpretation is involved. When designing the current study this issue was considered and open-ended questionnaires were used, only in part, for collecting group data. Case studies of

seven students were used to yield a richer and more comprehensive understanding of beliefs and belief change

As the conditions of change have become more fully understood, the methodology to ascertain change refined, and studies conducted over a longer time period, the outcomes have tended to suggest that change is indeed possible, although not inevitable. Frequently, it is shifts in beliefs rather than dramatic changes that are noted (Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Lin & Spodek, 1994; Richardson-Koebler, 1988; Rodriguez, 1993).

Belief change in the teacher socialisation process

There is sufficient known now to say with confidence that novice teachers differ in a variety of ways from experienced teachers (Carter, 1990; Mcneely & Mertz, 1990; Schempp, Sparkes & Templin, 1993). Furthermore, there is material to show that both student teachers, and teachers can change over the course of their careers. These changes and developments have been referred to as teacher socialisation. Teacher socialisation is “the process whereby the individual becomes a participating member of the society of teachers” (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p.329). Often this entails shifts in belief for student teachers as they move from novice to experienced teachers and develop their identity as a teacher.

In a comprehensive review of the research on teacher socialisation, Zeichner and Gore (1990) documented the competing explanations of teacher socialisation that have arisen from different intellectual traditions - traditions which can be equally well applied to the study of belief. These were the traditions of functionalist, interpretivist and critical. The functionalist tradition is described as adopting a view that tends to be positivist and is characterised by a concern with providing explanations for matters such as the status quo and social order. It emphasises the reproduction of existing arrangements and assumes that the socialisation process ensures continuity. The interpretivist tradition is an effort to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. It is anti-positivist and socialisation is viewed as a more complex and problematic process than when viewed from a functionalist perspective. The critical approach to socialisation has, as its central concern, bringing to consciousness the ability to recognise what is taken for granted in everyday life. Class,

gender and race relations are key foci of study and social transformation is the aim (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Few empirical studies of teacher socialisation are located within the critical paradigm.

Pintrich (1990) reviewed psychological research of relevance to student learning and college teaching for teacher education. Pintrich noted that one of the developmental models that has been proposed to describe human development has been an organismic and contextual model which assumes that

... the individual organism is the focus of development and that the developmental changes that take place are a function of the organism's active construction and organisation of the environment. (Pintrich, 1990, p.830)

Such a model accepts that development conforms to a pattern and that higher levels of development are qualitatively different and distinct from levels of development at lower levels. The levels of development are characterised, not by having more or less of some skill or process, but in terms of new structures, organisations or functions (Pintrich, 1990).

One organismic model that has been frequently referred to in relation to student teachers is Perry's (1968; 1981) model of college students' intellectual and ethical development. In this model, students move from dualistic thinking with right and wrong perspectives, where right answers are to be memorised and where knowledge is quantitative, to relativistic thinking where uncertainty is legitimate and knowledge is qualitative. The final stage results when this commitment to relativism is developed. Students are developing a set of personal values that they become committed to as an expression of their own identity. According to Pintrich (1990), students in these later stages would be open to new ideas, albeit their adoption of these would be informed and shaped by their own knowledge and commitments.

Other models that have been applied to teacher socialisation include contextual and life span models. With the contextual approach, the focus is on the context in which the individual functions and the relationship of the individual to that context. The assumption is made that it is the individual's interactions over the course of the life

span that is the crucial aspect of development (Pintrich, 1990). Illustrative of this model's application to teacher socialisation is the research of Fuller (1969). She maintained that there seemed to be a developmental conceptualisation of teacher concerns that could be posited in three phases; a pre-teaching phase, an early teaching phase and a late teaching phase. In the pre-teaching phase, before students were engaged in teaching practice, their concerns were vague and could be described as ones of anticipation or apprehension. They thought of teaching in terms of their own experiences as pupils. Fuller (1969) labelled this as a non-concern stage. Following this, she suggested an early teaching phase where there is a concern with self adequacy. She maintained the depth of this concern can easily be underestimated. The concerns expressed at this stage relate to students' own performances in the teaching role, judgements about those in authority, attempts to discover the parameters of the school situation and concerns with others' evaluations of them. In the late concern stage, attention shifts to the pupil and to one's own contribution to pupils' difficulties and gains.

Another model of interest is that developed by Katz (1972), as a result of her work with teachers of young children. She suggested four developmental stages, namely, survival, consolidation, renewal and maturity. Training needs for each of the stages were specified. Her focus was on teachers, however, and student teachers were excluded from the model. This is an important omission, as one cannot assume that student teachers would necessarily be in the survival stage as their situation is very different from that of a professional educator with all the responsibilities that that entails.

While the various models cited above have proved useful in focusing on teacher development, the value of them has been questioned. Each student/teacher is a unique individual and development does not always proceed smoothly through the stages or phases proposed by researchers. As a number have found, socialising adults into an educational culture will vary according to the personalities and perceptions of the people involved in the acculturation process. The unique combination of an individual's values, beliefs, life experiences and learning influences their daily interactions with others (Da Ros, & Swick 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The difficulties inherent in generalising about student teachers/teachers and their

development were apparent in the Gunstone et al., (1989) study when their findings proved to be inconsistent with Fuller's stage model of development. Individuals in the Gunstone et al. study did not sequentially address and surmount the three levels of concern suggested by Fuller. Rather, significant impact concerns were revealed from the beginning of the year, suggesting that all aspects of the model should be addressed from the beginning of a teacher education programme. Fundamental to the socialization of student teachers is the recognition and acceptance that individual realities exist.

As has been argued in earlier sections, student teachers bring to their programmes well established beliefs. Some of these beliefs may undergo change as they move through their teacher education programmes. Others appear to demonstrate little change. What is noteworthy, in terms of the teacher socialisation process, is that the beliefs, views and practices of student teachers are often different from those of established teachers (Borko & Putnam, 1996).

2.4 Approaches to Investigating Student Teacher Belief

The three main research traditions apparent in reports of teacher socialisation are also evident in student teacher and teacher belief research. These three branches of social research are identified as positivistic, interpretivist and critical. Positivism, according to Cohen and Manion (1987), has been used in such different ways by philosophers and social scientists that it is difficult to assign it a precise and consistent meaning. They noted that some of its features include:

- an underpinning by a natural science model which means that the logic and procedures of the natural sciences are adopted for social research
- a seeking of explanations and control or conviction
- a concern with maintaining objectivity
- a belief that human behaviour is essentially rule governed, and
- quantitative approaches to data collection, such as survey questionnaires, experiments, and structured observations.

In contrast, interpretive approaches endeavour “to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1987, p.39). Efforts are made to understand the person from within and actions are only meaningful in so far the intentions of the actor can be ascertained. Qualitative methods of data collection, such as loosely structured interviews and participant observation, are employed. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted that “the emphasis in qualitative research is on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined or measured, in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency” (p.4).

The assessment of beliefs is problematic and is essentially subjective. It is hardly surprising, then, that in student belief research the majority of reported studies have adopted an interpretive or qualitative paradigm. It is compatible with efforts to understand an individual’s beliefs, to understand the person from within and to comprehend intentions behind actions. Within an interpretive or qualitative paradigm, numerous research strategies aimed at making sense of how people construct meaning in their everyday lives are employed; these strategies attempt to ascertain more about the beliefs people hold and how these are interpreted in practice.

Qualitative research cannot claim to have a set of methods that are distinctively its own: rather, it draws methods from a variety of approaches in attempts to provide insight into the area of interest (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The research strategies used to obtain data on student teacher belief are diverse and are frequently used in combination. Often, as Kagan (1992) noted, the methods employed are indirect, as beliefs are often tacit. While research strategies that address the interpretive paradigm predominate, sometimes quantitative approaches are used, either on their own or in combination with other methods. Data analysis may be quantitative or qualitative. However, as noted by Denzin and Lincoln, (1994),

Although many qualitative researchers in the positivist tradition use statistical measures, methods, and documents as a way of locating a group of subjects within a large population, they seldom report their findings in terms of the kinds of complex statistical methods to which quantitative researchers are drawn. (p.5)

The research methodologies employed in student teacher/ teacher belief studies have included combinations of:

- interviews and document analysis (Bolin, 1988; Graber, 1995; Gunstone, et al., 1989; Lang, 1997);
- interviews and observations (Bell, 1991; Richardson-Koebler, 1988);
- interviews and questionnaires (Serow, et al., 1994; Su, 1992; Weinstein, 1990);
- interviews, vignette comments and document analysis (Calderhead & Robson, 1991);
- interviews, observations and questionnaires (Tatto, 1996);
- interviews, observations, and document analysis (Lin & Spodek, 1994; Raymond & Santos, 1995; Richert, 1990; Rodriguez, 1993; Shealy, 1994; Yonemura, 1991);
- personal histories and interviews (Holt-Reynolds, 1992);
- narrative enquiry/case studies, observations and document analysis (Conle, 1996; Gunstone et al., 1989);
- case studies/personal histories, interviews and observations (Holt-Reynolds, 1992);
- life histories, metaphors, and document analysis (Bullough & Stokes, 1994).

Research designs have also varied considerably depending on the purpose of the study (Thompson, 1992). They have ranged from ethnographic case studies of one or two student teachers (Bolin, 1988; Knowles, 1988; Mayer & Goldsberry, 1987) to standardized administration of a belief inventory with a large number of respondees (Brousseau & Freeman, 1988).

The time period over which the research has been conducted has also showed considerable variation. In some instances data have been gathered on only one occasion (Cachevki Williams, 1996; Copeland, Birmingham, De Meulle, Emisio & Natal, 1994; Doliopoulou, 1995). In other instances, the investigation has taken several weeks or months (Goodman, 1988; Morine-Dershimer, 1989), been over an extended time period of one year (Brantlinger, 1996; Calderhead & Robson, 1991) and, less often, over several years (Gunstone et al., 1989; Hollingsworth, 1992).

Learning to teach has been described as complex process (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Goodman, 1988; Hollingsworth, 1992) yet there is little direct information about how a teacher's personal pedagogy develops over the course of his or her career. Kagan (1992) described the lack of naturalistic, longitudinal studies of how teacher belief evolves as "representing a critical gap in our knowledge of teaching" (p.81).

2.4.1 Rationale for research

Research on student teacher beliefs, as noted earlier, has been increasingly seen as an area worthy of study. The volume of research and the understanding of their beliefs have increased markedly over the last 15 years. Most attention, however, has been directed at students preparing to teach in primary and secondary education. The knowledge base on early childhood student teacher beliefs is comparatively sparse, evidence of the smaller volume of research in the field. Moreover, the call for longitudinal studies has gone mainly unheeded by researchers of early childhood students' beliefs, as most reported studies cover a short time span.

While there may well be differences in the beliefs held by students anticipating working in different sectors of the education system, the rationale for studying their beliefs remains essentially the same. If, as has been suggested earlier in this review, beliefs influence students' knowledge acquisition and interpretation, task definition and selection, and interpretation of course content (Pajeres, 1992), then an understanding of the nature of the beliefs early childhood student teachers bring to teacher education is necessary. Such knowledge should be of value to teacher educators if they are to help students to make sense of their experiences as they move through the different facets of their teacher education programme. It could challenge them to assist students in making their beliefs about their role as teachers and the child as a learner more explicit. It could enable student teachers to reflect on the powerful influence their beliefs have on their acquisition of new knowledge, the way in which they interpret the teacher education programme and practices observed in early childhood centres, and to reflect on their own involvement in these different aspects. As Rodriguez (1993) pointed out,

... researchers on teachers' beliefs agree on the fundamental goal that teacher education programs must be responsive to the student teachers' prior beliefs in order to increase the impact of their professional preparation and broaden the knowledge base for teachers. (p.213)

There has been much speculation over the likelihood of effecting changes in beliefs. Research results report little to substantial change. Early childhood teacher education students are again almost invisible in these findings, indicating the need for a longitudinal study which attempts to capture their beliefs and any changes that occur in them over the course of their teacher preparation programme.

2.4.2 The research focus

The research questions are:

- What are the beliefs or views about the characteristics of an effective early childhood teacher that early childhood students entering a teacher education programme bring to that programme?
- How do they believe young children learn?
- What do students report as being influential in the formation of their beliefs?
- Do these beliefs or views appear to change or become modified as they progress through the programme?
- What methodological problems does a study of beliefs present?

The questions for the present research serve as a focus and starting point for a study of early childhood student teacher beliefs. In an attempt to understand their beliefs and perceptions, a qualitative approach will be adopted. The aim is to produce information from one group of students, which will lead to a greater understanding of student teachers' tacit beliefs and how they are changed or modified over a teacher education programme. An attempt will be made to ascertain if they are influential in determining practice.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 Introduction

The reader can establish the quality or rigour of any research inquiry when an audit trail is apparent. This audit trail, according to Morse (1994), “should leave an adequate amount of evidence [so] that interested parties can reconstruct the process by which the investigators reached their conclusion” (p.230). This chapter sets the research in a context and provides for the reader early indicators of the audit trail.

The chapter addresses the process by which this study was developed. It examines the considerations that were influential in the study design and in the selection of research methods. This is done by:

- providing a background to the study
- identifying the research paradigm and the inquiry framework
- describing the selection of research methods
- addressing the management of the data, and
- explaining how the quality of research outcomes may be judged.

3.2 Background to the Study

Janesick (1994) used the metaphor of dance to describe qualitative research. She perceived similarities between the dancer’s three stages of warm-up, exercises and cool-down stages to the design decisions that a researcher makes at the beginning, middle and end of a study. All dances begin with a statement and the question, What do I want to say in this dance? (p.219). The researcher begins with a similar question: What do I want to know in this study? This question, as Janesick observed, is influenced by our point of view, or what Miles and Huberman (1994) called “orienting ideas”. The point of view,

or orienting ideas, play a role in how we construct and frame a question for inquiry. In turn, the identification of the research focus is influenced by the particular research methods with which we are most comfortable. This perspective is something I can readily identify with. My curiosity about beliefs motivated an interest in the belief literature. This, and my experiences and responsibilities in working with early childhood teacher education students, played a major role in identifying the research focus.

As outlined in the introductory chapter (1.1), I had a longstanding interest in beliefs and had researched beliefs that secondary students have of disability. My interest in this area was also stimulated by numerous studies of parent belief and on the dilemmas I occasionally faced as a mother when assuming the teacher role with my own children. The major source of motivation, however, was my work on a daily basis with preservice early childhood teacher education students. In my teaching, I was often confronted with students' personal beliefs and the relevance or irrelevance of these for the programme in which they were enrolled. I was interested in the way some students would debate and appear to accept, at least in part, new ideas, approaches and philosophies presented to them, while others were much more resistant to change, particularly when this challenged what appeared to be strongly held beliefs.

To maintain my own interest in a longitudinal study, it was important to study an area that, as Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) noted in terms of their research on teacher beliefs, directly informs and invigorates teaching. By gaining a better understanding of the nature of the beliefs students brought to their programme, and changes that occurred in these over a period of time, I hoped this knowledge would assist myself and others concerned with facilitating learning in teacher education.

Earlier, my research experience had included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. I was open to selecting the most appropriate research paradigm for the study but did believe that a predominantly qualitative approach, rather than a quantitative approach, stood a better chance of tapping into an individual's beliefs and the meanings they attach to these.

3.3 Identification of the Research Paradigm

... you find the words are like sands slipping through your fingers, you feel you're staring through a microscope at a lot of life-forms that suddenly look like great snakes curling around and *biting* each other. (Byatt, 1996, p 476)

Byatt (1996), in her novel 'Babel Tower', explored the meaning and usage of words. Her description is applicable to the words used by individuals in their expression of beliefs and, moreover, to the very beliefs themselves. Beliefs are elusive. Determining what meaning people ascribe to the words they use is one of the challenges facing a researcher of beliefs. Beliefs are reflected in the language people use and in their actions. They are taken-for-granted by individuals, may not be easily articulated, and are often unconscious and implicit. Another challenge is attempting to understand the degree of conviction with which they are held. An analysis of both written and oral language is necessary and this, as Byatt (1996) stated with reference to the meaning of words, is far from straightforward. On the one hand, for example, the ideas expressed in beliefs are in a context and coding them into categories can fragment the belief so that the message being conveyed is lost. On the other hand, as one seeks themes, trends and evidence of change, analyses of the ideas becomes a crucial element in the process of discovery, of attempting to make sense of others' thoughts. It is this slippery nature of beliefs that highlights the importance of the research methodology employed.

Above all, the research paradigm needs to be responsive to the complexity of beliefs. The methodology employed in a study of beliefs needs to incorporate strategies that will allow for the "teasing out" of individuals' beliefs from the mass of things people say and do. It needs to be sensitive enough to detect consistencies and inconsistencies in beliefs, and to recognise changes over time arising from individuals' different life experiences. Furthermore, the research strategies adopted must be such that the researcher can probe into the construction of the beliefs, and attempt to understand them from the perspective of the participants in the study. For these reasons, this longitudinal investigation employed predominantly qualitative research methods and a variety of data gathering approaches. Through the selected methods of inquiry used in this study, I sought an understanding of

the meanings and the processes surrounding student teacher beliefs and the changes that occurred in these over time.

3.3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is described by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) as a field of inquiry in its own right that crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter. It is interpretative and developed as an alternative to positivist scientific approaches as the sole basis for understanding human activity (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993). Subsumed under the title of qualitative research are a number of research traditions, including those known as ethnographic, interactive, naturalistic, hermeneutic, phenomenological, and constructive (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Noblit & Hare, 1988). "All work within relativist ontologies (multiple constructed realities), interpretive epistemologies (the knower and the known interact with one another), and interpretive, naturalistic methods" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.13).

The essential elements of qualitative research are regarded as twofold. There is a commitment to "some version of the naturalistic, interpretative approach to its subject matter, and an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of positivism" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.4). The research strategies employed in qualitative research reflect these elements and are aimed essentially at understanding, or attempting to make sense of, how people construct meaning in their everyday lives based upon their experiences and perspectives. For the purposes of this study of beliefs, the constructive paradigm has much to offer. In this section three approaches will be discussed namely:

- the constructivist-interpretive paradigm
- symbolic interactionism
- feminist research

The constructivist-interpretive paradigm

Guba (1990) described a paradigm as a "basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry" (p.17). Both constructivist and interpretivist paradigms share the same common

intellectual heritage. Greene (1990) claimed "... the more generic term interpretivism is used to include the constructivist inquiry framework" (p.245).

A commitment to constructive epistemologies involves studying things (events, occasions, people) in their natural settings, and attempting to make sense of, understand, or interpret phenomena in all its complexity, in terms of the meanings people bring to that phenomena. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) maintained that studying *naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings*, or in close proximity to a specific situation, gives it a groundedness. The emphasis is on a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context. This involves more than simply attending to observable behaviour. Vigorous attempts are made to tap into the subjective data that exist in people's minds (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994) and to interpret their world of meaning. In interpreting this meaning there is, however, recognition within the constructivist tradition that there is no one form of reality. Rather, meaning is socially constructed and exists within the mind of the individual. In other words, multiple realities exist.

In order to really capture the perceptions of the actors, it is essential that the researcher brings to the task an empathetic understanding of the actors' situations and the ability to suspend or "bracket" preconceptions of the topics under discussion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, in the majority of qualitative research perspectives, there is an emphasis upon approaching and explaining the situation with as few preconceived ideas about the outcomes as is humanly possible. This does not imply that the process will be an objective process. As Guba (1990) stated, "subjectivity is not only forced on us by the human condition but because it is the only means of unlocking the constructions held by individuals" (p.26). The results of the inquiry are always shaped by the interaction of the inquirer and the inquired into.

Methodologically, Guba (1990) argued that the constructivist's task is to identify the variety of constructions that exist and to bring them into as much consensus as possible.

He identified two aspects of the process, hermeneutics and dialectics, in which

... individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted ... with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus. (Guba, 1990, p.27)

With my plans to examine both individuals', and groups of students' beliefs, I found situating myself within the interpretive paradigm allowed for an appropriate inquiry framework to be developed. I knew that the student teachers who were to be the participants in this inquiry were bringing to the study different life and work experiences. I knew that my own beliefs, my regular work relations and my position as a researcher with these students would not permit me to consider that I could possibly adopt what positivists believe to be an objective stance. Indeed, I did not see this as desirable and anticipated that my relationship with some of the participants would be interactive as we explored their thoughts, feelings, beliefs and shared experiences. I also wanted to ensure that the picture I presented of each of the students selected for the case study and of the group as a whole was as fair and as accurate as possible. In this way, the participants would be able to identify with the study and recognise themselves within it. For these reasons, two other branches of interpretive studies were of relevance to this study. They ensure it is well embedded in a qualitative framework. These two branches are those of symbolic interactionism and feminist research models.

Symbolic interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is an approach most often associated with Mead and Blumer (Patton, 1990). It places emphasis on meaning and interpretation as essential human processes. Drawing on the work of Mead, Blumer claimed that three major premises underpin the symbolic interactionist framework:

1. Human beings act towards physical objects and other beings on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.
2. The meanings are a result of the interactions one has with one's self and with other persons in the social world.

3. The meanings are established and modified through an interpretative process by the person dealing with the things (Blumer, 1969 in Patton, 1990; and in Schwandt, 1994).

Over the years, interactionism has undergone changes, been subjected to fierce debates and become less tightly focused (Fine, 1993). While traditionalists may look askance at its looser focus, Fine cited the numerous contributions interactionism has made to other lines of research. Of particular interest has been the rejuvenation in sociological study of the self, identity and the social role.

It is the concern with self in the social interaction framework that is seen as particularly relevant for the current study. Human beings are viewed as engaging in reflexive behaviour. They must interpret and construct the world with which they are faced in order to act in it. It is here that the matter of self arises. The self is seen as a social object - the definition that people create of who they are. In part, it is developed through the perception people have of themselves and, in part, as we think others see us. It arises in the process of interaction with others, but, like all social objects, is defined and redefined in social interaction (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Charon, 1985). Individuals can act towards this self they create. This means they can act towards themselves just as they can act toward others (Woods, 1996). The focus in this study is on the way people construct meaning, meaning which is evidenced in the expression of their beliefs and how they define the future role they will take as a teacher. This focus indicates a compatibility with symbolic interactionism. It means trying to see beliefs from the research participants' points of view, and understanding the meaning they ascribe to the beliefs they have developed in interaction with others. It was this focus that also led me to explore issues raised in feminist research. Particularly pertinent was the question of voice.

Feminist research

Giving voice to participants which allows for authentic expressions of their views, their beliefs and experience, has been adopted and found particular favour with feminist researchers (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993). They have been acutely aware of the absence of women's voice in much reported research. Qualitative research offers the possibility

for voice to be heard, both the voice of the participants and the voice of the researcher. Whilst the giving of voice to participants can add to the authenticity of the research there has been considerable debate of the dilemmas inherent in the process. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) vividly represented the dilemma for researchers when they claimed that

... the struggle for research voice is captured by the analogy of living on a knife edge as one struggles to express one's voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to capture the participants' experiences and represent their voices, all the while attempting to create a research text that will speak to, and reflect upon, the audience's voices... (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p.423)

Numerous other writers have also highlighted dilemmas regarding how participants are to be heard and in what form (see, for example, Carter, 1993; Fine, 1994; Olesen, 1994). There is, in effect, a symbiotic relationship between the researcher and the participant. While participants may be given a voice, Carter (1993) noted that their reports cannot be independent of the teller. Furthermore, it is the teller who makes the decisions about the voice that is heard and not heard, and how this is reported in the research. This is a powerful position and one that must be exercised responsibly or else: "... we may include the voice of the participant in such a way that the context of the research text obscures or silences the important parts of that participant's voice" (Clandinin & Connelly 1994, p.423). This is referred to by Fine (1994, p.70) as "othering", a process that involves the construction of an individual by others. To ensure that the participant's voice is truly heard and that "othering" does not occur, Fine (1994) maintained that researchers need to probe their own relationship within the contexts they study and their relationship with their informants. Opportunities need to be made for researchers and participants to discuss a number of issues, including what is happening, whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation and with what consequence. Such moves go some way to constructing a negotiated joint reality.

Although one body of researchers believe that participants should be allowed to speak for themselves and attempts to analyse, or interpret such data should be nonexistent or minimal, Strauss and Corbin (1990) commented on two options facing researchers. Firstly, there are some researchers who are concerned with presenting accurate

descriptions and, secondly, there are those who are more concerned with building theory. In the former instance, there are overlaps with researchers calling for recognition of voice. The aim is to provide sufficient material to allow for the accurate presentation of descriptions; interpretative comments are interwoven with speakers' words, and other materials from the fieldwork used to contribute to a rich narrative (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the second instance, researchers concerned with building theory utilise a scientific process of generating hypotheses, referred to variously as “generative”, “interpretative”, “constant comparison” or “grounded theory”. This approach emphasises the emergence of concepts from data, rather than an imposition in terms of *a priori* theory (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993). Theory is derived from, or grounded in, emerging field data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Efforts are made to closely inspect and analyse the data, to identify themes, to compare across categories, to construct hypotheses as they are suggested by the data, and then to confirm or disconfirm support for these themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

I was keen to allow student voice to be heard in this study of beliefs and, at the same time, to identify themes in the research data. I anticipated that most, if not all, of the participants would be women. I recognised that when group data were being collected, the opportunity for voice to be heard would be restricted, in spite of my best attempts to do otherwise. There would be no doubt that as the researcher I would have considerable power in selecting responses to illustrate points and attempting to encapsulate the intent and beliefs of a larger group. This was one of the reasons the decision was made to also prepare case studies of some of the participants. Closer contact with these students and the seeking of feedback on written material would enable more opportunity for voice to be heard.

3.4 Selection of Research Methods

In light of the very limited research information on early childhood student teacher beliefs, the questions raised for this study were:

- What are the beliefs or views about the role of the teacher that early childhood students entering a teacher education programme bring to that programme?

- How do they believe young children learn?
- What do students report as being influential in the formation of beliefs?
- Do these beliefs or views (about the role of the teacher and how young children learn) appear to change or become modified as they progress through the programme?
- What methodological problems do a study of beliefs present?

Once the research questions are posed and the inquiry framework established in an interpretive paradigm, the issue of the most appropriate methods to answer the research questions arises. In this section, a background to data collection in qualitative research and a discussion of the four methods that would be utilised will be explored.

3.4.1 Data collection in qualitative research

There is no one means of collecting data that gives researchers full access to an understanding of how other people construct meaning and why they act as they do. Qualitative researchers accept that in order to further their understanding within their field of study, a variety of methods may be called upon and used to answer particular research questions and meet the needs of the particular research design (Goodman 1988; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Reinharz, 1992). Or, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted, "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand" (p.3). This commitment to thoroughness is evidenced, for example, in the use of multiple methods in feminist research. Reinharz (1992) believed that its appeal related to feminist researchers' thoroughness and "the desire to be open-ended and to take risks" (p.197). Such an approach allows for triangulation of data when the data collected from one method of data collection are checked against data collected using a different approach.

This freedom to combine strategies, and to use a variety of methodological tools, allows for data collection using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. There is general recognition that knowledge may be enhanced in certain instances by the adoption of a mixed methodology. This is not denying the differences between the two approaches but, rather, is an acceptance that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, and that the

boundaries between the two are not clearcut (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Instead of viewing qualitative and quantitative approaches as distinct, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggested that it is more productive to regard the two approaches in relation to their position on a series of continua. Qualitative methods, particularly those related to ethnography, are located closer to the generative, inductive, constructive and subjective ends of the continua.

Miles and Huberman (1994) claimed that qualitative-quantitative linkages in qualitative research designs can occur at three levels. They emphasised the usefulness of these links in supporting and informing each other. Firstly, they referred to a "quantizing" level where qualitative information, for instance, can be either counted directly or converted into ranks or scales. Secondly, linkages may be made between distinct data types. They cited an example where qualitative information (say, from an open-ended interview) is compared to numerical data (say, from a questionnaire the same person filled out). Thirdly, a linkage may occur in terms of the overall study design, when the multi-method approaches may involve combinations of case study, survey, experiments, and unobtrusive-measure studies.

In spite of the overlaps between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms, it needs to be borne in mind that there are major differences between the two, and where mixed methods are used, most researchers, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) noted, place their emphasis on one form or the other. Furthermore, the ways in which the data are analysed will be very different indeed, and will ensure that the choice between the two will be clearly more than simply a technical matter.

This research adopted the perspectives stated above. Firstly, it was accepted that in qualitative research there is no one way of collecting data and that decisions on the nature of data collection must be made in response to the research question, and to ensure that the needs of the study are met. In this study, the research methods were reassessed and developed as the research unfolded. Secondly, the adoption of a mixed method approach was affirmed. A longitudinal study gives time flexibility. One is not so constrained by

the necessity to make an early commitment to a particular methodology. With the decision to seek information from both a group and individual students it was envisaged that a mixed methodology would be most appropriate and that linkages would be made between qualitative and quantitative methods to support and inform the study. Thirdly, the emphasis throughout would be more on qualitative than quantitative methods.

3.4.2 Focusing on four methods of data collection

A wide variety of data collection methods are available to the researcher working within the qualitative research paradigm. Four methods are reviewed in this section. Each of these methods was selected for the reported study and was chosen to elicit specific information and as a means of seeking triangulation. The four methods were:

- written questionnaires
- interviews
- case study
- participant observation.

Written questionnaires

The use of questionnaires is a strategy more often ascribed to the quantitative than to a qualitative research design. They can take a variety of forms and include questionnaires sent through the mail and those done in more controlled situations. Researchers using this approach generally recognise that it has limited validity.

Robson (1993, p.124) described the typical survey as “passive” in that it seeks to describe and/or analyse, even in some cases to explore, some aspect of the world out there “*as it is*”. It surveys what people think or feel about a topic and is developed as a way of understanding the population from which it is drawn. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggested written questionnaires provide material for baseline, process and values data. They noted that they should be corroborated by observational data, as it is likely that they register what people think they do, or what they think is socially acceptable to do, rather than what they actually do.

Surveys or written questionnaires can be part of a research programme that incorporates more than one research strategy and may be accompanied by case studies. In this instance, noted Robson (1993), “the surveys provide a general representative picture; the case study illuminate, enrich, and bring to life the survey findings” (p.125). They may provide quantitative data that can be explored and elaborated on in interviews.

The written questionnaire can be varied both in its intent and in its nature. It can be a “one shot” questionnaire designed to survey a population or it may be in a multiple form seeking opinions ideas and/or demographic data over a period of time. It can include open and/or closed questions. Open questions, noted Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991), are seen as having the advantage of allowing the participant to answer in a relatively unconstrained way, and to convey finer shades of their attitudes to their own satisfaction. They surmised that, for this reason, they might be more motivating to respondents. Fowler (1988) suggested that they also permit the researcher to obtain answers that were unanticipated and may describe more closely than some other approaches the real views of the respondent.

Closed questions are frequently incorporated into the written questionnaire format to enable the collection of demographic data and to seek agreement or disagreement on a particular subject. Participants are presented with a set of items and are asked to respond by indicating the category they feel fits their particular viewpoint. In quantitative research designs these responses may be summed to yield a single score. In comparison to other research strategies, questionnaires utilising closed questions and rating scales are easy to administer and produce easily managed data.

For the current research, the limitations of questionnaires was appreciated. The difficulties of assessing whether people are responding in a way that represents their true beliefs, or whether they are presenting what they think the researcher wants, or are responding in the most economical way to “get the job done”, or have some other motive is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, I did feel that open-ended questionnaires would provide what Robson (1993) referred to as “a general representative picture” of an intake

of students' beliefs. It would also enable the broad charting of shifts in responses over a three year time period.

Individual and small group interviewing

Books and articles describing the different forms of the interview, along with descriptions of the art of the interviewing process itself, are prolific. They deal with interviews that are highly structured and standardised, through to semistructured and unstructured interviews or conversations. In structured interviewing, as used in quantitative research, the interviewer asks the interviewee a series of set questions with a limited set of response categories (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The results of the interviews are quantifiable. In qualitative studies, on the other hand, semistructured and nonstructured interviews are more generally used.

Different nomenclature is used when referring to different forms of interviews. This is particularly true in the reports and definitions of unstructured interviewing. They have been referred to variously as semistructured (Reinharz, 1992), open-ended (Philipsen & Agnew, 1995), in depth (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), freely structured (Whyte, 1982) and focused (Judd, et al., 1991). These are characterised by a more informal open approach to the interview process. The researcher has a set of questions, most often open questions, from which they hope to gain information from the interviewee. These serve as "catalysts" for the interviewees to express their opinions and experiences (Philipsen & Agnew, 1995). While the questions may be asked in a particular order, usually the researcher judges the appropriateness and order of their use according to the way in which the participant frames and structures the responses (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Moreover, in an interview of this type, there is always the possibility of modifying the line of inquiry (Robson, 1993). Interviewers may change or modify questions and use probing questions (both planned and unplanned) to explore and allow for elaboration on what has been said. The information sought is not of a standardised nature and allows the researcher to acknowledge the differences among people and to gain "access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words" (Reinharz, 1992, p.19).

Semistructured interviews may also be used with groups of people. Fontana and Frey (1994) noted that group interviews, where several individuals are interviewed simultaneously, offer another level of data gathering or a perspective on the research problem not available through individual interviews. Different types of group interviewing can take place. These include focus group interviews, where the main function of the interviewer is to focus on a given experience and its effects, using a somewhat structured question format (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Judd, et al., 1991), through to natural, unstructured field interviews where the interviewer's role is nondirective, the setting is informal and spontaneous ideas are sought.

Like any form of interviewing, group interviewing does have advantages and disadvantages. Fontana and Frey (1994) pointed out that it has the advantages of being economical of time, data rich, flexible, stimulating to respondents, and offering the possibility of ideas being expanded and elaborated on by others within the group. It is, however, open to the possibility of domination by one person or a small subgroup within the larger group (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Robson, 1993). Furthermore, the group culture may inhibit or interfere with individual expression and make the researching of sensitive topics more difficult (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Ultimately, much will depend on the skills of the interviewer for it is they who will require the ability to handle effectively the dynamics of the group.

The role of the interviewer, regardless of the style of the interview, is a crucial factor in determining the outcome and success of the interview. This is emphasised time and again in the literature. The interviewer has to establish rapport and maintain a relationship with those being interviewed. They need to ask questions which are appropriate and useful, a task Fontana and Frey (1994) noted is much harder than it may seem at first, "for the spoken and written word has always a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and report or code the answers" (p.361). Moreover, researchers need to ensure that what is reported is a true account of what people believe and that the researchers, and those interviewed, share a mutual understanding of the topic under scrutiny.

It is this striving for mutual understanding, often absent in research interviews, that has led to reflection on the nature of the research process and the role and rights of all those involved in it. While asking and responding to questions is very much a part of day to day interaction, there has been a growing awareness of a sharp disjunction or gap between asking and answering “in naturally occurring conversations and the same process transformed into a systematic research procedure” (Mishler, 1986, p.2). Frequently, people have been deluded into believing that if one is capable of carrying out a conversation then they will be able to transport these skills to conducting an effective interview.

Feminist theorists who no longer see the interview process as unproblematic have challenged this stance. This point is particularly relevant for the investigation reported in this thesis as the participants were women being interviewed by a woman. Oakley (1981), for example, maintained that research protocols described in many texts assume a predominantly masculine model of society. Participants are constructed as passive, interviewers must feign a lack of knowledge or opinion if questioned, there is an interviewer-interviewee hierarchy and feelings and emotion are divorced from the process. She argued that when a feminist interviews women such an approach is morally indefensible. Rather, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when non-hierarchical relationships are established, the interviewer believes the interviewee, and the interviewer invests their own personal identity in the process, responding to questions, expressing emotions and demonstrating an empathy with those being interviewed.

Challenges such as these have heightened researchers' awareness of the constraints of the interview process and more truly conversational forms of interaction are being established (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). It is not good enough, however, to simply encourage women to talk (Devault, 1990). Rather, in order to hear women's perspectives accurately

... we have to learn to listen in stereo, receiving both the dominant and muted channels clearly and tuning into them carefully to understand the relationship between them. (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p.11)

In spite of its pitfalls, interviewing presented as a method of value in answering the questions for this research. Due to constraints on a single researcher's time it was considered not feasible to interview a large group of students over three years. It was anticipated, however, it would lend itself as an appropriate approach to use with a smaller group of case study students.

Participant observation

Interviews may be supplemented by participant observation. This may be used to verify whether people are doing what they say they are doing and what the researcher thinks they are doing (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The role of the observer can vary from being what has referred to as a "pure" observer (Bryman, 1988) who does nothing more than observe, through to a person who has complete involvement at the research site, participating fully as a member of the social group. In the latter instance there would be little discernible difference between the person or persons being studied and the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). He or she would be engaged in the conversation, actions and lives of people that they study (Judd, et al., 1991). Each study will be characterised by different degrees of participation by the researcher. Between the two extremes are different ways in which the researcher may position themselves with more or less emphasis being placed on the degree of participation. Furthermore, the degree of participation can vary during the course of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Judd, et al., 1991).

The goal of the participant observer is to record as much as possible about what people say, their interactions with others, their intentions and their actions. As Robson (1993) noted, this is a natural technique for gaining an understanding of people's actions and behaviour, with the onus being on the researcher to record, describe, analyse and interpret what they have observed. Just as in interview situations, there is increasing emphasis on retaining the original language of the participants and allowing their voice to be heard.

In a multiple method research study, Robson (1993) suggested two possible uses for participant observation. Firstly, it may be used in an exploratory phase to determine what is occurring in a particular situation and, secondly, it may be used as supplementary technique to complement or place in perspective data obtained by other means. Information obtained through another means, such as an interview or questionnaire, may be validated. The recording of data can range from very informal notetaking, allowing the observer considerable freedom to determine what is observed, through to the use of complex observation schedules. Whichever approach is used, focused observations might be on a specific dimension or dimensions, or on themes which cut across the dimensions (Robson, 1993).

For this study, it was envisaged that the observations would involve minimal participant involvement. They would be mainly what Robson (1993) referred to as a supplementary technique to complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means. They would be used to verify whether an individual's beliefs were apparent in their actions in an early childhood centre, and whether there were other things occurring that might suggest the presence of beliefs that had not surfaced in interviews or in written questionnaires.

It should, however, be acknowledged that participant observation also has its limitations. A student may, for example, be inhibited in their behaviour by knowing they are being observed. Furthermore, management and the associate teacher with whom they are working may have policies and procedures in place to which the student must conform. In such instances, the student may feel restricted in the early childhood centre by what they can and cannot do. Beliefs, strongly espoused within the centre practice, may be divergent from those held by the student but, nevertheless, require individuals in their student role to adhere to them. In instances such as these, observed student behaviours may not reflect an individual's beliefs.

Case study

A case study is an inquiry or study of an individual, an issue, a system or an organisation defined by an interest in individual cases (Stake 1994). It may be exploratory, descriptive

or explanatory (Yin, 1988). Designed "to capture different aspects of human experience," it is an appropriate tool for an intensive in depth examination of a phenomenon (Goetz & LeCompte 1984, p.46). The intensiveness and concentrated nature of the inquiry truly characterises the approach and is seen as an alternative way of understanding how individuals construct reality and the beliefs they hold. As the focus is on the individual, each study will be unique not only in terms of its outcomes but also in terms of the methods used.

One of the major strengths of the case study approach, according to Yin (1988), is the opportunity to incorporate a variety of research methods or strategies into the research design. He noted that evidence for case study research is available from multiple sources including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts. An even more important advantage, Yin (1988) suggested, is the development of converging lines of inquiry. As different sources of information corroborate findings, a process of triangulation occurs, ensuring that the research is more convincing and more accurate. This is strengthened when the case study is written to explain and illustrate the process of development over time (Reinharz, 1992).

The choice of writing style or presentation for a case study can vary. Telling a story is one way the writer indicates that the format is a case study (Reinharz, 1992). Several different writing styles were suggested by Van Maanen (1988), each unique and reflecting the nature and view of the research task.

For this research, it was appreciated that while compiling case studies may be time consuming, they do offer the opportunity to study individual students' beliefs more intensively and to present the participants' stories. There are greater opportunities for developing a clearer understanding of the beliefs held by individuals and they provide scope for explaining and illustrating the process of development in beliefs over time. Furthermore, the participant has greater control over her story than when the data is collected from a questionnaire.

3.5 Managing Data

While there are many advantages in using a mixed or multi-method method approach, a disadvantage lies in the vast amount of different forms of data that are produced. Furthermore, while data in their various forms have to be analysed, the challenge is to determine ways of doing this that do not divorce the materials from the context in which they were gathered. Mishler (1986), for instance, noted that

The central problem for coding may be stated as follows: because meaning is contextually grounded, inherently and irremediably, coding depends upon the competence of coders as ordinary language users. Their task is to determine the meaning of an isolated question, that is, to code a response that has been stripped of its natural social context. Their competence consists in them being able to restore the missing context. (p.3)

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity, of which coding is one part. The three activities are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. It is important to emphasise the concurrent nature of these tasks. For example, data collection and data processing are interwoven processes and must occur alternately because the analysis directs the data collection process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Conclusions will suggest themselves throughout various stages of the process.

To return to data reduction: as the name suggests, it is an attempt to reduce the material collected from a variety of sources by a "process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10). This is part of the research process and occurs when decisions are made about coding, about the discarding of material and when summaries are formulated. It is a searching for patterns and concepts and reaching an understanding of the relationships that exist in the data to enable a better understanding of the investigation and to establish the issues.

As this process proceeds, and data are coded and systematically organised, categorisation occurs. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), one way of assisting this process is

through the use of data display that compresses information permitting conclusion drawing and action. The displays may include matrices, graphs, charts and networks. These make material more accessible and assist in either drawing conclusions or moving onto the next stage of analysis.

Conclusion drawing and verification is the third stream of analysis. As ideas are developed and regularities in the data noted, conclusions begin building. These are verified with recourse to the data. The next step is to move to constructs and theories (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

It was anticipated that in the current longitudinal study an array of data would be produced and that its handling would not be straightforward. It would be necessary to ensure that it was not divorced from its context and that its collection informed the research as it proceeded. While the work by Glaser and Strauss (1967) on grounded theory offered considerable promise in this respect, it was not anticipated that this research would be conducted in such a way that it would completely fit their model. For example, one of the things they suggest is the writing of analytical memos on a regular basis, and it was not anticipated that this would prove useful. Nevertheless, comparative analysis would be conducted to allow for coding of some of the data so that regularities could be assessed for the development of categories. Different forms of analysis would be used to inform the research, feeding into interview questions and extending the scope of the inquiry. It was expected that, as in any qualitative study, there would be room for handling the data in ways that appeared most appropriate at the time to meet the needs of the study.

3.6 Judging the Quality of Research Outcomes

This chapter began by referring to Morse's (1994) concept of the audit trail and the need for the researchers to leave an adequate amount of evidence so that others can reconstruct the process by which the investigators reached their conclusion. This aligns with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of dependability as a measure of establishing the trustworthiness of a piece of research. Some of the ways by which dependability and this

trail can be established have been outlined in this chapter. These are an effort to make the method transparent.

For people positioning themselves within an interpretive framework there has been the difficulty of having interpretive inquiry accepted as a legitimate form of research. The question of validity is pertinent when the quality of research outcomes are addressed. For some interpretive researchers, concepts such as validity and reliability used originally in positivist research, are regarded as concepts worthy of inclusion in an interpretive paradigm, although they may be addressed in different ways (see for example, Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Hammersley, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For others, the concept is looked at askance (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Usually it is rejected because of its positivist associations and all that that implies.

As an alternative to the term 'validity', Lincoln and Guba advanced the concept of plausibility or good fit (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Two sets of criteria for constructivist research were proposed, namely trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 1994). Trustworthiness encompasses the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability - mainly methodological criteria. Authenticity includes criteria such as ensuring fairness for research participants, enlarging respondents' personal constructions, enhancing their understanding of others' constructions and empowering them to act. The latter aspects of these criteria, while worthy ideals, may not be considered relevant by all researchers for all research. The crucial point that should be made is that, in essence, Guba and Lincoln's approach is but another way of addressing validity.

Hammersley (1992) contended the terms and concepts of validity and reliability do have a place in qualitative research, but when used traditionally they are insufficient for judging the methods and products of research on their own. Relevance must also be considered. Validity or truth, he maintained, was present in an account if it represented "accurately those features of the phenomena that it intended to describe, explain or theorise" (p.69). In judging whether there was adequacy of information to support any claims,

Hammersley proposed three areas to be considered, namely the issues of plausibility and credibility, appropriateness in terms of the amount of evidence provided for the centrality of the claims made, and the type of claim made. The determination of validity of the research outcomes depends on whether the study was defined as a description, explanation or as a theory undergoing scrutiny.

While a focus on the account and understanding is seen as a fundamental concept, there is not necessarily one correct way of understanding. Maxwell (1992) maintained, for example, that we cannot step outside our own experience and thus it is always possible for there to be different, equally valid accounts from different perspectives. He proposed five broad categories of understanding and five corresponding types of validity which are summarised below:

- Descriptive validity is concerned with the accurate reporting of conversations interviews, observations and the like. It can apply to statistically descriptive aspects of accounts such as the numerical description of the specific objects of study. One may say for example, that the *majority* of students answered in a particular way.
- Interpretive validity is concerned with what “objects, events and behaviours *mean* to the people engaged in and with them” (p.288) and is looking at something from their perspective.
- Theoretical validity “goes beyond a description of concrete description and interpretation, and addresses the theoretical constructions that the researcher brings to, or develops during, the study” (p.291).
- Internal generalisability is the form of most relevance to qualitative researchers. Maxwell (1992) suggested that a researcher could provide an account of material gained in interviews that was descriptively, interpretively and theoretically valid, but that missed other perspectives that were not expressed in the interview and so false inferences could easily be made.
- Evaluative validity refers to the placing of an evaluation on an action or object of study. It is less central to qualitative research than the first three forms outlined above.

Maxwell (1992) offered this typology as a checklist of the kind of threats to validity that should be considered and as a framework for thinking about the ways these threats could be addressed. In the current research, the concept of the audit trail is used as a way of establishing for the reader the processes of data collection, analysis and its interpretation. The ideas proposed by Hammersley, Lincoln and Guba and by Maxwell have guided the research. Their proposals alert the researcher to the difficulties that may arise in developing accurate accounts.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has indicated to the reader the various influences on the construction of the present research. It has outlined how the writer's perspectives were informed both by personal experiences and interests and by the theoretical literature. The chapter backgrounded the selection of an interpretive research paradigm that, as a field of inquiry, would resonate with the need to understand the way in which individuals make meaning in their lives. The research strategies that were thought would be most responsive to teasing out the beliefs and perceptions of both a large group and individual students were outlined. Ways of dealing with the data and judging the outcomes were considered. In the next chapter, the design of the research is presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

This investigation employed a qualitative method of research in order to gain an understanding of the beliefs early childhood students have about the role of the teacher and how young children learn. The research on student teacher beliefs shows that these are viewed as a significant aspect of the way in which they think about education. Most of the research, however, has taken place over a brief time span and longitudinal studies are infrequent. Moreover, the research on early childhood student teachers' beliefs is still relatively rare, and changes that occur in their beliefs over the course of an early childhood teacher education programme are largely uncharted. Yet, early childhood teachers' professional work touches at the core of how children are reared in our society and the way in which children are perceived in relation to adults. Teachers work closely with parents, but, as noted earlier, they do not assume the same role as parents (Howes et al., 1992; Katz, 1984). Early childhood teacher education students are preparing to work at the interface of parenting and teaching. They need to understand why and how some people hold beliefs different to their own. At times they may need to consider modifying or changing beliefs they hold dear. An understanding of the beliefs they hold as individual students, and of the impact of their beliefs on their own practices and their relationships with others, is essential. It is intended that this research will inform its readers of the beliefs or views held by one group of early childhood students in a New Zealand context.

The nature of this research and the direction it took was also informed by the literature on research paradigms and methods. In the previous chapter, the inquiry approaches and methods of the study were outlined. Qualitative research methodology was selected because it offered the greatest promise of yielding information that would enable an

understanding of the beliefs students hold. A variety of data gathering methods is acceptable within this framework and it has the potential to allow the research participants' voices to be heard.

Engaging in research, particularly longitudinal research, is like participating in an absorbing journey. It is this journey and the encounters along the way that will be described in this chapter. The aim of the research will be restated, the programme in which the students were enrolled outlined, the participants described and the different phases of the study described. The phases will contain descriptions of the data collection and analysis methods and raise issues about the methodology for exploring beliefs. It will conclude with a summary statement.

4.2 Aim of the Research

It is understood that student teachers bring to their teacher education programme a unique set of beliefs that will influence and form a component of their professional knowledge in education. As stated earlier, beliefs will be regarded as views that students have on specific aspects of their future work. It is the ideas and knowledge embedded in their unique belief systems that are of interest.

The intent of the research was to work with one cohort of students entering their early childhood teacher education programme in a university in New Zealand, and follow them for the duration of their programme over a three year time period. The aim was to gain an understanding of student teachers' tacit and expressed beliefs, how they originated, and whether they changed, or were modified in any way over the three years. Methodological problems that arise in a study of beliefs were also to be explored. The first challenge was the selection of methods that enabled exploration of the research questions. The second challenge was the anticipated complexity of the data that would be collected and how it might best be handled.

Firstly, I was interested in collecting some group data over the three years, questionnaire data that would reflect the beliefs and understandings of the cohort as a

whole and that would provide useful basic information. A preliminary study was planned to assess the usefulness of the first questionnaire. Secondly, while I perceived each student as unique and differing from others to a greater or lesser extent, I acknowledged that collecting in-depth material of the whole intake of students would be untenable because of time constraints. For this reason, a case study approach with a small group of students from the cohort was planned to complement the group data. Like Bullough, Knowles and Crow (1991), I anticipated that this approach would preserve the integrity of the participants' experiences and their meaning, and be flexible to changes in the context. It offered a vehicle for understanding some individual students' beliefs in more depth, of making sense of the ideas some individuals bring to a teacher education programme. Questions that I wished to explore included, for example: Where do particular beliefs have their origin? What experiences do individuals perceive as significant in influencing the beliefs they hold? Questions such as these do not lend themselves so readily to in-depth exploration through written questionnaires. There is not the opportunity to explore ideas as they are offered, to ask supplementary questions, or to make statements that encourage reflection. A case study approach, employing several data gathering methods, offered interesting and fruitful opportunities for tapping into participants' thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

4.3 Research Participants

The early childhood student teacher cohorts at the University of Waikato are diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, academic qualifications and the life experiences they bring to the programme. A number have parenting experiences and some have previously worked in early childhood education in a variety of capacities. Even more have undertaken babysitting roles and worked with children from time to time.

In the research there were different groupings of students. These relate directly to the data collected. There were:

1. Forty student teachers who participated in a preliminary study.
2. Seventeen student teachers from the following year's cohort who participated in the longitudinal study and who completed all questionnaires. This group included

the seven students who were randomly selected and agreed to their experiences being recorded as a case study. This group, in its entirety, is the focus of this thesis.

3. Up to 38 students for whom there is incomplete questionnaire data over the three years. Their results are not reported in this thesis.

The difficulty in collecting a complete set of data for each individual over a three-year time period reflected one of the predicaments that arise when pursuing a longitudinal study. Retention of the research cohort is by no means straightforward. During the process of the research, the number of students responding to the questionnaires varied. Not all students were willing or able to respond to all questionnaires. Some were absent at the time of their administration and felt under too much pressure to complete the task when approached. (This pressure of work usually also explained their absence from class.) Some students moved to other parts of the country, while others left the programme for personal reasons. Two transferred into the primary teacher education programme. Students who had previous university qualifications recognised for prior learning, entered the programme at the beginning of the second year, while others returned from leave at various times. The options available to students, in effect, acted as limiting factors for the research. The incomplete data were discarded for the purposes of this study as it made the charting of change more difficult. A perusal of them, however, indicated that they offered nothing further to the study. Furthermore, it was the individual and her belief patterns that were the primary focus of this study and while trends were regarded as useful, it was the individual data that was of greater interest.

For an outline of the data collection phases in the research process, including both the preliminary study and the longitudinal research see Table 4.1 (p. 88). Phases 1 and 2 of the main body of the research were completed prior to entry and in year one of the research. The first phase was concerned with questionnaire data collection and phase 2 with case study data collection. The latter was completed when participants finished their practicum work in centres at the end of the year. Phase 3 commenced when participants began their second practicum in year two. The survey questionnaire was

Table 4.1: Data collection phases in the research process

<p>Preliminary Study</p> <p>October/November 1992 - August 1993</p> <p>Survey questionnaire one prior to entry (1993 intake)</p> <p>Survey questionnaire two after three weeks in programme.</p> <p>Survey questionnaire administered in Japan.</p>	<p>Phase 1 Longitudinal Study</p> <p>October/November 1993 - February 1994</p> <p>Survey questionnaire prior to entry (1994 intake) Questionnaire A1</p> <p>Survey questionnaire after three weeks in programme. Questionnaire A2</p>	<p>Phase 2 Longitudinal Study</p> <p>March 1994 - November 1994</p> <p>Selection of case study group</p> <p>Individual interviews of all case study participants.</p> <p>Observation and interview of three case study participants.</p>	<p>Phase 3 Longitudinal Study</p> <p>July 1995 - October 1996</p> <p>Observation and interview of four case study participants.</p> <p>Survey questionnaire B1</p> <p>Small group interview of four case study participants.</p>	<p>Phase 4 Longitudinal Study</p> <p>May 1996 - October 1997</p> <p>Observation and interview of seven case study participants.</p> <p>Survey questionnaire B2 and A3</p> <p>Writing of stories and discussions with participants</p>
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<p>Transcribing _____</p>
<p>Responses coded _____</p>
<p>Categories refined _____</p>
<p>Themes emerging _____</p>

administered later in the year. Phase 4 began with the case study participants' final practicum and again the questionnaires were issued towards the end of the academic year. Case study participants' stories were then completed prior to the end of the year. Data collection was completed in December 1997 when two students who had taken a year's leave had been through the cycle.

4.3.1 Participants in the preliminary study

In 1992/3, a preliminary study was undertaken with students then entering the programme. This study was to examine the effectiveness of the questionnaire and to develop tentative coding systems. The questionnaire investigated students' beliefs about what characterised a good early childhood teacher and how young children learn.

At the time data were collected for the preliminary study in New Zealand, I visited a colleague in Japan and she expressed an interest in collecting similar data from students enrolled in education courses at a university in Yamaguchi, Japan. This proved to be a worthwhile exercise in highlighting cultural differences as well as similarities in the data collected.

The participants in the preliminary study were 40 university students in New Zealand and 40 university students in Yamaguchi, Japan. The students in New Zealand were enrolled in the teacher education programme and those in Japan were studying courses on children and culture as part of their first-degree programme. Many of them intended in the future to meet the requirements for a kindergarten teachers' certificate, or a certificate that would enable them to teach in a primary school. In New Zealand they ranged in age from 17 years 7 months to 32 years 10 months with a median age of 20 years. In Japan the age range was from 18 years to 32 years 10 months with a median age of 19 years 2 months. Only passing reference will be made to the data collected in the preliminary study.

4.3.2 Participants in the longitudinal study

The longitudinal study comprised 17 New Zealand students. At the beginning of the study they ranged from 18 years to 31 years of age with a median age of 21 years 6

months. The students were all female and European with the exception of two who were Asian. All the students in the research came from the North Island of New Zealand. Two were parents and one had a child during her time studying in the teacher education programme.

Of the entering students, 12 were randomly selected to participate as case studies. Two chose not to participate because of the anticipated time commitment. Two others replaced them, also randomly selected. Three of the 12 left the programme before the completion of the research. Of the nine that graduated with their Diploma of Teaching, complete sets of data were available for seven students. The audiotaped recordings of one student proved repeatedly difficult to transcribe and there were significant gaps in the data for another student. The seven students for whom there were complete data comprise members of the longitudinal study and are the reported case studies.

Table 4.2 (p.91) presents a thumbnail sketch of each research participant. The focus is on the stage in their lives at which they decided to apply for teacher education, their reasons for doing so and prior experiences with young children. The information was collected from the second questionnaire (A2, Appendix D). The descriptions introduce the pseudonyms that are used consistently throughout the document. It should be noted that the first seven-bolded names are those who were randomly selected as case study participants.

Overall, there were several different reasons participants stated for entering the teacher education programme, with some participants citing more than one reason. All seven noted that they wished to either gain a qualification, or improve on the qualification they already held, while two hoped that the experience and knowledge they gained would enable them to provide a sound learning environment for young children. Four aspired to eventually managing an early childhood centre and three maintained that it would improve their prospects for getting a job. Six commented that they enjoyed being with children and two participants had been told several times by other people that they had the necessary skills for being a teacher because they possessed “people skills”.

Table 4.2: Backgrounds of the seventeen students in the research process

Participants	Life experiences - post school	Experiences with children	Self perception of ability/ knowledge with children	Aspirations
Sam 19 years	One year working overseas	Babysitting, short time, in childcare	Average/slightly above average	To teach & run own early childhood centre
Judy 19 years	One year working with children	Extensive	Slightly above average	A successful career in early childhood education
Debbie 18 years	Entered programme from school	Regular babysitting	Well above average	To be a successful teacher & run a centre
Maki 22 years	One year at university	Minimal	Average	To be successful in study & employment
Madison 20 years	Childcarer for two years	Intensive for two years	Average	Extend skills & improve employment chances
Rebecca 24 years	Travel, study, short term employment	Extensive	Slightly above average	To extend skills & to start own ideal centre
Emma 22 years	Study & childcare employee	As a childcarer & babysitter	Slightly above average	Extend skills & improve employment chances
Sally 18 years	Entered programme from school	Babysitting	Average to slightly above average	To work well with children in a career
Sarah 21 years	Childcarer for three years	Intensive for three years	Below average	Gain a qualification & learn more about children
Trudie 19 years	Entered programme from school	Babysitting	Average	To become qualified & specialise in an area
Sophie 26 years	Childcarer for three years	Intensive for two years	Average	To run & own an effective centre
Lenore 18 years	Entered programme from school	Babysitting & voluntary work in centre	Below average	Learn more about children & gain a qualification
Natasha 18 years	Entered programme from school	Babysitting & work in childcare	Above average	To have a career
Trina 20 years	Study & work in childcare	Childcare experience	Average	Confidence & qualification
Melinda 20 years	Three years in ece, babysitting, & supporting mothers	Extensive	Above average	Gain qualification & work with children from other cultures
May 23 years	One year studying English language	Minimal	Below average	To gain qualification
Karol 31 years	Parenting & in employment	Extensive	Slightly above average	Career opportunities & work in an exciting area

In terms of previous experience with children, 13 participants engaged in regular babysitting, 8 had worked in childcare in either a voluntary or paid capacity and 7 had been employed as a nanny of young children. Possibly because of these experiences, three weeks into the first year of the programme, 14 of the 17 participants rated themselves as average or above average in supporting the wellbeing of young children. They appeared, as a group, to have no difficulty in identifying themselves as potential members of the early childhood teaching profession.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Qualitative researchers, in their striving to ascertain the meanings people construct, must constantly scrutinise their own actions in terms of their ethical and moral nature. In the previous chapter, some of the ethical issues directly facing researchers working in the qualitative inquiry mode have been indirectly raised. In the discussion of interviewing as a method of collecting data and that of judging the quality of research outcomes, for instance, references were made to the relationship of the interviewer with the interviewee and the need to ensure fairness for research participants. It is issues like these that will present themselves regularly to the researcher, leading Woods (1996) to suggest that, "... reflexivity involves a constant monitoring of the rightness of what one is doing..." (p.66). While there are codes of ethics drawn up by various professional bodies and ethics committees guide research within universities, there are several issues that are worthy of mention for qualitative research and for this study in particular. These will be discussed under two headings with an explanation of how these matters were addressed in this research:

- the recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent
- the relationship between the researcher and research participants.

4.4.1 The recruitment of participants and obtaining informed consent

In October/November 1992, data collection with students involved in the preliminary study began. The three-year longitudinal study and case study data collection began in

October/November 1993. In both instances, a selection committee comprising university early childhood teaching staff and members of the early childhood community selected students into the teacher education programme. During the selection process, at the conclusion of a group interview and prior to an individual interview, students routinely complete a written task. This is a check to ensure they are able to express themselves coherently in a written format. Two open-ended questions related to the research were used for this purpose. One, based on work by Weinstein (1988), required them to complete the statement "A really good early childhood teacher is one who ...". The second question asked them to explain how they thought young children learn. (See Appendix C, Questionnaire A1) These questions were deemed appropriate both for the selection purpose and the aims of the research.

The two questions were presented to the applicants and the purpose of the task as part of the selection process was explained. One of the selection panel interviewers then briefly outlined to the group the nature of the research on student teacher beliefs. They were told that it was research for a doctoral thesis and that:

- their participation in the research was voluntary
- they could withdraw at any time they chose to do so
- the confidentiality of their responses was assured. (Any names used in this document, as mentioned earlier, are fictitious and it was made clear that their individual responses would not be discussed with others.)
- their decision, (whether or not to participate) would have no influence on the selection process
- the data would be destroyed once the thesis was examined and
- that their written responses (if they indicated an interest in being involved in the research) would not be made available to the researcher until they had accepted a place in the programme.

If this research were being undertaken today a full written account of the research and participants' rights would also be presented in a written form to the participants.

The applicants were then invited to participate in the research. A form stapled to the response sheet gave them information about the research and asked them to indicate

whether or not they were interested in being research participants. Consent to be included in the research required their signature. (See Appendix E) Eight students chose not to participate in the research in the longitudinal study. This figure would suggest that students did not feel coerced into doing so.

During the individual interview that followed the written task, applicants were given the opportunity to clarify any other questions they had about the research. Responses to the questions were not made available to me until a decision had been made about applicants' selection into the programme and they had accepted the offer. The applicants were aware that this would be the case.

In the longitudinal study, a second consent form, presented after students had entered the programme and attached to Questionnaire A2, (Appendix F), invited them to indicate if they were interested in participating in a case study. The nature of the commitment involved in the case study process was explained in class. It was stated that there would be interviews and observations of each participant working in early childhood centres. The responses indicating a willingness to participate were high. Although I had stated that the case study participants would be selected at random, some students wrote comments like, "Please, please include me!" and "Yes. I'd love to be interviewed." This was reassuring. It indicated that the process was non-threatening for the majority of students and that there was an interest in the research process itself.

Over the three years, whenever students were asked to complete a questionnaire, their consent was again sought. All questionnaires were completed during class time. To avoid singling out individuals, all class members completed them. Those students who withheld consent had their forms returned to them in an envelope, immediately after the consent forms had been checked following the class. It was suggested to them that they retain their questionnaires for their own interest and information.

4.4.2 The relationship between the researcher and research participants

Interviews and case studies are interventions that affect people. While the purpose of the research may be to gather information, Patton (1990) reminded us that the feelings, knowledge and experiences that are explored are frequently very personal. For this reason, qualitative research may be more intrusive and raise different ethical issues than quantitative approaches.

The relationship that develops between the researcher and the research participant is frequently a close one so that a dilemma faced by the researcher is the degree of intrusiveness that is acceptable. Kelchtermans (1993) noted that because of the nature of the relationship it is easy to elicit more information than the respondent originally intended to share. While a researcher does not want to pry too deeply, the private and personal worlds are very relevant in qualitative research. Kelchtermans, in her study of teachers' professional behaviour, found it useful never to ask questions about the private sphere, directly or explicitly, and when the respondent raised such matters, to explore them until he understood what was meant and how they linked to personal biography.

The nature of the relationship, and the differing status of the researcher and research participants, is particularly relevant for this study. As Director of the Early Childhood Teacher Education Programmes in the university in which I was researching, I was very aware that student teachers enrolled in the programme would have perceptions of my role and of their relationship to me in that role. This would then be layered with another relationship namely, that of me as a researcher and them as research participants. I needed them to conceive of me as person with integrity whom they could trust in both roles, have confidence in me and, for the case study participants in particular, be prepared to establish a relationship with me that was more personal than might normally be a case. Especially useful was the work of Sabar (1994) who suggested that provided the research is ethically sound, the different status of the researcher and the researched

appears not to be problem "... as long as each respects the other and keeps his or her promises" (p.116). Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that

The other's behaviour towards you as a researcher, ... rests on the perception of who and what you are, why and for whom you are doing the research, what your interests are, your view of them and your relationships with them and others. (Woods, 1996, p.65)

Considerable responsibility rests with the researcher in any research project. Of specific concern is the use made of the material collected and how it is reported. While research participants may have consented to take part in the research with considerable knowledge of its purposes, this may be done without a full appreciation of how their own beliefs and views will be interpreted. Sabar (1994), in a study of researchers studying teacher thinking, found that one of the most basic questions of research in general, "To what extent are we allowed to turn private knowledge into public knowledge?" (p.114) was regarded as a question of prime importance to their work. Moreover, it was noted that people researching teacher beliefs raised more ethical problems than did those researching other aspects of teacher thinking. Sabar (1994) suggested this might be because beliefs are conceived of as being more affective.

One of the means of overcoming some of the concerns that arise about what information a researcher should divulge, appears to be partially solved by ensuring that the research participants are fully aware of material that is being written about them, particularly that of a more personal nature. Sighting the material and giving them the opportunity to provide feedback and to request inclusion or exclusion of particular points, not only ensures informed consent but is likely to strengthen a trusting relationship between the researcher and research participants. This was particularly the case for the case study participants in this research. They were given copies of all their data and participated in the construction of their story. They in effect, vetted material of a more personal nature for use.

My role in the process was not a totally unambiguous one. I did not participate in the selection interviews, but was actively involved with the students once they began their

programme. My role as director of the programme necessitated my involvement in such matters as programme advice and pastoral care. Throughout the three years of the study, I reduced the amount of my teaching contact with the research intake and, on only two occasions during the three years, assessed any of their work. I took this stance, as I did not want them to associate me with the role of assessor. I did not want them to feel that during the course of the research when they were responding to statements, completing questionnaires, being observed or sharing in discussions either that I was assessing them, or that their research contributions were influencing my interpretations of other aspects of their performance.

Participation was voluntary and no incentives were offered to the participants. With the case study students, however, a nominal payment was made at the conclusion of their involvement. The payment was a surprise to the participants and the purpose was to compensate them for travel expenses incurred attending interviews at times when they would not normally have been present for university classes. Because the payment was offered at the conclusion of their participation it would have had no effects on the outcomes of the research.

4.5 Phases in the Research

As demonstrated in Table 4.1 (p.88), there was the preliminary study and the longitudinal research that occurred in four phases. This section will describe the different stages as the research progressed.

4.5.1 Preliminary study

October/November 1992

The preliminary study of 40 early childhood teacher education students began in October/November 1992. As mentioned earlier, its aim was to examine the effectiveness of Questionnaire A and to develop tentative categorisation and coding systems. All individual responses to the two questions were transcribed. The analysis of the data was informed by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The searching

for patterns and concepts led eventually to the identification and defining of categories. Reference was also made to the categories defined in Weinstein's (1988) research when she asked students about what made a good teacher.

The responses for question one (what makes a good teacher) were then coded and collated into five major categories, namely:

- background experiences
- personal and professional characteristics
- establishing relationships
- teaching and caring skills and
- responsiveness to individual children and their families.

Within these major categories a further 31 sub-categories emerged. Once I had coded one set of data, a research assistant repeated the task. This indicated where there were inconsistencies in the categories. The categories and the coding were then revised.

The students' responses as to how they believed young children learn (question 2) were handled in the same way. Six categories emerged from the responses and within these there were further subcategories. The major categories were that children learn through:

- play
- exploration/experimentation
- observation and imitation
- practical experiences
- social interaction
- maturation.

Reliability checks were carried out to ensure the categories were robust. With the first question, an independent researcher, prior to training on the use of the coding schedule, reached an agreement level of 76% and after training an agreement level of 98%. With question two, an agreement level of 92% was reached. This suggested that the categories were robust.

The preliminary study demonstrated that using a questionnaire with open-ended questions was viable, although it had its limitations. It did, however, as Goetz and LeCompte (1984) maintained, provide baseline and values data. Both similarities and differences in the data became apparent. For instance, participants in both countries most frequently characterised a good teacher as kind, warm and loving and as respectful of children. New Zealand students, however, placed more emphasis than their Japanese counterparts on the desirability of teachers enjoying their work with children and establishing sound relationships with families and others in their professional team.

One third of the participants in both countries believed that effective supervision and the ability to discipline children were characteristics of the good teacher. The same proportion noted that while the teacher had a role in supporting children's learning this could best be done by encouraging children's independence and allowing them to develop their ideas without adult interference. Overall, however, the New Zealand participants portrayed teachers as more proactive and used the term "teaching" more frequently.

Generally, New Zealand students referred more often to the needs of the individual child while, in contrast, Japanese students referred more frequently to children as members of a group. Such differences are indicative of cultural differences. They were also apparent in students' views on how young children learn. Students from both countries viewed children as active learners. They maintained that children should be given opportunities to explore and engage in risk-taking behaviour. New Zealand students placed more emphasis on the role of social interactions and Japanese students on the role the senses play in learning (Mitchell & Matsukawa, 1995).

Overall, the preliminary study revealed that the questions employed in the questionnaire were viable. The study helped in exploring ways of handling the data and demonstrated that some beliefs are closely linked to the society in which the individual is raised.

In terms of its limitations, the preliminary study strongly supported my feelings that to really ascertain an individual's beliefs in more depth, one or even two questionnaires

were insufficient and that the time period of the study should be extended. Secondly, it suggested that questionnaires on their own, even with open questions, should be only one source for developing a sound understanding of student beliefs, the meanings they attach to these, and how they are constructed.

4.5.2 Longitudinal study: questionnaires A1 and A2

Phase one: October/November 1993 and February 1994

This phase marked the beginning of the longitudinal study and involved repeating the use of the Questionnaire A1 (Appendix C) with a new group of applicants for the teacher education programme. As in the preliminary study, this questionnaire was completed during the selection process and the same ethical procedures followed. An example of Sam's original transcript and coded data is in Appendix G.

Questionnaire A2 (Appendix D) was completed after three weeks in the induction programme. It included the two original questions concerning the teacher's role and beliefs about how young children learn. The responses to these two questions from both Questionnaire A1 and A2 were transcribed and categorised as in the preliminary study. Some minor adaptations to the coding systems were introduced. The coding systems that were used for the two questions are presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 (pps.101&104). Themes gradually began to emerge and served to guide the following phase.

Additional questions were asked in Questionnaire A2 to ascertain participants' reasons for pursuing their current course of study, the extent of their previous experience with children within their own families, as babysitters, as parents and in the workforce. Their expectations about their own performance as a teacher of young children, compared with that of others on the programme, were also explored.

I recorded and photographed tasks each student had prepared for an intensive educational media course in the induction period. At this stage, they had had no classes in early childhood education and were taught mainly by people with limited experience in this sector of education. They were required to prepare overhead projector transparencies and a chart to use in an early childhood centre. My reason for exploring

Table 4.3 Coding categories in the main study: characteristics of the good teacher

A BACKGROUND EXPERIENCES

A1 Life experiences

Wide and varied knowledge/experiences/interests to share with children. Well educated.

A2 Experience with children

A3 Training in early childhood education, participates in professional development

A4 Able

B PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

B1 Kind and friendly

Understanding, compassionate, caring, sensitive, empathetic, concerned, cheerful, welcoming, positive, loves children.

B2 Patient

Patient, even-tempered and consistent.

B3 Flexible/open

Open-minded, nonjudgemental, adaptable, able to deal with the unexpected. Accepting of diverse range of people (gender, ethnicity, ability).

B4 Sense of humour

B7 Responsible/reliable/honest

Conscientious in carrying out responsibilities, accountable, able to assume leadership roles, fair and consistent. Presents self professionally.

B8 Well adjusted and healthy, high self esteem

Can handle stress.

B9 Enjoyment

Enjoys working, playing and having fun with children in all activities, enthusiastic, energetic.

B10 Commitment

Dedicated, strongwilled, determined, able to argue why, political.

B11 Ability and willingness to work in a team**B12 Time and effort**

Willing to give time and effort to help and work things out with children.

B13 Respect

Commands children's respect, builds trust with children and adults and in turn is respected by others.

C ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS**C1 Relationships with children**

Interacts well with children (implies reciprocal relationship), encourages with positive responses, comes down to their level and way of thinking.

C2 Good relationships with parents/family/ *whānau***C3 Good relationships with teachers, administrators and others**

Prepared to listen to others' ideas.

D TEACHING AND CARING SKILLS**D1 Encourages, motivates and supports children's learning**

Keeps children interested, encourages children to try new things, to participate and to develop their initiative. Does not restrict children's ideas and imagination.

D2 Creative and resourceful

Creative, artistic, imaginative, resourceful. Uses a variety of teaching strategies.

D3 Supervision, management and discipline

Keeps order, is authoritative, firm and pleasant. Can train children to understand right and wrong in ways that are non-abusive.

D4 Good communication skills

Listening, speaking, clear body language.

D5 Knowledge of pedagogy

Knows how to teach and methods and materials to use. Able to develop programmes.

D6 Knowledge of caring skills, concern with children's health and wellbeing

Establishes a safe, stable and attractive learning environment.

D8 Organisation/preparation

Can organise space, materials, time, sessions well.

D11 Able to work in different range of curriculum areas

D12 Knows and understands philosophy of centre in which they are working

D13 Has a clear philosophy and understands early childhood policies

E REPONSIVE TO INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

E1 Understanding of children

Knowledgeable about children's concerns, needs, rights, feelings, differences, development, interests. Skills in observation.

E2 Meets needs

Can meet the needs of individual children and their families.

E3 Cultural differences

Understands/respects/relates/is sensitive to different cultures and their traditions and instils these attitudes in children. Communicates biculturally.

E4 Family/community contexts

Aware of current social and political issues and their effect on education, children, families and community. Involves parents in their child's education.

4.4: Coding categories: how young children learn**AA Play****BB Trying Out**

1. Exploration/experimentation
2. Trial and error
3. Making choices
4. Repetition
5. Imagination

CC Watching and Doing

1. Observation
2. Imitating examples and models

DD Practical Experiences

1. Books, music, television and other equipment
2. Through the senses
3. Hands on experiences
4. Physical and natural environments
5. Exciting, interesting, fun, positive experiences
6. Friendly, secure environments

EE Social Interactions

1. Questioning
2. Social interaction and feedback from adults (other than parents)
3. With other children
4. *Whānau* and family

FF Maturation

their productions was because I anticipated the activities they prepared would indicate conceptions they held about the role of the teacher. They were useful when later reflecting with the case study students on their personal belief development. The three questionnaires in the main study, which repeated the questions asking what typifies a good early childhood teacher and seeking views on how young children learn, are referred to as A1, A2 and A3.

4.5.3 Longitudinal study: case studies

Phase two: March 1994 - November 1994

During this phase, work was begun with the case study participants. After they had given consent, students were invited to an individual interview. This interview had two purposes. The first was to establish rapport with the students and to endeavour to overcome some of the potential barriers that would exist between us because of our role differences. The second was to broaden my understanding of the views expressed in their two sets of questionnaire responses and to explore any differences that were apparent from one to the other.

Initial interviews with case study students

For this, and the following interviews, I decided to adopt what has been referred to variously as a “freely structured interview” (Whyte, 1982), “semistructured” (Reinharz, 1992), “informal interviewing” (Walker, 1988), “conversational and informal [techniques]” (Powney & Watts, 1987) and an “interactive interview” (Bell, 1984). Essentially, the aim of such an interview is to encourage the participants to express their thoughts without restraint on particular subjects. Preparing even a limited number of open-ended questions encourages students to respond from their own frames of reference, rather than one structured by prearranged questions (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). At the same time, the opportunity is present for the interviewer to probe the responses and to pursue meaning in ways that may not have been originally conceived.

After establishing rapport and obtaining consent for the use of a tape recorder, each participant was given a copy of their own responses to the first two questionnaires (A1, A2). After reading through them, they were asked individualised questions arising from

their comments and my observations (Appendix H). This initial interview, lasting approximately 50 minutes, yielded only a little in the way of useful information. It was difficult to determine which response the student was referring to when listening to the recorded discussion. The discussion was brief and added little to what I already knew. Rather than developing into an interactive interview, it was stilted and became more similar to a structured focus interview. This was disappointing, as earlier research I had undertaken with secondary students, interviewing them only once and using this informal interview approach, had furnished rich data.

In retrospect, I believe I had underestimated the impact of my role as director of the programme on students. I viewed myself as friendly and non-threatening; something was occurring in the research situation that suggested this not necessarily the way I was being perceived. Scheurich (1997) explored the nature of the interviewer and interviewee's relationship. He referred particularly to the work of Mishler, disagreeing with him on some points and agreeing on others. He agreed, for example, that the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee is frequently inequitable but also drew on work on resistance. He noted that

Critical theorists would contend that if the researcher is open to 'seeing' resistance, she or he will find that the interviewees are not just the subjects of researcher dominance, they are also active resisters of such dominance. (Scheurich, 1997, p.71)

He cited his own research in which he contended interviewees frequently controlled some or part of the interview, pushing against or resisting the goals, intentions, and questions of the interviewer. His point was that interviewees are active rather than passive participants in the interview, often using the interviewer as much as the interviewer is using them. He argued that this dominance-passive binary could be as confining as conceptions of the interview situation as totally inequitable in terms of power relationships. The dominance-passive form of relationship was one I could identify with in this second phase. The students seemed to be holding something back in the discussions and would agree with me or offer minimal responses. In the final interviews with Emma and Rebecca, both students on whom I prepared case studies, I commented on the ease with which we now discussed a range of matters, sharing ideas,

raising issues and reflecting on these in a relaxed way. I stated that I found this very different to the initial interviews and that the changes were noticeable with all the case study students. Emma's reply was

Yes but none of us knew you then. We didn't really know whether there was a certain way we had to answer the questions and just everything was pretty strange, a bit weird. Now it's so easy to talk with you about these things.

while Rebecca stated

We were all a bit scared coming to university and we were unsure about what to say. You're the big boss and man that was pretty scary! It took a while to be sure it was OK to say what we were really thinking. I suppose I was a bit careful about some things I said at the beginning.

It would appear that the differential in power was a determining outcome of the interview. Participants attempted to second-guess the information I might be seeking. They also exercised a resistance by holding back information and waiting to choose the time to disclose their beliefs and feelings, becoming more open and responsive. Viewed in this way the research participants were by no means passive in the research process. This raised the question of how one determines at any one time what proportion of the views expressed are deeply felt beliefs and what proportion are ideas expressed, either to satisfy the researcher, or to satisfy the research participant in their role of resistance.

The key methodological issue that arose at this point was how to ensure that diverse kinds of data were collected that truly reflected beliefs. If the case study participants continued to adopt a passive role there would be a difficulty in capturing the essence of their beliefs. On the other hand, by adopting different approaches, another dilemma arises. The data becomes more complex and increasingly difficult to analyse.

Observing and interviewing case study students

It was not until the latter part of phase two, towards the end of the first year, that I began to notice a change in participants' roles within the research process. Four of the case

study participants were observed on teaching practice for one session of three hours each and a discussion followed. The observations were arranged for a time after the student had received their visits and accompanying reports on their practicum progress from another university lecturer. My visit was scheduled at this time so that the students could see that the work on beliefs was truly separate from the assessment process. After the interview experience, I anticipated that this visit might create some tensions but this was not apparent, either in the behaviour of the students while under observation, or in the interview that followed.

During the time I spent in early childhood centres, I used non-participant observation for the same reason as reported by King (1978) in his study of infants' classrooms in England. I wanted to reduce the effects I had on the events I was observing. I would stay within roughly two metres of the students, sitting whenever possible to reduce my height and to make note taking easier. Sometimes conversations were inaudible to me but I felt moving in closer to the student was too intrusive for both the student and the children. At times, children would ask for my assistance, enquire about what I was doing, offer some advice or tell me something of great importance to them at the time. While I felt I could not ignore these contacts, I made few overtures that would have suggested I was going to become involved in an ongoing dialogue. Of course, some of these inevitably occurred. As has been noted, the extent of participation can change over time. "The ideal is to negotiate and adopt that degree of participation that will yield the most meaningful data..." (Patton, 1990, p.209).

As I observed, I recorded the events that were unfolding, leaving a wide margin at the side where I could make notes on matters I wished to clarify with the student. I recorded as much as possible about what was being said, interactions with children and staff, presumed intentions and actions. Although I was trying to observe simply what I was seeing, it should be acknowledged that the research questions would be having an effect on what I selected.

Immediately following the observation, I interviewed the student, using some set questions (Appendix I) and allowing the discussion to develop from the session I had

observed. While the observations were to complement or set in perspective data obtained from questionnaires and interviews, the interviews following the observations had several purposes. They were used to elicit more information on the participants' conception of the teacher's role and children's learning, the source of their beliefs, experiences which they believed were significant in their university programme, and also, to explore my interpretation of their experiences and how well I was representing their perspectives. These interviews were relaxed and participants were appreciative of the opportunity to reflect on their practice without it being an assessment process. They lasted between 50 minutes to one hour. The discussions were tape-recorded and the tapes were transcribed and searched for emerging themes. At this stage I also began keeping a journal to record my ongoing reflections and informal conversations.

With data on individual students increasing in quantity, I assembled meta-matrices or master charts as advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994). These displayed summaries of data. Each student's data was condensed onto one large sheet of cartridge paper. At this point, the data from each individual student was treated as a discrete entity. Then it was laid alongside that of other students. This enabled me to examine the charts for indications of changes in emphases of purported beliefs of individuals, and to look for patterns that were emerging amongst the group. These charts and the analysis of the questionnaire data formed the foundation for the propositions stated in phase four. Throughout the research process these charts proved to be extremely useful.

4.5.4 Longitudinal study: questionnaire B1, observations and interviews

Phase three: July 1995 - October 1996

Four forms of data collection were undertaken in this phase. They were a questionnaire of all students, observations and interviews of three more case study students, and a small group interview of four of the case study students.

Group data

Earlier questionnaire data had been transcribed and a “constant comparative” method of analysis was used to develop an understanding of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). In this phase, I wanted to gain an understanding of which categories were believed to be the most important and whether there were aspects the research participants, as individuals, had not thought of initially, but personally believed were of importance when they were presented to them. Questionnaire B1 was prepared. (Appendix J) On the first page, 18 characteristics and experiences students believed were important were specified. (These were the characteristics that had featured most frequently in responses to the first two questionnaires.) The students were then asked to rate these on a five point Likert type scale ranging from “not important at all” to “very important”. No distractors were included. The second page asked students to select the three characteristics they believed to be the most important and to comment on these.

Observations and interviews with case study students

The observations and interviews of three more case study students followed the same format as outlined in the previous phase. I began to notice that in the initial stages, before the tape recorder was switched on, and at the conclusion of the interview after I had turned the tape recorder off, there was often interaction that provided good research data. I, therefore, resolved to turn on the recorder earlier and leave it on later than had previously been the case.

A small group focus interview was planned to bring together the case study participants in two groups over lunch to discuss some of the emerging themes. Unfortunately, I scheduled these at a time when participants were experiencing what they perceived to be a high workload. In addition, some had employment and other commitments, which made attendance difficult. One lunch was scheduled and this was an enjoyable social occasion but, as a method for data collection, I felt it did not justify repetition. The four students did not all know each other well so some time was spent in familiarising themselves with each other. Their time was limited and it all was rather rushed. As an approach, I believe it suggested that small group interviewing should be preceded by a social occasion and then, on the second meeting, conversation around selected questions

may be more profitable. In the current study, the familiarisation time was truncated and this influenced the research participants' responses. They were cautious and less forthcoming than became evidenced in their individual interviews. (Interview excerpts are presented in Appendix K).

During this time, a number of propositions were emerging that tied together the literature and the questions that were presenting themselves from the collected data. These propositions impacted on the investigation focus. They were:

- Beliefs have their origins in the life experiences of individuals.
- Beliefs are closely tied to a person's identity.
- Beliefs are resistant to change.
- Changes in beliefs may result from repeated exposure to new ideas, the presentation of ideas that challenge one's thinking, critical experiences in one's life, the opportunity to reflect on one's own ideas.
- A preparedness to take risks is part of this change process.
- The social context exerts an influence on the ideas that one expresses.
- Views on the teacher's role are influenced during the three years in a teacher education programme by experiences in the field, exposure to new ideas and experiences, a greater understanding of the political nature of early childhood education and education in general.
- An understanding of the beliefs or ideology underlying early childhood practice is more readily recognised and articulated as students proceed through the programme.
- Beliefs have a strong affective component.
- Ideas expressed as newly formed beliefs do not necessarily maintain their potency over time.
- There is a movement from seeing a teacher as more 'caring' to one where the teacher has more responsibility for facilitating learning, and adopts a more active, reflective role in the process.
- Some, but not all, beliefs are reflected in one's actions.
- Changes in beliefs about the teacher's role are reflected in beliefs about how young children learn. Adult interaction with children achieves a new significance.

4.5.5 Longitudinal study: observations, interviews and questionnaires B2 and A3

Phase four May 1996 - October 1997

Data collection in this phase consisted of observations and interviews of all case study students, as in the first two phases. The only difference was that the observations for each of the students were longer and over two to three half days. After the first day's observation, the opportunity was taken to focus on behaviours that were or were not representative of the beliefs expressed.

Group data

All consenting students completed Questionnaire B2 (Appendix L) and A3 (Appendix C) in their third year. Questionnaire B2 was a similar questionnaire to that given in the previous phase. Students were asked to rate a set of characteristics. These included the five characteristics students rated the most important from the earlier questionnaire, plus an additional 16 items taken from students' responses to Questionnaires A1 and A2. They were invited to add any other characteristics they believed had been omitted, and to rate their importance. They then selected from the list the four characteristics they believed to be the most important, commenting on their choice. Questionnaire A3 was issued on the same occasion, once B2 was completed. It repeated the questions from phase one that asked about their beliefs on the characteristics of a good teacher and how they believe young children learn.

Overall, the questionnaires achieved the aim of providing data that reflected some of the beliefs and understandings of a group of participants, and allowed for differences and changes to be mapped over time. The second set of questionnaires (B1 and B2), where students were asked to select the most important characteristics of a teacher from a given list and to comment on these, was more fruitful than anticipated. Rather than giving a superficial short answer, participants provided a justification for their choice. This allowed a greater understanding of why the participants believed their choices to be significant.

As anticipated, the questionnaire data had some degree of superficiality. Absent from this process was the opportunity to explore with individuals the reasons for their responses, how ideas had developed and why there were changes in selection choices. In other words, there was less opportunity to tap into the subjective data existing in participants' minds, to interpret their world of meaning and to gain some understanding of how or why they had constructed their reality.

4.5.6 Case study data

Phase four

This phase covered a longer time span than was originally anticipated as some of the case study participants took longer than three years to complete their Diploma of Teaching. One, for example, took one year's leave from the programme to spend time overseas and another had experienced difficulties in courses in first year, requiring her to complete the programme over a longer time period.

Once all the data were transcribed, I again interviewed individually the case study group. The purpose of this interview was to encourage the participants to reflect on their experiences over their time in the teacher education programme, in relation to their beliefs and the research questions (see Appendix M). These students were presented with a complete copy of all their data. This included observations, transcripts of interviews and questionnaire responses. They were invited to take them away, read them through and to indicate if there were additions or deletions they wished to make. A time was arranged for them to meet with me when I agreed to have the first draft of their story ready to present to them.

Creating a story for a research participant places tremendous responsibility on the researcher. The onus is on one to ensure the story is accurate and conveys the meaning the participant intended. Although the researcher assumes the responsibility of interpreting the story and in the main uses their own form of discourse, it is the participants' voices that should be heard and they should feel ownership of their stories. Participants revealed information and thoughts to me that were often deeply personal

and that had strong affective components. I had the responsibility of selecting what I used. I tried to maintain the integrity of each participant's experiences but avoided including material that I believed could be hurtful to research participants when they were confronted with it in print, and particularly when the information was only peripheral to the purposes of the research.

The case study students eagerly anticipated having their story revealed. The personal stories drew upon all the data collected. For each student, I described a sampling of their beliefs relating these to their life experiences they had shared with me. These included, for example, the basis for their decision to enter early childhood teacher education and their own experiences of schooling. I read each student their story aloud and they were invited to interrupt if there were, for example, errors, omissions or misrepresentations in the account. This became a moving experience for us both. Several allowed me to read the story in its entirety and then we discussed it. Others interrupted and we made changes there and then. Regardless of the method adopted, all the students were overwhelmed and excited this approach. They suddenly seemed to appreciate the richness and complexity of their lives and of their own thinking. Statements made at this time included:

I've never heard my story before. No one has ever done this for me before.
Wow, that's me!

The emotional impact was not short lived for when I met with one of the students, Madison, five months later, she said excitedly:

I was thinking of you the other day. I read my story again. I cried. It was great but I can't believe it. And I can't believe some of the silly things I said at the beginning. They were so naive.

This demonstrated how satisfying this approach was for the research participants. At the same time, the approach yielded a useful, extensive information bank of data. More than anything it demonstrated the crucial ethical role of the researcher in ensuring the research participants are not harmed by the experience.

After the need for changes to the story was clarified and the meaning was established, each student was given a copy of the original to take away. The opportunity to provide further feedback was made available. Another meeting was arranged when the revised story was presented to each participant for her approval and for her own records. These stories formed the basis for the individual case studies. (For an example of the draft of one participant's story see Appendix N)

4.6 Summary

The product of this research is a picture of the beliefs of early childhood students in one teacher education programme in New Zealand. The research design was longitudinal and data collection employed multiple methods. Longitudinal studies present difficulties in tracking participants and maintaining their interest in the process but the richness and complexity of the data collected outweigh these difficulties. In terms of methods, issues surfaced as to the appropriateness of small focus group interviews for belief research and the need to take into account the social context when ascertaining beliefs during the research process.

The picture of beliefs students brought to the programme and developed during their course of study is presented in Chapter Six and in the case study chapters that follow. The data included in these chapters were analysed by drawing on strategies suggested in grounded research Glaser & Strauss (1967) and by Miles & Huberman (1994).

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

In this chapter, the analyses of the questionnaire data from the 17 participants will be addressed. The focus is on exploring the themes and developments that occurred in the beliefs, as evidenced in the responses to the questionnaires. This analysis will examine:

- participants' beliefs about the good teacher and how young children learn, and
- the nature of beliefs, taking into account their tenacity, their presence or their absence and/or their changing nature.

Subsequent chapters will present the seven case studies.

5.1 Questionnaire Responses

In the first two questionnaires (A1, A2) administered at the time of selection and at the conclusion of the first three weeks in the programme, students were asked to complete the sentence "A really good teacher is one who ..." and to write a paragraph explaining how they thought young children learn (Appendices C & D). This questionnaire was again completed at the end of the three years (A3). The second set of questionnaires, one in the second year (B1) and one in the latter part of the third year (B2), required the students to select from a list those characteristics they believed to be the most important and to comment on their choice (Appendices J and L).

The data were examined in two ways. Firstly, the group data were considered as a whole and, secondly, each participant was also treated as a discrete entity and indications of changes or consistencies were sought within the individual's written statements. The seven students on whom case studies were prepared will be included in the group data, but only minimal reference will be made to them when considering individual responses. Aspects of their beliefs will be reported more fully in the case studies that follow.

5.2 Beliefs about the Role of the Early Childhood Teacher

Four significant themes emerged in the data relating to beliefs on the role of the good early childhood teacher. These themes were selected as significant because they demonstrated the shifts in data referred to at the beginning of this chapter and evidenced by the majority of participants. In the analyses, the content and shifts, or changes and consistency in beliefs were under scrutiny. The four themes that will be reported relate to the role of the teacher and the move from

- a dyadic to an ecological view of early childhood education
- an emphasis on caring to an emphasis on educating
- a focus on homogeneity to a focus on heterogeneity
- a sense of spontaneity to one of predictability.

5.2.1 From a dyadic to an ecological view of early childhood education

At the outset of the research, many of the participants referred to characteristics of a teacher that appeared to be set in a context in which only a child, or children, and the teacher featured. The majority of the group moved to envisaging the good teacher as one who would interact with, and take account of, a much wider group in order to be truly effective, with some also recognising the influence of the socio-cultural and political contexts in which education takes place. Table 5.1 (p.119) indicates the contexts in which participants in questionnaire A1 indicated the teacher had a role. The arrows signify areas that were referred to later over the duration of the research. To demonstrate this shift, material that related in particular, to the need for the teacher to be an effective, responsive communicator will be used.

The teacher as an effective, responsive communicator – from dyadic to multiple relationships

The good teacher can communicate with all children and can interact with a child in any situation in the right way. They listen carefully to the child. (Judy A1)¹

¹ A1 indicates the particular questionnaire from which the quoted response was taken.

Just as in the preliminary study, the teacher as an effective, responsive communicator emerged as an ongoing theme in the group data. Statements similar to those made by Judy were common. In the first and second questionnaires, for example, 13 of the 17 participants regarded the establishment of effective relationships with children as a major responsibility of an early childhood teacher. The significance of communication in the dyadic relationship between teacher and child was referred to frequently and the role of listening in relationships noted. Participants identified the good teacher as one who can:

communicate effectively with young children and can listen to others' ideas. (Sally, A1)

communicate well with children and can explain a task to them in their language. (Sarah, A1)

listen to the children and respects and hears what they say. (Trudie, A1)
talk to the children at an appropriate level. (Trudie, A2)

It appeared that communicating, relating and interacting effectively with children in a variety of situations were regarded as vital attributes in good teachers. Moreover, the students maintained that teachers would have the ability to form comfortable, sound relationships with children. Overall, the relationship was viewed as a reciprocal one in which children would feel at ease in approaching the early childhood professional and engaging in interactions with them. Each child could be confident they would be listened to carefully, communicated with at their level of thinking and treated with respect.

Furthermore, in the first two questionnaires, eight of the participants identified the significance of establishing a relationship with parents. Features of the relationship were, however, expressed in general terms that indicated little of the nature or substance of these relationships. A small number of participants implied that the effective teacher would be assuming an "expert" role. The flow of information and knowledge would be from teacher to parent rather than in a partnership model where collaboration would take place. For example, Madison (A1) stated that "parents should feel comfortable with the teacher", Sarah (A1) that "the good teacher can respond to parents to sort out problems" and Emma (A2) that a good teacher will "give support and knowledge to the parents/caregivers." However, even early in the

Table 5.1 Shifts in context: recognition of education in a wider social context

	child and teacher	and parents	community and socio-political issues	and <i>whānau</i> and/or colleagues
Sam	shaded	→		→
Judy	shaded	→		→
Debbie	shaded	shaded	shaded	→
Maki	shaded	→		
Madison	shaded	shaded		→
Rebecca	shaded	→		→
Emma	shaded	shaded	→	→
Sally	shaded		→	
Sarah	shaded	shaded	→	shaded
Trudie	shaded	shaded	→	
Sophie	shaded	→		→
Lenore	shaded	shaded	→	shaded
Natasha	shaded	shaded	→	→
Trina	shaded	shaded	→	shaded
Melinda	shaded	shaded	→	shaded
May	shaded		→	
Karol	shaded	→	→	shaded

The shaded sections indicate participants' expressed ideas in the first questionnaire (A1). The arrows indicate areas of the social context to which they made reference at a later state in the research.

programme, it was noticeable that these responses were in the minority.

By the second year, a subtle shift was becoming noticeable. Relationships with children were still stressed, but the network of people with whom effective open communication was considered necessary had extended, and there was a shift in the nature of the relationship espoused. Instead of the main focus being on children, this was now widened to include the family and *whānau*.

In the third year, 9 of the 17 participants selected the establishment of positive relationships with parents and *whānau* as one of the most significant characteristics of a teacher. Seven had widened the net further to include colleagues, administrators and other adults. Supporting comments included:

Parents and *whānau* are important in running a centre. You need their input and they need to trust and rely on you to teach/care for their children. (Sarah, B2)

In order to give the best care and education to the child, the teachers must have good relationships with parents/*whānau*, children, teachers and administrators. (Emma, B2)

These shifts demonstrated a growing awareness of features of an ecological model of education and the necessity for connections and consistency among all aspects of the child's world. The good early childhood teacher, it was increasingly believed, was one who is supportive of families and *whānau*. Participants stated an appreciation of the necessity to ensure links between the child, the early childhood centre and the child's community in order to enhance the child's learning and development:

If you don't support the child's family, it makes the teacher's job very difficult because it's hard to link the learning environment to the home environment. (Sophie, B2)

By the third year, some participants expressed beliefs that the teacher would take cognisance of socio-political issues and would understand the place of early childhood education as a sector of the education system. Moreover, there was a growing awareness of the idea that good early childhood teachers would be able to articulate a philosophy of education and work within it.

Rebecca exemplified this movement of the conception of the teacher from a narrow to a wider contextual focus. Thus, in the first questionnaire, the teacher and child were at the centre of her statements. Parents were introduced in response to questionnaire A2. In addition, a number of matters relating to issues such as an appreciation of cultural diversity, children's rights and an understanding of policy were highlighted as characteristics of the good teacher. Rebecca appeared to be developing an appreciation that teachers operate in a socio-cultural context where political and philosophical matters impact on their role.

While most individuals reflected the shifts apparent in the group data, that is, a shift from a focus on children to a focus on a broader social context, there were two exceptions, May and Maki. May referred almost constantly only to the teacher and the child. In terms of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, her attention was directed almost exclusively at relationships within the immediate setting at the microsystem level. Maki, similarly, focussed almost exclusively on the child, although, eventually, the teacher's relationship with parents was also cited as being significant.

These responses may well to be linked to both May's and Maki's situation of being second language learners and engaging in a teacher education programme in a culture with which they were still becoming familiar. For May, the culture in many respects was still foreign to her. She had been in New Zealand for only a few months before applying for the programme. Personally grappling with the new culture, in itself, presented many challenges to her. Focussing on the interaction that the good early childhood teacher has with children may have afforded her more security than attempting to see beyond this. While Maki also reflected this more limited view of the teacher's role, as her mastery of English and confidence increased, she stated that she believed that it was important that the teacher develop sound relationships with parents.

5.2.2 From an emphasis on caring to an emphasis on educating

Closely linked to the belief of the teacher as an effective communicator were statements that clearly positioned the teacher in a caring and nurturing role. Most of the participants initially expressed beliefs which indicated that they perceived this role of caring and nurturing as important. Over the three years, there were, however, shifts as they moved from conceiving of the teacher as a carer or nurturer to being a facilitator of children's learning and later, to being a professional educator. What was very apparent was that when these shifts occurred, the participants were not totally abandoning their earlier thinking; rather they were incorporating or situating their earlier beliefs about the good teacher into their widening conceptions of the role. Figure 5.1 (p.122) illustrates the way in which earlier beliefs became embedded in those expressed later in the research.

This section will examine the participants' beliefs as they expanded on their ideas of the good teacher. It will do so under the following headings:

- The teacher as carer or nurturer
- The teacher as a facilitator of children's learning
- The teacher as an educator committed to a professional role.

Table 5.2. (p.123) provides exemplars from each participant's responses, illustrating the shifts that were occurring for individuals as well as for the group.

The good teacher as a carer or nurturer

The really good early childhood teacher is a sensitive person, someone who is caring and understanding and has patience and understanding when children need help. (Sally, A1)

In the first two questionnaires, 13 of the 17 participants referred to the teacher as a caring person. A good teacher was believed to possess such personal characteristics, or traits, as "warmth", "sensitivity", "kindliness", "understanding", "patience" and a desire to "care for children". Prior experience with children was not cited as significant. In their first year, participants appeared very comfortable with this notion of the teacher as a caring person. They strongly suggested that the good teacher would be liked and accepted by children in social interactions. Three

participants, in particular, noted that the teacher would love children. A further two saw this in friendship terms, stating that the teacher should be the child's friend. One wrote that the teacher should think of the child in more intimate terms as a best friend:

The good early childhood teacher will be a friend to children and tell them that if they have problems they can always come to you. (Natasha, A1)

The good early childhood teacher sees a child as a best friend [and] protects the child as you would a best friend. (Melinda A1)

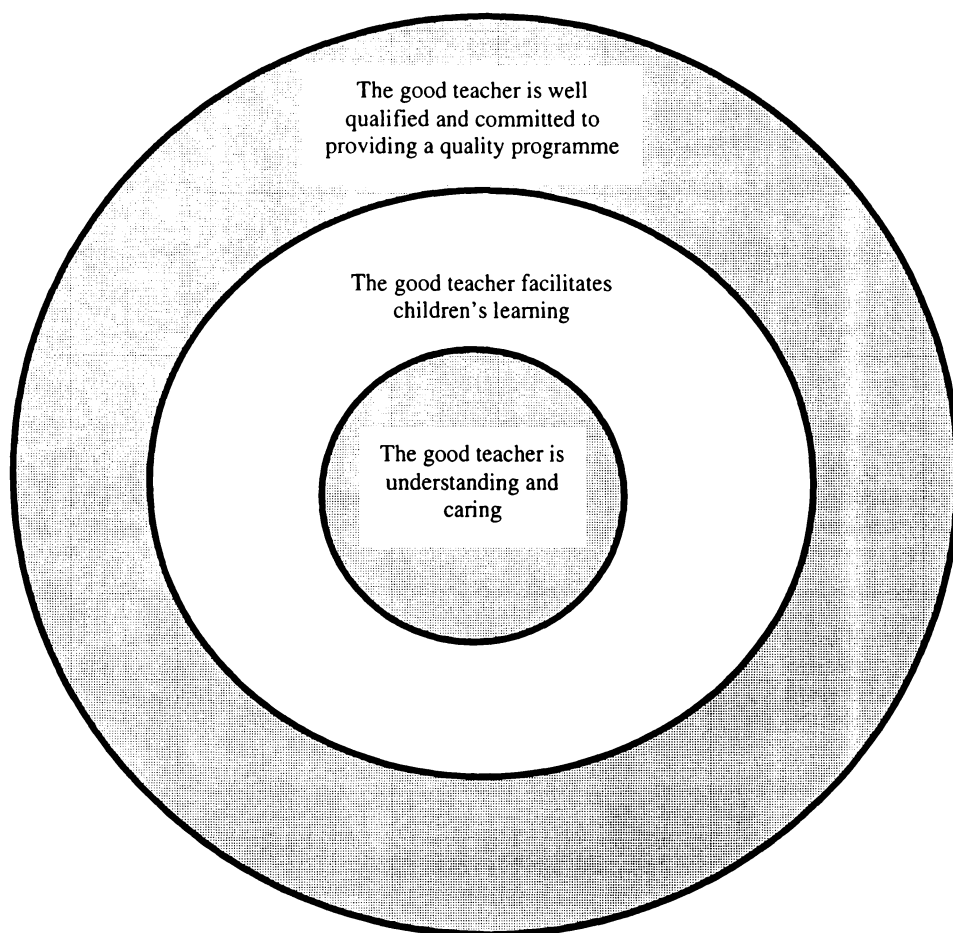


Figure 5.1 The development of participants' beliefs from an emphasis on caring to an emphasis on education

Table 5.2 Shifts from the view of a teacher as a carer to that of educator

	The teacher as: kind and caring	a facilitator of children's learning	qualified and committed to their work
Sam	Loves children is patient (A1)	Basically someone who encourages each child to do their best (A3)	Is committed to caring for and teaching the early childhood age group (A2)
Judy	Listens carefully to the child (A1)	Can cater for the child's needs (A1)	Trained teachers should cater for the educational and individual needs of all children appropriately (B2)
Debbie	Loves children (A1)	Children learn, especially if given, encouragement, motivation and support (B1)	Research shows trained teachers are better (B2)
Maki	Caring and has a positive attitude (A1)	In order for children to learn and grow the staff must encourage and extend children's ideas (B2)	... [an] education qualification is very important because trained teachers provide better quality programmes. (B2)
Madison	Is able to relate to the child and the child can relate to that person (A1)	Makes learning fun for the children (A2)	Committed to early childhood education [as] it is a crucial phase in the child's life and in their education (B2)
Rebecca	Is very caring and has time for every child's individual needs (A1)	Extends their learning in all areas including social and academic (A1)	I feel if you can't show enthusiasm and give time freely to help develop the child's agenda, why work with children (B2)
Emma	Builds trust with the child (A1)	Lets children learn at their own pace and helps them work things out (A1)	Has some training (A3)
Sally	A sensitive person. Someone who is are caring and understanding (A1)	A teacher needs to know strategies and ways of encouraging and supporting children's learning (B1)	Training is an important indicator of quality in early childhood education (B1)
Sarah	Builds respect from children (A1)	Empowers children in their learning in all activities in the centre (A3)	Committed to early childhood education (B2)

	The teacher as: kind and caring	a facilitator of children's learning	qualified and committed to their work
Trudie	Listens to the children and respects and hears what they say (A1)	... helps the child problem solve..helps with their progress (A1)	Is well qualified (A2)
Sophie	A person who is kind, has patience (A1)	One who encourages exploration and imagination in play (A2)	A teacher education qualification is important (B2)
Lenore	Loves children, spending time with them (A1)	There is no point in being an early childhood teacher if you do not encourage and motivate the children (B1)	If teachers are trained then all other things should fall into place (B2)
Natasha	Be a friend to the children, tell them if they have any problems they can always come to you (A1)	I think it is very important to meet children's needs and if necessary to change their teaching... in order to support the children always (B1)	I feel that it is very important to have fully qualified teachers as they will have the basis in child development and other important aspects (B2)
Trina	Cares for children's needs hygiene-wise, safety and security (A1)	Has the knowledge and ability to develop children's physical and mental skills (A1)	Willing to learn new ideas and information continuously (A2)
Melinda	Accepts a hug, gives a hug, helps to right the wrong (A1)	It sounds easy [to encourage, motivate and support learning] but in practice it takes time to develop these skills (B1)	
May	Careful [with] children. Loves children (A1)	Children need to learn and grow. [Teachers] need to teach and encourage, motivate and support them (B2)	Has a teacher education qualification so you will know the base of quality child care (B2)
Karol	Has tolerance and patience (A1)		To ensure children are provided with quality care and education qualified staff is one of the essential ingredients (B2)

None directly equated the role with that of a parent, although the implicit message may well be that a combination of the characteristics cited would be those of a “good parent”. This would, however, be conjectural. The concerns expressed on the necessity of having a sound understanding of children could be read equally as supporting the role of either the teacher or parent.

By the second year, a fewer number - 7 of the 17 participants - selected kind and caring as one of the most important characteristics of the teacher. There was some reiteration of the points reported above, with comments made on how these particular characteristics enhanced the relationship between the teacher and the children in her or his care. A meeting with some of the case study participants, shortly after these data were collected, was an opportunity to seek their views on the significance of caring. They were asked if they thought that a good parent always made a good teacher, and vice versa. There was agreement that this was not necessarily the case. Emma, for example, calling on personal experience, said that her mother had been a good parent but that she did not think she would necessarily make a good teacher. Similarly, it was contended that a good teacher would not necessarily make a good parent. What was noted was that the roles required different skills, abilities and knowledge.

By the third year, caring as an attribute was receiving attention from only five of the participants, and when it was specifically commented on, beliefs were more strongly expressed. Sam, for instance, regarded being kind and caring as “essential in any teaching position”, while Karol described them as “paramount”. While there was less explicit focus on caring as a desirable quality in the final year, when the responses of individual students were scrutinised, it was apparent that the notion of caring had not disappeared. Rather, it had become more implicit or even taken for granted.

The good teacher as a facilitator of children’s learning

The change from carer to educator was first evidenced by a move from statements that indicated a good teacher needed to do more than care, know and understand children. Initially, participants had referred to caring practices the good teacher

should engage in; the knowledge they believed that an early childhood teacher should possess was that required to care for and to understand children effectively. Knowing about children, being able to see things from their perspective, and recognising their needs, were emphasised.

Ten participants, in the second year, chose as one of the most important characteristics of a good early childhood teacher the need to encourage, motivate and support children's learning. The first exemplified the shift to viewing the teacher as also a facilitator of learning. Explanations accompanying and explaining their selection referred to the good teacher as one who had strategies and ways of supporting children in their learning, and could encourage and extend children's ideas. Two participants (Madison and Lenore) made comments to the effect that if encouraging, motivating and supporting children's learning were not some of the most important things early childhood teachers did, then there was little justification for their work and presence in an early childhood setting.

Further support for beliefs in the teacher as a facilitator of learning were even more obvious in the third year. In the final open ended questionnaire (A3), 11 participants wrote of the good teacher providing for children and recognising their rights. Thirteen included statements on how the good teacher would enhance the learning of children through the employment of a variety of strategies and approaches. Reference was made to following the child's agenda, to providing scaffolding to assist the child learn and to adopting a child-centred approach. Debbie, for example, stated,

Teachers should be aware of the benefits of adult support and motivation to [children's] learning. They should extend children's development based on their needs, [using] a child-centred approach (Debbie, B2).

The focus had shifted to ensuring not only that children's learning was encouraged, but also on empowering them to learn.

The good teacher as an educator committed to their profession

In their third year, the participants increasingly viewed good teachers as qualified professionals committed to their roles and to their work with children and *whānau*.

Very obvious was the newly espoused belief that the teacher should be well qualified and committed professionally to her work. Although seven participants gave as their reason for entering the teacher education programme their desire to gain a qualification, only one stated in years one and two that a good teacher would be qualified. By the third year, 15 participants noted this as one of their beliefs. As they neared completion of their programme, when consideration was given to what constituted a good teacher, being qualified assumed a new significance and relevance not previously noted. It came to mind more readily as an idea on which the participants wished to comment.

This belief change has three possible sources. The first is the appreciation and acceptance of research findings on quality education. The second appeared to be related to an increasing confidence on the part of the participants and the third may be the valuing of a qualification once it is within reach. After investing money, time and effort to reach the qualification, then it may indirectly strengthen beliefs about the value of having well qualified people working in the early childhood education sector.

A greater understanding of the research literature on quality in early childhood education brought comments acknowledging these links. Sam, for instance, wrote that

Teacher education is important [because] research shows educated qualified staff are more aware of children's development and are better paid which in turn means better service. (Sam, B2)

At the beginning I thought you would have to like children, but I didn't know it actually takes a lot of training and that one person doesn't know everything about teaching and different theories. This year, [I've learnt] a lot from the research on quality teaching and quality teachers. This is where I formed my opinion about how important it is to have trained staff. (Sam, A3)

Coupled with this were comments from others suggesting that participants, armed with knowledge that training did make a difference, now perceived themselves as

more confident in their understanding of children and in providing for all aspects of their development and wellbeing. Sophie noted how her beliefs had changed:

[Teacher] education is important in early childhood education because my teaching relationships and beliefs in supporting children have changed. (Sophie, B2)

The participants now appeared to see themselves much more as professionals with responsibilities not only to children, and in many instances their families, but also to others working in education. This was epitomised by Trina who stated that the good early childhood teacher

Is trained with a diploma or more and can work effectively in collaboration with other staff members, special education professionals and the Ministry of Education (Trina, A3).

Furthermore, Trina and some others also believed that the good teacher would be involved in ongoing professional development, reflecting a willingness to continue their learning in order to update their knowledge and skills.

It should be noted that although the research literature on quality in early childhood education was frequently cited in the third year of the programme, participants made limited reference to research and literature in other areas of early childhood education. Rather, what were apparent were changes in language usage. Increasingly, participants, over the three years, began incorporating such terms as “holistic learning,” “empowerment,” “scaffolding,” “the zone of proximal development” and “advocacy” into their repertoire.

Overall, however, only minimal attention was directed at a teacher’s ability to work in a team and the skills needed to manage groups of children. Rather, participants tended to focus on the importance of establishing sound relationships with children and families, ensuring their needs were met and adopting an approach that was flexible and tolerant. It seemed that underlying such statements were beliefs that if these other approaches were in place, the managing of larger groups of children and working within the context of the team would present few difficulties.

Similarly, there was only minimal reference overall to the role of the teacher in programme planning, other than general statements that referred to meeting diverse needs. In the final questionnaire, for example, Judy incorporated into her responses the belief that the good teacher is able to plan programmes and observe children with a view to ascertaining the programme's effectiveness. Melinda echoed these beliefs when she wrote,

The good teacher can plan objectives and put plans into action and evaluate effectively, individually and within the team (Melinda, A3).

5.2.3 From a focus on homogeneity to a focus on heterogeneity

The impression gained from the initial questionnaire was that participants conceived of teachers working in centres where diversity among children, families and other team members was non-existent. By the third year, however, participants began to appreciate more fully the diverse nature of the population they would be working with as educators. In the latter stages of the teacher education programme, the teacher came to be viewed as an implementer of equity in the facilitation of children's learning, particularly when these children were from different ethnic groups or, to a lesser extent, when they had disabilities. An exploration of the changes that occurred in participants' responses, over the three years, with respect to cultural diversity follows.

In response to the first questionnaire, only 2 of the 17 participants acknowledged the existence of more than one culture in New Zealand. This was in spite of there being questions in the selection interviews that particularly targeted applicants' understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and their reactions to biculturalism in the New Zealand context. The two exceptions were Karol, who noted that the early childhood teacher should be aware of all ethnic groups, and Sally who believed the good teacher

Can get along with people from different backgrounds and culture and knows about the many cultures that make up New Zealand. (Sally, A1)

After three weeks in the teacher education programme, which included completing a course focussing on the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for all people living

in New Zealand, eight of the participants expressed ideas on the role of the teacher with respect to other cultures. These included the need to be culturally aware, open and sensitive to different ethnic groups, to treat children equally and to include different languages, cultures and songs in the daily programmes in early childhood centres.

In the second year, seven participants selected an understanding and respect of cultural diversity as one of the most important characteristics of the early childhood teacher. Others made reference to these aspects when examining relationships between the teacher, parents and *whānau*. The need to value different cultures was coupled with a belief that, by doing so, both the child and the family's wellbeing would be nurtured:

It is important to establish good relationships with parents because their ideas and beliefs need to be respected, they need to feel comfortable with you, and know that you will provide the best care and education for their child. They need to feel their family will be valued. (Trina, B1)

In their final year, eight participants stated that a good teacher would have a sensitivity and appreciation of cultural diversity. Judy, Lenore and Karol maintained the teacher would be committed to the Treaty of Waitangi and, thus, would respect the values of children and families. Melinda and Lenore saw the valuing of diversity as an essential indicator of quality programmes, and Natasha linked its significance directly to the teacher's work with all children:

The good teacher incorporates biculturalism as well as multicultural aspects into the programme, giving children the opportunity to learn empathy and understanding of the world. By increasing their understanding you show the value of diversity. (Natasha, A3)

Natasha's statement typifies the shift that occurred over time. The teacher was increasingly described as having a proactive role in ensuring diversity was respected. By the end of the research, the good teacher was regarded as a caring, responsive educator who, as an intrinsic part of their role, appreciated diversity and ensured that an understanding of different cultures was a feature of their programmes. This was accompanied by increasing attention to children and family's rights. As noted earlier, while the concept of "equal" treatment was applied to all children and families, most

attention was directed at children from ethnic groups other than Caucasian, and to children with disabilities and their families.

Trudie and Debbie were two participants who entered the programme with beliefs that mentioned the teacher's role in respect to diversity. Throughout the three years, both Trudie and Debbie appeared to strengthen their entry beliefs, eventually using more educational terms to express their views in their final year. Initially, Trudie did not use the term "rights", although she spoke of respecting each child's individuality, extending children in every aspect of their development and seeing their abilities and not their disabilities. In her second year, she was relating her ideas to the rights of children and the respect a good teacher would accord children and families. Finally, in the third year, it was interesting to see her incorporating language widely used by educators into her statements. For instance, she wrote of the teacher being "respectful of all cultures" and using "a child-centred approach in which children's agendas are followed and extended". In order to do this, she maintained the teacher had to have knowledge of "developmental needs and milestones", as well as "inclusive beliefs" that are carried through into "inclusive practices". A similar pattern was evident in Debbie's expression of her beliefs over the time of the research.

Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989) outlined a six-point continuum that people need to move along if they are to develop cultural competency or proficiency. Using the latter four stages on this continuum, all participants' responses have been charted under the headings Cross et al., (1989) presented (Table 5.3, p.133). Although it is difficult to ascertain from questionnaire data exactly where a respondent should be accurately placed on the continuum, an effort was made to do this. Only four of their points on the continuum have been employed. The first two have not been included. There was nothing in the participants' statements to suggest either, that they perceived good teachers as being culturally destructive and engaging in behaviours that would be oppressive of others or, that they should demonstrate a cultural incapacity and lack the skills to be effective with individuals from diverse groups. The participants' comments are categorised in Table 5.3. Using only the data collected from the questionnaires, most of the applicants appeared to accept and indicate that the good teacher would demonstrate a degree of respect for people from

Table 5.3 **Comments that suggest participants' position in developing cultural proficiency (Adapted from Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989)**

	Cultural blindness: little or no specific reference to ethnic diversity	Cultural precompetence: does not proceed beyond tokenism or searching for ways to respond	Cultural competence: accepts and respects differences and implements policies that support beliefs and commitments	Cultural proficiency: those who seek to refine their approach by learning more about diverse groups through research, dissemination and fully inclusive practices
Sam		Is prepared to include different languages cultures & songs in their activities (A2)		
Judy			... various cultures need to be respected & catered for in an early childhood setting (B1) Committed to the Treaty of Waitangi & respects the needs & values of children & their families (B2)	
Debbie		Willing to accept children of all races & abilities. Willing to include the Māori language & culture in their teaching (A1)	Important for overall teaching standard to understand & respect cultural diversity (B2) Has an inclusive policy (A3)	
Maki		Understands & respects cultural diversity (B1)		
Madison	Mention of inclusive practices but not in relation to ethnic differences			
Rebecca			Increases children's understanding of other cultures. ... By increasing their understanding you show the value of diversity(B2)	
Emma	No mention, other than speaking of needs globally			
Sally		Can get along with people from different backgrounds & cultures (A1)	Teachers need to be able to celebrate the differences & similarities (A2) Provides for different needs (A3)	

	Cultural blindness: little or no specific reference to ethnic diversity	Cultural precompetence: does not proceed beyond tokenism or searching for ways to respond	Cultural competence: accepts and respects differences and implements policies that support beliefs and commitments	Cultural proficiency: those who seek to refine their approach by learning more about diverse groups through research, dissemination and fully inclusive practices
Sarah				Has and wants ongoing training for biculturalism. Will work with <i>whānau</i> & parents to develop a programme that suits all needs. (A3)
Trudie		Respectful of all cultures		
Sophie		Open minded about different cultures (A2)		
Lenore		Very important in a centre to understand & respect cultural diversity (B2)	Believes in & is knowledgeable in biculturalism, multiculturalism, has a strong commitment & understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi (B2)	
Natasha		Teachers need to have an understanding of their pupils' culture. (A.1) ..will be able to support our children, <i>whānau</i> & other teachers (B2) ... able to respect children of different abilities, ethnic groups, special needs...commitment to biculturalism & use of Māori language plus an understanding of their cultures. (A3)		
Trina		Has cultural awareness & makes an effort to speak te reo Māori (A3)		
Melinda	Can talk to a child as an equal. Can see a face & not a colour (A1)			
May		We need to know [about] cultural differences & have an open mind (B1)		
Karol		Cultural awareness of all ethnic groups (A1) Need to understand & respect all differences & it is vital to always consider the rights & needs of children (B2)		

different cultures. It should be noted that participants still wrote using very general statements and appeared unsure about how the good teacher would respond to children from different cultures. Little reference was made to policies and practices that the teacher could implement.

5.2.4 From spontaneity to predictability

... lots of colourful and interesting ways of teaching. It needs to be fun for children to learn. Not boring like the same way all the time. It might mean being imaginative to show them a different way of learning (Sarah, A2)

Almost half the students in the preliminary study believed that a good early childhood teacher would find enjoyment in their career and their day-to-day work with children. This was similar to the first year of the main study (A2), where 9 of the 17 participants, echoed this view. They focused on teachers and children sharing an environment in which it is a fun place for both the teachers and the children to be. Sarah's statement above exemplified this and Karol expanded on this idea, maintaining teachers would have

... a sense of imagination, creativity and spontaneity. They would have an enjoyment of children as children and a sense of fun. I think you have to be fun and enjoy keeping company with a large group of children. (Karol, A1)

According to Melinda (A1), this sense of fun would be shown in their approach and they would "sing, laugh, dance, love, and play and see what a child sees." Trina also emphasised the involvement of the teacher in expressive activities but, along with three other participants, linked it more directly to children's learning or the learning environment:

The good early childhood teacher has an open mind and does not feel ashamed to sing, dance and be silly while educating children as this creates a fun learning environment for children. Is creative and imaginative in games and activities. (Trina, A1)

By the second year, only 4 of the 17 students made reference to such beliefs and by their third year this number reduced to 3. Of the three, it was only Rebecca who stated beliefs that maintained an element of fun, creativity and surprise to any great

extent. She linked her beliefs in these elements closely to her ideas about the way that such approaches enhance learning:

You have to be lateral and creative and extending what they've learnt. Being able to just have different ideas to extend children, being able to sort of encourage them to develop different ways to develop their interests. It might be like making a dinosaur or to act out these dinosaurs or find out more, like in the Reggio Emilia programmes. I think that's cool. So it's just knowing how to extend them in the best possible way. (Rebecca, A3)

This sense of excitement and enjoyment, the need to be creative and spontaneous and to grapple with opportunities as they arose in a way that stimulated children's learning, was lacking in many of the participants' later responses. Rather there was more of a sense that a teacher's actions would be predictable, planned and lacking in a light heartedness.

5.2.5 Summary of beliefs about good early childhood teachers

Over the three years of the programme, participants expressed many beliefs about how they perceived a good early childhood teacher. The beliefs that have been reported are predominantly those where there were marked shifts. These can be summarised as follows:

There was a shift from a dyadic view of the teacher's role, to a recognition that work in early childhood education involved the teacher in interaction with a wide group of workers, children, family and *whānau*, co-workers, administrators, other professionals and the community. The effect of broader socio-political issues on the teacher's work was acknowledged.

There was a shift from a view of the early childhood teacher as a carer to one of educator. The teacher came to be perceived as more than a best friend, but rather, as a facilitator of learning who was professional and demonstrated a commitment to their work. Caring was now embedded within the educating role. Reference was made to the literature on quality early childhood services and the use of educational terminology began to permeate the responses.

Participants initially gave the impression that the good teacher would be working in early childhood centres with children, families and co-workers of the same ethnic group as themselves. Later, it was believed that the good teacher would provide equitably for children and families from diverse groups. Children from different ethnic groups became the focus of these beliefs, although it was also maintained that the good teacher would include children with disabilities in regular centres.

Finally, there was a shift in the way in which participants referred to the teacher's behaviour within the programme. Early in the research, there was reference to the teacher being a creative person, who enjoyed her or his work, had fun and was able to spontaneously respond to situations as they arose. In the latter stages, there was little reference to these qualities. Rather, the portrait of the good teacher was one in which they were professional but more predictable, with fun no longer stated as part of the equation.

Overall, what became very clear was that the beliefs expressed and the shifts that occurred could be located within an ecological approach to human development. Initially the focus was on the child/parents and teacher in the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model. As the research proceeded, though, there was evidence that transitions were being made into other levels and an awareness of the larger social contexts that affect the teacher, the child and their family was expressed.

5.3 Beliefs about How Young Children Learn

The second question in questionnaires A1, A2 and A3 asked participants, to describe how they believed young children learn. When exploring the characteristics of the good early childhood teacher, participants made references to the way in which children learn and the strategies or approaches teachers could adopt to enhance learning. They wrote, for example, of communicating with children in ways that the children understood, of employing strategies that would extend their ideas, of scaffolding their learning, of empowering them and encouraging them in their play and exploration. Moreover, in their explanations of how young children learn, the implications for the teacher were frequently specified.

In the first questionnaires, participants' responses explaining how they believed young children learn reflected many similarities to those found in the preliminary study. Children were viewed as active learners who, when provided with the appropriate opportunities, would thrive in terms of their learning and development. Most frequently, participants at the beginning of the research believed that young children learn:

- by observing what is occurring around them and by imitating some of what they see (9 of the 17 participants)
- through exploration and play (13)
- through social interaction with adults in a secure environment (10).

In the final questionnaire (A3), changes were apparent. Fewer participants focussed on the role of observation and imitation (6). In contrast, there was more emphasis on the role of play, exploration and experimentation (17) and on the significance of interaction between children and adults (12).

In the section that follows, these predominant beliefs about children's learning will be examined. Reference will be made to three classes of learning theories or approaches, which, although not mutually exclusive, have major elements that assist in grounding participants' ideas about learning and the purpose of play within a theoretical framework. The theories or approaches selected are those which relate to participants' statements. They are listed in Table 5.4 (p.138). Examples from participants' responses, reflecting ideas that can be linked to different learning theories or approaches, are provided in Table 5.5 (p.141). The section will conclude with a statement on the ecological contexts in which participants' responses could be situated and a summary of their beliefs on learning.

5.3.1 Learning through observation and imitation

At first, careful observation by children was believed by nine participants to serve a most useful learning purpose. Not only was it seen as providing examples of behaviour to be emulated, but also enabling children to gain a better understanding of how things in the environment operate. Participants used words such as "copying" and "mimicking" to describe how children reproduced behaviours they had observed.

Table 5.4 Theoretical perspectives reflected in participants' responses about how young children learn

Theories or approaches	Theorists	Main Elements
Observation and imitation	Bandura & Walters, 1963 Skinner, 1957	Observation, imitation and modelling Observation not always followed by a learned behaviour
Cognitive-developmental	Piaget, 1962	Children individually create their knowledge of the world through interactions with people and materials Practice and consolidate on knowledge and skills through play
Sociocultural theories	Vygotsky 1986 Rogoff, 1995	Role of social and cultural contexts and adults and more mature peers in mediating learning Joint collaboration, joint construction of meaning Importance of symbolic play Learning embedded in context of social relations and socio-cultural tools and practices

These could be behaviours of siblings, other family members, early childhood educators or anyone with whom they were in contact:

Young children learn by listening to what is going on around them and also by observing or seeing. They learn a lot by example, especially from other people and those they spend a lot of time with such as siblings and child-care workers. (Lenore, A1)

Trina, for example, cited the processes of observation and imitation used by children

as a rationale for explaining the importance of the role model presented by caregivers.

Children learn through observing, through mimicking others. This is why a role model is important for an early childhood caregiver, always to be positive and to act in an appropriate manner. (Trina, A1)

Overall, the emphasis was on observing actions rather than learning about the properties or functions of objects. Two exceptions were the ideas expressed by Emma and Lenore. Emma (A1) maintained children “learn by watching how things work” and Lenore (A2) claimed that, “If you talk about something or show them [children] a way of doing things enough times they will learn.” Bandura and Walters (1963), in their theory of learning, emphasised the role of observation. They did, however, distinguish between observation and imitation, noting that while observational learning is occurring all the time, it may not be translated into performance either immediately or at all.

In the final year, year three, the numbers of participants citing imitation as a useful learning strategy had decreased from nine to six. These six still believed that children learn a lot by observing things and people around them and/or by imitating others. The others may be children (peers and siblings and other children) or adults (parents, teachers and other adults).

One noted that while she still felt imitation was one way of learning, she now believed it was a more complicated process than that. Referring to language learning Emma stated,

I always thought that they learnt it [language] by just picking it up from other people. But they also learn by what they see, and what they hear and they imitate it. Their peers have a lot to do with their language, learning. It's learnt through socialising ... through the interaction, rather than just imitating what the adults are saying. (Emma, A3)

While not totally discarding elements of the social theory of learning proposed by Bandura and Walters (1963), participants were attending more to exploration and play, the learning environment and the interactions within it as means of learning.

Table 5.5 Examples in participants' questionnaire responses of theories of learning implicit in their beliefs of how young children learn

Participants	Questionnaire	Examples of theories of learning implicit in beliefs of how children learn		
		Observation & imitation	Cognitive developmental	Sociocultural theories
Sam	A1	Imitate & copy those around them	Play, trial & error	
	A2		By playing, exploring.	
	A3	Through observation & just by looking & watching	Environment where they can explore	
Judy	A1			Learn with teachers. <i>whānau</i> & community who empower a child to learn
	A2	From watching other children.	Through play & exploration	Parents & teachers influence them from a young age
	A3			Learning may occur by taking an activity... & extending on it as an educator. ...can facilitate, observe, ask questions
Debbie	A1		From physical activity	Interaction with children, in kindergarten or neighbourhood playgroup
	A2			Learn from adults & from other children
	A3			Through exploration & play with teachers working with children to scaffold & extend their development
Maki	A1		Learn from play	From play & learning from others
	A2			Through play & partnership in playcentre or home
	A3			From other children as they interact with them & from adults.
Madison	A1			Learn from environment they are in...being taught by someone who is not threatening
	A2	See things being done & the end result	Play, trial & error	
	A3	Modelling effective language		Communication between peers. Being supported

Participants	Questionnaire	Examples of theories of learning implicit in beliefs of how children learn		
		Observation & imitation	Cognitive developmental	Sociocultural theories
Rebecca	A1			Everyone they come into contact with presents a learning context for them
	A2	Observing & copying	Trial & error, repetition	With help from an adult or child
	A3			By talking to teachers & exploring with them
Emma	A1	Observation		Interacting with adults & other children
	A2	Observation	Play & exploration	
	A3	Imitation		Through interaction with adults & children in play & more structured situations
Sally	A1	From example those around them set	Through play, experimenting	
	A2	From caregivers who are role models	Games	
	A3			With adults as supportive guides who help them
Sarah	A1		Repetition is important	With patient adults
	A2	Show them ways of doing things enough times they will learn	Repetition	
	A3	Imitation	Playing by themselves.	Through responsive staff who respond to their ideas & listen
Trudie	A1		Through play in a supportive environment	
	A2			In play with teacher there to extend learning & language
	A3			Through exploration & play with teachers scaffolding within the zone of proximal development
Sophie	A1			Learn with other children & adults who can explain how things work
	A2		Self exploration trial and error	
	A3	By observing others around them	Exploration & play as Piaget has stated	Influenced by the wider world
Lenore	A1	Observation & learn by example from siblings & childcare workers		
	A2	By observing & copying		
	A3		By playing freely where contribution is valued	

Participants	Questionnaire	Examples of theories of learning implicit in beliefs of how children learn		
		Observation & imitation	Cognitive developmental	Sociocultural theories
Nastasha	A1	By seeing things		
	A2	Through positive role models Imitation		
	A3		Experimenting	
Trina	A1	Observing & mimicking others	Repetition	
	A2	Observing & mimicking others	Repetition	
	A3		Exploring in a free play environment	By interacting with others & participating in group activities
Melinda	A1	Watching		
	A2	Mimicking adults	Through play & repetition	Through adults encouraging problem solving, cooperation sharing, friendship
	A3			Adults scaffold children's learning introducing them to a slightly higher level...work within the ZPD
May	A1		Play & becoming independent. Imagining things	Influence of teacher
	A2		Play	
	A3			From other children Through play & teachers who are encouraging.
Karol	A1	By example		From peers, family & friends
	A2			Through support & encouragement
	A3			When adults support their learning & provide opportunities that extend their ideas & challenge them to try new things alongside their peers

5.3.2 Learning through exploration and play

In the first questionnaire, only five people made mention of play. In two of these instances the statements were global and revealed little more other than that children learned through play. By the second questionnaire (A2), a total of 9 of the 17 participants had stated that they believed that children learn through play. This was conceived as covering a number of activities, including free play, messy play, and participating in activities such as baking and games. Exploration and/or

experimentation were referred to by 11 of the participants. Generally, these were regarded as integral aspects of play.

Pelligrini and Boyd (1993, p. 105) noted that “play is an almost hallowed concept for teachers of young children.” Many writers have recognised its role in children’s development and among the most influential was Piaget who regarded play as the means by which children construct their own knowledge and develop their thinking (Beard, 1969). As noted by Bowman (1990), Piaget’s emphasis is on “the self-directed nature of children’s play rather than on the role of the adult in changing children through play” (pp. 103-104).

In this section, the participants’ beliefs on play will be outlined using categories of play proposed by Piaget (1962) and Smilansky (1990), namely, functional play, constructive play, socio-dramatic play and games with rules.

Functional play

Piaget (1962) described the period in infancy when the child is exploring and attempting to make sense of their experiences, as the sensori-motor period. Initially, in this stage of development, there is a heavy reliance on the senses and later there are repetitive movements that have been interpreted as functional play. Other writers have preferred to regard this as exploration, a behaviour that is dominant in infancy and is replaced by play later in the early childhood years (Pelligrini & Boyd, 1993).

From the beginning of the research, the three participants who believed exploring or experimenting were ways children learned, invariably linked exploration and experimentation with play. Sally and Sam, for example, wrote:

I think children learn by trying things, which comes out of curiosity. They learn by play and in social situations. They probably learn a lot from making mistakes, trial and error, which helps them remember different things. (Sam A1)

I think young children learn by play and exploring. They try out different things and find out which games and activities they like and which ones they don’t. (Sam A2)

Children play with things and learn about them through play, experimenting with the things they are playing with and from the mistakes that they make. (Sally, A1)

For these participants, play and exploration were inextricably linked and continued well beyond infancy. The final set of responses (A3) reflected a similar pattern, with 11 of the participants linking exploration and play.

In comparison, learning through the senses, which Piaget (1962) also saw as significant in infants, received less mention as the research proceeded. Those who believed it was important did not indicate that they saw it as most significant during infancy. Rather, they noted it as a means of learning for children in their early years. To support her beliefs on the role of senses in children's learning, Natasha, for example, drew upon experiences and observations in a kindergarten. Her responses in the first two questionnaires were similar:

I think the way young children learn is by using their five senses. Because when I was at a kindergarten the children went around touching and feeling things and that's how they learn. Also by seeing things that is how they are taught about colours. (Natasha, A1)

I still think that young children learn by using their five senses, as this is why young children are always so curious. Because you often see young children going around smelling, touching things etc. (Natasha, A2)

Rebecca echoed these views, relating them explicitly to implications for the teacher:

I think that children learn with all five senses and that this should be encouraged. They need to be stimulated at all times and with this stimulation social qualities are important. Children believe that their world revolves around them and because of this everything and everyone they come in contact with will have some learning context for them. (Rebecca, A1)

Children were thus seen as learners who used their senses and were actively engaged with the environment. In the final year, the active engagement in the environment was receiving more attention than sensory learning. It may well be that learning through the senses had now become more implicit, and was not foremost, when participants responded to the final questionnaire.

Constructive play and socio-dramatic play

Smilansky (1990) described constructive goal-oriented play as an elaboration of sensory motor activities. She noted that this form of play often contains an element of pretend and that it is the materials that are the focus of attention. “The child acts upon the materials and enjoys doing something with them” (p.23). The child may, for example, use an item such as a block to stand for something else. In contrast, socio-dramatic play still has the imaginative element but generally occurs when the child is engaged in play with others. The child will take on a role in which they pretend to be someone else and bring earlier experiences to bear in fulfilling the role. Smilansky (1990) defined imitation as one of the central elements of this type of play.

Although, as noted earlier, participants in the research regarded imitation as a significant way of learning, this was not linked to play. Indeed, the idea of constructive and sociodramatic play as a means by which children learn, received scant reference. Eight people referred to it only briefly and each only once during the three years.

Games with rules

Games with rules may be either competitive or non-competitive. Again, there was little reference to these as a means by which children learn. Two participants, Sam and Sally, referred to games, but the nature of these were unclear and it could not be determined from their responses whether they involved rules.

As has been indicated in this section, there were occasions when the expression of beliefs by participants lacked sufficient information to interpret with certainty any underlying meaning or intent. This was not, however, the case when the role of adults in children’s learning was described.

5.3.3 Learning through social interaction with adults

From the beginning, it was clear that participants believed that adults had a role in facilitating children’s learning. In the first two questionnaires, social interactions

with adults received attention. More specifically, participants believed that children learn when:

- adults provide children with information (6 of the 17 participants)
- adults interact with children in a supportive manner (7)
- they are immersed in social practices in which adults are present (14).

At the end of the three years of the teacher education programme, the number of participants commenting on the significance of this adult/child interaction remained generally constant. There were, however, changes in their focus and it is these that will now be discussed.

Learning occurs when adults provide children with information

Six of the participants in the first two questionnaires (A1, A2) maintained that children learn through a variety of means, which included being told or taught. Madison, for example, noted that children must learn that there are rules and limitations to behaviour and the teacher would need to explain these to them, thus providing the necessary information and, in the process, teaching the rules. Sarah introduced the element of repetition. She claimed that if “you talk about something or show them [children] a way of doing things enough times they will learn.” Sophie, too, reiterated this idea of teachers assisting children in their learning by explaining to them how things work. The direction of communication in such instances appeared to be more one way than interactive.

This idea of learning by being told or taught did not appear in the same form in the third year. Rather, more participants believed that children learned as the result of interactions between the adult and children.

Learning occurs when adults interact with children in a supportive manner

By the end of three years, 12 of the 17 participants perceived adults, and particularly the teacher, as having a vital role in facilitating children’s learning through their interactions with them. While all emphasised the supportive nature of the interactions, five focussed particularly on this aspect. They discussed the learning that occurred when children were in relationships with adults with whom they felt comfortable talking and exploring, felt able to ask questions and were assured their

questions would gain a response. Overall, these social interactions were perceived as occurring in an environment in which the children felt they belonged and had a contribution to make. A further seven participants incorporated similar beliefs and expanded on these by referring specifically to the learning that occurred when a teacher or adult scaffolded an interaction and enhanced the child's learning. Mention was made of Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development.

These ideas were adopted into participants' beliefs from course work in the programme. Over the three years of the teacher education programme, and particularly in the third year, the work of Vygotsky and Rogoff are studied and their implications for practice addressed. In his socio-cultural theory of development, Vygotsky (1978) emphasised on the social bases of knowledge, viewing the social context and cognitive activity as interactive. A basic premise in his theory is that meaning is jointly constructed in collaboration and discussions with others in what he termed "personally meaningful experiences" (Vygotsky, in van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991). The adult (or more able peer) and the child work in tandem, both accepting joint responsibility in achieving a goal. A central idea used to explain this relationship centres on the concept of the zone of proximal development:

The zone of proximal development of the child is the distance between his actual development, determined with the help of independently solved tasks, and the level of potential development of the child, determined with the help of tasks solved by the child under the guidance of adults and in cooperation with his more intelligent partners. (Vygotsky, 1935 in van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p.337)

In the four examples that follow, the writings of Vygotsky are reflected. Reference is made to scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. It should be noted, however, that there was no acknowledgment of the source of the ideas and, in particular, the naming of Vygotsky himself:

The teacher should be there to extend their language and learning. Young children learn through exploration and play with teachers scaffolding within their zone of proximal development. (Trudie A3)

Children learn through play. They explore the environment and encounter problems - some problems occur naturally and others are created by supporting adults. Children explore various solutions to

problems; the adult can scaffold children's learning introducing them to a slightly harder level, they know when the problem is too hard, they work within the 'ZPD'. (Melinda, A3)

Children learn best through exploration and play with teachers working with children to scaffold and extend their development. (Debbie, A3)

They learn through responsive staff who respond to their needs and scaffold. (Sarah, A3)

Not all participants specifically related their ideas to identifiable concepts from Vygotsky's work. Many, however, incorporated ideas on the significance of the environment, an integral aspect of Vygotsky's theory.

Learning occurs when children are immersed in social practices in which adults are present

In the first two questionnaires, participants explored the nature of the adult/child interaction and the educator's responsibility in ensuring that the environment provided in the early childhood centre invited learning. Children, it was maintained, would learn when teachers assumed a positive, non-threatening position in their interactions with children. As a role model for children, they would provide encouragement and establish an environment that was non-abusive and optimised learning opportunities. Trudie, for instance, stated:

If the teacher provides ... opportunities and creates an environment in which the child is free to learn, the child will keep on learning and progressing in their development. The teacher should support this in her centre. (Trudie, A1)

What was initially most noticeable by its absence was recognition of the role parents and *whānau* play in young children's learning. Only one participant, Judy, acknowledged their contribution when she stated:

Whānau and community play an important role by empowering children to learn and grow. (Judy, A1)

Parents and teachers play an important part in their [children's] lives as they influence them from an early age. The early stages of a child's life are when they learn the most. (Judy, A2)

At the end of the three years of the teacher education programme, the significance placed on the establishment of a positive secure learning environment remained similar, but adults, albeit teachers, now assumed a more prominent role in facilitating learning in the environment. Whenever mention was made of the environment, and the social practices that occur within it, there was nearly always mention of the adult's role in assisting the child's learning:

I believe children learn in an environment that they feel comfortable in. Where they can explore freely, with adults who support their learning and provide opportunities that extend their ideas and challenge them to try new things, alongside their peers. (Karol, A3)

I think there's quite a lot involved. I believe children learn when their needs are met for their emotional and physical well being. They have a place and that must be respected. Each child is different and is going to learn in different ways. It is up to us as educators to know how these needs can be met. I'd refer back to *Te Whāriki*. Toddlers, babies and older children learn when they are comfortable, feeling confident. The teacher can facilitate, observe, ask questions, developing and extending all the time. (Judy, A3)

Young children learn in a safe environment following the establishment of trust and attachment with primary caregivers. They learn when they know they have a place and part to play in the EC environment. They learn by interacting with others and participating in group activities. Young children learn when they are given positive reinforcement and encouragement to explore their environment. (Trina, A3)

In the final questionnaire, the beliefs expressed about how children learn were, overall, more comprehensive than earlier statements. Ideas from *Te Whāriki*, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum document (Ministry of Education 1996) were cited. There were changes in focus in terms of the means by which children learn, and, by the end of the research, all participants were attending to play, exploration and experimentation as ways in which young children learn.

5.3.4 The ecological context of learning

As was noted earlier, early childhood teachers work within a particular early childhood setting, but are influenced by systems that extend beyond their immediate workplace. The data on beliefs about the nature of the good teacher indicated that participants came to recognise that influences from outside, as well as inside the immediate workplace, impinge on the teacher's role.

Children learn within the environments in which they function and are also influenced by factors outside the immediate environment of an early childhood education centre. Garbarino's (1989) application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model to play served as another vehicle for exploring participants' beliefs about how young children learn. He defined the four systems as:

- The microsystems in which children learn. He assumed these to be the home and the early childhood centre. According to Garbarino (1989), within the microsystem there should ideally be reciprocal, loving interactions between the child, their peers and the adults. Survival needs should be met and play and learning encouraged. The environment would be arranged to facilitate play and learning, and materials and toys available to support the child's development.
- The mesosystem where reciprocal relationships between the early childhood centre and the home can support the child's learning. These interactions would be frequent and information provided bidirectionally from one setting to the other. Teachers would appreciate diversity and acknowledge and work appropriately with children and their families from different cultures, classes and different abilities.
- The exosystems which comprise "situations having a bearing on a child's development but in which the child does not actually play a direct role" (Garbarino, 1989, p.25). It may include, in New Zealand, a Kindergarten Association or the management of an early childhood centre, a town planning committee or any organisation that influence what may occur in early childhood education generally.
- The macrosystem represents the broader ideological and institutional patterns of cultures within a society. It represents the values held by different cultures. Garbarino (1989) describes macrosystem risk as

... any social pattern or societal event that impoverishes the ability and willingness of adults to care for children, children to learn from adults, and play to flourish. (p.27)

Over the three years of the research, eight of the participants attended to factors at the microsystem level only. Their focus was on the interactions between the teacher and child, the child and their peers and the opportunities provided in the learning

environment. The latter included reference to a range of materials and curriculum areas that should be available to enhance children's learning.

The remaining nine participants acknowledged the influence of the microsystem and also attributed children's learning to settings outside the early childhood centre. Links were made between the contribution to the child's learning from adults working in the early childhood setting and the child's family. Judy signalled the value of respecting a child's culture and providing appropriately for children. Apart from this there was little recognition of the influence of diversity on young children's learning. Any influence of the macrosystem was generally not considered.

So, while the participants' responses to the nature of the good teacher had expanded into the first three levels of Bronfenbrenner's model, namely the micro, meso and exosystems, ideas about learning were confined almost equally to the level of the microsystem or to a combination of micro and mesosystems.

5.3.5 Summary of beliefs about how children learn

From the beginning of the research, the participants expressed beliefs that indicated that they perceived young children as active in the learning process. Observation and imitation, learning through play and through social interaction with adults were perceived to be the most significant ways in which young children learned. These ideas could be situated within the theories of Bandura and Walters (1963), Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1986).

Over the three years, observation and imitation were referred to less frequently. Generally, the reason for this appeared to be a growing recognition of the complexity of the learning process. While there was a decrease in those referring to observation and imitation, the number citing learning through play increased. Exploration and experimentation were almost invariably referred to as part of the play process. The same degree of emphasis was not accorded sociodramatic play. This was rarely cited as a vehicle of learning.

The role of adults in the learning process also underwent change. At first, learning through being told things by adults was evident in expressed beliefs. By the third

year, it was the nature of the interaction between the child and the adult that was stressed. The ideas stated resonated with those of Vygotsky (1986) and his notion that meaning is jointly constructed in collaboration through personally meaningful experiences. Hence, there was a shift to stressing the role of the adult as a guide and facilitator of learning.

For just under half of the participants, this attention to the teacher's role and their interaction with the child appeared to be uppermost. Influences outside the early childhood centre received scant attention. Even though many had indicated that they believed the teacher's role was situated in a wider context, this was not the case when they explored ideas about how children learn.

Just over half of the participants, however, mentioned that learning was influenced by what occurred in the mesosystem. Acknowledged were the role of the family and other settings that encouraged the child's learning. Few, however, stated that the establishment of a reciprocal relationship between those working in the early childhood setting and the family would enhance the child's learning. Similarly there was almost no mention of the role of culture.

5.4 Beliefs Held at the Beginning and at the Conclusion of the Research

While there were differences among the beliefs espoused by participants about how young children learn, some similarities and themes were pursued by a large number of those involved. These have been outlined in this chapter. Table 5.5 (p.141) showed the theories of learning implicit in participants' responses and the changes in emphases over time. The ideas participants held about the teacher's role were interpreted to form a table of the data obtained at the beginning of the research and at the end of the programme. These are presented in Tables 5.6 (p.154).

In compiling the tables, the close links, or overlaps, between the 17 participants' beliefs in the two areas under study were apparent. A discrepancy arose between the context in which teachers were seen to operate and the position of the child within

Table 5.6 Summary of beliefs in year one and year three about the teacher's role		
Characteristics of a good teacher	Year one	Year three
Communication skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates effectively with children Is a good listener Accepted by children Respects children Is a friend to children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective, responsive communicator with children, parents and whānau, other professionals and administrators
Concern with environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets up a good safe environment where children can learn through observation, the senses and imitation Ensures their wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes a secure, rich environment where children's learning can be facilitated through exploration and play
Caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is caring and nurturing Sensitive, patient, kind Loves children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caring implicit in descriptions of other features of the good teacher
Relates to parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flow of information from teacher (expert) to parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are welcome in centre Links between home and centre encouraged Supportive of families
The caring educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands children Focus on needs Includes features from other categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to articulate a philosophy of education and work within it Committed to work Is well qualified and can provide quality programme Works from child's agenda Encourages, motivates and supports children's learning Empowers children Has a range of strategies and approaches they can employ Provides quality education View of child as competent
Managing groups of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal attention
Programme planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal attention
Ecological context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus almost exclusively on the dyadic teacher/child relationship Attention to children's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad focus and an awareness of the larger ecological context of education Understands concepts of rights, equity and diversity and application in centres
Understanding of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal mention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciates cultural differences and this is evident in programme Has inclusive beliefs and an inclusive programme
Spontaneity, creativity and fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has fun, is spontaneous and creative in their teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal mention

the larger socio-cultural context. When exploring the teacher's role, the participants made increasing references to a number of political and social issues that a teacher needed to take into account, and a knowledge that early childhood teaching involved more than working with the child divorced from other contexts.

When it came to how children learn, generally the participants' attention was directed at how the child learns in an early childhood centre and, even within that context, there was little reference to the different microsystems that operate within that environment. Only six of the participants noted that learning also occurred outside the early childhood centre.

Infrequent reference was made to the influence of the family and whānau and others on young children's learning. At times, one could be led to believe that learning only occurs when a child is attending an early childhood centre. While the tables allow for a summary of findings, it was clear from the data that all ideas expressed were not necessarily beliefs of long standing. It is this situation that will now be addressed.

5.5 Categorisation of Beliefs

Many researchers speak of beliefs as though they all hold the same status in a person's belief system. However, as themes were explored and shifts in beliefs examined in this study, it was found that the beliefs espoused by individuals could be categorised according to their tenacity, their presence and/or their changing nature. These are described as reiterated beliefs, lurking beliefs, reorganising beliefs, taken-for-granted beliefs, emerging or new beliefs and mentioned once or twice only beliefs. A taxonomy of the different types of beliefs and their definitions is presented in Table 5.7 (p.156).

5.5.1 Examples of the different types of beliefs

Examples of almost all the different types of beliefs were present in participants' ideas on the need for a teacher to establish communication and sound relationships. This categorisation has, therefore, been used in Table 5.8 (p.157) to demonstrate the different belief types found in the data on the good early childhood teacher.

Table 5.7 A taxonomy of different types of beliefs and their description

Name of belief	Nature of belief
Reiterated belief	A belief that is consistently stated and shows little evidence of change.
Lurking belief	A belief that is cited in initial questionnaires and only referred to again on one other occasion.
Reorganising belief	A belief that is cited early in the research and is developed more comprehensively over the three years. It may change in its content and underlying philosophy.
Taken for granted belief	A belief that is initially expressed and becomes implicit. It is inferred from the discourse rather than being explicitly expressed.
Emerging belief	A belief that is stated in the latter part of the research and was not mentioned earlier.
Once only belief	A belief cited in either the first or second years of the research but not revisited in final year.

Examples of belief types on the teacher's ability to communicate effectively

Evidence for a *reiterated belief* was found in Karol's responses. Throughout the three years, she reiterated the need for the teacher to demonstrate good communication skills that would enable them to relate and interact well with children.

A *lurking belief* on communication and relationships was found in Sam's comments. In the first two sets of data, she referred to the need of the teacher to communicate with children, parents and staff. This was not addressed again until the final questionnaire when she noted that sound relationships are essential to both the teacher's and the child's wellbeing. This is a belief held by Sam but not one that necessarily came readily to her on each occasion.

Table 5.8 **Types of Beliefs**

Name of belief	Examples of the expression of the belief over time		
	Year one	Year two	Year three
<p>Reiterated belief A belief that is consistently stated and shows little evidence of change</p>	<p>Karol: Has good communication skills with children</p>	<p>Interacts well with children</p>	<p>Relationships with children are important. The good teacher communicates well with children.</p>
<p>Lurking belief A belief that is cited in initial questionnaires and is only referred to again on one other occasion.</p>	<p>Sam: communication and relationships Talks to children at their level. Can communicate with children, parents and fellow staff.</p>		<p>[Sound relationships] are essential to the child's wellbeing...Interacts well with the children.</p>
<p>Reorganising belief A belief that is cited early in the research and is developed more fully over the three years.</p>	<p>Lenore: relationships Approachable to parents, fellow educators and especially to children. Can cooperate easily with everybody – children, childcare workers, public.</p>	<p>Parents and whānau are important to the child's learning and wellbeing. The teacher and parents/whānau need to be able to work together for the child.</p>	<p>Very important – to establish good relationships with parents and whānau, to understand and respect cultural diversity. Is able to work in partnership with other adults –staff, parents, whānau and other professionals. Believes in and is knowledgeable in biculturalism, ... has a strong commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi. A knowledge and understanding of <i>Te Whāriki</i></p>
<p>Taken-for-granted belief A belief that becomes implicit and is inferred from statements made rather than being explicitly expressed.</p>			<p>Caring: a belief that was explicitly expressed in year one and implicit in statements in year three.</p>
<p>Emerging belief A belief stated in the latter stages of the research to which no previous reference was made.</p>		<p>Sophie: relationships Establishes good relationships with parents and whānau and children. Respects the child's own values, culture etc.</p>	<p>Relationships with children are important because understanding the child's individual needs builds trust between the adult and child...when the child feels nurtured it encourages risk taking, taking challenges. ... supportive, caring and non-authoritarian towards children. Listens to what children, parents and whānau are saying, open.</p>
<p>Once or twice only</p>	<p>Sally Can communicate effectively with young children and listen to others' ideas</p>		

Reorganising beliefs, where beliefs were expressed early in the research and then more comprehensively over the three years, were in evidence in Lenore's statements. She began, for example, with a focus on the teacher as a carer who loves children, is patient and approachable. Relationships with parents and others were regarded as important. Later she provided a rationale for being approachable. Lenore explained knowledge and understandings that would ensure a teacher was able to be effective in their relationships with all. In her third year, she linked this rationale to two key documents, The Treaty of Waitangi and *Te Whāriki*, using these to support her case.

As all students over the three years made some comment on communication and the establishment of sound relationships, the best example of *taken-for-granted beliefs* were those on caring, as noted in section 5.2.2. Early in the research, caring was frequently cited as an important personal characteristic of a teacher. This received less mention as the research proceeded, but appeared to become embodied in the notion of a teacher as an educator.

An example of an *emerging belief* presented itself in the ideas expressed by Sophie. In the first two sets of questionnaire responses, no mention was made of the relationships the good teacher would need to establish. By the middle of her second year, Sophie maintained the good teacher would show a respect for different cultures and value systems, and would relate well to children, parents and whānau. In her third year, a link between sound relationships and learning was made. She contended that children who are in trusting relationships with adults and feel nurtured are more likely to be able to accept the challenges of learning and show a willingness to take risks.

Once or twice only beliefs were beliefs cited in the first two years and not mentioned in the final year of the research. May, for example, wrote of the teacher communicating well with children in her first year but never referred to this again.

Examples of belief types in how young children learn

The same range of beliefs was present in participants' expressions of how children learn and are illustrated with three examples.

Karol demonstrated a *reorganising belief*. From the outset, she believed children needed to be in a secure, safe environment where learning was encouraged. This was echoed in her final statement, but she had also reorganised her ideas. She now noted that learning is enhanced when children are able to explore freely with adults who support them and provide opportunities for learning.

Sarah also echoed some of these views, but her pathway was somewhat different. Initially, she expressed ideas that indicated she believed the teacher held the power and assisted learning by preparing material for children. It was implied that children would do as the teacher requested. This would be classified as a *once or twice only belief* as it only appeared early in the research. Moreover, in the final questionnaire, she then stated that she believed that children learned in an environment where there was a responsive staff who empowered children, and assisted them by scaffolding their learning. This would be classified as an *emerging belief*.

5.5.2 Participants' belief profiles

The main beliefs that had emerged were then plotted on a table (Appendix O) for each of the 17 participants and collated in Appendix P. These 17 profiles illustrate the diversity that existed, firstly, in terms of the apparent status of the expressed belief or idea held by the individual, and, secondly, in terms of the diversity present for the group as a whole. It would be easy to assume that once an idea or a belief was expressed, it had become a strong component of the belief structure of an individual and would remain unchanged. Collecting data over a three year time period demonstrated that this was rarely the case. Thirteen participants reiterated one belief and two reiterated two beliefs over the three years. Sixteen people had lurking beliefs in which ideas were revisited but, mainly, participants were expressing new beliefs and reorganising and expanding on their ideas. This demonstrated that, for most of the students, beliefs are not static but rather appear to vary in their strength and their content. Moreover, different patterns emerged for each individual.

Particularly interesting, was the number of ideas that did not come to mind for participants when they were expressing their beliefs. For example, eight made no reference to the teacher as a team member. Twelve did not discuss the role of socio-dramatic play in children's learning and, while there was mention of ways in which

teachers could assist children's learning, 12 participants did not use the word "scaffolding". This could well be an artefact of the open-ended type of questionnaire.

5.6 Other Aspects of Beliefs

Apart from the areas previously explored, there were other aspects of particular interest to this research. Already, it has been shown that knowledge learned in the programme was assimilated into beliefs and that beliefs could be categorised according to their different status. Less clear were the presence of affect and conviction in participants' beliefs and the effect of life experiences on the construction of their ideas.

When the material, or discourse, was visually scanned, there were two possible indicators that suggested affect and/or conviction sometimes played a part in the expression of beliefs. This was the use of the pronoun "I" and the word "important". Rather than presenting a more formal style in expressing views, some participants would move into a more personal, first person style of expression. Examples of this included usage of the words, "I think..." and "I believe...". The views prefaced with these words were conveyed as what appeared to be strongly felt personal beliefs. Similarly, the use of the word "important" signalled to the reader that what was being stated at that point was something that should be taken seriously and should be read as a belief closely connected to the writer.

Most emphatic in her use of the word "I" was Trudie who stated "I have a strong belief that children learn through their imagination and play." (A1) This was later categorised as a reorganising belief for she expanded and developed this idea as she moved through the programme. Others signalled that what they were saying was what they personally believed and affect appeared to underscore their statements. Sam, for instance, revealed how strongly she felt about the use of books in the learning process by using an "I think" statement to support her ideas:

Books are great teachers for young children and I think books should be introduced at early age, as you're never too young to be read to. (Sam, A1)

She, too, revisited this idea in her final year when she claimed that children learn much from books and that it is important to have many available.

Beliefs supported from personal experiences were more difficult to detect unless there was specific reference to them, or there were oblique comments that indicated some involvement of self. Sarah pointed out that the teacher should be patient when teaching, as after all everyone needs people to be patient when they are learning something new.

Melinda used some negative experiences to support her choice of characteristics, she considered vital in a teacher:

I believe [experience with children] to be important, especially before beginning formal training. As you may be "fantastic" in theory but not in practice.

Interacts well with children. This is because I have seen many "trained" teachers whose manner in dealing with and interacting with children is poor in contrast to others.

Encourages, motivates and supports learning. It sounds easy but in practice it takes time to develop these skills. I think teachers should take refresher courses: some of the ones out there are very STALE. (Melinda, B1)

Trina's experiences were also reflected in her beliefs, even though she did not state this explicitly. Trina became pregnant during her second year. She delayed her teacher education programme for one year and the final questionnaires were completed on her return. She brought a different perspective to the teacher/parent relationship presenting a strong rationale for why she believed this was important. It appeared she had been influenced by the experience of motherhood:

It is important to establish good relationships with parents because their ideas and beliefs need to be respected, they need to feel comfortable with you, will provide the best care and education for their child. They need to feel their family will be valued. This will gain further support for the centre and children in general (Trina, B1).

The case study methodology presented the opportunity to explore these aspects in more depth. The observations, and the interviews in particular, yielded rich data which supplemented the questionnaire findings and allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of participants' construction of their beliefs and the changes that occurred over the three years. It should not be inferred from these comments, however, that the questionnaire data lacked substance, for there was a degree of complexity reflected in all data collected. This was apparent when it came to the analysis and when decisions had to be made about which material to include as being significant. However, overall, when it came to giving voice to the participants, the case study approach offered more opportunities, not only to explore ideas from my perspective, but also to ensure that the participants felt that they were represented fairly. By meeting with them several times, and sharing their stories as they were developed, we negotiated a joint reality that is reflected in the case studies in the chapters that follow.

An Introduction to the Case Studies (Chapters six to twelve)

When you read me my story you made me sound so interesting and exciting. I couldn't believe it. I thought, well yes, I am an interesting person!
(Rebecca, fieldnotes)

Each of the case studies reported in the next seven chapters reflects the lives of interesting individuals who found the confronting of themselves in story form both moving and thought provoking. They were a diverse group of individuals who generally achieved average and slightly above average grades. Their diversity was particularly evident in the wide-ranging life experiences they brought to teacher education. These experiences influenced the beliefs they espoused. Each case study presents aspects of the participants and their beliefs as they proceeded on their way to achieving a Diploma of Teaching in early childhood education. The title for each chapter is based on the beliefs that were emphasised by each individual student. These beliefs emerged as themes as the research developed.

In the chapters that follow, beginning with Sam, each case study participant is presented separately. The chapters adopt a similar format in that a brief profile of each participant is presented first. This is followed by an exploration of specific areas of interest relating to that individual. The nature of participants' beliefs is then examined and shifts that occurred in beliefs on the role of the teacher and how children learn documented. Reference is made to the ecological context in which such beliefs were situated and a summary statement concludes each case study chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

SAM: THE TEACHER AS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with a brief profile of Sam's life, followed by a discussion of life experiences that influenced her decision to enter a teacher education programme. The nature of Sam's beliefs is explored and her beliefs are positioned in an ecological context. A summary concludes the chapter.

6.2 A Brief Profile of Sam

Sam was raised in a small rural city, the younger of two girls in the family. Disillusioned with school, she left after four years of secondary education feeling she "had had enough." She enrolled in a six month computer course before leaving with a friend (who her mother did not approve of) to "have a good time in Australia." She reported that she did have a good time and also time to consider her options. Sam applied for the teacher education programme two years after leaving secondary school. She maintained she had been thinking about applying most of the time she was away and when she received notification of the interview, in response to her application, she "jumped on the plane and came back."

6.3 Life Experiences and Entry to Teacher Education

Sam cited several influences on her decision to become a teacher. These included her enjoyment of children, a motivation to improve on her own experiences of education and the influence of her older sister.

6.3.1 Motivation for working with children in education

Sam has enjoyed being and working with young children for as long as she could remember. Citing this as one of her main reasons for entering a teacher education programme, she also acknowledged that a lack of satisfaction with her own schooling was a powerful motivation for selecting teaching as a career. Her mother was always present when she attended kindergarten and Sam claimed, beginning school was, in contrast, most unpleasant:

I ran away from school twice. I was very much tied to the apron strings and when I went to school it was a big shock. This was when I was young, five, and my mother wasn't there and I ran away from school.

She vividly recalled her teacher's angry reaction and the longstanding adverse effect that had on her attitude to school:

I really remember going back and being hit by the teacher, getting put across her knee and hit. It is one of the only memories I have of early school. So it is quite freaky. I don't remember much but I remember that!

While her reactions to intermediate school and secondary schooling were more positive they were still somewhat mixed; "I liked intermediate and I sort of thought high school was ok." Overall, Sam recalled intermediate school with a certain fondness, noting she enjoyed the learning, the camps and the friends. Her first year at secondary school was also successful, and she achieved well academically, but this was turned around during her second year when she

... mixed with the wrong crowd and started bumming out. I hung out with girls that were not interested in doing well. By the time I got to the fifth and sixth form I hated school, I hated the teachers and I just wanted to leave.

She maintained there are many children who have had similar distressing experiences and that it is knowledge of this that spurred her into the teaching profession, confidently believing she could do better than many of the teachers she had experienced throughout her school career. Moreover, Sam believed she could make a positive difference to

children's lives. She maintained that while she was lucky in overcoming her initial dislike of the education process, there are many who do not make this shift:

I think it's so important to start out liking education and if you don't start out liking it you will not end up liking it. I'm one of the exceptions really.

One of the more positive aspects of her later secondary education was Sam's participation in a childcare course in her final year at school. On reflection, she saw this as effecting her later decision to apply for early childhood teacher education. Her older sister also proved influential.

6.3.2 The influence of an older sister

Sam's sister completed a course to become a nanny for young children and found this provided her with a number of career opportunities. Hearing her sister, continually talking about her work for an organisation providing services for people with disabilities provided an added impetus for Sam to re-examine the direction she was taking. It was obvious to her that her sister enjoyed her work, and this enthusiasm "rubbed off" on Sam who was searching for a job that promised to be more satisfying long term. She noted, however, that now the situation is reversed. Her sister is beginning to find her job limiting in career possibilities and is also considering applying for a teacher education programme.

Sam's life experiences influenced her beliefs about the importance of educational experiences for children and about the need to find satisfying career possibilities. Both positive and negative interactions with others furnished her with the idea that she could provide children with better educational encounters than she had experienced.

6.4 The Nature of Sam's Beliefs

Sam's questionnaire data, reported in Appendix O, revealed that she had beliefs of varying status. The three lurking beliefs, and one reiterated belief, indicated that there was a high degree of consistency in the beliefs she held over the three years. The four

reorganising beliefs represented ideas that she developed more fully as she moved through the programme.

Sam entered the teacher education programme with strongly held beliefs that teachers should provide educative and caring environments in which they were fully involved as active participants. They should demonstrate a commitment to the children with whom they were working. When looked at closely, these beliefs, as discussed earlier, related very closely to her motivation for entering teaching, her own experiences of education and a desire to improve young children's educational experiences. Her disenchantment with some aspects of her own education led to a heightened concern for children's affective wellbeing.

There were four belief areas in the case study data that retained an element of consistency and were more fully developed by Sam. These can be characterised as her beliefs that effective early childhood teachers should:

- demonstrate a concern for children's wellbeing and affirm them as individuals
- be active participants in their work with children
- be kind and caring
- demonstrate a commitment to the children with whom they are working.

6.4.1 Concerns for children's wellbeing and affirming them as individuals: a reorganising belief

Sam wished to ensure that children had good experiences in early childhood education. From the outset, she expressed a belief that teachers should meet children's affective needs and affirm them as individuals. At the time of selection, she maintained that a good early childhood teacher "listens to a child with a problem or question and works it through with them." In addition, she asserted they would be sensitive and "aware if something was not quite right with the child." This recognising of difficulties, "whether at home or in the centre", continued to be articulated over the three years. Hand-in-hand with this was the belief that teachers should establish sound relationships with children. This reorganising belief was expressed in her final year, not with the focus on

needs, but on strengths. She had reorganised her ideas and was now viewing children as competent:

I think a good teacher is probably seeing that everyone is an individual and is able to see their strengths and what they are good at. Because every child is different. I mean they are not all the same and you can't treat them like they are. Everyone needs encouragement.

Clearly, Sam's own experiences in education had heightened her empathy for children as individuals and, particularly, those who may be experiencing difficulties. Allied to this was a belief that teachers should be active participants in their work with children and should not act as an authority figure who simply conveys information.

6.4.2 Teachers as active participants in their work with children: a reorganising belief

Sam's beliefs centred on the teacher as someone actively involved in the children's education, rather than a teacher who assumes a more passive, observer role. These beliefs related closely to those held about how young children learn and the significant role of modelling in the learning process. At the time of her selection interview, she wrote that a good teacher "plays and learns along with the children. Children learn by what people do around them so they copy."

At the beginning of the programme, the concept of the teacher having fun and enjoying his or her work was added to Sam's expressed beliefs about the role of the teacher. These three aspects - the active involvement of teachers, the modelling of appropriate behaviours and skills for children, and enjoying their own involvement in the teaching and caring process - were beliefs that did not change in their intent but, rather, were strengthened over time. They formed a focus for Sam's work.

An observation, in the third and final year of study for her Diploma of Teaching and later discussions confirmed the strength of Sam's beliefs. In practise, these were demonstrated most clearly in socio-dramatic play with children. Sam developed strategies that enabled her to move easily into children's scripts and to be fully accepted

into their play. She never foisted herself onto the children but instead, waited for an invitation or suggested to the children ways she could be given entry into the play. These suggestions could have been refused but, clearly, the children were accustomed to her involvement and accepted her as an equal partner in the play.

In one observation, Sam had a large group of four-year-old children around her discussing various topics. As a group, they moved towards a large climbing structure and several of the children and Sam climbed up it together (something other teachers in the centre rarely did). When she was sitting on the platform at the top, children invited her to join them and “play a game about flying to Australia.” She consented immediately with enthusiasm. Discussions about the time it would take to fly to Australia, the role of the pilot and navigator and what they might see followed.

The next day, younger three to four year old children in an afternoon session were playing in the family corner. Sam unobtrusively moved into the area and asked if she could have a cup of tea. She was invited to sit down and participate in play. So well accepted into the play was she that, when another child called out to her and asked her to come and paint later, one child in the family play area said to her, “You have to stay.” On another occasion when she approached the family play area children indicated to her to sit down and one asked if she was Pamela’s friend. Sam nodded and participated in their play, pretending to eat the meal with the children. Eventually, the children transformed the play into a “lollypop party” for Sam. Decorations were put up and one child handed Sam a dress-up tulle skirt saying to her, “You put it on.” Sam pondered on whether it would fit but pulled it over her head and put it around her waist. Meanwhile, the child looked on approvingly and said, “You’re a birthday girl now. It’s nice.”

Sam reorganised her beliefs about the teacher having fun with children to incorporate ideas about the value of socio-dramatic play for development and, particularly, for developing imagination. Later, she commented that she

Liked to go along with it, with them, and they see that so they will always come and find me a lot of the time if they are like going on a trip overseas, or something. They always get me a ticket to go, so it is quite neat.

Furthermore, she believed that

A good teacher is one that encourages imagination and can join in and just be one of them. A good teacher is also one that can go in with their play and sort of take on a role and direct too. I mean to be an active participant in it. You don't have to just sit back. I think if you are really enjoying doing it, it will show and they will keep coming back to you and involving you in their play. ... in all areas you should be a role model and if children see you painting or involved in some other activity they are more likely to do it themselves. If you don't participate, that's not giving a good example is it? ...You must remember you are a role model for the children.

In comparison, she disliked teachers who were “rigid and strict” and “stuck in their ways.” She expressed a concern about working with such teachers who gave her the “impression they would not listen to other opinions.” She visualised herself in situations, where both teachers and children had the freedom to be actively involved in pursuing their own learning and the opportunity to make choices for themselves, rather than being forced to work in a structured environment.

6.4.3 Teachers as kind and caring: a reorganising belief

The third belief held strongly over the three years related to the requirement for a teacher to be kind and to have the child's interests at heart. At first this was stated as a belief that they should “love children and want them to have the best start in life as possible.” After a few weeks in the programme Sam maintained this was “a perspective that was coming through as a general feeling in the classes from students and staff alike.” By the third year, Sam mentioned the word caring in conjunction with kindness and, she maintained adamantly, that these were “essential in any teaching position.” However, she no longer saw them as sufficient in and of themselves, and used research to support the rationale for the reorganisation of her beliefs. This was the only time that Sam cited research to support her beliefs.

6.4.4 Teachers committed to children: a reorganising belief

From the outset, Sam put forward strong belief statements maintaining that a good early childhood teacher would demonstrate a commitment to children and early childhood

education. This commitment was tested in her third year. It is the reorganising of Sam's beliefs that will be discussed in this section.

The commitment to children and early childhood education was described in various ways. Initially it was allied with patience and a belief that good teachers would devote their time to working with children. When she was introduced to the concept of care and education early in the programme, her language showed slight modifications. Now she referred to a commitment to caring and teaching young children in early childhood education. In the final year of her Diploma of Teaching, Sam spoke of dedication and enthusiasm as important. She related this to wanting to "help children reach their potential when they are in their class or centre." Furthermore, in an attempt to justify the importance of dedication, she maintained that "you don't have a lot" without it. She saw dedication as the basis to "build skills on". Later in the year, she selected as one of the most important characteristics of good early childhood teachers, a willingness to put time and effort into work with young children. Sam qualified this by noting that sometimes more time and effort needs to be directed into certain children or projects. Comparing early childhood education with primary education, she commented,

There are drawbacks, like pay and things which lessen your enthusiasm, like my big loan. But I feel I am dedicated to it and I will stick in that field.

Her commitment to this sector of education was, however, being tested. She explored the possibility of enrolling in primary curriculum papers during the fourth year, the final year of her degree. Sam then began to discuss the value of having teachers with a background in early childhood education working in the first years of a child's primary schooling. Later, she contemplated her plans for the future and whether she would go early childhood teaching upon graduation, indicating that she was wavering about this decision.

Questioned about what attracted her into primary teaching, she replied,

I hate to say it, but probably the money. Because early childhood is not really going to pay off my loan as much as probably being in primary could. That's just the way it is at the moment. I am hoping maybe it will change.

That's the first thing that is attracting me. I do like new entrants, I found that when I did the reading [course] I really liked getting out there and working with that age - a bit of a challenge and yeah probably those two things. I've seen new entrants. They don't change from the one day they are at kindergarten and the next day they are at school. But I would still be working with the age group I like and for more money.

While Sam still believed in the importance in early childhood education, her own commitment to it was undergoing modification due to the economic reality that working in one sector of education offered better outcomes than another. When this was discussed with Sam in the final interview, she also admitted that she had chosen early childhood because with her secondary education record she might not have been accepted into primary teacher education. This raises the issue of the number of possible factors in the social context that may interact with an individual's beliefs and bring about shifts or changes in their beliefs.

6.5 Positioning Sam's Beliefs in an Ecological Context

Sam's beliefs from the outset included a perspective that went beyond the dyadic relationship of the teacher and the child. She expressed a belief that the good teacher would establish effective communication with children, parents and staff within the early childhood centre. Bronfenbrenner (1979) maintained that the capacity of a setting to

... function effectively as a context for development is seen to depend on the existence and nature of social interconnections between settings, including joint participation, communication, and the existence of information in each setting about the other. (p.6)

These social interconnections are of significance within the early childhood centre itself. Sam increasingly commented on such interconnections, believing that the good teacher would participate in all settings within the early childhood centre and would encourage children to do likewise. In her third year, she said,

I try to encourage children into areas that they don't normally play. Like, for example, a lot of boys will only stay in the sandpit for a lot of the time.

So what I did was I took art into the sandpit to see if they would do any... I try to encourage boys into the family corner.

In addition to developing an awareness of the potential for development in all settings within a centre, she developed an interest in wider issues that impact on programmes. These included the influence of research, the impact of teachers' qualifications on programmes, ongoing professional development, administration and the funding of education. In terms of the ecological context of her beliefs, she demonstrated an understanding of the need for interconnections within and between systems moving from a predominant focus on the microsystem to a concern with broader social systems which impact on teachers and children.

6.6 Summary

Sam's beliefs retained a consistency during the time she was enrolled in the teacher education programme. Under close scrutiny, it was clear that several of her entering beliefs were reorganised and developed further. The following is a summary of points to consider for a study of beliefs.

- Life experiences and particularly educational experiences exert a strong influence on beliefs about the role of an early childhood teacher and children's learning.
- Some strongly held beliefs remain remarkably consistent; particularly when these can be related back to adverse experiences in childhood. Beliefs that remained consistent may have a strong affective component.
- Interactions with significant others influence the beliefs held and may result in a reorganisation of beliefs to incorporate new ideas.
- Beliefs in one domain can be linked to beliefs in another domain.
- Beliefs are sometimes evident in actions.

- Belief change occurs when research findings are presented over a period of time, in different contexts, and are perceived as relevant and plausible.
- Some beliefs appear to be accepted as commonsense. Reference to theories, research, readings coursework and practicum experience, in support of beliefs, is infrequent.
- A number of possible factors, including economic factors, might cause an individual to reflect on their beliefs and to modify them according to the reality with which they are faced.

CHAPTER SEVEN

JUDY: THE TEACHER AS A FACILITATOR AND ENCOURAGER OF LEARNING

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief profile of Judy's life story and her entry into the teacher education programme is followed by a consideration of Judy's early life experiences and their relationships to her espoused beliefs. The nature of her beliefs is explored by examining the reorganising beliefs she expressed on the teacher as a facilitator of children's learning in an interactive relationship, her lurking beliefs on diversity and an emerging belief on working within a team. Judy's beliefs are positioned in an ecological context and the chapter concludes with a summary statement of considerations for belief study that emerged from this case study.

7.2 A Brief Profile of Judy

Judy lived most of her life in a small city as one of five children in a supportive, close family. She was the second eldest child, with three others born after her over a nine-year period. She remembered there always being younger children in the home as she grew up. Reflecting on her upbringing, she recalled, "My family have never had much money and have had to work hard to provide for us but, one thing we never went without was their support."

Judy cited as significant the closeness of family members and the ways in which efforts were made to consciously encourage bonding. Firstly, for example, she noted the family attended church together for many years. She believed the intent of this was to ensure closeness as a family and that the children learned values and basic morality. As the children became older, attendance at church was no longer compulsory. Judy and her mother have, however, continued their involvement and Judy perceives this as an important part of her life. Secondly, what Judy referred to as bonding was also

consciously developed within the family with the expectation that they would always eat dinner together:

As a family we would sit at the table for dinner. It was a chance for everyone to talk about the day they had had. It was a time of family bonding, which is something we still do today. There's just not so many people sitting around the table.

The closeness of the family was really accentuated for Judy when she made the decision to attend university. Leaving them was not easy and in her first year in the programme her mother was diagnosed with a life threatening illness. At nineteen, she accepted considerable responsibility for her mother and family, as well as carrying on with her study in a city five hours by car from her home. She found it difficult, "knowing you just can't jump in the car and go and be her support when she needs it." An operation was successful and further strengthened the relationship Judy has with her mother whom she regards as her "best friend".

Judy recalled her school experiences as pleasurable and marked by success. At intermediate school, she received awards for her academic and athletic achievements. This success was repeated at secondary school with awards for drama, for the most improved student in language and literature in her final year, and then success in her university entrance examinations.

Moving on to a university education was something Judy saw as the next step, and she was encouraged to do this, even though it would mean leaving her home and family. For a year after leaving school, she "worked hard at various jobs trying to save money for university." Several of these involved work with young children in their homes, as well as in an early childhood centre. By the end of the year, she "knew that early childhood education was what I wanted." Encouraged by an aunt who worked in home-based care, by the staff of the early childhood centre in which she had experience, and by attendance at a university delivered professional development course on *Toddlers and Young Children*, she applied for the university teacher education programme.

Judy perceived her successful application as a “bonus” in her life and the qualification she would receive upon graduation as a worthy goal to which to aspire. Her earlier successful and enjoyable experiences with children gave her the confidence to believe that she had slightly above average knowledge of children. Compared with other people at the beginning of the programme, she also believed that she was slightly above average in supporting the wellbeing and development of young children but

... wanted the knowledge that everybody else [in the early childhood centre] had, because I thought, well I want to meet these children’s needs and how do I do this.

While she wanted this knowledge, she did not purport early in her teacher education programme that a good teacher should be qualified. By the third year, however, it was one of the four most important characteristics she selected, stating that this was essential if a person was to be truly able to “cater for the educational and individual needs of children.” This change she attributed to an understanding, developed over three years, of the complexity of children and the teaching process.

7.3 Early Life Experiences, Beliefs and their Development

Two aspects of Judy’s life experiences were influential in terms of her beliefs about the teacher’s role. These concerned, firstly, the family values related to bonding and the establishment of morals as a guide to behaviour, and, secondly, beliefs developed through her contact and work with young children.

7.3.1 Family values reflected in beliefs

Judy’s family emphasised the value of bonding and the establishment of responsive relationships in which each individual was accepted and respected. Judy, in turn, regarded these as important attributes a good teacher would demonstrate with the children in their care. There was every indication, however, that she did not view these professional relationships as identical to those relationships one would find in a close

family. In other words, she did not perceive teachers as taking the place of parents but, rather, as being complementary to them. When describing the attributes of a good teacher, personal characteristics were less dominant and she perceived the teacher as having a professional relationship, albeit close, with the children, parents and *whānau*.

Judy believed her parents encouraged church attendance as a way of providing their family with a set of moral values. In her parents' bid to teach their children acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, Judy recalled that punishment was used. This often took the form of "growling, being sent to bed early or a smack on the bottom." Although the punishment was "never appreciated at the time", Judy believed it had helped "to learn what was acceptable behaviour and what wasn't" and that it helped her "to grow up a lot faster." While Judy did not advocate punishment in the form employed by her parents, she did feel that it was the teacher's role to teach children "right from wrong in a non-threatening way." She explained this further:

I guess I just mean that if a child was to do something wrong then a teacher wouldn't get aggressive or anything like that. Wouldn't hit them or anything like that because that would be wrong.

She was concerned about handling children with care, avoiding conflict before it arose and, when it did, using thoughtful ways of handling it. She observed other people's approaches, reflected on these and incorporated some strategies into her own teaching. Observing teachers in a kindergarten, in her second year, she noted,

If the children are misbehaving they'll say something and basically that'll be it. They say it in such a way that's not hard. The children will just listen and that's actually quite helpful for the children. They seem to have a good understanding of what is acceptable.

There's no pressure and the teachers handle things as they arise and gently. They're also good at dealing with upset children. I think they listen to the children's ideas when they want to do something as well.

It was apparent that when a child shared an activity as requested, or stopped a behaviour on request that threatened the welfare of others, Judy was quick to reinforce their

positive behaviour with explanations of why she was doing so. While she defined “the teaching of right and wrong” as part of the teacher’s role, she became frustrated when the environment forced her to become more of a disciplinarian than she would have liked.

During a practicum experience in a childcare centre in her third year, Judy commented that she was spending a disproportionate part of her day on child management. She observed that the children interrupted each other, annoyed others and were demanding of teacher attention. This became most acute during an observation after lunch when children were expected to sleep and Judy was given the task of settling the three and four year olds. Mattresses were laid side-by-side on the floor and some of the older children attempted to share mattresses, tried to tickle others, fiddled with the puzzles on nearby shelving and were generally restless. Judy eventually quietened them with a story but was pleased to leave them to discuss her morning’s work with me.

In the ensuing discussion, Judy stated that while child management was an important facet of her role, she also believed the environment was forcing her into a role of disciplinarian. She expressed discomfort with this:

I find rest times here are really hard because I always think it is hard to say to children you have to rest now, even if you are not ready for it. In the childcare [I worked in my hometown] we made the decision by knowing the child. If they were tired then we would be able to tell. It is observing and knowing their behaviour and knowing when they need to go down for a rest. We’d throw a mattress on the floor and they’d be supervised and sometimes sleep for two hours.

Although she handled most of the situations effectively, Judy nevertheless, felt she sometimes spent “far too long persuading children to do things.” Judy was attempting to teach children appropriate behaviour, but she felt the context was exerting an influence on how often and the manner in which she needed to assume this role. It was becoming a dominant and an undesirably frequent feature of her interactions with children. This was in direct contrast to other experiences with children she had had in the past.

7.3.2 Contact and work with young children

Judy described the centre in which she had worked, prior to entering the programme, as a “quality centre”. The staff was equally impressed with Judy. They had offered her employment during vacations and the opportunity of a position upon her successful graduation. Furthermore, they foresaw a time in the not too distant future when they would create a position of responsibility for her. Judy’s successful experiences in this centre, prior to entry and during vacations, meant that she was very focused on her intentions. She was preparing herself to work in a childcare centre and her commitment to this did not waver during her time in the programme. Furthermore, her experiences and interactions with young children and her work in a soundly based early childhood centre, coupled with an interest in reflecting on these experiences, had developed beliefs that she expressed with confidence.

7.4 The Nature of Judy’s Beliefs

Judy’s belief questionnaire profile (Appendix O) shows that she did not reiterate beliefs but, rather, that she reorganised and revisited beliefs expressed earlier. Furthermore, new beliefs emerged. In this section, two reorganising beliefs will be described. One was her belief about the role of the teacher as a facilitator of children’s learning and the other related to her beliefs about the good teacher as one who respects cultural diversity. From the questionnaire data, the latter was classified as a lurking belief. The interview data, however, showed that this was a belief that was reorganised over time. Following these sections, comments on the teacher’s role in a team, an emerging belief, will be noted.

7.4.1 The interactive nature of the teacher’s role and children’s learning: a reorganising belief

Most obvious in the expression of Judy’s beliefs was the way in which she perceived the teacher’s role and children’s learning as being interactive. The reorganisation of her

beliefs in respect to this, over the time of the research, will be examined under the following headings:

- Pre-selection beliefs: The interactive nature of teaching and learning
- Year one: An increasing emphasis on the child and their family
- Year two: Standing back
- Year three: The teacher and the environment as resources

Pre-selection beliefs: the interactive nature of teaching and learning

From the outset, in Judy's pre-selection responses, beliefs about the teacher's role were always made with reference to the child or children. A really good early childhood teacher she believed,

would communicate and interact appropriately with children at all times, would listen carefully to the child and adapt to their environment, be supportive of children in their decision-making, would get to know the child well through their observations and interactions and use this knowledge to cater for children's needs.

In terms of how children learn, she believed teachers, parents, the *whānau* and community play a vital role. She maintained that children learn through a process of reciprocity with adults. This, she stated, placed responsibility on adults to ensure that their interactions and approaches were empowering of children. In addition to learning through interactions with adults, Judy also believed that children learn through responding to and interacting with their environment, and through the use of their senses.

Year one beliefs: an increasing emphasis on the child and their family

A focus on the interactive nature of the teacher's role, and their part in enhancing children's learning, continued to play a pivotal role in Judy's responses over the three years. These views resonated with those of the teacher education programme where a holistic view of the child, their learning and the role of the teacher in this process are espoused. Emphasis is placed on the social context of learning. This notion of the child being part of a wider social context fitted well with Judy's beliefs on the role parents, *whānau* and community play in children's learning. At the beginning of year one, she

believed it was important to understand not only the needs of the child, but also to “know the child’s family and be sensitive to their needs.” In addition, she acknowledged the “important part parents and teachers play in young children’s lives” at a time “when they learn the most.”

When asked whether the ideas that she presented had been confirmed in any way through coursework, she felt that this had been the case in every instance. Three courses she was taking in the first semester had been particularly influential in broadening her own perspective about the teacher’s role in relation to children and families. One had increased her awareness of the need to be more culturally sensitive, another had stressed the importance of effective communication with all involved in early childhood care and education and, the third, had emphasised the role of observation in understanding children’s needs. The latter course, *Exploration Through Learning and Play* had caused Judy to reflect on her earlier stated belief that “A really good early childhood teacher is one who participates in all activities with the children and supports them.” As she said in an interview towards the end of that particular course:

Now that I’ve done all the courses and all the assignments in *Learning Through Exploration and Play* they [teachers] don’t always have to interact. They’ve got to stand back and observe more, not necessarily involve themselves too much. ...They don’t have to participate in all activities.

Year two: standing back

This idea of “not always participating” continued to challenge Judy’s beliefs in the second year. She saw one of the main tasks of the early childhood teacher as the encouraging and motivating of individual children’s learning. An observation of her work with four year olds in a kindergarten revealed that she was responsive to children, made use of positive reinforcement to “let them know when they’ve done a good job”, and modelled behaviours she wanted children to imitate. She encouraged thinking, with statements like “I wonder what would happen if –“. Reflecting on her practice, she said,

I’d like to meet the children’s needs, to extend their knowledge, to facilitate their learning. ... I want to make that difference.

Judy articulated strategies she used to do this. She said, “Sometimes, I do things like saying “Oh I think I might do that” or, “ I could do this and help you.” Always, she was conscious of the need to judge carefully when to intervene, a practice that she noted had been debated in a second year course, *Making Sense of the World*. She maintained that work in this course had helped her to review her interactions with children. She stated, “Sometimes it is good to stand back, watch what is happening and then come in to extend the learning.”

Moreover, she linked these ideas to fostering the development of autonomy in children, stating that teachers should follow children’s lead and only involve themselves as far as necessary. She was striving to maintain a balance between intervening and allowing the child to develop autonomy. She used an example that occurred in water play where children were experiencing difficulty in turning on taps and the play “was leading nowhere”:

It’s quite difficult actually [determining what my role is] because one of the children was very determined to do it [turning the taps on and off] herself which was good. She told me, ‘No I can do it’, which I think is really good. Otherwise I could have been standing there for ages turning it on and off. I think it’s not what you want to find yourself doing.

Year three: the teacher and the environment as resources

During year three, Judy was again observed working with children. She was interviewed twice and completed the final questionnaire. Again her ideas demonstrated a belief that the teacher’s role and the facilitation of children’s learning were intertwined. She attributed her commitment to meeting children’s needs to the base provided by her own upbringing. She believed that “the family values” instilled in her, followed by her “learning and experiences at university” had led to her current beliefs. Particular mention was made of her practical experiences in early childhood centres and the relationship between these experiences and coursework:

Influential were practical experiences, going into centres, doing the task that we were given in some of the courses and actually observing and finding out how and why teachers and children do what they do. Then going back to

classes and sorting all that through and evaluating it. And just from that re-evaluating, and every year doing more tasks, it builds up your knowledge of how children learn.

By the third year, she viewed children's learning as a more complex process than she had originally contended. She spoke of "there being quite a lot involved in learning" and the need to ensure children's emotional needs were met so that learning could be more easily accomplished. The teacher and the environment were seen as significant resources for the child and for their parents and *whānau*. She believed that the teacher, for instance, should ensure there are ample opportunities for the child to play, explore and experiment in a secure and safe environment. They should be respectful of the child and facilitate their learning through sensitive and appropriate actions. She acknowledged individual differences and different learning styles and referred to the curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, and the way in which she would use it as a reference point or touchstone in her work. In keeping with the philosophy inherent in *Te Whāriki* she emphasised the necessity of establishing positive relations with parents and *whānau* so that the early childhood centre became a "healthy learning environment for all."

While she embraced the curriculum, little reference was made to specific theories in her written responses or in her interviews. She had developed a clear personal philosophy of education that cohered with the curriculum. In her final year, she spontaneously made the comment that she had at times asked herself how relevant some of the theories were to working with children, why it was being done and whether she would ever use the information again. In sum, she said she "wondered whether it was all necessary."

This had first raised itself as an issue for her in her first year and was revisited in her third year:

They've [the theories] come up again this year through other theories that we have to do, but whether I've actually used them in practice I don't think I have. But as you know, they are in the back of my mind and I do still remember them. But I suppose if ever I needed to use them in a practical situation I could.

Thus, while she maintained she had gained considerable knowledge during her time of study that she had not known beforehand, and that much of this learning had come about through the linking of course work and practical experience, the coursework of relevance was not acknowledged as having a theoretical base.

7.4.2 Cultural diversity: a reorganising belief

After completing a Treaty of Waitangi workshop and some work in a *Cultural Studies* course in her first year, Judy stated that she believed this work was relevant to her role as an early childhood teacher. She did, however, qualify this by saying that it would be most important if people were working in a kindergarten as “they are incorporating cultural studies into their programmes.” She implied that other early childhood services were not so concerned about this aspect and that it was less important for people working in such contexts to have the same understanding.

Another movement in her beliefs on providing for culturally diverse populations occurred in the second year. Prior to completion of the questionnaire, she spent time in a kindergarten with several Asian children and completed a second *Cultural Studies* paper. In the questionnaire, she selected as an important characteristic the need for a teacher “to understand and respect cultural diversity”, stating that this knowledge would help “children of various cultures settle into their environment.” By the third year Judy believed that all teachers should be committed to the Treaty of Waitangi. Coursework had been influential in bringing about this change. Although she had been in early childhood centres that had not incorporated much *Māori* language, she now perceived its presence as a real indication that a teacher had respect for children and their families in New Zealand. This would be further demonstrated when they had an understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications for early childhood care and education.

7.4.3 Working in a team: an emerging belief

In her third year, Judy mentioned the importance of teachers working effectively in a team for the first time. This was classed as an emerging belief. She stated that the good

early childhood teacher would have respect, respect others and develop positive relationships among the team working in an early childhood centre.

This aspect of a teacher's work appeared to assume more significance because of Judy's experiences within early childhood centres. She now stated that relationships among those in the centre impacted on everyone with whom they came in contact. Drawing upon a situation she had experienced as a student, she maintained that difficulties staff members were experiencing in their relationships within the team had had a detrimental effect on her, creating an undesirable tension. She noted its effects on children:

I think children pick this up as well. I think a child knows through intuition really when someone is unhappy, when a teacher is unhappy, quite angry about something. It just shows, maybe when telling a story or when talking to others.

7.5 Positioning Judy's Beliefs in an Ecological Context

In her first year, Judy's focus was on the adult child dyad. She saw both teachers and the family as influential, with both having responsibilities for establishing reciprocal responsive relationships that would enhance the child's learning. Hence, from the outset, the child and the teacher and the child and its family were taken into account. Judy was expressing views that could be clearly cited within the micro and mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model.

In her second year, she was beginning to refer to the need for a good teacher to take account of features of the macrosystem, in particular with respect to cultural diversity. In her final year, she again cited the valuing and respecting of families but, overall, her main focus continued to be what was occurring in the microsystem of the early childhood centre. Indeed, when Judy was citing issues that extended beyond the immediate environment, she frequently related her ideas back to this setting. So, while she acknowledged the role of other influential factors on the young child's learning, it was still what was occurring in the environment of the early childhood centre that captured her attention.

7.6 Summary

A study of Judy's beliefs about the role of the early childhood teacher and how young children learn raised a number of considerations for the study of beliefs:

- Beliefs rooted in family value systems are likely to be highly resilient. These beliefs can be highly influential and underlie dominant beliefs held by an individual.
- Behaviours demonstrating beliefs in action are adapted to suit differing contexts and to incorporate new information. A dissonance may exist between beliefs held and the actions that are required in a particular context.
- Successful life and school experiences may give an individual confidence in expressing her or his beliefs. Positive work experiences in early childhood care and education may assist in the formulation of beliefs that cohere with the ideology of the early childhood teacher education programme.
- Belief change, or development, comes about when startling new information is presented, theoretical and practical links are clarified, opportunity is provided for reflection, and when knowledge and ideas are repeated and developed in different contexts and in different formats over three years.
- Negative examples of practice influence the development of positive beliefs of the teacher's role.
- Ambivalence about the place of theories in a teacher's knowledge base may result in a lack of acknowledgment of the source of ideas or a lack of recognition that ideas from theories are being incorporated into an individual's own belief system.
- An appreciation of the complexity of the teaching and caring role develops over three years as beliefs found in Te Whaariki, are adopted and a new understanding of the significance of the teaching team, and the family and whānau are appreciated.

CHAPTER 8

DEBBIE: THE TEACHER AS AN AFFIRMER OF DIVERSITY

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief profile of Debbie's life, outlining some of the influences of life experiences on her beliefs. This is followed by an exploration of the status of Debbie's beliefs and their positioning in an ecological context. Finally, a summary of the major considerations for a study of beliefs that emerged from this case study will complete the chapter.

8.2 A Brief Profile of Debbie and the Influence of Life Experiences on her Beliefs

Debbie entered the early childhood teacher education programme immediately after completing her secondary education. This section will explore her:

- family's beliefs about the value of education
- reasons for selecting early childhood education as a career and
- beliefs about the role of background experiences with children.

8.2.1 The family's beliefs about the value of education

In Debbie's family there was an expectation, held by both parents, that their three children would have a tertiary education. Debbie stated,

My Mum is a secondary school teacher, and education is the be all and end all in my house. I am the youngest and the third to go to varsity. Mum and Dad pay for it. They'll pay for the first degree. I don't think they would have said go to varsity if we said we didn't want to but because it was always so strong for the three of us, we never thought of not going.

This valuing of education influenced Debbie, not just in terms of herself, but in believing in the importance of education for others. However, while education is

strongly valued by the parents, anything but teaching as a career was encouraged first and foremost. “Going into teaching full stop was considered doubtful,” said Debbie, commenting on her parents’ reaction to her choice of early childhood education as a career. If she were to take the step of being a teacher, her mother suggested becoming a secondary school teacher, which she thought would interest Debbie more. This has encouraged Debbie to pursue a major interest she has in history, secure in the knowledge that she has sufficient university papers in the subject, should she wish to teach in a secondary school sometime in the future.

8.2.2 Debbie’s reasons for selecting early childhood education as a career

In spite of her mother’s suggestions that she reconsider her career choice, Debbie did not weaken in her resolve to become an early childhood teacher. Her day-to-day interactions and regular babysitting experiences, coupled with her study break work as a teacher’s aide during her senior secondary schooling year, confirmed her career choice.

From a young age, working with young children was a goal she held. A neighbour gave birth to her first child when Debbie was seven and, as she said, her “interest came from there.” She stills feels a close attachment to the children and claimed it is “bizarre” that this interest began so early in her life and that she would complete a four-year degree. Initially, she pursued the idea of enrolling to train as a nanny of young children. She was too young to be accepted and was also aware of the career limitations inherent in it. As she said, it really “interested her for travel prospects” but “when I come back I didn’t want to nanny for the rest of my life.”

The attainment of a teaching qualification opened the way for three possibilities that Debbie still perceived as highly desirable. Firstly, she believed early childhood teaching offered a clear career pathway with long-term career opportunities for advancement and the possibility of eventually owning one’s own business. Secondly, it met her other more immediate aspiration to travel overseas by giving a “passport” for work. Thirdly, the opportunity to study history at university as major supporting subject would enable her to move into secondary teaching should she wish to pursue this option later.

8.2.3 Experiences with children

Debbie does not consider previous experience with children and life experiences as an essential prerequisite for being a good teacher (“you can learn”). Indeed, she maintained that sometimes it appears to be counterproductive. She cited teachers she had seen who had plenty of experience, but were out-of-date and appeared bored in their work. She believed that teachers should

... not continue to do the same thing for too long because children get bored with it and won't keep doing it. You've got to be motivated. If you get there and you're not really into it, then the children don't benefit as much because they can see you're not interested.

Her early work in the teacher education programme and her initial questionnaire responses appeared to build on her previous experiences. She demonstrated a basic understanding of children and a desire to be an interesting imaginative teacher. When she looked back, at the end of the research, on her first responses given in the selection process, she noted that they “were quite cool.”

This basic understanding of children was also evident within the first few weeks of the programme when students participated in an educational media course. In this course, they were required to prepare a chart and an overhead transparency for use in a teaching context with young children. At this stage, with little experience and no substantial coursework, many students focused on encouraging children to learn shapes, colours and numbers using didactic approaches, closed questioning and activities that permitted little opportunity for spontaneous language. Debbie, however, prepared a chart on the seasons using interesting pictures and incorporating both the Māori and English language. Even more interesting was her overhead transparency. This revealed only a black outline of eyes and feet. Intended to encourage children to engage in lively discussion, and to predict what the picture was of, it offered interesting possibilities. A series of coloured overlays allowed small sections to be revealed one at a time, until a complete Paddington Bear emerged. It was designed to evoke interest, encourage discussion and speculation, and allow for interaction.

Debbie could not recall just where the ideas for her work came from. She reflected that one of the neighbour's children with whom she had a good deal of contact, was diagnosed as having a learning disability. He has constantly presented challenges and Debbie felt that to be successful with him she needed to take into account his needs and be imaginative in ensuring they were met. In some ways, she felt she had him in mind when she prepared her transparency. In this sense, past experiences had assisted her in her work, even although she did not believe they were a necessary prerequisite.

8.3 The Nature of Debbie's Beliefs

There were three areas that warrant comment, in which there were noticeable changes in Debbie's beliefs. The first two can be classified as reorganising beliefs and the third as an emerging belief. The first reorganising of a belief related to programme organisation, the role of the teacher and how children learn. The second represented a consolidation and development of some beliefs on diversity, while the third related to Debbie's ideas of where she ultimately wished to find employment. The latter ideas could be linked to her beliefs on the place of education and care in the early childhood teacher's role, but it was also influenced by an affective response to particular situations commonly found within New Zealand kindergartens.

Two other beliefs expressed by Debbie in interviews were highly resistant to change. These beliefs were concerned with child management and the nature of the teacher education programme

8.3.1 Programme organisation, the role of the teacher and children's learning: a reorganising belief

When Debbie applied for admission, her written responses indicated a basic appreciation of the significance of the first eight years in a child's life and its impact on later growth and development. She believed children learn through practical and physical activities, through social interaction with other children and through extending their imagination. She gave no indication of the nature of the programme through which these needs might be met.

Her first placement, for three days in the first two weeks of the programme and, thereafter, for one day a week in semester one, was in a private kindergarten. She described the centre as one that was “structured” and had “quality teaching”. Debbie enjoyed this experience and believed it would be the kind of centre she would like to work in eventually. At the end of her first year she recounted her experiences in a second kindergarten which had not impressed her. Here, she claimed she had expected it to be “more of a learning place” but it had been free play taken to an extreme with teachers spending time talking and gossiping. She stated,

I just found the teachers at X were too much, not so much interested, but they were never really interacting with the kids. There would be one teacher, perhaps on the mat doing some paper mâché with a couple of kids, but they were basically just left outside or left wherever they were to do what they wanted.

Debbie was adamant that she found a structured environment a more satisfying option. In such an environment, she believed that children were learning and the teachers were assisting them in the process. By the end of the third year, however, with more experience in centres and in the teacher education programme, this had changed. She reflected on those first experiences in what she had earlier referred to as a structured setting:

At the time I thought it was quite neat. They made sure children did all the activities and they had specific ones set out each day for them. But, as soon as I went into another centre, I thought it was quite ridiculous how they were doing it. In the first place they actually made sure every child did every activity and like no one was allowed outside until they had done them. ... Like torture, making a child do something it didn't want to. ... It was the first kindergarten I'd been into and it seemed like it worked really well.

Now, she believed the ideal early childhood centre is one that has a free play philosophy, where activities are set up and where children are encouraged to think. Teachers are aware of the children's needs and are encouraging their learning, but there is no compulsion on the child to engage with specific activities. This change in belief was regarded as a reorganised belief, for Debbie's ideal centre is not without routines and rules. These still have an importance, for she noted they enable a centre to run smoothly and “both children and adults know where they stand.”

Early in her teacher education programme, Debbie felt a strong conviction that structured programmes were most beneficial for children. During the second year, she began to have doubts, and by the third year, her beliefs had undergone a transformation. While she declared she had changed as soon as she went into another early childhood centre, the data do not bear this out.

8.3.2 Understanding and respect for diversity: a reorganising belief

Debbie was raised in a small rural town and brought with her beliefs that indicated a good teacher would be open to working with children with diverse needs. In her selection questionnaire responses, for example, she stated that a good teacher is one who “is willing to teach anyone regardless of race, sex, and capabilities”. These beliefs were reorganised and developed over the three years when she came to refer and reflect on ideas on diversity in greater detail

Early in her first year, after participating in a Treaty of Waitangi workshop, Debbie made specific reference to the good teacher as one who had an understanding of children who are Māori and children with special educational needs. Experiences in two early childhood centres over the year reinforced her beliefs. The Treaty of Waitangi workshop extended her own knowledge and explored issues of racism and implications for work with young children. In the early childhood centres in which she participated, sincere efforts were being made to incorporate basic Māori language and culture. In her responses Debbie began introducing the idea of acceptance, saying a good teacher “is willing to accept children of all races and abilities” and “to include the Māori language and culture in their teaching”. She also argued for more teaching of Māori language within the teacher education programme. In the third year, she continued to affirm that a good early childhood teacher would be one who would understand and respect cultural diversity as this, she maintained, is necessary to achieve a sound teaching standard overall.

Beliefs about the education of children with special needs also reflected Debbie’s appreciation of diversity. Early in the teacher education programme, she cited three experiences with children as the sources for this interest. The first was her

knowledge and friendship with two of her neighbours' children who are regarded as having challenging behaviours. A second source was a boy with language difficulties who had interested her in the class where she was a teacher's aide, and the third was a child with special educational needs with whom she came in contact while in an early childhood centre during the teacher education programme. As a result of these experiences, she believed teachers should be inclusive of all children including those with different abilities. By the third year, the strength of her beliefs was even more apparent and she identified closely with the philosophy and practices being propounded in a course on *Inclusive Programmes for Young Children*. Her beliefs sat comfortably with the new information presented. She stated, "I don't think children should be excluded for any reason. There is no reason why any centre can't accommodate any child just because of their disability." Asked if she had always believed this, Debbie replied that she did not think she had thought about it too much before doing *the Inclusive Programmes* course but qualified this statement:

I had never thought that a child should not go into a centre but I had never thought about how you do include a child or, what you do if you are put into a situation where somebody has quite a big disability.

8.3.3 The role of both education and care in the teacher's role: an emerging belief

Debbie entered the programme with an open mind about where she would like to work when she graduated. Her initial statements indicated a concern for the child's wellbeing and their overall development. This was supported in the expression of her beliefs about the nature of the teacher's role. At the end of the first year, after experience in both kindergarten and childcare, Debbie voiced a strong preference for working in kindergartens. By the end of the third year this had swung to a strong preference for working in childcare. Her major reason for this shift, she maintained, was the feeling that kindergartens fared less well when comparisons were made between the two services and provided fewer opportunities for her to gain job satisfaction. In comparison with childcare, she found the kindergarten programmes "monotonous" and devoid of opportunities like those offered at lunchtimes in childcare where a teacher "can sit with a group of children and really talk to them." Overall, she stated that childcare offered more opportunities for the teacher to offer

an educational programme that incorporated care. In addition, she noted that her views about children attending childcare had changed:

I can see the benefits of a child going to childcare more than I probably could before. I may have thought staying at home with mum was just as good, but socially and educationally, I think a childcare centre, even one day a week, or one afternoon a week, is a huge benefit to your child.

In the first instance, this shift in Debbie's views can be interpreted as a preference for a centre that was more aligned with her beliefs on the care and education of young children. These beliefs may have played a significant role but, as Debbie offered later in the interview, there was something even more fundamental, an abhorrence with mat-time. She stated,

Mat time, I think that's the big reason why I don't like thinking about being in a kindergarten. Because I don't like the parents, especially in the afternoon mat times at the end sessions, peering at you.

Debbie has a reserved style and described herself as "very standoffish" when faced with any new early childhood centre, new children and teachers to interact with. As a student she said that she "didn't want to put a toe out of line". Having to "perform" in the kindergarten afternoon session with children on the mat was clearly an emotional experience for her. Affect appears to have played a role in strengthening her preferences for childcare. She now believed it provided a more satisfying work experience for teachers and offered children positive educational and social outcomes.

8.3.4 Child management: a reiterated belief

As a result of earlier experiences with children, Debbie had well-established beliefs about effective child management strategies. These beliefs were resistant to change and were as strongly held at the end of the programme as at the beginning of it. Only some minor concessions were made. The beliefs became apparent at the end of the

first year when she commented that she found the management of some children in an early childhood centre presented her with difficulties:

I find it really hard to control some of the kids. That's when I usually get another teacher to help me with some of the kids because they can sort it out. That's all experience, to know what to say and what to do with them.

She recognised that there were strategies that teachers used effectively, but found them “hard to pick up”. Moreover, she had identified her own management procedures. These, she claimed, had potency in a different context but would be regarded as unacceptable in an early childhood centre. Reference was made to the neighbours' two children with challenging behaviour who Debbie said she could discipline in her “own way”:

I can scream at them. You can raise your voice at them because they know that once I get a certain tone that that's when they stop. But the kids here don't know that.

Course work on child management and observations in early childhood centres, failed to weaken these beliefs. She was fully aware of other strategies but doubted their potency compared to her own approach. She felt strongly, for example, that discussing problems with children was not necessarily the best approach:

In some centres they really work on you to sit down with the child and talk through any problem they have. Whereas I find a bit of a raised voice would work just as well. Because they pick up that I'm annoyed when I say, 'Don't do that!' It's going to work better than 'Why did you do that?' to a three year old.

Furthermore, she did not believe such an approach had any adverse effects saying, “You're not hurting them in any way, not putting them down or anything”. She also acknowledged that there were times and certain situations when it was productive to talk through situations with children. On two occasions, she differentiated between practices in childcare and kindergarten as she had experienced them, using the

examples to support her own philosophy of child management:

In a kindergarten it's all, we sit down and talk about this. 'Why did you do that?' - 'Because I wanted to.' Whereas in a child-care they don't mind growling and saying 'Don't do that', or 'I saw you do that', and the children realise they have done something wrong, which often works a lot better, or in my experience. Really, kids that are misbehaving all the time, they just think it is a joke when you sit down and ask them why did they do it.

At kindergartens they are good at using words with the children, like 'Don't do that I don't like it.' That works well because it's child on child, but at times it works but, with some children it doesn't work to sit them down and talk them through what they are doing, because they don't really care. They are not going to get in trouble for it, so they will just do it again. ...At child-care they do talk it through, but not every day do they have to sit down and talk about everything you do. They don't mind having someone say 'Don't do that!' I don't know. Maybe it is something to do with the policy of kindergartens. It seems kindergartens never kind of scream at their kids, or raise their voices or anything.

Debbie's beliefs about child management were based on strategies that had been successful for her in the past and that she found no reason to change, particularly as she had seen similar practices used in some childcare centres. The different approach used in kindergarten proved unconvincing to her as an alternative practice. It is likely that this is another factor contributing to her preference for ultimately working in childcare. Her beliefs about child management may resonate more with the perceived practices observed in some centres and provide little challenge to her current beliefs.

8.3.5 The lack of relevance of some course content: a reiterated belief

Debbie regarded the teacher education programme somewhat differently to the other university courses in which she was enrolled. She expected everything in the programme to have direct links to work in early childhood centres. The courses that were linked to placement in early childhood centres she regarded as "so relevant because the aim of the course was putting what you learned into practice". In spite of a deep interest in history, for example, she had difficulty in her first year in seeing the relevance of learning about the history of early childhood education. For

instance, when asked what had surprised her in the things learned so far in her first year, she commented,

I think so much history we do of kindergartens in our *Historical Perspectives* course. I didn't think we were going to be involved in that so much. Things that seem so irrelevant to teaching but I guess they won't be.

In the third year, she continued to be critical of courses that she perceived as not providing a "hands-on" approach. She believed that the work on theorists could be reduced and that what was taught could be delivered in a more systematic way with clear steps: "This is what he thought". Much "theoretical" material she regarded as irrelevant. In the three years, her beliefs about what should be contained in a teacher education programme did not alter. Only material that she could see had direct practical outcomes was believed to be of real value. This is not to say, however, that Debbie held a limited view of the teacher's role in the educative process.

8.4 Positioning Debbie's Beliefs in an Ecological Context

The ecological environment in which Debbie perceived the teacher as working and the child as learning went beyond focussing solely on the teacher/child dyad. From the beginning of the research, she perceived the teacher as one who worked imaginatively in all areas of the early childhood centre. In addition, she expressed an awareness of wider issues conceived of as integral, or impinging upon, educational institutions. For instance, she stated that the good teacher would realise the importance of early childhood education and would recognise the responsibilities this placed on her. Reference was made to the need to be non-discriminatory in work with the diverse populations found in early childhood centres. She expressed views that the good teacher would create an environment in which Māori language and culture was included. These beliefs she related to her own upbringing and the opportunities in her neighbourhood for her to understand more about the Treaty of Waitangi and its implications.

The child as a learner was also perceived as learning within a wider social context than the early childhood centre. It should be noted, however, that over the three years Debbie made few references to parents and whānau so that, although she was

interested in the wider context of education and its implications, it was a context almost devoid of specific mention of parents and whānau. Rather, she maintained a holistic perspective of learning within the early childhood centre and conceived of the teacher as one who empowered children and acknowledged differences.

8.5 Summary

Debbie's research data presented material for consideration in belief studies. These are summarised below:

- Beliefs are strongly influenced by family values and the life experiences of the individual.
- Even although beliefs are espoused with conviction and contain a strong affective component, they appear to still be open to change.
- Some belief change is linked to experiences in contexts that appeared to be more conducive and supportive of beliefs held by the individual and the way he or she perceives herself functioning in that context.
- Beliefs and new knowledge that resonate with some basic ideas, or less well formulated beliefs appear to have an increased chance of being accepted and developed into more comprehensive beliefs.
- Affect is a component of some beliefs.
- Strategies that are believed to be effective because of past experiences are resilient and resistant to change.

CHAPTER NINE

MAKI: THE TEACHER AS A RESPECTED FACILITATOR OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

9.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief profile of Maki and her family in her country of birth. It then explores the influence of life experiences on Maki's beliefs about the role of the teacher. This is followed by an examination of the nature of Maki's beliefs and a statement on the positioning of her beliefs in an ecological context. A summary of considerations for belief studies concludes the case study.

9.2 A Profile of Maki and Her Family

The first 12 years of Maki's life were spent in the country of her birth, an Asian country. Reminiscing on this, she noted that there were both happy and sad times. Life was initially very hard. The family had a subsistence existence, in spite of long hours spent labouring in the fields. Their situation improved when her father went to work in another city some distance from their home and sent a portion of his wages back to his family. As the years went by, Maki noted that the social, political and economic situation in the country began improving and, along with this, money in the household became less tight. Her father, too, changed his occupation and so life was less precarious.

From birth, Maki lived in the ancestral home in an extended family and much of her upbringing was her great grandmother's responsibility. After she died, her grandmother, who now lives with the family in New Zealand, took over this role.

9.3 Life Experiences and their Relationship to Beliefs

Maki brought with her to the teacher education programme a set of values and beliefs that have their origin in her own particular culture, a culture with a long history. These values and beliefs shaped the way she answered questions, interacted with the researcher, viewed the material presented in the programme, as well as her observations in early childhood centres. In this section, these will be discussed under two headings:

- Respect for others
- The valuing of education and industriousness

9.3.1 Respect for others

Maki acknowledged her grandparents as having a considerable influence on her beliefs and values systems. It was they who instilled in her from an early age respect for parents, grandparents and others. This has impacted on her beliefs about respect for teachers and for children in a teacher's care.

Respect within the family

Respect, emphasised Maki's grandmother, would be demonstrated behaviourally in the way others were greeted, spoken to and cared for. It was considered improper, for instance, to argue with those who were to be respected and there was a clear expectation that their wishes and demands would be met. Maki's parents have two daughters and no sons. The role of the daughters, in taking on the traditional male role of caring for the parents, has been continually impressed on her. Firstly, in due respect to the parents and secondly, to overcome some of the shame directed at her family by the extended family for only having daughters. In effect, the daughters must demonstrate they can "act like sons" in assuming responsibility for the parents.

Respect for teachers

When asked if this respect was extended to teachers, Maki answered that this was definitely so in her home country. Indeed, the respect and awe in which it was expected teachers would be held led her to be "very frightened" of them. "Over there you have to respect them all the time," Maki commented. She found she could not talk with them in the same way as she later found she could do with New Zealand teachers. The respect Maki was taught to value was an ascribed respect associated with a person's position in society. In some instances, this respect engendered a sense of fear.

In the process of collecting data for this research, congenial collegial relationships were established with Maki. She would warmly greet me when we met and frequently sought me out for advice and assistance. It was also apparent from the outset that my position as Director of the programme engendered in her a respect. She found the acquisition of fluency in the English language difficult to achieve to her satisfaction and it was this, coupled with a desire to please, that led to her sometimes find difficulty in expressing her views as well as she would have liked.

Evidence for this in the data was apparent in her short responses to questions, particularly in her first two years. At times, she found the questions difficult to comprehend and at other times she struggled with what she wanted to say. On some occasions, she assumed there should be a correct response and was apologetic about her responses, believing they might be incorrect. These included comments, such as "My English is terrible." and "I can see a

mistake here.” when she was reading responses made on a previous occasion. Another time, she offered an answer to one of my questions and then stated, “I hope it’s right.” For these reasons, the observations of Maki’s work in centres became important as a shared point of experience to discuss and to confirm, or disconfirm, my understanding of her thinking.

The respect Maki has for people, and particularly for those with responsibility for others, is reflected in her beliefs of the role of the teacher. When a person is awarded respect, she implied that the behaviour demonstrated should then be worthy of this. She was very disappointed, for example, in teachers’ behaviour in the first early childhood centre in which she was placed for practical experience. She said,

I found the staff was really different because they’re kind of like family there and they’re always gathered together and talk about their families and gossip and stuff like that.

This, she stated in casual conversation later, was not what teachers should do, either if they wished to be respected themselves, or if they were respecting children and working for their wellbeing.

Respect for children

Maki’s sense of respect for children was apparent from the time she applied for enrolment in the programme. She emphasised the personal characteristics of the teacher that she believed would enhance a child’s care. The observations, both in a kindergarten with four year olds, and in childcare where her work was with infants, indicated that she demonstrated a quiet respect for children. This was coupled with a degree of intolerance when “too much time” was spent by other staff on housekeeping tasks at the expense of time that could be better spent with children.

9.3.2 The valuing of education and of industriousness

Maki’s life experiences have led her to believe in the value of education and working hard to achieve one’s goals. These beliefs and values can be traced to her early years of life, to observations of the life her family led and to discussions she had with her grandparents. The two themes of this section, education and industriousness, will be woven into what follows.

Education in Maki’s life

For Maki, her education has taken place in two countries with two very different education systems. The two countries hold different beliefs about how children learn and the way in

which learning should be encouraged. She found the school system in New Zealand “totally different”. She noted that

School hours are different and more people in the class. In X we stay in the same class all day and the teachers change class. ... The teaching is different. Over there you have to learn text off by heart. Here in New Zealand you don't have to. ... I think you have more freedom over here and over there it is very strict. Here in New Zealand you learn by yourself more, take responsibility on yourself.

In this section, Maki's experiences that have led to her valuing education will be examined by exploring her experiences in her home country and in New Zealand.

The opportunity for education in her home country

When Maki was seven, the local schoolteachers came to the house one night and discussed with her parents Maki's readiness for school. Maki wrote,

My parents agreed with them that I was ready and I also knew that my parents had no money for an education. After the teachers left, I discussed with my parents and I told them I had five dollars. I had this from my birthdays from my great grandmother over the last few years. Five dollars was worth a lot of money in those days. I never wanted to spend it on any other thing except for my education. So I took the money out of my moneybox and gave it to my parents. Their tears were running down their faces because they felt very sorrowful and didn't have any money to pay for me to go to school. A week later my parents and I went to school and enrolled.

Maki's reasons for wishing to gain an education stemmed from discussions with her grandmother about the way in which a lack of education had hindered her parents in moving into a higher socioeconomic group. In spite of working extremely hard, her parents at that time had little to show for it. Their material possessions were limited and there was no money to spare for anything other than the bare necessities of life. Her grandmother viewed education as a way of gaining liberation from such an existence, even though the money she gave her grandchildren for birthdays was not given specifically for education.

Having paid for her schooling with money carefully saved, and fully aware of how hard earned any money was within the household, Maki determined to be a good scholar. She recalled leaving for school early in the morning, in darkness in winter, because "I was getting marks for being an early student." Maki applied herself well and passed final exams at the end of each year. She remembered her parents' pride in her achievements and willingness to accept responsibilities.

When Maki reflected on the teaching and learning style used at the primary school, she described a heavy emphasis on recall, on encouragement to work hard and the development of good study skills:

As soon as I got into the classroom [each morning] I read the text out very loud, as loud as possible. The teacher said it's good for our lungs when we read it loud and also said it's easier for us to remember the text and the poems. I used to remember the whole text and I had to get up and go and stand next to the teacher and read it aloud without looking at the book. If I didn't pass I would get into detention and, if I did pass, I would get good marks.

School finished at 2.30 p.m. and homework would be done before playing with friends. After a meal with the family, there would be time for revision before going to bed. School was attended six days of the week and there was always an expectation from her parents that. "I would concentrate and do well in my study and at school." She did this as she felt it was her "responsibility to study well and create her own future." She understood the situation the family were in financially, the need to be careful with money and the inappropriateness of making demands on them.

Education in New Zealand

During her middle school years, the family took a major step and emigrated to New Zealand to work with the other extended family members in an established business. The move to New Zealand was a significant change in the family's life. The aeroplane seemed huge, the large airports were overwhelming and suddenly communication had to take place through body language rather than through oral means. Forms to be filled in were a mystery, and coping in an English language environment was a considerable culture shock.

The family were destined to live in a small New Zealand city. Everything was strange. The city seemed so small and quiet, there were comparatively few people and everyone spoke English.

Maki's introduction to the New Zealand education system was at an intermediate school in Form II. Her ability to communicate in English was almost non-existent. She remembers vividly the first day at school:

The teacher asked me where I lived and I couldn't understand her and didn't know what she was going on about. So she took me out of the classroom and pointed to the house. Then I realised that she was asking me where I lived.

As she gained skills in the English language and an understanding of expectations in New Zealand, Maki's confidence and understanding grew. Although she found her first year of

schooling in an intermediate school in New Zealand a major challenge, secondary school was more enjoyable. Maki's English improved, teachers were interested in her progress and offered support in various ways, and friendships with her peers were consolidated.

Throughout this time, the family had obligations to meet with the extended family members who had brought them to New Zealand. After school, there was work to be done in the family business. Generally this was completed between 10 and 11 p.m. at night and then it was time for homework. Homework was nearly always completed, although teachers noticed that she was frequently tired and had difficulty in concentrating. For Maki, succeeding at her study continued to be her major objective.

Maki maintained that both she and her sister experienced a lot of freedom at this time. As her parents were unfamiliar with the New Zealand school system, the two girls were able to select the subjects they would take at school and determine, to a certain extent, their future careers. Maki's first leaning was towards hairdressing but her parents discouraged her from this, disliking the thought of her handling other people's hair. Furthermore, they did not equate this with a university education. Finally, Maki decided she would go to university, something she saw as an independently taken decision, although it did win her parents' approval and support. They wanted her and her sister to receive a good education, something that had been unavailable to them. Maki was convinced that there was a place for her in tertiary education and, after a lonely week at one university, she changed universities and enrolled in Social Sciences.

Towards the mid-point of her first year, she was unable to see a clear career path and explored other possibilities. Teaching appealed to her because of her belief that that "education is important and that she had something she could offer to the children". She applied for selection to the early childhood teacher education programme and prepared for the selection interview using information gained from a book on child development borrowed from the university library. Employing techniques that had served her well in the past, she committed some phrases and terms to memory in anticipation of questions that she was likely to be asked. Later she admitted that she did not fully understand all she had written in response to the question about how young children learn. For instance, she referred to a "zone of potential development" and was unable to clarify what it meant during a subsequent interview. This point demonstrates yet again the difficulty in tapping into actual beliefs that people hold and the need to use a mixed methods approach in any investigation of beliefs.

Maki had had some babysitting experience and occasional work in a creche, but prior to entry into the early childhood teacher education programme, her experience with young

children was limited. During the first month in the programme, however, she reported having an average level of knowledge about children from attending courses and from reading. Overall, she rated herself as slightly below average in supporting the wellbeing and development of young children, but felt that in the future her performance in the field would be above average of those in her peer group. As with her previous educational experiences, she wanted to "try hard and work towards [becoming] more accurate". Conscious of the need to continually improve her use of the English language, she reported putting "heaps of effort into it". Her confidence in her ability to succeed appeared related to a history of previous successful educational experiences and the belief that hard work brings its own rewards.

Maki's beliefs about education and working hard in order to achieve one's goals are rooted in the family value systems, her parents' expectations for their daughters and in their belief that eventually the work ethic will have positive outcomes. These beliefs have influenced the responsibilities Maki believes lie with teachers in their work with children.

9.4 The Nature of Maki's Beliefs

Maki entered an early childhood programme that she knew little about and brought to it a limited understanding of young children. In this section, Maki's beliefs are explored under three headings:

- An appreciation of cultural diversity: a reorganising belief
- The role of the teacher and how young children learn: a reorganising belief and a lurking belief
- Risk taking and belief change.

9.4.1 An appreciation of cultural diversity: a reorganising belief

Maki entered the programme from a minority culture in New Zealand society. She had little background knowledge of New Zealand history and the many other cultural experiences and knowledge, that other students take for granted. Small things had to be learned. Children's action games, songs, singing games and nursery rhymes, for example, were frequently new to her. Although she had received her secondary education in New Zealand, her limited contact with New Zealand history had not prepared her to deal easily with some aspects of the programme.

The Treaty of Waitangi is a crucial document for teachers in New Zealand to understand. It is only over recent years that there has been a growing awareness of the need to honour this document and to implement its implications for education. While Maki was thoroughly grounded in her own culture, a workshop on the Treaty of Waitangi in the first few days of

the programme, followed by intensive reading on the subject and the necessity to demonstrate in writing an understanding of the issues, presented challenges for Maki. She said,

I found it really, really difficult. ... Oh it was my most difficult course. ... I didn't really understand it. I was asking heaps of people at home to help and to ... explain it to me.

In spite of these difficulties, Maki believed it was important to study the Treaty and the subsequent history in order to deal with a number of related issues. One can surmise that her appreciation of its importance is likely to be accentuated with her own position as a member of a minority culture.

Maki's beliefs about teachers having an appreciation of cultural diversity were not, however, reflected in her responses to the first two questionnaires. Hence, in the pattern of her beliefs developed from responses to the questionnaires (Appendix O), this was classified as an emerging belief. However, the ideas referred to above were cited early in interviews and in the second year she selected as one of the most important characteristics of an early childhood teacher, the respecting and understanding of cultural differences. By the third year, she believed teachers should offer an education that is bicultural and respects other cultures. Her concerns about racism in New Zealand society are likely to have influenced her beliefs. She expressed uncertainty, for example, about her chances of moving into a position of leadership fearing there might be "some racist people ... they might put me down." She had observed such practices, but was optimistic that the situation was improving as New Zealand became more multicultural. When all data were taken into account, Maki was clearly developing and reorganising her beliefs on cultural diversity.

Maki's beliefs demonstrated a respect for other cultures, and her life experiences appeared to have been influential in her acceptance of the new ideas and an appreciation of rights for minority groups. An increased appreciation of associated issues enabled her to readily adopt some of new ideas into her own belief system. Her ideas on cultural diversity were reorganised as she moved through the programme.

9.4.2 The role of the teacher: a reorganising belief and a lurking belief

At the beginning of the programme, Maki's ideas about the early childhood teacher and how young children learn were based on her life experiences and the reading of textbooks in

preparation for her interview. This section will chart the changes that occurred in Maki's beliefs about the teacher's pedagogical role and how children learn, over the time of the research.

Although Maki had stated early in the research that young children learn through play, one of her first assignment tasks suggested that she also regarded the teacher as a giver of information. In an educational media and technology course referred to earlier (see 8.2.3), she prepared an overhead transparency whereby only portions of the picture on the transparency were revealed at a time. The picture was of a house and Maki's aim was to use the transparency "to teach children how to draw a house". As each section was revealed, the children, under directions from the teacher, were to copy the door, the windows and the chimney until finally the house was completed. This suggested that what Maki meant by routine in her early statements might have been a practice in which the teacher takes a directive role. Certainly, the only models of teaching she had from her own early schooling experiences were those where the teacher was directive and where much learning occurred by imitation and rote.

Nevertheless, over the three years, Maki frequently referred to children learning through play and through interactions with others. Observations of Maki working with children suggested that these beliefs were being incorporated into her practice. For example, in the second year, the observation was of an activity that Maki had organised to encourage early literacy skills. A post office, with writing papers, writing implements, stamps, telephone, books, post box and other objects, set the scene. When asked how she decided what action to take when children were making demands on her, she replied,

I can't expect them to do what I want but I have to leave them to do for themselves the way they want to learn. ... I just want to encourage them to do it for themselves ... and I just do something and they watch me and they do it for themselves.

Maki engaged herself fully in the activity and modelled behaviours in an unobtrusive way. These included writing a letter, addressing an envelope, speaking on the telephone and wrapping a parcel. Children were encouraged to interact and assist each other. Her role was not dominant or directive. Children initiated interactions with her and she frequently followed their lead and encouraged them to act independently.

Over the three years, Maki maintained that she had become more encouraging of children. She cited her observations of staff in centres and the opportunity to practise behaviours herself as being influential in bringing about a change in her thinking. Courses in the programme that had tasks to complete while in early childhood centres had also played a

role. By the third year, she was adamant that she did not want to become a teacher who forced children into doing things.

Nevertheless, Maki had not totally abandoned her earlier beliefs; rather they were lurking in the background. When she was asked in her second year, for example, whether she would still use the overhead transparency to teach children to draw, she replied,

Oh, I probably wouldn't ask to copy it down. I don't know, I think it just depends... I think it just depends on different situations. Probably. I don't know. Probably not. ... I think I've changed a bit. Not forcing children to do what I did.

In the third year, she was keen to maintain some form of structure in a programme, suggesting there should be times children spend together on the mat; "I like to encourage children to sit down and sing". Maki was critical of the practice in a centre that allowed children to jump up and down and run around when singing or story telling was in progress. It appeared that she was seeking a balance between informal and more formal or structured approaches, but she did not wish to return to the ways of her family where children were "expected to sit down and be quiet" and were given little freedom. From the questionnaire data, it appeared that her belief in the teacher as a giver of information was taken for granted. However, when the interview data were also considered, it was apparent that this was more of a lurking belief.

Overall, Maki had reorganised her ideas about the role of the teacher, but there was still a lurking belief that teachers needed to be directive in certain contexts and with certain activities. For Maki, there was no dilemma in holding beliefs that were not totally congruent; rather, they were able to co-exist.

Maki perceived children's learning and adult learning as different processes. She stated in her third year that young children learned through play, interaction with others and exploration, but this did not translate to her beliefs and actions about how she, as an adult, learnt most effectively. As well as spending hours researching, reading and note taking for tests, she continued to memorise considerable amounts of material - a technique that had stood in her good stead in her home country. By the third year, this was becoming less and less effective and she was experiencing nightmares as a result of the long hours awake, the time spent memorising notes and the distress when a test question was different from that anticipated. While she was open to new ideas she continued to attempt to learn by rote.

9.4.3 Risk-taking and belief change

It appeared that Maki was willing to make changes and develop her ideas in some areas. In other aspects, particularly with respect to her own study skills, there appeared to be difficulties in changing and breaking away from the security of what were well proven strategies within another culture. This section will explore risk-taking and belief change with reference to Maki.

Maki stated in the first year that she had more to learn in order to be proficient at supporting young children's wellbeing and care. She had obstacles to overcome in terms of the language, but also demonstrated a willingness to work industriously to overcome these. In addition, she had a respect for what was being taught, sometimes finding it difficult to critique the lectures and reading materials. Her ambition was to succeed in her studies and she was highly desirous of gaining the necessary skills and knowledge. Just as important as all these factors, may be an ability to be a risk-taker, even if at times these risks were forced upon her.

When asked about whether she considered herself a risk-taker, Maki replied that she did not believe this to be the case. In support of this she cited how, while in her home country, she had turned down opportunities to study in New Zealand and in the United States. If she had really been a risk-taker, she maintained, she would have grasped one of these opportunities. However, she did acknowledge the risk-taking models presented by her parents, a father who had moved to another country on his own to improve the family's situation, and then the family's decision to emigrate to a country where so much was unknown. Furthermore, she demonstrated an ability to take the risks forced on her and her sister, because of their parents' limited English and difficulty in understanding the system. Both daughters responded to the challenges, selecting their own secondary school subjects, and not necessarily adopting the most comfortable options. Maki, for example, first enrolled in a university in another city and within a few days regretted her choice and moved to her present university. She made the decision after one year at university, to apply for a teacher education programme she knew little about and to accept an interview for this. When she was unhappy with her placement in an early childhood centre she discussed this with the person organising the placement. She saw this as a risk, for she was challenging her placement with a person for whom she had respect.

These examples would suggest that a willingness to take risks, and to respond and accept change, might have facilitated some belief change. Hypothetically, the magnitude of the changes Maki was faced with were likely to have been greater than for the majority of the students enrolled in the programme, whether or not she recognised this. She was forced into

assessing beliefs brought from her own culture and determining their value or “fit” for her as a prospective early childhood teacher. Either rejecting or accepting these put her into a risk-taking position.

9.5 Positioning Maki’s Beliefs in an Ecological Context

Maki’s early questionnaire responses focused on the child and teacher in their immediate environment. This was a strong theme in her responses. She acknowledged that children learned in other contexts and, in her second year, believed that the good teacher would develop sound relationships with parents and *whānau*. In her final year, her focus was still predominantly within the early childhood centre. There were, however, inferences and statements made in response to the questionnaires that suggested that she was beginning to look to the wider ecological context in which children and teachers operate. Maki began referring to the role of the staff as a whole, noting that “they must share their ideas, knowledge and skills and communicate positively.” It was unclear from the questionnaire data whether this sharing should occur with the parents and *whānau* or whether she perceived this as being a component of the relationship between a good teacher and her colleagues.

In interviews, where she had the opportunity to elaborate on her beliefs, Maki demonstrated that she was positioning her views on the good teacher within a wider context. At the microsystem level, she maintained that sound relationships between all people engaged within the system were crucial in the development, maintenance and implementation of effective programmes in an early childhood centre. Furthermore, she was grappling with the philosophies, theories and practices expounded within the teacher education programme with which she agreed, but that she had not always seen in operation in early childhood centres. She noted, for instance that

It’s funny because when you go out into the centres they don’t use it. They do it so differently, perhaps, different beliefs, different philosophies. I’ll have to find out for myself when I go out there.

Her beliefs about the role of the good teacher encompassed ideas that meant that teachers should ensure children were learning in a safe environment but they were also taking responsibility for wider issues. Maki compared early childhood teachers with other professionals, most notably those she termed the helping professions, namely, lawyers and doctors. All of these groups she believed were helping and, in some instances, “rescuing

others”. She maintained they should all be “respecting children’s rights and fighting as advocates for children.”

Maki’s questionnaire responses were somewhat limiting in terms of understanding the ecological context of her beliefs. It was only because she was given the opportunity to discuss her ideas in an interview that it became clear that she had a broader view of education and society than could be construed from questionnaire data. Over the three years, she moved from considering the good early childhood teacher in terms of immediate interactions with children in the direction of also viewing the teacher as a professional with responsibilities that went well beyond the immediate child/teacher dyad.

9.6 Summary

Maki’s case study and her beliefs about the role of the early childhood teacher raise a number of considerations for the study of beliefs. These are summarised below:

- Early experiences and the cultural context in which they occur have a strong influence on beliefs.
- Clearly articulated family values, recognised as part of the belief system, appear highly resilient and may be maintained as primary beliefs.
- New knowledge, information or beliefs that resonates with personal beliefs are more likely to be incorporated into an existing belief structure.
- Beliefs from one field (the role of the teacher) may be linked with beliefs in another field (on how young children learn).
- Beliefs pertaining to children will not necessarily be regarded as having application to adults.
- Interactions with others may impact on beliefs.
- Beliefs that are not totally congruent may coexist without creating any noticeable dilemma for the holder.
- Tapping into actual beliefs that people hold is not straightforward and a mixed methods approach proved most fruitful in this investigation.

CHAPTER TEN

MADISON: THE TEACHER AS A PARTNER IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS

10.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief profile of Madison and a discussion of some of the life experiences that influenced her choice of early childhood teaching as a career. As Madison proceeded through the programme, many of her earlier beliefs were reinforced and she articulated her ideas with increasing confidence and certainty. A sample of Madison's beliefs and their development over three years is explored by examining the nature of Madison's beliefs and particularly those relating to the teacher as a partner in the learning process. The positioning of her beliefs in an ecological context follows and a summary statement concludes the case study.

10.2 A Brief Profile of Madison

This brief profile of Madison will explore her perceptions of herself in her final year of secondary school, her movement into paid employment, her desire to extend her skills and her subsequent acceptance into the early childhood teacher education programme.

10.2.1 Self perceptions and stigmatisation

Madison, the youngest in a two-child family, achieved what she regarded as "average secondary school grades". Her friends gained bursary, ensuring entry to university study which most of them saw as an automatic step in their educational development. Madison did not achieve a successful outcome in bursary examinations and she felt stigmatised by this lack of attainment. The message she received was "Bright people go to varsity" and at that point her grades suggested to her she was not a "bright person".

As part of her secondary school programme, in the final year she participated in a childcare course. This ran for the full year and incorporated basic child development

with practical experiences. One of these practical experiences involved participation in a buddy reading system as a tutor. Madison was trained by a psychologist and a reading tutor, and began a programme with a seven-year-old boy from a neighbouring school. She worked with him twice a week and, by the end of six weeks, she reported that “He had done so well. He’d improved so much.” Hence, while she had felt stigmatised by her lack of academic success in her final year at secondary school, her success in an individual teaching situation left her with the belief that she had some skills she could offer others.

10.2.2 Movement into paid employment and the wish to extend her skills

After leaving school, Madison became a nanny to two young children, a job she acquired by word of mouth. This involved being with the children five days a week and taking them to an early childhood centre, once a week. After two years in this position, she felt the need to extend her knowledge and skills in working with children and was encouraged by the family who employed her, her parents, and others, to apply for the early childhood teacher education programme at university. She had reached a stage when she thought, “I can do more. There is more to early childhood than just nannying!” This was a major step for Madison. Her parents have not had a university education and she commented that she would be only the second in her extended family to graduate, a matter of pride to her family: “My mother is proud of my achievements and I think my father is too but he doesn’t show it.”

Her motivation for furthering her study related strongly to three aspects: her desire to become more knowledgeable about young children, her wish to have a qualification that would be of value when she travelled overseas, and her goal to become a kindergarten teacher. Madison recalled aspiring to be a kindergarten teacher from an early age. There were always five or six occupations that appealed to her and, while these varied from time-to-time, there were always two that remained constant, namely a kindergarten teacher and postwoman. Madison was surprised when she discovered recently that eighteen years ago, at the age of six, her doctor’s records showed that she had told him

that she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. She reflected on her reasons for maintaining this interest and wondered if it was because she “was so used to telling everyone that I was going to become a kindergarten teacher that I was so sure that that was what I was going to do.”

She can recall very little of her own experiences as a child at kindergarten. She did not believe it had consciously influenced her career choice but has been told by her mother that she always loved attending. She stated,

I can remember early primary but not kindergarten. I remember talking to my Mum about going to kindy and she said that I loved going, every morning just getting up and going. I didn't perform, didn't cry. I was the first out of the door to go. I didn't like leaving either. That's got to be good.

Allied with a long-term aim to be a kindergarten teacher was Madison's enthusiasm for working with children and their families. Her experiences with children in her secondary schooling, her work with young children and later her participation in the teacher education programme led to her beliefs of the teacher as a partner with parents and whānau, with colleagues, and with children as learners. Towards the end of her three-year Diploma programme, her beliefs in these partnerships and her enthusiasm for the work had not waned. This led Madison to say that she did not see her work simply as a job that had to be done, but implied it was something more satisfying and enjoyable than the word “job” connoted.

10.3. The Nature of Madison's Beliefs

Once the interviews, observations and questionnaire responses were combined and analysed, it was apparent that some of Madison's beliefs underwent changes over her time in the teacher education programme. Beliefs that were reorganised or emerged included her beliefs about the “good teacher” being a partner with parents and others in the early childhood team, and the need for the teacher to understand and provide for children from diverse backgrounds. Also of particular interest were her beliefs about

the ways in which a good teacher would act as a partner with children in the learning process.

10.3.1 The teacher as a partner with parents and *whānau*: a reorganising belief

From the first contact, Madison believed that a good teacher is one “the parents feel comfortable with” and who is able to “help parents cope with problems facing their child.” In her first practicum, she expressed delight in the way parents had approached her, talking readily with her:

They don't treat me like a student. They value my opinion. If I've got something to say they listen.

By the third year, Madison was beginning to see herself not simply as source of information, but more as a partner with parents, caregivers and *whānau* in the education of their young children. She maintained, for instance, that

Families have a lot to offer a centre and have vital information about their child that can be passed onto the [early childhood] centre. They offer a lot of resources that the centre can use.

I don't think it would be an ideal centre without parents. Their contributions are valid in all sorts of ways. I like having an open door policy so that they can come in and take an activity like flax weaving.

In other words, she came to regard parents as allies in the educative process and expressed the belief that parents should feel comfortable about approaching teachers when they see gaps in what was being provided for their child. Moreover, she pointed out that teachers should not perceive this as a threat, but should feel pleased that the parents are relaxed and confident enough to take this action.

In the final year of the Diploma of Teaching programme, this view of parents is emphasised and conveyed to students in several courses within the programme. It is an ideology that resonated with Madison's beliefs. In her final interview, she believed the

relationship early childhood teachers have with parents is one of the differentiating features of it as a profession. She claimed that early childhood education “is more sensitive to family issues than other professions”.

10.3.2 The teacher as a partner with others in the team: a reorganising belief

By the third year, the importance Madison placed on the partnerships teachers developed with parents was translated into additional beliefs that related to partnerships within the teaching team. She was adamant that, in order to make a child’s experiences in an early childhood centre worthwhile, it is necessary for the teacher to work effectively within the staff team.

Madison first made reference to a good teacher being “able to work in a team situation” in her selection responses. In hindsight, she agreed that at that point in time she was strongly influenced by an earlier question in her selection interview when she was asked what qualities she had that would make her an effective team member. Searching for ideas to complete her written work, she referred back to questions asked in the interview. This raises the issues of how beliefs can be sifted out from ideas like this one that serve a purpose for an individual in a context, at a given time, and may never be cited again as something in which one believes. It also raises the question of whether ideas in a particular context have a potency that either remains dormant, or is activated as a belief, when their relevance is more clearly recognised.

In her third and final year, Madison’s beliefs relating to teamwork were clearly evident. These pertained to two aspects she regarded as crucial, firstly, the importance of an effective team in ensuring children’s wellbeing but also, secondly, and just as importantly, in ensuring the wellbeing of teachers. Madison personalised this belief. It clearly had a strong affective component for her and could be traced back to some critical experiences she had while in early childhood centres. In her first year, she was placed in a centre for a one day a week placement. There, she found the staff not as supportive, as she would have hoped, this highlighting how difficult it could be for a

student teacher, or a teacher, if they were not accepted as an integral team member. In addition, she herself recognised that she lacked confidence in some situations and required support as a novice teacher.

This lack of confidence was something Madison continued to grapple with. She was aware that she was still dependent on others for support and was particularly sensitive about times when this was not forthcoming. As she said,

I know I can do it but it's actually first being comfortable. Sometimes the centres you go into don't give you an easy feeling being there and that holds you back. ... You go to [the staff] for support and its not there. They hear what you are saying and they leave it. They don't say, "Oh we can do this to help you' or "Have you tried doing this?"... I really need that extra support. ... I have been in some centres where all the teachers have been wonderful, very supportive. It makes a big difference.

I like support; I don't like being out on my own. A lot of encouragement and a lot of communication. I would say the support is important even up here at university.

Madison's beliefs about forming partnerships and the strength in people assisting others can be related to her own sense of self, and her life experiences both prior to and during the teacher education programme. Adverse experiences, on two occasions in early childhood centres, consolidated new beliefs that were emerging about the role of individuals within a team. Course work reinforced these reorganised beliefs.

10.3.3 Understanding and providing for children from diverse backgrounds: a reorganising belief and an emerging belief

Madison cited two areas where she believed she had experienced changes in her beliefs and understanding. The first was related to biculturalism and the second to the inclusion of children with disabilities within regular programmes. In both instances, she felt the knowledge presented was new, challenging and something she had "never had to think about before". The courses in which these new ideas were presented she cited as the most satisfying of all, in spite of there being no correlation between her high interest and the average grades she received in these courses.

Her initial exposure to biculturalism came in the first few weeks of the programme and was something of a shock to her. She felt she had been “thrown in the deep end.” Firstly, she was placed in an early childhood centre that strives to be bicultural. Her reaction to this was characterised by feelings of dissonance:

One thing that I really didn't like was that I was put in [a bicultural centre] and I had no idea about the Māori culture. I sort of felt we were thrown in the deep end. ... It was just that [the staff and parents and children] were quite strong in the culture. I had no idea and I felt that I shouldn't have been there and I felt that I was sort of being a bit of a nuisance to them.

In her second year, upon reflection, she realised that through this experience she had learned “quite a bit without even realising it.”

Secondly, she participated in a compulsory workshop on the Treaty of Waitangi in which information that she had previously not encountered was presented. This information related particularly to the Articles of the Treaty and to exploitation of Māori. Later, in the same course, she was required to demonstrate her understandings of readings on the Treaty and to reflect on its ramifications, particularly for people working in education.

Repeated exposure to many of these ideas over the following three years and the opportunity to reflect on them, led Madison to say,

I learnt to be a bit more sensitive to other people's cultures. I learnt a lot, especially in terms of the whole area of biculturalism within a centre. Before I did the courses it wasn't really an issue. But now I think it is just so important.

Just as biculturalism was a new idea to her so too was understanding children with disabilities and their inclusion in regular early childhood centres. She had never previously had to even consider the possibility of working with a child with a disability. Moreover, she had no significant contact or knowledge of disability and found herself

confronting the philosophy of inclusion. While she did not appear to have wholeheartedly embraced the concept, the ideas presented had challenged her and she was receptive to considering, rather than dismissing them.

10.3.4 The teacher as a partner with children in the learning process

Not only did Madison regard the successful early childhood teacher as one who established a partnership with parents, but she also maintained that the good teacher would work in partnership with children in the learning process. This will be explored by examining the links in Madison's data between the teacher's roles and her beliefs about how children learn, as well as her translation of these beliefs into her own teaching practice.

The linking of the teacher's role and the way in which children learn

Madison regarded the way in which children learn and the teacher's role in an early childhood centre as being inextricably linked. In the first two survey questionnaires, her answers with slight word changes would have been appropriate responses to either question. In the initial survey, she believed, for example, that a good teacher should demonstrate fairness and sensitivity to children's needs. There were links between these ideas and her beliefs that young children learn a lot from the environment they are in and, if it is abusive, they will fail to learn the appropriate social skills. In discussing how young children learn, reference was made to the desirability of certain teacher behaviours. She believed, for instance, that children

... learn a lot by being taught by someone who is non-threatening to them. But the teacher should also show that there are rules and limits to what they are allowed to do.

In the second survey, near the beginning of the first year, she actually interchanged her ideas when responding to the same questions. Some of the ways children learn were now directly translated into her beliefs about characteristics of a good teacher. She claimed on this occasion, for example, that a good early childhood teacher is non-

threatening to children, cares for them and is sensitive to their needs demonstrating a consistency with discipline. This ability to see links, and to avoid divorcing the teacher's role from that of the child's learning, remained a strong feature of Madison's responses throughout her teacher education programme. She expressed beliefs about the desirable attributes of a teacher and a concern about those teachers who spend time "growling at children" and who demonstrate a lack of interest and involvement. This, she believed, served to hinder rather than enhance children's learning.

Madison's beliefs in practice

Towards the end of Madison's first year in the teacher education programme she was observed on a teaching practicum where she had been assigned a potentially uninteresting task of overseeing the making of paper chains for Christmas decorations. After an initial group time, children in the kindergarten were directed by the head teacher to select a different activity to which to move. Four children, between the ages of four and five years, were attracted to the paper chain making. This could easily have become a teacher-dominated activity for those participating had little skill in some of the required components of the task and began by requesting teacher help. The component tasks included threading one piece of paper through another without twisting it, replenishing the stapler with staples and using the stapler correctly while holding the paper in place.

It was apparent from the observation that Madison's aim was to encourage the children to complete the task independently, with assistance provided only when she deemed it necessary, or as bridging assistance while the child developed the required skills. When asked about what she had been pleased about in her role during the morning, she responded:

[The way I] encouraged the children to work on their own, to come up with their own ideas and because they were not always making the chains as they were supposed to, not to put them off making what they were making. I didn't want to use the stapler when they asked me to because I thought they should learn how to use it. So I thought if I just held the paper for them they could staple it. This way they wouldn't get discouraged and think they

couldn't do it. ... If I just held the paper for them it encouraged them and a little while later they could actually do it themselves.

This emphasis on encouraging children to work independently and assisting them to reach the next step, Madison defined as "teaching". She claimed children need this form of guidance. At one stage during the activity she had announced to the children that she thought she would make a chain too. When questioned about this later, Madison noted that this had been a deliberate ploy to encourage a child who looked as though "she was going to give up." As Madison said,

I didn't want her to do this so I thought if I just sat there and made one she could help me as well. What happened was that she just added on to the end of mine and I did a few more and she added on more as well.

Nearly two years later, in an observation of Madison working in a childcare centre with a group of toddlers, it was evident that she still regarded her role as one of guiding children and encouraging them to be as independent in their learning as possible. One example of this occurred when she was approached by a child carrying a doll who sought Madison's assistance in finding clothes for it. Madison found some clothes on a shelf out of the child's reach and handed them to her asking her if she could put them on the doll. The child attempted to put on a sock and said, "This doesn't go on", handing the doll to Madison who asked, "Doesn't it fit?" The child replied, "Yes" and Madison then held the doll in place while the child accomplished the task.

Other beliefs about the ways in which children learn, reflected in both her interview and in her teaching practice in her final year, included her beliefs that children should be exposed to a wide range of activities that allow opportunities for experimentation. This, she maintained, was important as children "learn by trial and error" and through interactions with peers and adults. She noted that the adults must take an interest in what children are doing and involve themselves in children's learning by extending or developing children's skills using language appropriately, providing useful feedback when tasks are successfully completed, introducing interesting activities and using strategies such as modelling to encourage learning.

By her third year, Madison had also developed clear ideas about teacher behaviours that she believed hindered children's learning:

Some are more interested in telling the children off and telling them what they can't do. When I saw this, there weren't very many activities set up for the ones that weren't naughty but were always misbehaving. Instead of taking them away and giving them something more constructive to do teachers were just constantly telling them off. ... The staff was just walking around in circles. Just setting up an activity and either explaining it to the children, or modelling what to do with that activity, and then just leaving it. Supervising, but not actually getting down and getting in there with them

Madison's life experiences, in terms of her own schooling experiences, her teaching of reading to a child, and her observations of teachers during her teacher education programme, led her to develop strong positive and negative examples of teacher behaviours that could enhance or hinder children's learning. She aspired to be a "supportive" teacher for parents and children. While she saw herself as not being particularly "outgoing" she believed children do not always need someone who is extrovert. Rather, she believed she could provide the nurturing and support children so often require.

10.4 Positioning Madison's Beliefs in an Ecological Context

Over the three years, Madison demonstrated an increasing awareness of the socio-political nature of early childhood education. Beliefs were espoused which showed that she was appreciating increasingly that education involved more than a simple interaction between a teacher and a child. Evidence of this has already been discussed in terms of beliefs on teacher parent relationships, on the need to foster biculturalism and the challenges facing her with a growing awareness of the philosophy of inclusion and its application in early childhood centres. In addition, she found her beliefs on the need to have a qualification in order to provide quality care for children undergoing a

shift, and the widely accepted views in the community of the role of an early childhood educator disquieting.

Madison admitted that when she applied for the three year programme she had questioned its length, believing it was too long and that to be an early childhood teacher should not require an education of that duration. During her third year, however, she said, “I can understand now why it was a three year course, there is so much to know.” She expressed concern that there are those in our community who do not perceive teaching as a profession:

On the whole, I don't think some think of teaching as a profession, especially early childhood teaching. I think people just laugh about the three-year diploma and four-year degree that we have to go through. They can't comprehend what has to go on, what we have to go through in order to qualify be a teacher. I get to a point where I'm actually defending what I do. ... Some people just see it as play dough. They always bring up play dough. They think we just sit and play with dough all day.

It was a concern with defending her work and painting a larger picture of early childhood education that demonstrated it was more than simply playing with dough, that led Madison to state that it was her belief “that teachers should be committed to their work in early childhood teacher education”. In support of this claim, Madison believed that this “is a crucial phase of a young child's life in terms of their education and later life development”. It is a time when children deserve a committed teacher “to foster children at this time in their life and make it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for their child and their *whānau*”.

10.5 Summary

The study of Madison's beliefs about the role of the early childhood teacher and how young children learn raised a number of considerations in the study of beliefs. These are summarised below:

- Beliefs in two domains may be inextricably linked.

- Some beliefs have their origins in life experiences.
- Affect influences the nature of some of beliefs.
- Entry beliefs may be reinforced, consolidated and developed more fully through course work and practical experience.
- New beliefs develop, and change is brought about in some instances, when new information is particularly challenging and is offered in different ways over a period of time. These beliefs are most easily accommodated when they do not conflict with existing beliefs or experiences.
- As the wider socio-political context in which education is based is made more obvious some beliefs may become more easily accepted.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REBECCA: THE TEACHER AS AN EDUCATOR AND CARER

11.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a brief profile of Rebecca's life story and her entry into the early childhood teacher education programme. Her beliefs are examined by exploring their relationship to the values held by her family, the nature of her beliefs and their positioning in an ecological context. A summary statement concludes the chapter.

11.2 A Brief Profile of Rebecca

Rebecca was born in England to parents with a multi-ethnic background. She described her family as "diverse", with a mother who identifies as Spanish and a father who is West Indian. She commented, "We have West Indian, Spanish, English and Irish and I think there might be some Australian there too." Her family decided to emigrate to New Zealand when Rebecca was five years of age. Her early childhood education in England was in a Montessori centre.

In New Zealand, the family chose to live in a small seaside town where they resided for six years. Upon arrival, Rebecca entered the year two junior class and then continued through primary school and the first term of intermediate school. At this point, the family returned to England in the hope of healing an ailing marriage. Rebecca was enrolled in what had been a Secondary Modern school and, two years later when her parents' marriage broke up, her mother returned with the family to New Zealand, where Rebecca continued her secondary school education. Her experiences at this time of her life led her to reflect on the two educational systems. Overall, she felt that the expectations were higher for children at primary and secondary school in England than

they were in New Zealand. In support of this statement, she referred back to her encounters with the teaching of French where the same text was used in both countries:

When I came back in the third form we had the same book. It was two years later. In a whole year of the third form here we had got to exactly the same page as I had got to in six months two years earlier in England.

Some of these experiences have probably contributed to her belief that the “New Zealand education system is a bit too lenient, laid back.”

After a term in the seventh form, Rebecca left school with no definite plans in mind for her future. She managed to get odd jobs, went on the dole and in her words, “didn’t do a lot.” She had no clear idea of what she wanted to do and kept busy with short-term employment and involvement in theatre groups. In her early twenties she enrolled in a year long computer course. Towards the end of it she realised that she did not wish to embark on this as a career. Furthermore, she was unable to find a job in the field. She stated,

I woke up one morning and thought, I’m going to be a teacher. ... so it was just something that had been in the back of my mind forever and it just popped out one morning. It just literally popped out.

On reflection, Rebecca felt it was not strange that she had found her way into teaching as she enjoyed being with children and, in turn, she reported children as enjoying her company. She commented that, “Anyone who knows me, no matter how slightly, tells me I’ll make a wonderful teacher.”

Rebecca’s contact with young children, prior to entering the teacher education programme, was considerable and this gave her confidence in her ability to support the wellbeing and development of children. With five nephews and nieces, there had always been young children around her and from the age of fifteen, when friends started having babies, she was often in a child minding role for extended periods of time.

11.3 Rebecca's Beliefs and Their Relationship to Family Value Systems

There are three values that Rebecca holds which she believes originated in her family and have impacted on her personal beliefs. These have exerted a strong influence on her philosophy of education and what she maintained should be valued in a teacher. In effect, they set the scene for the remainder of this case study.

The paramount value Rebecca believed she learned from her family was respect, a value that was also reinforced during her early Montessori education experience. Within her family, respect meant having an awareness or empathy with others, and basically “treating others as you would like to be treated.” Secondly, the family valued language in all its forms. Rebecca noted that she places a high value on language, literature and books. She described herself as “crazy over books and fascinated by language.” This was seen as a carryover from its importance within her family. Twice she commented, “I do talk a lot”, attributing this again to her enjoyment of language. The third family value related to her valuing of freedom, choice and the opportunity to explore nature. Her parents encouraged their children to enjoy a wide range of life experiences. As Rebecca said,

I had freedom as a child. I grew up ... near the hospital by the museum which was only just being built and we had that entire farm. We actually knew who owned it. We used to go for miles. We'd jump over little ditches and we used to have this one very cool little secret hideout. It probably took us about an hour to get there. It was like this big copse of trees and this big stream and you'd jump over the stream and it was like this little island in the middle and it was like being in 'Swallows and Amazons'. And we used to have picnics and a little billy. We'd take matches and you'd just go out for the day and disappear. We'd make huts and go and take Dad's axe with us.

These family values, the valuing of respect, of language and of freedom, along with an appreciation of the outdoors, permeate Rebecca's ideas about early childhood education. They have had a marked influence on her beliefs of the teacher as a carer and educator, how children learn and the role of the environment and community in early childhood education.

11.4 The Nature of Rebecca's Beliefs

The data obtained from the questionnaires were supported by the information gleaned from interviews and from observations of Rebecca's work with children. For example, her belief about the important role that the environment plays in a child's learning was reiterated in both the questionnaires and the interviews.

What came through strongly in the interviews, but was less clear in the questionnaire data, was the holistic view Rebecca held of education and of the ways in which children develop and learn. As the research proceeded, she often spoke as though some of the ideas she was expressing were views that she had always held. In many instances, these were classified as emerging beliefs, for no mention had been made of them earlier in the research. It was difficult to ascertain whether these beliefs really were beliefs of long standing, or whether the new ideas and information she was being presented with resonated with her earlier experiences and beliefs and, hence, were readily adopted. From available evidence, the latter appeared more likely.

Of interest were the non-expressed beliefs. Although Rebecca visualised her ideal early childhood centre as one in which parents would feel comfortable and where there would be a place for them to sit, have coffee and observe, she never expressed beliefs that described the effective teacher as one who worked collaboratively with parents. Similarly, there was very little evidence of how she visualised the teacher's role in relation to colleagues. The ideas she expressed may well have been those that were most pertinent of her at the time.

In this section, Rebecca's beliefs on the good teacher as a carer and educator are explored. She entered the programme with well-elaborated beliefs on the characteristics of a good teacher and how young children learn, focussing on the diverse roles of the teacher as a carer and nurturer, and as an educator. Her beliefs of what a teacher should do demonstrated some clear linkages with her ideas about how young children learn.

11.4.1 The teacher as carer: a lurking belief

Rebecca believed from the outset that a good early childhood teacher is one who “is very caring”. This was a belief she consolidated throughout her three years in the programme. In the questionnaire data, she did not continue to specifically employ the word “caring”; rather it was implicit in what she wrote and said. It became more transparent in comments in her final interview. When discussing how teaching as a profession compared with other professions, she maintained that teaching had a comparable status, at least in her mind. She did note, however, that it was not always perceived in this way by the government and by society. She suggested that the roots for this were historical as teaching had been branded a female profession because it was perceived as having a nurturing and guiding role. “And yet” she said, “men could nurture just as well if not better than women.”

When she referred to the caring or nurturing role, she did not simply mean someone who liked children. Rather, she expanded on this concept by targeting what she believed to be aspects of caring. These included the provision of an appropriate environment, being respectful of the child and meeting their emotional needs. She believed that other personal characteristics of the teacher, such as being open, cheerful and friendly, went hand in hand with this caring role.

The teacher as carer in an appropriate environment: a reorganising belief

In defining an appropriate environment, Rebecca initially focused on comfort and enjoyment. She believed the appropriate environment provided by the teacher would be one that is “safe, happy and comfortable, somewhere children enjoy being”. This environment, she suggested, would have some routines because children “enjoy having some sort of routine in their lives”, but these would not be such that they stifled individuality. Later, she expanded on her beliefs, taking into account what she had observed in early childhood centres and, finally, she articulated the ideal environment as similar to that which she had experienced as a child. There was evidence that her beliefs on the environment were reorganising beliefs.

By the third year, Rebecca still believed what she had espoused earlier was important, but also suggested that there were times when children would not feel happy and that this, too, required recognition and acceptance. To illustrate her point, she argued that sometimes children are not given opportunities to express their emotions in centres, a situation she believed to be unhealthy and unhelpful in terms of a child's growth:

I don't like the whole, 'Everybody's friends here'. I mean if you're pissed off, you're pissed off. Children can be the same and if they want to yell and scream and work it out that way, well let them. I don't like, Oh, you've got to be quiet now.

The relationship between the environment and children's learning

Rebecca focused increasingly on the nature of the environment and its relationship to children's learning. While she still maintained it needed to be emotionally safe, she expressed concern about the current safety regulations and their potential for stultifying learning. She believed they were "limiting" and had the inherent capacity to hinder children's development by denying them the opportunity to take risks. Harking back to her own experiences as a child and the freedom experienced on the farm, Rebecca said,

And I think because you were taking those risks, the older children did take a lot more of the responsibility and like you were more aware of the risks so you knew you had to be careful. You knew that if you did this wrong you would get into trouble and you wouldn't be able to do it again. So you just didn't. You were more independently responsible and instead of having, 'No you can't do that because it is unsafe'...[You thought] OK, so I really want to do this so I'd better do it right.

Rather than becoming prescriptive and prohibitive, she believed it would be better practice to increase the adult numbers in centres so that children were being adequately supervised and still permitted to climb trees and engage in other adventurous activities.

At the end of her three-year programme, it was clear that beliefs originating from her own childhood experiences were being consolidated and supported by new knowledge she was gaining. Rebecca was strongly influenced by what she had learned about international early childhood education practices (particularly those in Reggio Emilia in Italy) and by the philosophy underpinning the New Zealand early childhood curriculum,

Te Whāriki. Combined with her own positive childhood experiences, she now passionately maintained that a good teacher would provide a “natural” environment, with a bush and tree area, a stream and a place where children could garden. Concern was expressed about the provisions that many children experienced in their home environments:

... now they are all inside playing Sega, and watching crap videos and crap TV and going to McDonalds and staying inside. ... I think we are heading towards those futuristic movies where we are all enclosed and we are all inside. ... All our shops and shopping malls are enclosed. I want grass and trees, the way it should be. We should be able to go back there.

Associated with the idea of going back to the way life used to be, Rebecca stated the importance of encouraging children to develop life skills, including learning how to interact with others. As part of this process she believed that it should be possible to do things spontaneously in the community, like going to the bush and the beach and on local walks

... without having to go through all the paperwork and the rigmarole ... just to be able to take kids down for a walk to the dairy ... to be able to walk down the street and go and say hello to the old man weeding his garden.

The teacher as caring and respectful

This linked to her ideas on respect. Respecting the child was one of the features of a good teacher mentioned by Rebecca in her initial responses. She insisted a good teacher would take into consideration “the special individuality of children”, be respectful of them and ensure that their emotional needs were met. She or he, would “listen to children’s problems and fears and try to relieve them.” In addition, she believed children enjoy having some routines in their lives but they still need to be appreciated as individuals, implying that routines should not be so rigid that the individuality of children is overlooked.

While she does not have extensive memories of her year-and-a-half attendance at a Montessori preschool, she said,

I can always remember it was very polite and very respectful. The respect is something which is still there. I can remember having to finish what you

were doing. You couldn't start one thing and then go on to doing something else. You'd finish what you were doing and put it back and then go and get something else...

This respect for the environment and for materials that others would be using cohered with the respect for others Rebecca learned from her family. Once she began her three-year programme, she identified closely with the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whaariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) with its focus on holistic development and the establishment of responsive, respectful relationships. She readily adopted the term “holistic” to describe her beliefs about learning and the child. In her final interview, it was a term she still used when describing an ideal early childhood centre and its programme.

Respect and trust were also very dominant beliefs she retained. Now she focused more explicitly on the significance of respect in all social interactions, saying,

A good early childhood teacher is trusted and respected by children and in turn respects others. I believe respect is the underlying key to all our social interactions and behaviours and you can't model the correct behaviour without respect.

She implied that without trust, “nothing else works” and postulated strong links between trust and self esteem.

Observations of Rebecca working in a childcare centre with children of three and four years of age confirmed that her interactions with children were respectful and that she appeared interested in them as individuals. In conversations with children, she made links with earlier events in the child's life, both in the centre and at home, used positive reinforcement, and respected their wishes to choose whether or not they wanted to participate in activities. These beliefs appeared to be well embedded in her practice.

11.4.2 The teacher as educator: a reorganising belief

From the time of her selection interview, Rebecca demonstrated beliefs that a good early childhood teacher has to be both a carer of children and also a facilitator of

children's learning and development. She believed that it is the teacher's role to guide children and extend their learning in all areas, including the social, academic and creative spheres, and to help them develop special talents. To assist in this process, she maintained teachers needed to be good listeners, able to communicate at the child's level and to "feed their [children's] creative needs, as well as their formal educational needs." She did not view this as an instructional process, commenting,

The teacher guides children instead of actually teaching them and telling them exactly what to do. [He or she] ... allows children to develop at their own pace and doesn't tell them what to do, rather just guides them.

As Rebecca was tracked through the three years of training, it became apparent that she was able to reflect on issues, particularly those relating to her role as a teacher, as a carer and facilitator of learning. She brought a love of language, an interest in learning and willingness to question, all of which are likely to assist in the reflection process. In this section, the teacher as facilitator in the educative process, and a love of language and learning and its role in her development will be explored

The teacher as facilitator in the educative process: a reorganising belief

Early in the teacher education programme, Rebecca discovered there was affirmation for her beliefs of the teacher as a facilitator. She found it "pretty freaky" that she had developed this particular philosophy prior to entry. When asked if there had been anything that had surprised her in the material presented in the first few weeks of the course, Rebecca stated, "A lot of it is, I find, commonsense to me." While nothing had surprised her, she noted that during the first semester of the year she had gained new insights and knowledge into how young children learn, cultural issues and historical information related to the position of children in society.

As Rebecca proceeded through the programme, she continued to espouse beliefs similar to those she articulated on entry, incorporating newly learned information into her ideas. In relation to the teacher's role, she continued to clarify roles and responsibilities they had as facilitators in guiding children and ensuring their wellbeing and learning. In her

final questionnaire, she commented that teachers should be enthusiastic and give time freely to help develop the child's agenda.

Observations of her in the third year of the programme confirmed that the role she espoused was often assumed in practice and there was minimal evidence of her adopting an instructional, directive role. Rather, she demonstrated support and encouragement of children, giving help when necessary and placing the responsibility back on the child when she believed they were capable of succeeding.

The observations occurred in a childcare centre during winter. Rebecca was on a seven-week block teaching practice working with mainly four-year-olds. On several occasions, children approached her asking her to do things for them or to answer questions that they could resolve for themselves. Rebecca's responses indicated that she had no wish to make the children dependent on her. She did not do things for them that she believed they could do and, furthermore, she did not wish to deny the child what might be a learning opportunity for them. Sometimes she would support and guide a child. Sometimes she would pretend she did not know the answer to the child's request. A boy, for example, said he was going to draw a snowman and then asked Rebecca how to do it. Her reply was, "You tell me." There was no immediate response from the child and Rebecca indicated, by walking away, that she believed he could do it. Other times she would say outright, "You can do it" or "Do it yourself."

When questioned later, she indicated that her responses were all consciously made and took into account the child's individual development, their understanding and ability to complete a task, something she believed had been emphasised in all the work she had undertaken over the three years. She maintained that the emphasis had been on developing child-centred, individually appropriate programmes. To illustrate how this operated in practice, Rebecca compared the position of two children, a boy and a girl, who had been with her at the rope ladder earlier in the morning. She explained that one had confidence climbing because of previous experiences and he certainly demonstrated his adeptness. Rebecca maintained he needed no assistance, whereas the girl was not at all certain and needed Rebecca's reassurance and guidance to overcome her insecurity.

Rebecca felt she had a role here but indicated this always required considered judgement:

I don't like taking over. When we were at the carpentry table and a couple of them wanted their nails banged in, well that's a bit different because they had tried and they were getting to that stage where it does get quite hard.

Rebecca was resolute that she never wanted to become directive or authoritarian and "like children to sit down and shut up."

Nevertheless, the tension faced between allowing a child freedom to explore and develop, and the teacher's role of guiding and facilitating children's learning, was one that Rebecca grappled with throughout the three years. Listening to her story in the final stages of the research, she further clarified her beliefs on this matter. She maintained that a teacher who is "laid back" does not "offer children the encouragement, freedom and opportunities to explore and make discoveries for themselves". There are two ways in which they fail to meet what Rebecca viewed as their responsibility. Firstly, they are not providing the appropriate opportunities that will allow the child to develop and, secondly, they are not themselves actively using strategies to extend the child. She maintained,

Teachers need to be there to pick up what the child needs, to use the curriculum effectively (and it is one that accommodates diversity) and to extend the child. This means that the teacher needs a good understanding of children and their interests. He or she needs to understand each child as an individual and extend upon these. Children can't do this by themselves. They need the adult.

A love of language and learning and its role in Rebecca's development

The broadening of beliefs and ideas that occurred throughout the time Rebecca was in the programme appear to be facilitated, as mentioned earlier, by her attitude to learning and her love of language. She enjoyed being part of the research, for it gave her the opportunity to explore her ideas verbally. Rather than accept ideas offered to her in class, she demonstrated a confidence and curiosity, frequently questioning the teaching

staff and fellow students. She was also prepared to offer freely her perspective on issues.

Shortly before one of the observations in year three, a lecturer assessing her teaching practice visited Rebecca. Her comments reinforced Rebecca's beliefs that language was one of her strengths. Rebecca reflected on this again, suggesting the origins for this lay in upbringing and the fact that her family uses language a lot:

If you ask him [my dad] a question, you get the whole thing. He doesn't just give you an answer he takes you through the whole process. I suppose my mother is the same. ... It's not unusual to have a three-hour phone conversation.

Similarly, Rebecca's enjoyment and intrigue of language enabled her to explore new ideas. She stated,

It's easy to turn the jargon into like lay terms. Like tutors' [language], I translate it into lay terms and so I think when I am writing an essay I just write based on talking to someone else about it. And also because I have a lot of the others constantly ringing me up saying 'How do you do this, and what does this mean?' So I am constantly telling them what I think is needed, or what I think is required, and I forget that others don't find it as easy as I find it and they spend time doing their readings and time focusing on it and maybe they can't understand the words. Because I think I enjoy it, they probably just don't like it really and also I suppose it needs to be done and I have to do it so I will do it. Explaining it to others does help.

... I think it is just I love learning. I talk a lot and I think I learn as I explain things. I can develop the ideas as I am talking which is why I repeat myself a lot, because I am just refocussing every time I say the same thing. I think it is like constant motion in my mind

This "constant motion" in Rebecca's mind, and her comfort at using language in both its oral and written forms, has given her flexibility in her ability to reason and think about issues. She employed a metacognitive process that enabled reflection on her own learning, new ideas and her own beliefs. While the beliefs were strongly based in earlier life experiences, she appeared willing to review, develop and modify them. The

metacognitive and reflective processes that she employed appeared to play a significant role in her belief development.

11.5 Positioning Rebecca's Beliefs in an Ecological Context

Rebecca's initial responses indicated a focus on children as individuals and a teacher with responsibilities as a nurturer and educator in a dyadic relationship with the child. Her focus was on the child in the microsystem. By the third year, she was taking a broader perspective on the diversity of children and their families and the social, cultural and political contexts in which they function.

Rebecca now perceived a situation she would like to encourage whereby there was a seamless link between homes, the community and early childhood centres. She expressed this as being in the interests of all concerned. She wanted the children to know the people in the surrounding community and the roles they held. Coupled with this was a belief that teachers needed to understand the child's culture in its broadest sense and the different aspects of society that impinged on children, their families and teachers. Teachers need to be aware of policies of education and those specifically for children.

In her final year, she selected as one of the most important characteristics of a teacher the ability to increase children's understanding of other cultures. In spite of coming from a culturally diverse background herself, there was little mention of diversity, prior to the latter stages of the research. When it was mentioned, one aspect of the programme gave her cause for concern. This was a focus on a bicultural approach, rather than a multicultural approach to education. This, she perceived as narrowing, rather than broadening, perspectives on diversity.

Earlier, she had maintained that she had "always been interested in differences". Over the three years, however, this interest related particularly to differences in education

philosophy, theory and practice. She found it fascinating, comparing the philosophies and practices of Steiner and Montessori education. With her own experiences of Montessori education, she believed that she had not been given the opportunity to extend her imagination, “her mind and her thoughts”. With Steiner education, she was interested in the opportunities for imaginative play while later in the teacher education programme, the early childhood education system in Reggio Emilia engaged her interest with its holistic, creative approaches and its integration with the community.

Rebecca increasingly expressed beliefs that could be assigned to different levels within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological approach of development. She was aware of a number of matters that impinged on education, either directly or indirectly. She was also becoming increasingly critical of teachers whom she perceived as being narrow in their thinking. She became less tolerant, for example, of teachers in early childhood centres who exercised an authoritarian approach, expressed little interest in the broader context of their work and expended minimal effort in their teaching. In addition, there were a number of basic assumptions in early childhood education that she pondered over. These included the emphasis on biculturalism, to which reference has already been made, and the placing of young children in full day care. She frequently cited her own happy childhood and it seemed that she was implying that it would be difficult to replicate this for young children when they attend childcare on a full day basis.

11.6 Summary

A study of Rebecca’s beliefs about the role of the early childhood teacher and how young children learn raised a number of considerations for the study of beliefs. These are summarised below:

- Beliefs rooted in family value systems are highly resilient.
- Beliefs or practices that are in conflict with an individual’s belief system can evoke strong affective responses.
- Espoused beliefs are evident in some aspects of practice.

- Information that connects with held beliefs may be regarded as commonsense.
- Believing that a child should be given the freedom to explore and learn and that the teacher's role is to guide and facilitate learning can create a tension for the holder.
- Metacognitive processes that include the use of oral and written language play a crucial role in reflection and seem to facilitate the development of beliefs.
- Where beliefs shift or develop, it appears that this occurs, in part, because there are already beliefs present with which to comfortably link or associate new information.
- A more global perspective of education and the integral nature of its place in society may facilitate belief change.

CHAPTER TWELVE

EMMA: THE TEACHER AS EQUITABLE MANAGER

12.1 Introduction

In this case study, features of Emma's beliefs are selected for examination. In the questionnaire data there was evidence of stability in some of her expressed beliefs. The data obtained through the case study made this even more apparent. This chapter presents a brief profile of Emma, the nature of her beliefs and positions Emma's beliefs in an ecological context. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major considerations for a study of beliefs that emerged from this case study.

12.2 A Brief Profile of Emma

Emma was accepted into the early childhood teacher education programme two years after making an unsuccessful application. In the interim period, she had successfully completed a tertiary level course preparing her to become a nanny of young children. Some experience working in childcare also assisted her second application. This was demonstrated in the second selection interview when she articulated more clearly and with increased confidence her ideas on the care and education of young children and the teacher's role in this process.

Emma's initial responses to the questions seeking beliefs about the characteristics of a good early childhood teacher and how young children learn, focused on the need for the teacher to develop positive, trusting, supportive relationships with children. She believed that a good teacher allowed children to learn at their own pace, providing assistance only when necessary. Young children, she stated, learn primarily through the senses, through interaction with other children and with adults, and through being told information.

As she progressed through the programme, Emma maintained many of her beliefs or ideas espoused early in the programme. At times, some were expanded on, reorganised and articulated more fully as, she said, she "got more words rather than having to find the words"

to understand and to explain her ideas more effectively. At other times, beliefs were challenged and tensions arose.

What became particularly evident in Emma's data were firstly, the influence of life experiences on her beliefs and, secondly, the way in which some new beliefs or ideas were readily accepted, while those relating to child management and the teacher's role in developing learning created dilemmas for her. The dilemmas became acute with respect to her beliefs about child management as these were directly related to teaching practice, and therefore, were more difficult to ignore or to set aside, particularly when they came into conflict with the views of experienced teaching staff. It is these two aspects, the effects of life experiences and the tensions over beliefs on child management, that form the focus for this case study. The former will be used to demonstrate how closely Emma's beliefs were tied to life experiences and the latter to examine aspects of belief change. Inevitably, there is an interaction between the two.

12.3 Influential Life Experiences

Emma's early beliefs about the role of the teacher, relationships with children and about the optimum conditions for learning were strongly influenced by her own personal experiences and her own self-identity. These will be discussed with reference to her physical disability, her adverse experiences in secondary schooling, and her subsequent lack of confidence.

12.3.1 Managing a disability

Managing a disability has been a feature of Emma's life. The youngest in a family of seven children, Emma demonstrated normal development before an aneurism at seven months. As a result of this, Emma was left with hemiplegia down her left side and what she described as a "lazy eye". She reported her mother as saying that her behaviour shortly after the aneurism was more akin to that of a newborn than of a seven-month-old infant. In spite of these setbacks, her parents determined that Emma would be assisted to develop as normally as possible, given the same opportunities as other children in the family, and expected to participate and contribute within the family.

The slowness in development that followed over the next months, particularly in terms of physical development, encouraged her parents to begin her on a programme that involved exercising Emma's limbs regularly. Helped by her determination, and in spite of medical forecasts to the contrary, she learned to walk at eighteen months of age.

Emma recalled not always doing things in the "proper or normal way". Walking, and later climbing, for instance, were long arduous processes and were regarded by her mother as memorable accomplishments. Emma stated that these activities would not have been achieved, either in exactly the same way as they would have been by other children, or would the time taken to achieve them. When Emma was determined to complete a physical activity, however, the amount of time it took was of minor significance.

12.3.2 Secondary school experiences

School experiences were not always the happiest for Emma. Her father's occupation necessitated frequent moves in her first few years and she recalled the effort to make friends and to begin anew establishing relationships with peers. Her mother, Emma reported, said that Emma was a happy and outgoing child until six years of age when they moved to the town where her family still lives. With this move, she became withdrawn and found it difficult to establish friendships. According to Emma, her mother stated it was as though Emma had decided "it was no use making friends with anybody because we were just going to move on to the next town." Rather, she relied on her supportive family and a close relationship with her mother to meet her friendship and emotional needs.

After a reasonable third form year at secondary school, the fourth form was a year that Emma regards as a particularly significant and unpleasant time in her life. She became disillusioned with school and maintained her limited success in later school examinations can be traced to this time. She felt she was frequently "put down" and began rebelling by doing only what was absolutely necessary in her work. Her ambivalence for school effected her attitudes to other subjects. Her parents became concerned at her unhappiness, evidenced by her frequent crying, and requested an interview at the school. A meeting with the Dean was arranged. During a discussion of Emma's performance, her parents were told she was attention-seeking and they were advised that they were being overprotective of their daughter. This angered

both parents considerably and they went away from the school sharing some of Emma's disenchantment with the place.

Emma also recalled an incident in the fifth form that further fuelled her lack of confidence and reduced her interest in schoolwork. Her science teacher employed both written and practical assessment tasks. In the first practical test, the task required the use of both hands to complete it successfully. As Emma has limited power and movement in one hand, as a result of hemiplegia, this presented some difficulties. She had, however, completed the task previously by having a friend hold a piece of equipment while she wound the wire around it. This assistance was sought in the test situation and the teacher denied it her. It was at this point Emma recalled thinking, "stuff you" and allowing her feelings on this issue to colour her attitudes to the rest of her work. She did only what was necessary and even then with some reluctance.

12.3.3 Dealing with a lack of confidence

After a mediocre seventh form year, Emma left school and spent the first six months "sitting at home feeling sorry for myself". Her experiences in hospital throughout her life resulted in her setting her heart on being a nurse. She referred to this as "her dream". Those about her discouraged this and, instead, she looked at what she believed to be the next best thing, working with children. Not a great deal of encouragement was forthcoming for this proposal either. Her mother, for instance, thought it unachievable and Emma believes that, at this point, her mother could not conceive of her youngest daughter leaving home. As she stated, "We had both begun to depend on each other". Nevertheless, she gained a voluntary short-term position in a childcare centre and commenced living away from home.

Her voluntary work in childcare confirmed for her an interest in working early childhood education. An application for the university early childhood teacher education programme was unsuccessful. She was, however, accepted into a one-year course to train as a nanny in a technical institute. Following this, she had short-term jobs with children over the next two years. They included relieving in an early intervention centre for children with disabilities, teacher aiding with a 13-year-old boy with cystic fibrosis and acting as a nanny of young children. While some of these experiences were enjoyable, others, particularly while being a

nanny, were less so. Emma realised that while she enjoyed working with children, being a nanny offered limited career possibilities and there were opportunities for the carer to be subjected to psychological abuse by her employer. Encouraged by her disability social worker, she reapplied for the teacher education programme and, although she felt she lacked confidence, was successful in gaining entry.

Throughout the programme, and even as her graduation approached, she had difficulty in accepting that she had been successful in achieving her goals. She stated with some emotion,

Even at graduation I feel I'm going to wake up from this dream. People will discover I'm a fake. I couldn't believe it was easy. Once I began working and knew what was expected it was not hard.

12.4 The Nature of Emma's Beliefs

A number of the beliefs espoused in the first contact with Emma remained stable or were reorganised over the three years. Many of these beliefs had an affective component relating to her own encounters with education in her early teen years. The beliefs to be discussed are those relating to:

- the use of praise as a technique for establishing positive self-esteem: a reiterated belief
- the establishment of trust with children to ensure effective relationships and learning: a reorganising belief
- the degree of teacher control: a reiterated belief with attempts to reorganise
- managing children to ensure equitable outcomes: a reorganising belief.

12.4.1 The use of praise as a technique for establishing positive self-esteem: a reiterated belief

In her first interview, Emma referred to an earlier perception she had held of herself as one unlikely to succeed at university study for, as she commented, "I didn't have enough self-esteem." Emma noted that her belief in the role of praise for developing confidence and learning could be traced to school experiences where she felt devalued. This was something she did not wish children to experience. Throughout the research, she frequently referred to a belief in teachers "praising children and telling them they are special." Implicit in her

comments was the desire for children to avoid experiencing feelings of unworthiness as she had done. She linked praise with the enhancement of confidence and children's learning. As she stated,

I think a child needs reassurance that what he or she is doing is on the right line if they don't have much confidence in themselves. And I think a teacher has to be able to say, "You're on the right track", if they [children] need this help with things to guide them along the way.

12.4.2 Relating to children as individuals to establish trust and provide support: a reorganising belief

Closely related to her beliefs on fostering positive self-esteem, were beliefs that focused on treating children individually. Initially, she emphasised the establishment of trust. By the middle of the third year, this belief was being reorganised and the focus widened:

[There is] a need for sensitivity to children so that their needs are met. The centre is for them, not for me. I make sure that every single child's picture is on the wall and if they have one that they think is nice that one goes up on the wall, rather than the one that I think is nice and I think that is really important.

She perceived the teacher's role as "primarily to help the child and to meet the needs of the child" and emphasised the helping function in terms of children experiencing difficulties:

The centre should be one where the child knows that if they need help there is somebody there that can help them. That's with problems, things children can't cope with.

Children deemed as having a disability or being at risk in terms of their development emerged increasingly as an expressed interest. From the outset, Emma was proud of her experience with working with children with different disabilities and became more open when discussing her own disability. While her beliefs overall still had a general focus, by the middle of her third year she frequently related these beliefs back to children whom she perceived as being at risk. She said, for example,

I'm more inclined to treat children individually than as a whole group, although sometimes they need to be treated as a whole group. Being able to treat every

child differently and according to their needs ... is a very important point, because, especially in childcare centres, the quiet ones get left behind.

There were strong affective components in these beliefs. Her concern with children with diverse learning needs also caused her to reflect on appropriate management strategies for all children, an issue discussed in the next section. The area of child management was one Emma puzzled over, firstly with regard to the degree of control the teacher should hold and, secondly, in terms of managing children to ensure equitable outcomes.

12.4.3 The degree of teacher control: a reiterated belief and attempts to reorganise

Throughout the programme, Emma expressed beliefs that suggested her view of the teacher was one who intervened only when children needed someone “to help them work things out.” She believed a good teacher plays an important role in children’s learning by allowing them as much freedom as possible. The child, she maintained, should be given the opportunity “to learn at their own pace” and to “develop skills themselves with minimal help and without the teacher standing over them”. These beliefs were consistently held and were reiterated over the three years. In practice, however, they were effected by:

- the context
- the dilemmas facing Emma over the use of praise and teacher control, and
- new knowledge that appeared to Emma to conflict with her beliefs.

The teacher’s role and context

Observations of Emma’s teaching practice during her second and third years showed that her beliefs relating to teacher control were reflected in many, but not all, of her actions. She offered minimal assistance in many instances and appeared to place much of the responsibility for learning with the child. However, it was also apparent that when she intervened, particularly during the third year, she sometimes became directive or took a dominant role in an activity. This was particularly the case in one observation where the children were supposedly drawing fish, covering them in a transparent film, attaching paperclips and using a fishing line with a magnet on the end to fish for them in a bowl of water. In this activity, Emma wrote most of the children’s names on the back of their fish and covered them with the

film, cut out most of the fish and, in some cases, attached the paperclip. This suggested that, while she espoused particular beliefs, the context also played a role in determining whether the beliefs were actioned. After this session, Emma stated that the task was too difficult for the children to complete so that she intervened to ensure the activity was able to proceed more quickly and that interest was maintained. She seemed unaware of other strategies that may have aligned more comfortably with her beliefs.

The use of praise and teacher control

The role of teacher control and praise also presented a dilemma for Emma as a student teacher. On the one hand, she believed children should be left to get on with their learning with minimal support and praise from the teacher and, on the other hand, she expressed strong beliefs about setting boundaries for children. Her concern with this became apparent in the first year of the teacher education programme when she discussed what she perceived as a “difference between a smack and a hit”:

I think that hitting is uncontrollable and smacking can easily get to that stage but I believe, especially for two year olds, that you’ve got to have something that is instant or else they forget what they were doing.

She saw smacking as an acceptable boundary-setting strategy in a home, but problematic in an early childhood centre and felt it was better to “try something else”.

In the second year, when she was asked to select from a list of characteristics those three she believed were most important in a good early childhood teacher, she included the ability to discipline children. She noted that, as well as using positive discipline, the teacher should be able to use what she referred to as “negative discipline [for] the child needs to know where the boundaries are.” Later in the same year, it was apparent that she was still exploring her beliefs in this regard, describing her views on her stance and actions as “messy”:

I’m one of those people who say something to children and I like it to be done. And if it’s not done I used to go off the handle. But I’ve tried to find some other way so at the moment I’m in the middle. It’s very messy. I don’t want to come down like a ton of bricks. ...When I say something I’d like it to be followed through. So now I’ve got to find some other way of doing it and I’m not sure of

another way of doing it. ...So sometimes it looks like I'm a bit wishy-washy but it's just I don't want to be the big bad lion.

She maintained she had moved from using firmness as her first strategy in difficult situations, but was struggling with finding and accepting effective optional approaches.

During the third year, conversations with Emma indicated that the degree of management she should be exercising with children was still a matter of concern for her. When she was being observed, she made an aside to me saying, "They say how good I am at child management. I think I might over-discipline." To an observer, the firmness Emma demonstrated in her handling of children clearly did not sit easily with her espoused beliefs about the teacher's role. They were not actions that treated children as individuals, and affirmed and supported them in their learning with minimal teacher intervention. A desire to be firm, coupled with other beliefs on child management, caused Emma discomfort.

Furthermore, during the third year, she articulated beliefs about the need, as she said, to set boundaries for children. She thought a teacher should be

... able to curb children's behaviour too, able to tell children when they have stepped over the boundaries so that children know exactly where they are and if they do so what will happen.

She attributed her beliefs on boundaries and their role in child management to three sources: her own life experiences, including observations of two different families, study in a course entitled *Belonging and Contribution* that focuses on positive child management strategies, and the influence of her mother. Reflecting on the source of her beliefs, she said,

I think the boundaries come with experience, with knowing a family that has none whatsoever to those who have too strict boundaries and families that have a nice sensitivity in the middle. I don't think it matters which the way the boundaries are, not what the boundaries are, but how you keep them to a certain extent.

Questioned on whether she meant that one could be either strict or relaxed as long as there

was consistency, Emma expanded on her views and, in doing so, demonstrated a slight shift in her beliefs on the use of smacking in the home environment:

... if you're too strict with children they tend to turn away and fly off the handle. If you're too relaxed then they freak out and don't know where they are. They need to know when the going gets tough they can call Mum or Dad or somebody, and as long as you don't abuse them, lock them in the cupboard, or beat them or shout at them and tell them how useless they are, it doesn't matter. Personally I believe in smacking but it doesn't mean parents should smack.

From her course work, she maintained that she learnt a lot about problem solving techniques and teaching children to negotiate. In discussion of the content with her mother, particularly that relating to the setting of boundaries, she realised how much she and her mother agreed. On occasions her mother offered another perspective that Emma may not have thought of, but one with which she often found herself in agreement.

It would seem that, in Emma's case, those beliefs creating tensions were those that were no longer tenable in her teaching role, particularly when they related directly to the management of behaviour. She found it was neither philosophically or practically acceptable to expect children to respond immediately to her commands in an early childhood centre, and nor was the use of punishment condoned. Once there was this realisation, there was a searching for alternative ideas that could be accommodated within her belief system. This searching generated some stress as her beliefs proved difficult to reconcile and even more difficult to put into practice.

Assimilating theories of learning

As Emma grappled with these dilemmas, the introduction of theoretical ideas that were perceived as different to her own beliefs proved the most difficult for her to assimilate. In both the second and third years, she was required to demonstrate an understanding of the theories propounded by Bruner, Vygotsky and Rogoff and to reflect on her role in relation to these. These theories form a basis in the programme for understanding how young children learn and how teachers may facilitate that learning. The works and ideas of the theorists were introduced to her initially in year one, expanded on in the first semester of year two, and revisited in the third year of the programme. Emma found her beliefs difficult to reconcile

with the theories. This became apparent in an interview after observing her working with children in her second year.

The observation took place in a kindergarten where she worked with a group of four-year-old children using a magnetic story. The goals of the task were to encourage children's thinking and language skills and to reflect on the teacher's role in their interactions with children. Emma also hoped the children would enjoy the story, "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", which allows the teacher to develop spatial and number concepts as well as story structure and sequence. During the observation, however, very little time was spent on meeting the goals of the task. A small group of boys highjacked the story by hiding the pieces from the other children and refusing to relinquish these to Emma on request. Some of the other children became irritated by the events. Emma's reaction to the episode was an interesting one, for, rather than focusing on the objectives of the task, she rationalised the outcomes as satisfactory. She said,

I try not to interrupt them too much. I like it if they take over the story rather than me just reading the story out, or doing the whole story, and they just listen. And because they just took over and did everything, I just interjected when I felt they were waiting for me to say something.

When questioned about what they had learnt, Emma maintained that they had "learnt lots of things." She expanded on this:

They learnt to deal with little conflicts. Like they all wanted to be the big billy goat and they all wanted to be the troll, but apart from that one instance, they all sorted it out for themselves. So ... they learnt to cooperate with each other.

In addition, she claimed the children had enjoyed the activity. This, she believed, would make learning more likely, particularly as they had been involved and had control of the materials. She perceived her role to be that of a mediator. She maintained that when children were unable to make a decision, her role was

... to come in there and talk to them about why they feel that way or why they did what they did. So, hopefully, I'm just 'piggy in the middle' with scaffolding I suppose ... to sort it out with a little bit of help. Sometimes I know I do jump in

and try to stop it. [This is] when children are hitting or saying comments which are not appropriate, racist comments or others that are unacceptable.

In further discussion, she indicated that while she thought she understood Vygotsky's work on the zone of proximal development, and Bruner's concept of scaffolding, it presented her with some difficulties:

I find it very difficult to differentiate between pushing and scaffolding. So I don't do it much. I try and see if they need some help and I put in a little bit and see how it comes out. If the children seem to me like they want some more help then I'll go for it. But if they don't, I'll back away.

The strong belief that the teacher's role was one of minimal intervention created tensions when she sought a balance between the teacher intervening by using scaffolding to bring about learning, on the one hand, and in managing children's behaviour, on the other. She demonstrated a limited understanding of scaffolding and identified it as a process that she was somewhat uncomfortable with. She experienced difficulty in reconciling scaffolding with existing strongly held beliefs.

12.4.4 Managing children to ensure equitable outcomes: a reorganising belief

Emma's concern for children with disabilities, and those at risk in terms of their development, presented other tensions for her. In the third year, course work on equality and equity struck a chord with her that she found difficult to express verbally but nevertheless, appeared to partially comprehend. This raises the issue of whether it is essential to be able to articulate a belief in order to hold it. These newly articulated beliefs focused on the need to treat children differently, to treat children equitably or fairly, rather than equally and possibly unfairly.

While she valued her previous experiences working with children with special needs, she also felt that this, allied with her new-found understanding of equity, had created problems for her in her final practicum. Her interactions with children with disabilities caused some concerns to be expressed by the staff in the early childhood centre. These were on the grounds that she was treating the children differently and in ways that would ultimately not be of benefit to

them. Emma perceived this as a lack of understanding of the concept of equity. She believed the attention she was giving the children was attention they should be getting from the teachers, but were not receiving. Furthermore, she claimed she was told that, “I shouldn’t use my experience and should remain impartial”. Emma felt it was placing her in an untenable situation if she could not use her experiences.

Regardless of the different views that were expressed, and whether one perspective was more accurate than the other, it is Emma’s story that is being expressed here and there was no doubt that her expressed beliefs had created tensions. As she attempted to actualise beliefs on equity in practice, situations were created that were viewed unfavourably by others. Their interactions and comments served to strengthen, rather than to weaken, Emma’s new understandings and beliefs. Indeed, being in a conflict situation seemed to give her beliefs an increased standing, taking on the status of possessions that were to be defended at all costs. As a student, Emma was in a position where she had to accept the teacher’s advice and respond accordingly. Later discussions, however, demonstrated that her beliefs on equity had not lost their potency. Indeed, they had been extended to encompass more deeply felt concerns for the involvement of parents, and the need to be aware of social and political issues and other aspects that impinge on the child. Furthermore, as she attempted to understand her own values and beliefs and those of others, she moved beyond considering the immediate environment of the teacher and the child and their family to broader socio-political issues and their influence on relationships and education.

12.5 Positioning Emma’s Beliefs in an Ecological Context

Thus, it can be seen that while Emma’s beliefs initially referred predominantly to children and their families, as she moved through the three-year programme the data indicated that she was setting early childhood education within a larger social context. Beliefs on diversity, particularly in relation to individuals and their different abilities and ethnic backgrounds, were indications of this. Not only was she tussling with the place of her own beliefs and values, but she was attempting to also understand the values and beliefs that her peers and lecturers held, and to unravel whether these influenced their actions. In other words, she was joining in the research journey.

12.6 Summary

A study of Emma's beliefs about the role of the early childhood teacher and how young children learn raised a number of considerations in the study of beliefs:

- Beliefs may be influenced by life experiences and have a strong affective component, particularly when the experiences have been devaluing.
- Beliefs based on experience may be extremely resistant to change, but if there is some new information that connects with the current beliefs and appears particularly relevant, it stands a chance of being adopted within a person's belief system.
- New knowledge or beliefs that make some form of connection with current beliefs may be more rapidly assimilated than ideas that are totally new.
- Ideas that do not resonate with established beliefs may be discarded. When this is difficult to do, tensions are created.
- Knowledge and information of a more theoretical nature appear to be more easily assimilated when there is a perceived urgency to make changes in teaching practice.
- Beliefs are not always consistent with actions. The need to act differently from espoused beliefs is influenced by the context and the range of strategies available to the individual.
- The holder may have never previously articulated some beliefs that they hold, raising the issue of whether a belief must be articulated before it is accepted that a person holds that particular belief.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

13.1 Introduction

Researchers look for themes; themes that will help bring about a clearer understanding of the topic under investigation. The reporting of the results for this research has done just that. It has sought themes that will help the reader to make sense of or interpret the beliefs being expressed by a group of early childhood education student teachers. These themes enable us to understand the ideas expressed by several participants and to look for trends. The inherent danger when referring to the findings of a group is that the individuality within the group is lost, for they will frequently sound as though they are homogeneous. Not only were the participants different in ages, in experiences with children, in cultures, and religions, but they brought to the learning situation of the university a range of strong beliefs that incorporated values to which they held dear. By preparing case studies of seven of the participants, the heterogeneity of this group of early childhood teacher education students became even more obvious.

Many of the participants' beliefs about what constitutes a good teacher and how young children learn originated in early life experiences and incorporated what Bruner (1996) referred to as "folk psychology":

"Folk psychologies reflect certain 'wired-in' human tendencies... but also reflect some deeply ingrained cultural beliefs about 'the mind.' ... Just as we are steered in ordinary interactions by our folk psychology, so we are steered in the activity of helping children learn about the world by notions of *folk pedagogy*. ... From ... work on folk psychology and folk pedagogy has grown a new, perhaps even revolutionary insight. It is this: in theorising about the practice of education in the classroom (or any other setting for that matter), we had better take into account the folk theories that those engaged in teaching already have. For any innovations that you, as a 'proper' pedagogical theorist, may wish to introduce will have to compete with, replace, or otherwise modify the folk theories that already guide both teachers and learners. (p.46)

This chapter will discuss the beliefs reflected in the questionnaire responses and in the case study data, recognising that some incorporated folk psychology. In this instance, folk psychology can be equated with lay theories (Vygotsky, 1978). Holt-Reynolds

(1992) described these as “...beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction” (p.326). Common themes and material from individual students will be used to illustrate particular points that help lead to an understanding of formative influences on beliefs, and changes that occurred in the beliefs over the three years of the teacher education programme. The main areas to be covered will include discussions of the following:

- the relationship between beliefs and knowledge
- the formative influences on beliefs
- the development of teacher role identity
- themes in participants’ beliefs about the role of the teacher and how young children learn
- the evolving beliefs of the participants and
- the relationship between beliefs and action.

Interwoven throughout these sections will be reference to the methodology and the theoretical perspectives that formed the background for the research.

13.2 The Relationship between Beliefs and Knowledge

A challenge that initially presented itself was whether beliefs could be distinguished from knowledge. The difficulty in doing so was evident in the research literature and was highlighted when studying the participants’ questionnaire responses and discussing with them their ideas. Furthermore, if it was possible to discriminate between the two, was there a point in so doing?

Determining what the participants and/or the researcher perceive as knowledge, and what they perceive as beliefs, presents major methodological and philosophical challenges. Firstly, any choices or classifications made would almost inevitably be open to debate as there are no clear cut, commonly agreed upon definitions that discriminate between knowledge and belief. Secondly, any attempt to do so runs the risk of devaluing the role of beliefs in student teachers’ thinking, for knowledge may then be regarded by some readers as more “worthy”.

Examples from the research are used to demonstrate the difficulty in discriminating between beliefs and knowledge. In response to the first questionnaire, 5 of the 17 participants stated that young children learn through play. This is a strong and well-developed concept in early childhood education and underpins many early childhood education philosophies (see 5.3.2, p.143). The participants' responses on the role of play could, on the one hand, be classified as a belief acquired by the participants through their particular cultural experiences or, on the other hand, it could be regarded as knowledge gained through earlier observations and educational experiences. Furthermore, while the case study approach allowed for greater penetration of participant's ideas, it still did not always allow for the discrimination of what some would classify as beliefs, distinct from knowledge. Rebecca, for example, in the second half of the research spoke of beliefs she had as though they were longstanding, yet no mention had been made of them earlier (see 11.4, p.229). Two reasons may be proposed for this situation. The beliefs may well be longstanding beliefs that she had not thought of introducing into the research situation. We do not necessarily call to mind all beliefs we hold on a topic when requested. An alternative explanation could be that new information or knowledge she acquired resonated with her earlier beliefs, making assimilation into her belief system easier. As she raised some of the "new" ideas, soon after they had been developed in classes, the latter is a strong possibility. If this is believed to be the case, then it can be argued that she was now espousing knowledge she had acquired as a result of her study. What was more important for this research was recognising that she had these ideas and felt ownership of them.

A number of researchers have concluded that beliefs appear to be a dimension or component of knowledge (see for example, Alexander & Dochy, 1995; Guerin & Foster, 1994 and other authors referred to in 2.2.4, p.20). Furthermore, Quine, who has been hailed as the most influential philosopher in the second half of the 20th century, (Devine, Held, Vinson & Walsh, 1983; *The Economist*, January 13, 2001) maintained that the difference between matters of fact and matters of meaning is of degree not of kind. In other words, you cannot separate out scientific facts from philosophical concepts and regard one as truth and the other as not. Moreover, the data indicated that, as others have proposed, knowledge and beliefs are inextricably intertwined (Alexander

& Dochy, 1995; Beijaard & de Vries, 1997; Pajeres, 1992; Posner et al., 1982; Rokeach, 1968; Van Fleet, 1979). To attempt to separate them was not a useful exercise. Hence, this was the perspective adopted in the current research. As the purpose was to find out what students believed and were thinking in two specific areas, it was important to consider all aspects of what they believed and avoid establishing what could be a false dichotomy. The decision to regard beliefs as views students have about the role of the teacher and how young children learn (see 2.2.4, p.20) appeared wise, as there was nothing in the data that suggested anything to the contrary.

Bruner (1996) argued that beliefs, and folk beliefs in particular, are what guide teachers and children. Brown and McIntyre (1993) acknowledge the role of beliefs in contributing to diversity among teachers:

There are strong indications too of a diversity among teachers in the specific knowledge and ways of thinking they use, even when they have gone through the same training programmes and are employed in similar positions: different personal histories, beliefs, values and concepts of themselves as teachers seem to shape the knowledge and skills on which teachers depend in their classroom teaching. (p.9)

Clearly student teachers, too, are diverse. They start their teacher education programme with different ideas about the teacher's role and how young children learn. The next section will explore formative influences on their beliefs.

13.3 Formative Influences on Beliefs

This research was based on a constructivist-inquiry paradigm that presupposes individuals, through their interaction with the environment, socially construct meaning. It also embodies aspects of symbolic interactionism in which meaning and interpretation are recognised as products of social interaction and essential human processes (Boden, 1990). People actively create a self that is an image of how they perceive themselves and how they think others see them. They formulate beliefs about themselves, about others and about the world in general. It is influences on their beliefs related to teaching and learning that are of interest here.

Tracking down the origins of either your own or someone else's belief is not like seeking a solution to a question or problem in an encyclopedia. People participating in

research, even with the best will in the world, do not necessarily divulge to the researcher all they think, know or feel on a particular topic. Rather, the challenge to the researcher is to ensure that the methods employed are selected for their usefulness in collecting data that yields valid results.

The questionnaires were designed to determine particular beliefs participants held and to plot any changes that occurred in these over time. Their major purpose was not to explore the socialisation process and the influences of these on espoused beliefs. Occasionally, oblique references were made to these influences, or the researcher made an inference (see 5.6). For example, after returning from a year's leave of absence after giving birth to her first child, Trina brought a different perspective to the teacher/parent relationship. She now emphasised the importance of this relationship, providing a rationale for doing so. This suggested that her life experiences were influencing her belief on this relationship.

The case study methodology, employing questionnaires, interviews and observations of practice, led to the construction of a story. It enabled exploration of belief formation in more depth and allowed for comparisons to be made with data from more than one source. It presented opportunities for the researcher and individual participants to negotiate a joint reality (see 5.6, 160), for it permitted an unravelling of some of the ways in which participants constructed their beliefs, as well as influences on their development, and changes that occurred. When discussing the use and value of narrative with teachers, Clandinin and Connelly (1986) noted that

...while the focus is on teaching, participants' lives in their totality bear on the matter The picture that merges is one of the social and the personal intimately connected in the narrative. (pp. 381, 382)

Moreover, they contended that narrative is the study of how humans make meaning of experience, for by telling and retelling stories about themselves "they both refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986, p.385).

When case study participants were first asked why or how they came to believe something specific, they were sometimes able to pinpoint contributing factors but, in other instances, they had difficulty in determining the reasons they thought as they did. What made a difference were the opportunities to reflect on their beliefs and their origins. Work on source monitoring is helpful in explaining the processes that occurred

for them and also it helps to clarifying some reasons why the narrative approach is useful as a tool in understanding the meanings individuals have constructed.

Source monitoring involves the making of judgements about the origin, or source of information (Lorsbach & Ewing, 1995). According to Johnson, Hashtroudi and Lindsay (1993),

... people do not typically directly retrieve an abstract tag or label that specifies a memory's source, rather, activated memory records are evaluated and attributed to particular sources through decision processes performed during remembering. (p.3)

They claimed that this process contributes to our ability to exert control over our opinions and beliefs. Significant in the process is the role of source attributions made on the basis of certain phenomenal qualities of remembered experience. Johnson et al., (1993) claimed that among the most important memory characteristics are those that were established when the memory was formed. These include

... records of perceptual information (e.g., sound and color), contextual information (spatial and temporal), semantic detail, affective information, reactions), and cognitive operations (e.g., of organizing, elaborating, retrieving, and identifying). (p.4).

For case study participants in this research, the use of affective information served as potent cues for recalling the source of their beliefs. Sam, on the one hand, used negative affective information when recalling why she wished to be a teacher and how she believed teachers should work with children (6.3.1, p.165; 6.4.2, p.168). She vividly recalled being hit by a teacher shortly after entering school. She used this incident, and other examples of negative school experiences, to demonstrate why she believed affirming children and making learning fun were important. Judy, on the other hand, referred to positive experiences when recalling the source of some of her beliefs. She spoke, for instance, of the closeness of her family and related this to her belief of the necessity for teachers to establish close, responsive relationships with children (7.3, p.177).

Research on source monitoring has emphasised that recollection occurs in degrees and includes not only retrieval, but also interpretation of what is retrieved (Johnson,

Hashtroudi & Lindsay; 1993). It is the concept of recollection occurring in degrees that appeared to help the recall process for the case study participants. The opportunities to revisit ideas, to reflect on these and then to shape them into their own story enriched the data collected.

Other influences on belief formation evident in the data will be discussed under the following headings:

- culture and belief formation
- family influence on belief formation
- educational experiences and belief formation
- affect and belief formation.

13.3.1 Culture and belief formation

The preliminary study conducted in New Zealand and Japan served not only to examine the effectiveness of the questionnaire and to develop tentative categorisation and coding systems, but also to explore similarities and differences between the beliefs expressed in two very different cultures (see 4.5.1, p.97). It is not necessary, however, to travel outside New Zealand to encounter cultural differences. No Māori students completed all questionnaires, but two of the participants, Maki and May, were from two different Asian countries. They demonstrated graphically what Bruner (1996) and Cohen (1971) meant when they stated culture shapes the mind. (It should be noted that as Maki was one of the case study participants, the information gathered on her beliefs was more extensive.) Although Maki and May also reflect the differences found in their cultures, it is what they had in common that will be discussed here.

Firstly, both were respectful of others and demonstrated this most obviously in their interaction style with their university teachers and teachers in centres. Maki was able to explain in some detail the source of these beliefs (see 9.3.1, p.201). Respect in Maki's culture is ascribed according to a person's place in society and/or their age. Maki was made very aware of other responsibilities that her culture demanded of her, whether she was living in her own or a foreign country. As her parents had no sons, she was aware that she needed to think of how she and her sister could properly care for their parents, as they became older. She not only recognised it as a responsibility but believed that it was rightfully so. It therefore, gave her an incentive to do well in her chosen career.

Secondly, both valued education and were influenced by the style of teaching commonly adopted in their own cultures. May, in spite of writing that she believed in the importance of play, experienced difficulty in moving away from a model that perceived children as imitative learners, taught by the teacher using a transmission mode of teaching (field notes). Early in the research, a similar pattern was evident in the data collected from Maki (see 9.4.2, p.207). Although she reorganised her beliefs over the three years, and became more aware of children's agenda and how a teacher might work from these, she still expressed beliefs that teachers need to be directive in certain contexts and with certain activities. Clearly her early cultural beliefs about learning were strongly held and lurking in the background. This was particularly the case in relation to beliefs about her own learning where she clung to methods that served her well in her own country, but were proving inadequate in the New Zealand university situation.

Thirdly, both Maki and May had gaps in their knowledge of games, songs and rhymes that are commonplace in a young child's life and are seen as part of a child's cultural heritage when growing up in New Zealand. Maki and May had to learn these or else be regarded as what Schutz (1970) referred to as "outsiders" by the group.

Finally, their understanding of New Zealand history was limited and, coming from cultures where they had experienced little cultural diversity, they initially gave little consideration to the teacher's role in working effectively with a range of cultures. This is not to suggest that all New Zealand students did the latter either. Indeed, there was considerable diversity within the beliefs espoused by participants, reflecting the differences or "varied opportunities that different cultural settings provide" (Bruner, 1996, p.4).

Moreover, using an analogy, Bruner (1996) claimed that culture "provides us with a toolkit by which we construct not only our worlds but our very own conceptions of ourselves and our powers" (p.x). While culture shapes the way we think and what we believe, as well as the view we hold of ourselves in the world, we are not simply receivers of what culture offers us. Rather, we construct our view of the world through interactions with others so that we are both products of our culture and of our individual histories. This was apparent with the beliefs of students raised in New Zealand, not only in relation to cultural diversity, but also on a number of other matters. There are in New Zealand, for example, a number of folk beliefs that focus on the management of

children's behaviour and the appropriateness of physical discipline in the form of smacking of children. It is regarded as an unacceptable practice in early childhood education but, in the community, there are still those who argue for its use in the home and use statements such as "It never did me any harm" to support their arguments.

Three case student participants raised the place of smacking as a form of child management. Sam, who had been smacked at school for running away (see 6.3.1, p.165), totally rejected smacking, either in the early childhood centre or in the home. While it could be hypothesised she had received this as an acceptable cultural practice within the school at that time, she had reacted against this. Instead, she constructed beliefs on the use of encouragement and affirmation of children, both to encourage learning and to manage behaviour. Judy and Emma (see 7.3., p.177 and 12.4.3, p.247) maintained, however, that smacking of children had a place in the home, but not in an early childhood centre. They were both holding on to a folk belief and part of their cultural history. Such ideas frequently could be traced back to family beliefs.

13.3.2 Family influences on belief formation

All of the case participants claimed some of their beliefs about teaching and children's learning emanated from the family in which they were raised as children. These were frequently related to family values that they had adopted as their own. Overall, these were beliefs that were deeply held, were resilient and had been internalised as values. Incorporated within the espoused beliefs was one that overrode all others - the worth placed on them as individuals by their parents and other family members. This was related to the theme of "respect" which pervaded participants' beliefs about teaching and how children learn.

While the respect was learnt as a respect for others, it had wider implications and varied in its origins. For some, it was linked to religious beliefs. Emma and Judy, for example, commented that the influence of religious beliefs held by their families shaped some of their beliefs. In Judy's case, she maintained that religion had been important in teaching her values and a basic morality. This was reflected in the respect she had for children and their families. Within the framework of her family's religion and values, Emma learnt that everyone should be treated equally and respectfully. Both students appeared to see no connection between their belief about respecting others and the belief about smacking as an acceptable form of punishment for young children.

Three of the other seven case study participants came from homes where education was highly regarded. The roots of this belief lay in clearly articulated values. Debbie, whose mother is a teacher, said it was never doubted that she and her brother would have a tertiary education. Maki's belief in the role of education had its origins in her grandmother's views while Rebecca maintained there were clear-cut beliefs and values about education discussed in her home.

While the family has a role in the inculcation of beliefs, the extent of their influence on student teachers' educational beliefs has been less well defined. Su (1992), in survey questionnaires, found teacher candidates rated family, relatives and friends as having only a moderate influence. However, in a later study when students were interviewed rather than surveyed, over a half rated family as having a powerful influence on the formation of their basic educational values. There are two points of interest here. Firstly, students interviewed and given the opportunity to voice their ideas in both Su's research and the present research referred frequently to the influence of the family. Secondly, whereas over half of the students in Su's research stated that the family were a powerful influence on their basic educational values, all case study participants in this research mentioned this as a determinant. This may well be a factor of the small group but, nevertheless, it does indicate the crucial role family plays in the enculturation process and in shaping beliefs of its younger members. It is also a reminder, as Blumer (1969) stated, that meanings are seen as products of social interaction, "as creations that are found in and through the defining activities of people as they interact" (p.5).

13.3.3 Educational experiences and belief formation

It has been claimed that the educational system student teachers have experienced exerts a powerful influence on their beliefs about how effective they will be as teachers, about children as learners and the learning process itself (Borko & Putnam, 1994; Lortie, 1975 and others, see 2.3.3, p.42). These experiences also play a role in shaping the student's sense of identity (Smith, 1991). In this section, the case study participants' comments on their earlier educational experiences will be discussed.

In contrast to Smith's (1991) research with six student teachers, the participants in the present study placed less emphasis on earlier educational experiences and their

influence on beliefs. The emphasis, as already discussed, was on family influences. This may be explained, in part, by the research design. Smith's (1991) focus was on prior educational experiences and how the students perceived these as relating to their understanding of the teacher's role and work. Specific questions were asked about school experience in the initial interview. In contrast, participants in the present study were invited to offer what they conceived as influences on their beliefs without any leads offered.

Six emphasised the formative nature of the family's role on their educational beliefs but credited earlier educational experiences as exerting some influence on their thinking. Only one totally dismissed the influence of past educational experiences and the part they played in making a good teacher. Debbie maintained that past experiences generally, and educational experiences in particular, were of little relevance and would have minimal significance in determining whether or not a teacher was a good teacher. Teaching from some experienced teachers that she had witnessed disappointed her. Rather, she believed it was important that teachers should be motivated and work imaginatively in all areas of the early childhood centre so that children's interest was maintained. In other words, she wanted teachers to bring enthusiasm and creativity to their role and to discard outdated ideas from previous experiences. It was clear that she had interpreted the use of the word "experience", in this instance, in a very specific way.

Rebecca noted the influence of a Montessori early childhood centre she attended as a child. The notions of respect fostered there related to the values learnt at home. She also mentioned three male teachers who had influenced her. She had difficulty in specifying precisely what that influence had been, stating that one, at least, probably provided her with a male role model after the dissolution of her parents' marriage.

Those participants who declared that prior educational experiences were a strong influence on their beliefs about the role of the teacher and children's learning, referred to either positive or negative specific encounters from their school days. For Judy and Maki, schooling had been a pleasant experience marked by success in achievement. Both felt that this had given them the confidence they needed as teachers. Judy's

positive relationships with her teachers may have led her to state that she believed that parents and teachers play an important role in assisting children's development through interactions that empowered children.

In contrast, three participants, Sam, Madison and Emma, all expressed strong emotions about negative experiences and the effects that this had had on their own identity. For Sam, this was the hitting episode referred to earlier; for Madison, it was the lack of success in final school examinations (10.2.1, p.213); and for Emma it was discrimination she had experienced as the result of her disability (12.3.2, p.243). Madison and Emma claimed that these, and other school experiences, had lowered their self-esteem and reduced their confidence. Sam perceived her experience as being related to others in her schooling that made her rebel against what was being offered. All three volunteered that they would make better teachers than some of the teachers they had encountered and saw this as a motivating factor. Sam spoke of "making a difference" in children's lives by providing educative and caring environments; Madison spoke of being effective with young children and working in partnerships with teachers, parents, *whānau*, colleagues and children; and Emma did not wish any child to replicate her experiences. Rather, she believed in the importance of establishing equitable opportunities for children in secure environments where both confidence and learning would flourish. Clearly, affect played a role in all these participants' beliefs.

13.3.4 Affect and belief formation

The above examples were all taken from the case studies. From the questionnaire data alone, it was difficult to ascertain what role affect played in the participants' beliefs. Speculations were made about this in Chapter 5 (5.6, p.). It was suggested that the use of the personal pronoun "I" and the word "important" in written statements might signal a strongly held belief. There was little, however, to conclusively indicate the involvement of affect. Melinda, in her second year, referred to what she perceived as poor teaching and related this to beliefs she held (5.6, p.160). An element of affect could be seen in her vehement statements.

In contrast, the case study methods allowed for the probing and checking of ideas from one source to another. Affect featured in some of the espoused beliefs, particularly when participants explored the origin of their beliefs. As outlined earlier in this chapter, it was present in the recounting of both positive and negative experiences within the family and/or the educational system.

These affective beliefs contributed to the individual's concept of self and self worth. Judy, for example, had a quiet confidence that she traced back to her valued position within the family and her school successes. Emma, on the other hand, described herself as lacking in confidence and possessing poor self-esteem. She tracked this back to the frequent shifts the family had made in her early years, her difficulty in establishing friendships, and the inequitable treatment she had received at school. Madison echoed the effect of unhelpful school experiences on self-esteem when she spoke of her need for support, and her current belief in the importance both of receiving support as a teacher and of giving it to others.

In the beliefs divulged by participants, it was those relating to negative school experiences that contained the most obvious evidence of affect. There are claims that school experience plays a powerful role in shaping a student's sense of identity (Bruner, 1996; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Smith, 1991; Sugrue, 1997). The students cited in the previous paragraph were able to pinpoint specific incidents that had influenced their beliefs about themselves and aspects of the profession that they were entering. The stories that they told about their school experiences were similar to those reported by Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) who found that student teachers rely on, and trust as models, significant school experiences they have had:

They use these memorable experiences, these critical incidents, as a core or framework around which to structure 'practical arguments'. ... They also use these memories strategically, as a backdrop against which to think about and evaluate the practical potential of ideas they encounter in course work. (p.90)

So much part of “self” have their experiences become that people can have difficulty in seeing beyond them. Situations encountered as student teachers may be interpreted with reference to their own personal experiences. As result of her own negative experiences, Emma, for example, had an admirable goal. She wanted to ensure that children with disabilities received equitable treatment (see 12.4.4, p.252). She found it difficult, however, to listen and to accept her associate teacher’s comments that she was treating children with disabilities differently and in ways that might not be beneficial to them in an inclusive setting. Rather than trying to understand what was happening from the teacher’s perspective, she chose to blame the teachers, maintaining that they were not giving the children the attention they deserved. She claimed they were not meeting their responsibilities. Her past experiences, coupled with new knowledge, led to the construction of firm beliefs about the teacher’s responsibilities with children with disabilities.

13.4 The Development of Teacher Role Identity

Overall, the case study students conceived of teaching as a career that carried great responsibility. From the beginning of the research, they voiced a commitment voiced to the professional role for which they were being preparing. Already, they were expressing what Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) have referred to as a teacher role identity with the image of self-as-teacher.

The notion of self is strongly influenced by the beliefs held whether it is, for example, self-as-daughter, self-as-scholar or self-as-teacher. Interactionists view self as “a construct that is given meaning through an actor’s choices, mediated by the relationships, situations and cultures in which she or he is embedded” (Fine, 1993, p.78).

So significant is the concept of self that Bruner (1996) has suggested that

Perhaps the single most universal thing about experience is the phenomenon of ‘Self’... We know Self from our inner experience, and we recognise

others as selves.... What characterises human selfhood is the construction of a conceptual system that organises as it were, a 'record' of agentive encounters with the world, a record that is related to the past (that is 'autobiographical memory,' so called) but that is also extrapolated into the future – self with history and with possibility. It is a possible self that regulates aspiration, confidence, optimism and their opposites. (pp. 35,36)

This conceptual system, that incorporates a record of the self in the past, the present and the future, was what participants were creating as they established their image of self-as-teacher. They were drawing on past and present experiences, and applying beliefs formulated as result of these experiences, to determine the image of themselves in the present and the future.

Three other factors appeared to be of consequence in contributing to the early teacher role identity. They included

- the influence and support of significant others
- previous experiences with children and
- career aspirations.

The influence of significant others

Significant others included family members, employers and a social worker who had all given their encouragement and support and led the participant to believe that they could succeed in their study at university and become a teacher. Contributing to this image of self-as-teacher was the folk belief embodied in comments from people in the past who had told the participants how great they were with children and what a good teacher they would make. Britzman (1986, p.451) noted that this leads to people seeing themselves as “natural teachers”. As Rebecca said, “Anyone who knows me, no matter how slightly, tells me I’ll make a wonderful teacher.”

Previous experiences with children

In addition, successful previous experiences with children played a role in the social construction of self-as-teacher. A folk belief emerged that if a person is “good” with children, then it is taken-for-granted they will make a good teacher. Most of these experiences had been with one or two children or with small groups for limited periods

of time. As Sugrue (1997) commented, such ideas feed into the notion that there is a teaching personality and that this is more important than other skills and knowledge a teacher needs to effectively bring about learning. Furthermore, such comments overlook the complexity of the teaching task and the differences involved in working with groups of children, compared to working with one or two children (Weinstein, 1988).

Career aspirations

Of the 17 participants, 7 had spent time prior to entry to the programme working in early childhood centres, either on a paid or voluntary basis. Eight had babysitting experiences, or had worked as a childcarer in the child's home, and two had had minimal responsibilities and experiences with children (see Table 4.2, p.91). Reasons for applying for the teacher education programme included the desire to gain a qualification and learn more about children, as well as the wish to be an effective teacher and to eventually manage an early childhood centre. Several participants saw the move they were taking as embarking them on a successful career that offered a clear career path and opportunities, both in New Zealand and overseas. Successfully completing a qualification would be a move that would strengthen their identity as a teacher.

13.4.1 Self efficacy as a teacher

To explore their image of self-as-teacher, a question in the first year of the study (Questionnaire A2) asked participants to compare themselves with others enrolled in the programme in terms of their knowledge and ability in supporting children. Eight rated themselves as either average or below average and eight from slightly above average to above average. One considered herself to be well above average in comparison with her peers (see Table 4.2, p.91). There were no clear relationships that emerged in terms of the participants' self-assessment and the variables of age, or the extent of their experiences with children.

Weinstein (1988) contended, firstly, that as many students have had previous experience with children in a variety of contexts, they may conclude "that they have the

prerequisite ability be effective [teachers]" (p.33). Secondly, she hypothesised that if teaching is viewed "as an extended form of parenting, about which there is little to learn other than through instincts and one's own experiences as a child in the network" (p.33), then students may well believe that teaching is caring. If they conceive teaching as akin to parenting or nurturing, then the most important characteristics of the teacher will be viewed as caring, understanding, patience and the ability to relate to children (Weinstein, 1990). Convinced that they have these qualities, students may develop what Weinstein termed "'unrealistic optimism', that is, the tendency to believe that problems experienced by others 'won't happen to me'" (p.33).

Weinstein (1989) noted two limitations of her research design. Firstly, students when faced with an open-ended questionnaire may well overlook items that they would have included if they were presented with a fixed list. Secondly, questionnaire items can be ambiguous and coders may unintentionally misunderstand or distort the response. For example, if a person writes that a good teacher will be responsive to children's needs, they may be referring to both affective and cognitive needs, but this is unclear from the response.

These two points will be explored in relation to the research reported here. There were differences in the research design with opportunities to explore case study participants' responses through interviews. Survey questionnaires were kept in an individual file and could be referred to by both the interviewer and the interviewee. With this opportunity to clarify points, the research results have introduced variations to those Weinstein proposed. The patterns she found did not emerge to quite the same extent.

Firstly, with the exception of Debbie, the participants appeared to believe that experiences with children were a useful springboard for their study in early childhood education. It is difficult to determine whether this made them unrealistically optimistic. Rather, some recognised they had limitations and wished to develop a professional competence they felt they did not already possess. Four of those who had the most experience in working in early childhood centres, or with small groups of children for

long periods of time, spoke of wanting to extend their skills in working with young children. Judy, for example,

... wanted the knowledge that everybody else [in the early childhood centre] had, because I thought, well I want to meet these children's needs and how do I do this. (see 7.2)

In terms of their knowledge and ability at supporting young children, one of the four who wanted to extend their skills, rated herself as average and the other three as slightly above average, compared to their peers. It should also be remembered that 3 of the 17 rated themselves as below average (Table 4.2, p.91). If anything, there was evidence of a lack of confidence or uncertainty expressed by some of the participants.

Secondly, all students entering the programme believed caring to be one of the most important characteristics of the good teacher. Of nine students who rated themselves in the bands of slightly above average to well above average, only two focussed almost exclusively on caring. Again, it was the interviews with the case study participants that highlighted how caring was seen as but one component of the teacher's role. All portrayed the teacher and children as active participants in the learning process. Several were reflecting on what teachers needed to know and the extent and nature of the teacher's involvement. In terms of the latter, Sam, for example, emphasised the teacher's active participation alongside the children. Judy spoke of establishing reciprocal relationships with children and families to enhance learning, Rebecca referred to the teacher as a facilitator of learning and Emma perceived the teacher as one who intervened, but only when necessary. For some, learning was holistic, occurred in a rich environment and necessitated interaction with the children's families. For Judy and Madison, there were clear indications that they saw the teaching and learning role as inextricably linked.

This would suggest that, overall, these participants might have had rather more realistic expectations of the teaching role on entry into the programme than those in Weinstein's research. If this is a correct interpretation, then it is encouraging, for of the nine, four spoke of wanting a career in early childhood education and three aspired to running an

early childhood centre. This would suggest that their aspirations and their images of themselves as teachers might not have been so unrealistic, for they brought with them a basic understanding of some of the demands and complexities of early childhood teaching. In other words, they appeared to perceive it as more than simply a nurturing role, but as a career to which to aspire.

13.5 Themes in Participants' Beliefs

Beliefs and the way in which they developed have already been presented in Chapter 5 which examined the questionnaire data, and in Chapters 6 to 12 where the case studies were presented. What follows now is a discussion of the content of some beliefs, from the different sources, under four themes. The themes that will be explored are

- the caring educator
- the management of children
- fun and spontaneity
- looking beyond the immediate teacher/child relationship.

13.5.1 The caring educator

In spite of many social changes in New Zealand, there are still folk beliefs that persist that attempt to closely define the roles of men and women in terms of their gender. They include a belief that the nurturing or the care of young children is almost solely the domain of women. Hence, early childhood education is regarded by many in the community as “women’s work” and is seen as child minding or nurturing, rather than education even if that is not the view held by the research participants. People who hold such beliefs are likely to fail to recognise the educational value of play and the other activities that are commonly found in early childhood centres. Madison referred to this when she said that she believed that some people in the community do not think of teaching as a profession, especially early childhood teaching (see 10.4. p.223).

Much has been written on research outcomes that demonstrate the emphasis student teachers place on care in the teaching role. This is generally equated with a view of the

teacher as a nurturer of children who assumes a role more akin to that of a substitute parent. In such instances, as noted earlier, student teachers use affective terms to describe the essential characteristics of the teacher (Bullough & Stokes, 1994; Renwick & Vize, 1993; and others, see 2.3.3, p.42). This has been viewed with concern for it suggests that teaching is being viewed as commonsense (Burgess & Carter, 1992) and the cognitive or professional attributes necessary to be a good teacher overlooked or devalued (Gunstone et al., 1989).

Definitions of caring vary but generally it is seen as a value and a belief about how we should view and interact with others (Noblit, Rogers & McCadden, 1995). In practice, this would be demonstrated by teachers who show genuine concern for their students, as evidenced by their listening intently and engaging in meaningful dialogue with their students (Noddings, 1984; Schubert & Ayers, 1992). This has been defined as requiring “sensitive, responsive and empathetic adults who can both reflect on their experiences with children and engage in reciprocal relationships with children” (Goodfellow, 1996 p.125).

Student teachers, both in this research and that reported elsewhere, use adjectives such as “sensitive,” “understanding”, and “friendly” to describe the “caring” teacher. The teacher with these qualities was conceptualised as one who established good relationships with children and both love, and is loved by the children with whom she or he works (5.2.2, p.122). But, as explained previously), these were not the only attributes participants believed were important. Furthermore, as they moved through their programme, caring either remained as an explicit feature of their beliefs or, more usually, became implicit. Even when it was explicit, it was regarded as only one aspect of a teacher’s role. Sam, in the third year, for example, still maintained that caring was an essential element of teaching but did not regard it as a sufficient characteristic of a good teacher (6.4.3, p.170).

Another point of particular interest was the wider application of caring that Rebecca voiced. Expanding on what she believed to be aspects of caring, she introduced the notion of respect. Then she focussed on the caring teacher as providing an appropriate

environment, one that is safe, happy and comfortable, and that children enjoy. Furthermore, within this environment, she perceived the teachers as having a role in which they were concerned with the facilitation of children's learning.

Several other participants also made comments that a good teacher would provide a safe and stimulating learning environment. This raises a question that could be explored in more depth: precisely what it is that participants mean when they speak of a caring teacher? Is it, for example, a teacher who simply embodies all the affective qualities they so frequently cite, or is it a teacher who has caring qualities as evidenced in practice in a variety of ways?

According to a number of writers, caring carries with it moral and social responsibilities (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Noblit, et al., 1995). Those in education who hold this perspective believe that caring is actioned, not only through interpersonal relationships but also through curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom management (McLaughlin, 1991a; Weinstein, 1998). There were participants in this research who either held, or were developing beliefs that were in keeping with a broader definition than that usually cited in much of the literature on teacher and student teacher beliefs.

13.5.2 The management of children

When teaching is conceptualised as primarily caring, it has been contended that student teachers may experience conflict when these beliefs impact on their management of children (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Noblit et al., 1995; Weinstein, 1998). Research with beginning teachers found that they made a classic mistake of seeing control as the opposite of caring. Then, when the caring relationships they develop are insufficient for "dealing with the daily realities of life in the classroom, they move to control in the form of 'discipline' or 'classroom management'" (Noblit et al., 1995, p.684). Moreover, Weinstein (1998) suggested that

... if teachers are primarily concerned about establishing warm, nurturing relationships with children, they may not recognise that caring can be enacted through teaching well. Moreover, they may not appreciate the link between caring expectations and may be reluctant to exert the authority needed to create an orderly, productive environment for learning. (p.155)

In her research with 141 teacher education students, 40% of who were in the early childhood/elementary education programme, Weinstein sought beliefs, firstly, on establishing order in classrooms and, secondly, on how care would be demonstrated. Caring was seen primarily in terms of interpersonal relationships with little mention of either pedagogy or classroom management. Order, it was believed, would be achieved through managerial strategies such as establishing rules. Weinstein noted that despite the general tendency to dichotomise order and caring, there were clear individual differences among teacher candidates. These individual differences were also apparent in the research reported here and will be illustrated with pen pictures of Sam, Judy, Debbie and Emma. All four students perceived the good teacher as caring, but there were also other beliefs coming into play on pedagogy and management.

Sam balanced her beliefs on caring with other beliefs about the teacher's role. Not only did she believe in the significance of establishing warm relationships with children, but also she perceived the teacher as one who enjoyed learning with children. This meant the teacher participated fully in all activities and, in doing so, took each child's agenda into account. Sam fostered children's involvement, their enjoyment of learning and their imagination through socio-dramatic play and other activities in a range of areas within the early childhood centre. She made learning fun by being involved and, in turn, encouraged children's active participation. She maintained clear expectations for behaviour and handled differences and conflicts through discussion and the creation of stories. She was consistent and children appeared to enjoy her company and stimulation so much that they rarely "tested" her limits in terms of their behaviour. Sam fitted into Phyfe-Perkins's (1981) view of an effective early childhood teacher who would be encouraging, interact positively with children, be involved in children's activities rather than being engaged in directive teaching, and have a child-centred approach.

Judy, too, expressed beliefs that the good teacher would care for children through listening to them and supporting them in their decision making. She spoke of the need to observe children carefully and to use this knowledge to assist children. She viewed the ideal teacher as one who facilitated learning and extended children's ideas. After

being observed working with children, she discussed how she handles conflict, and strategies she adopts to reduce the possibilities of conflict arising in the first place. She was aware of useful tactics that the teaching staff she observed employed. She used positive reinforcement with children, accompanying her praise with explanations of what it was that pleased her and why. However, she found it troublesome that sometimes the context forced her to act in ways that were contrary to her beliefs. She did not like having to be a disciplinarian and assume a dominant role, simply because insufficient thought had been given to the environment and the nature of the programme within which people were operating.

Debbie felt strongly that teachers should be directing attention at both the education and care of children. These beliefs were expressed throughout the three years. She also expressed some concerns about her own inability to develop effective child management strategies. In her first year, she waited for the experienced teachers to intervene when conflict among children developed and continued to find working with large groups of children in kindergartens difficult. She expressed strong beliefs about the ways she thought children could best be controlled. These she had developed from past experiences of working with a neighbour's children. These were beliefs that she revisited over the three years. She pondered on the possibility of finding employment in a childcare centre where the staff managed children in ways that accorded more closely with her own beliefs.

Emma maintained it was important for a teacher to establish sensitive relationships with children so that a climate of trust was established and positive self esteem enhanced. She drew on her experiences with disability and emphasised the need of the teacher to treat children equally. She perceived children as learning through interaction but also stressed that the teacher should stand back and only intervene when necessary. This, she sometimes did to the detriment of children's learning (see 12.4.3, p.247). While on one occasion, in her second year, she let behaviour reach a point where the situation was seemingly unproductive in terms of learning outcomes she was able to rationalise this situation on positive terms.

There were several issues Emma was grappling with. She wanted to give children power, but experienced difficulty in doing so. Her style of managing children was a reflection of this. When being observed in her third year, she was frequently very firm indeed. She recognised this was the case and expressed doubts about her behaviour, in spite of being congratulated by some teaching staff in an early childhood centre on her ability to manage children. She stated, however, that she did not want to be “the big bad lion”. This led to her reflecting on the appropriateness of her actions.

The individual differences found in these four examples emphasise how wary we should be about generalising and assuming that all students who believe that teachers should be caring will experience conflict when these beliefs impact on their management of children. There may be factors other than the caring belief that impact on management beliefs. Both Sam and Judy introduced caring as just one component in the child teacher relationship. They both expressed beliefs about pedagogy and curriculum and were well aware of effective child management strategies. Sam appeared not to separate caring and management; rather they were intertwined into her practice. Management was only an issue for Judy when she felt caught in a situation not of her own making and where, as a student, she could exert little influence. Certainly, her desire not to spend time “persuading” children does relate to her concern for children’s care, but it is the context rather than the belief that appears to be the most influential in raising management concerns.

Debbie and Emma brought strong beliefs about child management to the programme. Although they both also expressed caring beliefs in their descriptions of the good teacher, in practice, their beliefs about controlling children’s behaviour appeared to override these caring beliefs. The management beliefs they constructed were based on strategies that had proved effective for them in the past, and in different contexts. They were not beliefs they were able to easily discard. Given the opportunity, they might well argue that exerting firm control of children is another way of showing that a teacher cares. Remember, Debbie commented that when she spoke harshly to children “You’re not hurting them in any way, not putting them down or anything.”

Overall, the data failed to suggest that students who attend to caring as a characteristic of a good teacher will necessarily find they are experiencing conflict in terms of beliefs on child management. It appears to be a much more complex than a simple causal relationship. Rather, one needs to examine, as has already been proposed, exactly what student teachers mean by caring and how they interpret it in practice.

13.5.3 A dwindling sense of fun and spontaneity

“Fun”, “imagination”, “creativity” and “spontaneity” were words that featured frequently in the first year of the research. They were words used to describe characteristics of the teacher, the environment and the means by which young children learn (see 5.2.4, p.135). There was an expectation that good teachers enjoyed their work and received pleasure from it. In turn, they would make the environment a fun place for children to be and their learning would be enhanced through the observation of positive models and their sheer joy in their involvement. This emphasis diminished in expressed beliefs, so that by the third year it was almost non-existent in response to the questionnaires.

Data from the case studies demonstrated that while these ideas of fun, spontaneity and creativity had not completely vanished, there were only two participants overall, Sam and Rebecca, who continued to explore them in any depth. Furthermore, both had reorganised their beliefs so that these ideas were more fully integrated into their pedagogy and theories of learning.

Sam, for instance, stressed the importance of children and teachers learning together and actively participating in all aspects of a centre’s programme. Disillusioned with teachers who were “rigid” and “stuck in their ways”, she stated she would be seeking out environments where her beliefs were practised. She had no desire to work in programmes that were highly structured, and where teachers and children were constrained in the choices they could make and what they could do.

Rebecca, too, retained her belief of the teacher as spontaneous and linked it to the provision of an environment that allowed for flexibility, gave children freedom in their

learning and was such that a teacher could develop the interests of children. She believed that the directions programmes take should be determined by children's development and this necessitated the teacher having awareness

...of children's culture and what T.V programmes they are into. What is it that is important to children as a whole as well as individually, like what music are they into and what books are they are into, what clothes do they want to wear and what little phrases do they have.

In other words, teachers should understand the culture of the child if they were to understand children and to facilitate their learning in a way that children found fun.

In order to gain some understanding of why others in this research no longer focused on fun and spontaneity, as characteristics of the teacher and the learning process, two related explanations are offered for consideration. The first concerns the role of intentionality in a teacher's work and the second, the process of teacher socialisation.

Katz (1984), in distinguishing between the role of mothers and teachers, suggested that

whereas mothers should be optimally *spontaneous* with their children, teachers should strive to be optimally *intentional* about their work. Their activities should be largely predetermined, premeditated in terms of some aims, goals, and broad objectives (p.57).

She described the purpose of training in pedagogy as aiming to bring the consequences of one's pedagogical methods into closer and closer agreement with the intentions underlying one's pedagogy. A critical point made by Katz (1984) is that, with training and experience, the intentional behaviour takes on a spontaneous quality as well.

It was apparent that as the students in this research moved through their programme, what can only be described as a more serious professionalism or intentional outlook developed in both their oral and written responses. Occasionally, they drew on new learning from research and began to use more educational terminology in their responses. Furthermore, as their teacher education programme began drawing to an end, they were faced with the reality that they were almost over the first hurdle towards

becoming a qualified teacher. At this point, it appeared that intentionality held a stronger position in their thinking than spontaneity and fun.

Moreover, Perry (1968; 1981) suggested in his model of college students' intellectual and ethical development (see 2.3.4, p.49) that students move through stages. They move from dualistic thinking, with right and wrong perspectives, where right answers are to be memorised through to the final stage where they develop a set of personal values and become committed to them as an expression of their own identity. Although not a major focus of this study, there were examples of some of the behaviours Perry proposed. Maki, for instance, entered the programme with the belief that there were right and wrong answers and spent excessive hours learning material by rote. Uncertainty was evident in others' thinking as they began to accept that uncertainty was legitimate in the learning process and that knowledge is qualitative. Then, to greater or lesser extent, all the participants were dabbling in Perry's final stage as they expressed personal values which they perceived as an expression of their own identity.

At a lunch that the students arranged to celebrate their final day at university in the teacher education programme, some chatted with me informally about their experiences. They commented on the development in their confidence and the ways in which they had changed. The image-of-self they held was not the same image they entered with three years earlier:

Once I accepted everything I heard or read. Now I think about it, ask what are the issues, question things. I don't just accept things as they are any longer I've changed so much.

My succeeding at university is a big thing for my family. I've learnt so much. I said to my partner the other day, after all we've learnt in inclusive programmes, once I was scared about having a child with a disability. Now I'd think 'So what', I can handle this. I'd make sure my child got the best of everything. (Amy, field notes)

Her partner's comments were interesting. They demonstrated how different the thinking required in the teacher education programme was from that experienced in his study to become a tradesperson:

I'm a tradesperson. We did exams. We had to learn but its so different to what Amy had to do. I'm really proud of her. With my trade, its all black and white. You're either right or wrong but I looked at some of Amy's essays and I've thought 'What does this mean?' Other times I've thought 'Gee you could answer this in different ways. Which is the way to go?' Her work has meant you've got to consider so many different things. Knowing about what she's doing is so different to knowing about what I'm doing. I'm really proud of her. (field notes)

In this final year, much was happening for the participants. They were weighing up different viewpoints, becoming more intentional in their thinking, using research, considering their own role as future teachers, strongly committed to early childhood education, and life was taking on a seriousness as they prepared to offer themselves to the job market. Overall, spontaneity was taking a back seat.

13.5.4 Beyond the teacher/child relationship

Moreover, the majority of the participants were beginning to appreciate that the early childhood centre is part of a wider social context. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model was applied to the participants' beliefs to analyse the nature of the context in which they perceived the teacher working and the child learning. At the beginning of the research, their major focus was the child, or a group of children and the teacher, working together in various curriculum areas. There were indications that participants viewed children's learning as occurring in early childhood centres, but there was only minimal mention of other contexts and their impact on children. Furthermore, at the beginning, half of the participants believed that the good teacher would establish relationships with parents but, initially, this was more of a "teacher as expert" model than one of collaboration. By the third year the focus had broadened to include others with whom a teacher would come in contact. Awareness of the significance of such connections for the child's learning and development was beginning to grow.

At the time of selection to the programme, there was little consideration given to the diversity found in the general population; the expressed beliefs gave the impression of homogeneity among children and their families. After a Treaty of Waitangi workshop, however, and related course work just under half (eight) of the participants began expressing a developing awareness of cultural diversity. In the third year, this was still not something that was raised with great passion by the participants overall. When it was perceived as important, it was often referred to in very general terms with few clear indications of policies and strategies that could be employed to enhance such development. They were more passionate about the inclusion of children with disabilities but, again, principles and attitudes rather than practices, were generally expressed.

Those students who entered the programme stating the importance of diversity left with strengthened beliefs. Those who reorganised or adopted new beliefs relating to diversity did so with alacrity. (See Amy's comments on her newly developed understanding of children with disabilities.) An incident arose at the end of the third year, when a group of Pakeha students would not accommodate to a request from Māori students to have a bilingual statement on T-shirts they were organising as a momento of their time at university. I expressed to the student, who had been attempting to bring the two groups together my disappointment at the intense feelings that had arisen and the impasse that was reached. I commented to her that sometimes I wondered if we, as a staff, were making any progress in raising people's awareness and understanding of the issues. Her comment was, "But of course you are! You only have to look at me. I came in here knowing nothing and I've just learned so much about this [cultural diversity] I'm going out a different person" (field notes).

What the data revealed, overall, was that from the second year, participants were developing an awareness that teachers do not operate in a vacuum. Political and philosophical issues that impact on children and teachers were beginning to enter the discourse. Ultimately an understanding of these issues might prove to be the key to a greater appreciation of diversity.

13.6 The Evolving Beliefs of Participants

Student teachers bring to a teacher education programme beliefs about teaching and children that are considered to be robust and difficult to change (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Much of the belief literature presents a pessimistic view about the extent to which beliefs can be altered (Abelson, 1986; Kagan, 1992; Pajeres, 1992). In a survey of articles on issues of belief change in student teachers published in the late 1990s, Nettle (1998), however, found 18 of the 20 studies provided evidence of change in some beliefs and 15 found evidence of stability in some other beliefs.

This was the situation in this study. Change was apparent in some beliefs and stability in others. As the research was conducted over a three-year period, changes may have been more evident than if it had been over shorter time frame, as has been the case in some earlier research. Furthermore, the multiple methods used in the data collection allowed greater insights into belief change than if one method, such as the use of one or two questionnaires within a limited time frame, had been employed. Of particular value, were the interviews leading to the construction of the stories for each of the seven participants. Although this was not developed to the same extent as the narrative work reported by Clandinin and Connelly (1986; 1996b), it did allow for the emergence of some of the same features they described. Participants' lives, and their bearing on their beliefs, were raised and jointly discussed as the stories developed. This allowed for the placement of the participant in time and a consideration of the historical background to beliefs. It also enabled students to explore and reflect on their current position, as well as their perceptions of their future role as a teacher. In other words, it developed an understanding of what Clandinin and Connelly (1996a) called "teacher knowledge in terms of narrative life constructions" (p.68).

Analysis of the questionnaire data indicated that there were shifts or developments in the beliefs participants held. This could be seen by scrutiny of the group data and then

the individual data. The changes, as described in this chapter and in Chapter 5, showed that there were shifts from

- a dyadic to an ecological view of early childhood education
- an emphasis on caring to an emphasis on educating
- a focus on homogeneity to a focus on heterogeneity and
- a sense of spontaneity to one of predictability.

Group data, as already suggested, does tend to mask what is occurring in terms of belief development for individuals and to give the impression that the individuals are more homogeneous than is the case. Therefore, the next step was to examine more closely what was occurring to the beliefs of each of the 17 participants reported in the questionnaire data. This analysis showed that individual's beliefs varied in their status. This was borne out by the case study data, which provided further verification for shifts in beliefs, as well as the differing status that beliefs hold within the individual's belief system.

The data, in the present study, gathered from participants on several occasions over a three-year period, indicated that beliefs are dynamic. Changes, as Bullough and Stokes (1994) suggested, may be subtle but significant. Furthermore, Orton (1996) suggested that "one way is to distinguish between beliefs that are certain or at least very probable and beliefs that are less certain" (p.135). Depending on the point of the research at which the data were being considered, changes could be viewed as either gradual or more radical. If, for example, children were conceptualised as passive learners at the beginning of the research and active learners at the conclusion of the research, on first glance this could be interpreted as a radical change. However, this change may well have been characterised by gradual shifts that occurred over the three years. Moreover, an expressed belief may be accompanied by other competing ideas indicating that the belief was not as well established in year one as it might have first appeared.

13.6.1 A taxonomy of beliefs

A taxonomy was developed to chart the status of participants' beliefs. This was used to situate the beliefs of learning and teaching generated from past experiences and

exposure to folk beliefs, as well as those beliefs constructed from new ideas and recent experiences. It was an attempt to better understand the complexity of the change process. The rest of this section will discuss belief development by examining each of the belief types and processes that appeared to be influencing either their movement or their stability. These will be illustrated with examples from individual participants .

Reiterated beliefs

Reiterated beliefs are those beliefs in which there is little evidence of change in their expression over a period of time. Clearly, they are beliefs that a person holds dear and may be influenced by a variety of factors. They are likely to be primary or central beliefs that are psychologically important and that have implications and consequences for other beliefs (Green 1971; Rokeach, 1968). Sometimes, these beliefs may fit comfortably within the context of the teacher education programme. Karol, for example, reiterated beliefs about the teacher's ability to relate and interact well with children (see 5.5.1, p.155). Although over the three years she was required to critically examine teacher/child relationships, it is less likely that this basic premise would ever have been challenged.

When new ideas are presented, there may be a rejection of these simply because they do not "fit" with the strongly held, reiterated belief. Debbie's belief about child management (see 8.3.4, p.195) was an example of this. So strongly did she hold on to her belief, that she stated that she would seek employment in an early childhood centre where firm discipline methods were in place.

Folk beliefs like this appear to be particularly resilient and contrary views may be easily dismissed. On other occasions, these reiterated and closely held beliefs create tensions for their holder. New information and the adoption of new ideas may compete or conflict with a well- established reiterated belief. Emma, for example, also held some strong beliefs about the management of children (see 12.4.3, p.247). She came to the realisation that her ideas were neither philosophically acceptable, nor practicable, in an early childhood setting, but she had difficulty in finding, adopting and employing

widely acceptable alternatives. In contrast, her reiterated belief on the use of positive reinforcement was accepted and its retention presented her with no difficulties.

Lurking beliefs

This is a belief that was expressed at the beginning of the research and subsequently on only one other occasion. For this reason, it was difficult to ascertain how firmly the belief was held and the significance granted to it by its holder. This is neither to say that such beliefs are of any less significance than others in the taxonomy, nor may they be less firmly held. Indeed, the evidence in the examples that follow suggests the contrary. Rebecca, for example, referred to the role of caring in the teacher's role in an early questionnaire and it was not raised again until her final interview, when she made it very clear that she perceived the guiding and nurturing role as very significant (11.4.1, p.230). Maki, in spite of voicing ideas of the child as an active learner, had a lurking belief that indicated that there were occasions when she continued to conceive of the child as learning from a teacher who presented the child with information and assistance (see 9.4.2, p.207).

Abelson (1986) compared beliefs with possessions. On the one hand, a lurking belief may be like a possession that we treasure but we do not find necessary to wear, to use, or to display all the time. Rather we bring it out at times when we think it is most useful. On the other hand, it may be a belief that we experience difficulty in abandoning in spite of having other beliefs that are competing with it. We may express some uncertainty about the belief but, as in Maki's case, it may be like a comfortable pair of old shoes that are almost worn out but cannot be abandoned by their owner because they are still perceived as having some value. We bring them out from time to time because they "fit" the occasion. There is a Chinese proverb that sums this up well. Occasionally Maki was "walking a new road in old shoes".

Reorganising beliefs

A reorganising belief is a belief expressed early in the research and developed more comprehensively over a period of time. There is continuity in some of the ideas expressed within the belief, coupled with the incorporation of new ideas and a

modification to the existing belief. Reorganising beliefs provide evidence that beliefs can develop or be revised as a result of new experiences and the introduction of new knowledge. Occasionally, it may be a new belief that is developed early in the programme and undergoes change as time passes.

Frequently, beliefs are reorganised when new ideas or experiences that are encountered resonate with beliefs already held. They, too, may present challenges. Judy, for instance, entered the programme perceiving the teacher's and child's role as interactive. Furthermore, she believed that parents, whānau and community all contribute to what the child's learns and to the learning process itself. Learning more about the influence and significance of the social context, and those within this context, fitted well with the beliefs she held. She believed that her ideas were being confirmed and her understanding extended (see 7.4.1, p.180). As she learned more about the teacher's role in empowering children and encouraging their autonomy, she reviewed her own position as a teacher and articulated strategies that would meet these goals. She did not always find it easy grappling with these new ideas, but she recognised the relevance for her own practice. She was particularly appreciative of courses that had a practical component in early childhood centres. The testing out of ideas, observing experienced teachers and taking opportunities to reflect on these in class, Judy believed, contributed to her development as a teacher. As a result of her experiences, both in centres and in university courses, she came to view children's learning and the teacher's role as more complex than she had previously.

Time was a factor in the development of these reorganised beliefs. For a few participants, the reorganised belief was heralded by what Beijaard and de Vries (1997) referred to as a radical change on the basis of "key experiences". Madison, for example, entered the programme with little appreciation of the diversity she could expect to encounter in early childhood centres. Her initial exposure to biculturalism was a shock to her (see 10.3.3, p.218) and she felt angry about her placement in a bicultural early childhood centre in her first year. Repeated exposure to more and more complex issues on diversity over the three years challenged her and eventually led her to say, "... now I think it [cultural diversity] is just so important". For Madison, this belief is less likely

to have developed to the same extent without the key experience, the presentation of more knowledge, and the time to reflect on these experiences and knowledge over time.

Reorganising beliefs should be thought of as beliefs that gain in complexity over time. They may start as quite a simple idea. As new ideas are accommodated, they increase in their complexity. The beliefs explored in this research were specifically related to the teacher's role and children's learning. Almost inevitably, these reorganised beliefs caused the participants to reflect on how much more complex teaching and learning were than they had first appreciated. Several comments made to this effect in the third year may well have contributed to the strongly expressed emerging belief that it is important that people working with young children hold a teaching qualification.

Emerging belief

An emerging belief was one that appeared in the third and final year of the research as a new belief. It contained information that had not been cited previously and was frequently accompanied by full comments. Judy, for example, in her final year detailed the importance of working in a team (7.4.3, p.185), Madison emphasised including children with disabilities in regular early childhood centres (10.3.3, p.218), and Emma identified closely with the principle of equity (12.4.4, p.252). It was described as an emerging belief and there was uncertainty about how strongly the belief was held. Rott (2000) suggested that new incoming information may get accepted, but only at the lowest level and in a subsequent case of conflict it is the first candidate for removal.

Alternatively, it could well be that connections to other beliefs were sufficient to suggest that these emerging beliefs were components of a larger belief system undergoing reorganisation. This was difficult to ascertain, particularly as these newly expressed beliefs were related to content covered in that year in course work. Their durability was, therefore, difficult to determine. To pick up on the shoe analogy again, it was more like taking a new shoe and testing it out for comfort. If an individual felt comfortable with the belief after a period of time, then he or she may well continue to wear it.

Once or twice only beliefs

These were beliefs mentioned at the beginning of the research and not raised after February in year one. They were assumed to be beliefs that the individual did not regard as being as significant as others they raised. Occasionally, the participant had been influenced by something at the time of writing, and so included reference to it. This may have been an idea, for example, raised in the selection interview or in the early days in the programme. Or, at that point it may have been an idea a participant thought I would like to hear. These are the beliefs that could be overvalued if the research design was such that a participant was responding only once or twice over the duration of the research and indicates the value of researching beliefs over a longer time period to ascertain developments.

Charting change and stability

A taxonomy was developed to demonstrate that the beliefs expressed by student teachers do not necessarily hold the same status or are held with the same degree of certainty or conviction. While there are some beliefs that are robust and do not change, there are others that are undergoing development and, occasionally, completely new ideas are introduced.

Rott (2000), reporting on Quine's work, noted that theory revision is a matter of choice and the choices are to be made in such a way that

- the resulting theory squares with the experience
- it is simple and
- the choices disturb the original theory as little as possible.

This approach related well to most of the beliefs expressed that were not entirely new or were a major change of belief for the holder. It appeared much easier, for instance, for participants to assimilate new ideas and practices when these squared with earlier beliefs and experiences. In effect, they would consider the value of new ideas in terms of the connections they could make and then choose whether or not to adopt them, either in part, or in their entirety. The easier this process and the less it disturbed the

original belief, the more likely it seemed that the idea or practice would be incorporated into an existing belief or practice.

There were, however, those who were prepared to make more significant changes to challenge their own beliefs and to try out new practices. This involved a preparedness to take risks, to live with some uncertainty, and appeared to be aided by the opportunity to express some of the ambiguity and to reflect on it. For these reasons, it appeared that courses that had a practical component in an early childhood centre were highly valued. The main reasons for this were that they helped to make sense of theory by trying ideas in practice, observing experienced teachers and providing the opportunity to discuss both good practices and issues with peers and tutors in the university.

Clandinin and Connelly (1986) speaks of teachers as being not so much in a “knowing” as in a “doing” environment. Participants in this research already appeared to be adopting this approach. They were assimilating ideas from theories, both in their beliefs and practices, but, like Judy, were not always clear where these ideas were coming from. Sometimes, they dismissed the relevance or value of theories, in spite of incorporating them into their thinking and practises. Instead, they attributed their beliefs to practical experiences and to past family experiences, and it was not until the latter part of the second, and particularly in the third year, that they began referring back more explicitly to course work.

13.7 The Relationship between Beliefs and Actions

Clear links have been demonstrated in some instances between beliefs and actions (Bell, 1991; Clark, 1992; Spodek, 1988). Caution has been advocated in assuming that this relationship is unproblematic, for much can happen between the holding of a belief and an action (Sigel, 1985).

The titles given to each of the chapters written on the individual case study participants, were created to best summarise a view the person portrayed of her beliefs and of self-as-teacher. These titles were generally supported by all data sources and by the story that

each participant agreed reflected influences on their beliefs and some of the beliefs they held. When it came to considering the relationship between beliefs and actions, the decision was made to explore whether the belief represented in the title was also evidenced in actions.

Sam: the teacher as an active participant

Much has already been said about Sam and her beliefs about the good teacher as one who is actively involved with children and motivates their learning through interesting, exciting experiences. Although at no time did she write in response to the open-ended questions that children learn through interaction with other children and adults, it was clear that this was what she believed. It was strongly expressed in interviews when discussing the teacher's role, and the importance of liking, respecting and affirming children as individuals. All of these beliefs were carried through into Sam's actions with children. She was observed to be a very active teacher, involved in all aspects of the work in a centre. She perceived her role as enabling children's learning through acting as a role model and having a part to play in what was happening.

Judy: the teacher as a facilitator and encourager of learning

Like Sam, Judy perceived the teacher's role and the children's learning as intertwined. She held views of children's learning that were akin to those developed by sociocultural theorists (see Table 5.4, p.139). She conceived children as learning in social contexts with responsive adults mediating their learning. She wrote of getting to know children well through observations and interaction and using this knowledge in work with them. She believed that teachers should encourage and motivate children and consider carefully how they could make a difference. Observations of Judy indicated that she was striving to ensure that her beliefs were carried through into her practices. She experienced discomfort when the social context forced her to act in ways that she considered were contrary to beliefs held about respecting children, being responsive to them, managing them positively and encouraging their learning.

Debbie: the teacher as an affirmer of diversity

Debbie's case study relied less heavily on the observations of her work in centres for understanding her belief on diversity. This belief tended to arise in interviews and in her written responses. Debbie described herself as reserved and observations confirmed this to be the case. It was clear that she respected children and they, in turn, respected her. She affirmed them as individuals. As both centres in which she was observed had fairly homogeneous populations, and she tended to stay working with the same small groups, there was no opportunity to see whether her beliefs on diversity were actioned.

Maki: the teacher as a respected facilitator of children's learning

Maki's belief about the teacher as respected facilitator was apparent in her actions in centres where she demonstrated a respect for adults and children alike. She was disappointed to find that teachers in some centres did not always accord this respect to others, disapproving of gossiping she had observed and the spending of unnecessary amounts of time on household tasks, at the expense of interactions with children. When she was constantly asked by a staff member to do housekeeping chores, she felt undervalued. Furthermore, she found it a difficult situation to deal with, as it conflicted with her beliefs of the teacher's role as an educator.

Madison: the teacher as a partner in the education process

It was Madison's belief of the teacher as a partner with parents and *whānau*, others in the team and children that was the most prominent. Like Sam and Judy, the teacher's role and children's learning were often referred to together. The implications of one for the other were recognised. Madison's beliefs were reorganised and developed over time as a result of course work and practical experiences. The observations revealed that she put her beliefs on partnerships into practice. She assumed membership of the teaching team, was approached by parents, responded professionally to them and provided a supportive environment for children. In spite of being asked to work with children on a task that could have easily become teacher dominated, Madison encouraged children to work independently, guiding them and facilitating learning through the employment of

a range of strategies. Her beliefs on this aspect of the teacher's role were translated into actions.

Rebecca: the teacher as an educator and carer

Rebecca encompassed the broader view of caring that was discussed earlier. Over the three years, it became clear that she perceived the role of educator and carer as encompassing all that was occurring in early childhood education. The caring educator would actualise their beliefs through a concern for anything that impinged upon the child's wellbeing. Of particular interest to her was the environment and its contribution to the child's overall development. She conceived the teacher's role in an ideal environment to be that of a facilitator and supporter. She wished to encourage children's independence and confidence. Observations of her indicated that this was the role that she generally pursued. (This was described in detail in 11.4.2, p.233.) Particular reference was made to her handling of calls for help from children who were capable of doing the task in which they were seeking assistance, and the degree of teacher guidance required by two children on a rope ladder. She felt some of her beliefs were thwarted in action by regulatory requirements within early childhood education.

Emma: the teacher as equitable manager

Emma espoused firm beliefs about working equitably with children and allowing them as much freedom to learn and develop. In practice this was sometimes observed, but on other occasions, she took a dominant role. Her well established beliefs came into conflict with new ideas she was being introduced to at university and with some experiences in centres. She was aware of some of these differences and was prepared to discuss them with others. Philosophies and issues relating to equity and its applications to children with disabilities appealed greatly to her. While she felt she was putting these beliefs into action, her way of doing so caused displeasure within the centre. This was threatening to Emma's identity as a prospective teacher. Symbolic interactionists contend that actors adopt social identities that mark their self-defined relationships to those with whom they interact and if these are unsuccessful, then stress is created (Fine, 1993). For Emma the questioning of her beliefs and actions proved stressful and a

threat to her self-esteem. There was some evidence of links between beliefs and actions, but because not all her beliefs were congruent, they created conflict for Emma.

Although only a sampling of beliefs has been considered for each of the case study participants they do indicate that some beliefs will, as Nespor (1987) suggested, be influential in determining behaviour (see 2.2.7, p.30). There was a consistency between what participants thought a good teacher should do and what they did in their work. At the very least, beliefs served as a vehicle for interpreting experiences, were likely to guide action and although the context may not have allowed them to become fully operational, they were still encompassed within the meanings individuals assigned to differing situations.

13.8 Summary

This chapter raised the issue of folk beliefs and their relevance for belief studies. It explored the difficulties of differentiating beliefs from knowledge in student teachers' beliefs and concluded there would be little value in doing so in this research. The influences on the beliefs students bring to a teacher education programme and the relevance of past experiences and folk beliefs were examined, followed by a discussion of some themes that emerged. It was maintained that beliefs are dynamic. A taxonomy to demonstrate the differing nature of beliefs as they evolve was introduced, and the relationship between beliefs and actions explored by aligning beliefs participants expressed with observations of their work in early childhood centres.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONCLUSION

14.1 Overview of the Research

This study of 17 early childhood students in a university-based teacher education programme in New Zealand explored the beliefs the participants held about what constitutes a good early childhood teacher and how young children learn. The decision was made to focus on beliefs because of the presumed central role that they hold in guiding people's thinking and influencing some of their subsequent actions.

Research into the beliefs of students entering early childhood education is much less comprehensive than for other sectors of education. What is available is generally conducted over a short period of time, making changes or modifications to beliefs more difficult to ascertain. As the charting of belief development was one of the aims of the research, it was decided to engage in a longitudinal study and to employ a qualitative method of research using multiple methods. Seventeen students responded to five questionnaires and, of these, seven agreed to be case studies in the research. These participants were interviewed and observed working in early childhood centres. They jointly assisted in the writing of their own stories.

As the data were collected, the coding and analysing were done. Whilst there was considerable diversity in the individually expressed beliefs, there were also some themes apparent in the group data. By the third year, changes or modifications in beliefs became clearer, challenging the pessimistic view often expressed in the literature on the possibility of bringing about belief change.

The questionnaire data served to explore the beliefs overall and to chart changes in these beliefs over time. The case study data enabled a greater in-depth study of formative influences on beliefs and an understanding of the self-as-teacher identity that was being developed by each student. What became increasingly clear as the research proceeded

was the complexity of the beliefs held by individuals and the need to ascertain just how temporary, stable or tenacious these beliefs were. They presented as dynamic and a taxonomy of beliefs was developed in an attempt to demonstrate the different status beliefs could hold.

14.2 Findings of the Research

Beliefs in this research were defined as ideas or views held by individuals, occupying a central role in guiding their thinking. They contributed to the diversity found in this group of early childhood student teachers and influenced their perceptions of how they believe teachers should work and how young children learn. The results of the questionnaires, and the case studies supported the notion that it is no longer a valuable exercise to attempt to separate beliefs and knowledge. Indeed, beliefs and knowledge seem to operate in much the same way in mental activity and to influence action. Attempting to differentiate between them runs the risk of establishing a false dichotomy and appears to serve little useful purpose.

14.2.1 Methodology

Beliefs were described as elusive, necessitating a methodology that was viable in determining, with a degree of accuracy, the meanings participants had constructed about the two areas under study. Furthermore, in an attempt to chart the development of ideas, it needed to be longitudinal. The mixed methods approach was helpful in meeting this aim. The first two questionnaires (A1; A2) revealed little in the way of change, validating the decision to conduct the research over three years and to employ a case study approach. The compilation of the cases studies combined data from questionnaires, interviews, observations and the joint writing of a story. The use of these methods over a period of time enabled the charting of belief development. Cognisance of data from all sources gave a more accurate picture, challenging the idea that belief change in student teachers is either non-existent, or so subtle that it is difficult to detect.

The writing of the stories with the case study participants, in the third and final year of the research, was a particularly satisfying exercise, both for the researcher and participants. Not only did it contribute greatly to the research outcomes, but it also gave something back of value to this group of student teachers. They found it exciting and affirming to have aspects of their life history and beliefs brought together.

The coding and analysis of data was at times almost overwhelming and difficult to maintain as an ongoing activity, such was the diversity reflected in the responses. Suggestions from Miles and Huberman (1994) on data reduction were invaluable. Large charts and matrices were particularly helpful tools for compressing information so that movement to the next stage of analysis could occur. Also valuable was the drawing up of propositions throughout the research. These are presented as summaries and statements in several of the chapters and served as a focus for ideas that were emerging, or were worth revisiting, along the research journey.

The role the researcher held within the participants' teacher education programme should not be ignored. At first, participants were uncertain about how they should respond and, in some instances, were trying to guess what was expected or wanted. Overcoming these expectations and establishing more of a research partnership relationship took several months to bring into fruition. Had small group interviewing been pursued, it would also have also been essential to devote time to ensuring participants became comfortable and at ease with each other so ideas were honestly and openly expressed. Only then would such an approach prove of value.

14.2.2 Participants' beliefs

Diversity characterised the participants' beliefs, both in the questionnaire and case study data. Differences in cultures, experiences, the ways in which participants viewed themselves as future teachers and their approach to new learning contributed to this. Participants had not, however, simply been the recipients of different experiences, but had reacted and negotiated realities in the construction of their own meanings of self and the beliefs they held.

All of the participants claimed that some of their beliefs about education, the role of the teacher and how young children learn originated in family values and beliefs. They regarded their families as very influential in shaping their thinking. Schooling experiences were regarded as less influential but, where participants had had either very positive or very poor encounters with school, the beliefs that formed appeared to become well established. Students with negative experiences, as well as those who have witnessed what they categorised as poor teaching, were adamant that they could do better and this seemed to be one of their motives for seeking teaching as a career.

Such examples of affect in beliefs were less apparent in the questionnaire responses. The interviews, however, clearly revealed that affect did underpin some beliefs and was influential in the establishment of self and early teacher identity. Even prior to entry into the teacher education programme, this self-as-teacher was apparent. Contributing to this identity were the influence and support of significant others, previous experiences with children and career aspirations.

When responding to the questions about the nature of the good teacher and how children learn, the answers the participants gave frequently made comments to one question that suggested implications for the other question. In other words, they were not viewing the teacher's role in isolation from children's learning, or vice versa.

Moreover, both the questionnaire and the case study data revealed that all students modified their beliefs in some way over the research period. As much of the literature presents a pessimistic view of belief change, a decision was taken to focus on the evolution of beliefs, rather than simply attempting to describe all beliefs present in the data.

The questionnaire data revealed four major trends in terms of belief development about the characteristics of a good early childhood teacher. There were the move from a dyadic to an ecological view of early childhood education, from an emphasis on caring to an emphasis on educating, from a focus on homogeneity to a focus on heterogeneity, and from a sense of spontaneity to one of predictability. Bronfenbrenner's (1979)

ecological model was employed to explore changes of foci. There was evidence that participants' understanding of the broader context of education increased.

In terms of children's learning, the participants in their final year paid increased attention to the role of exploration and play, and learning through social interaction with adults. Ideas about children's learning related to three major categories of learning theories. Increasingly, tenets from sociocultural theories of learning were incorporated, along with a constructivist approach to viewing the children as thinkers who learned as they acted on the world.

The case study data confirmed the findings in the questionnaire data. Some of the aspects were expanded under four headings, namely, the role of caring in the educator's role, child management, fun and spontaneity and, finally, looking beyond the teacher/child relationship.

As in much previous research, this group of student teachers began with the view of the teacher as a caring person whom they conceptualised as warm, friendly and liked by children. These were not, however, the only attributes they believed the ideal teacher possessed. Furthermore, as they moved through the programme, these attributes became increasingly implicit rather than explicit. What was of particular interest was the wider application of caring that was being espoused. Rather than simply referring to the role of caring in terms of sound relationships with children, there were many indications that this caring would be reflected in the teacher's practice in a variety of ways. In several respects, these student teachers embodied the wider definition of caring raised by other writers (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Noblit et al., 1995; Weinstein, 1998).

The data on child management failed to confirm the findings of earlier studies that student teachers who focus on caring may experience conflict when their beliefs impact on the management of children. In this research, it appeared that the situation was much more complex and to suggest that it is only beliefs about caring that will effect difficulties in child management is oversimplifying the case. Indeed, a person who is a

caring teacher may integrate caring and management into practice, developing strategies which enable the individual to be considered as a caring manager of children. In addition, examples were given of situations where other beliefs create tensions in the management of children, or where the context forces people to act contrary to their beliefs. It was therefore suggested that it is unlikely to be only a belief on caring that influences child management practices.

Early beliefs suggested that participants frequently held an image of a teacher working in an early childhood centre with one or two children of the same culture, and with a degree of homogeneity. This image changed over the three years as participants began expressing beliefs that indicated a growing awareness of the ecological context of early childhood education, the people and influences involved.

People entering tertiary education for the first time bring with them a sense of eagerness and excitement, along with some trepidation. They expressed an expectation that the good early childhood teacher would be fun, spontaneous, imaginative and creative. Concerns about these aspects of the teacher's role decreased dramatically over the three years. Katz (1984) wrote of the intentional nature of teachers' work and suggested that with training and experience the intentional behaviour takes on a spontaneous quality as well. It was suggested that this change in participants' expressed beliefs may well be due to an increase in intentionality and that this may be linked to a greater emphasis on the significance of qualifications and the teacher as a professional.

14.2.3 Belief development

There was evidence of both stability and change in the beliefs. The data revealed that student teachers' beliefs are dynamic, rather than static, as frequently portrayed in the research literature. Beliefs that appeared to be most resilient and less likely to change were folk beliefs that their holders felt had been "proven" in practice, beliefs that had their origins in family values, and those that contained strong affective elements. Those rooted in family values appeared to be beliefs that participants held to particularly tightly and reported as influential in guiding their behaviour. These beliefs gave the

appearance of being extremely stable and deeply embedded. When concessions were made and some reorganising of beliefs took place the changes that occurred appeared to have a tenuous hold.

Where there were changes, most of them could generally be described as incremental and constructive. This may well explain why changes in some short-term studies have been so difficult to detect. Furthermore, some changes appeared to be experimental. In the long term, they could result in the establishment of long-term belief change, or they may be abandoned, as other choices became more appealing. In some instances, what was most surprising was how quickly some new beliefs were adopted and became taken-for-granted. These related to ideas that the participant had not voiced, but when ideas were introduced in class, they rapidly adopted them as their own. They appeared to be ideas that connected with existing beliefs and occasionally were described as commonsense. Sometimes, the student expressed difficulty in determining where the idea had originated.

There was also some evidence of change when individuals were confronted with what were, for them, quite startling new ideas or experiences. Most commonly, these related to cultural diversity, the teacher's role in guiding children's learning, the inclusion of children with disabilities and research on what constitutes quality education. It would be foolhardy to suggest that these new beliefs were immediately accommodated into a person's system of beliefs. Confronted with new ideas, the participants needed some time to consider them, to try them out, to select what they wanted from the ideas and to attempt to resolve discrepancies with other beliefs they held. If these could not be resolved, they could occasionally live alongside other beliefs without the discrepancy being voiced, or they might cause uneasiness that the participant sought to resolve.

Over the three years, it became increasingly obvious that the participants were adopting new ideas and changing their thinking in specific areas. As they gained more knowledge, much of this was incorporated into their thinking. They were being socialised into the role of teacher and they were identifying with this role by incorporating new ideas into their self-as-teacher. Particular ideologies espoused in the

programme became more apparent in participants' beliefs as they worked their way through the three years. There were changes in language usage and some reference to theories and class work. Clearly, however, not all participants were doing this in the same way or to the same extent. There appeared to be a consensus on some core beliefs, but they also maintained differences in the meanings they constructed for themselves, of the role of the teacher, and of how young children learn.

A taxonomy of beliefs was developed to demonstrate the status of participants' beliefs. It served to warn that when a student teacher expresses a belief, it may be an idea they are simply trying out, an idea that they are not wedded to, one that is undergoing change or a belief that is firmly embedded in their thinking. Not all beliefs hold the same status, but those that are firmly held are frequently evident in actions.

14.3 Limitations of the Research

The major limitations of this research relate to the sample size and to the location of the research. Only 17 students participated in the questionnaire data collection and the research was carried out in only one university offering teacher education. Each institution offering teacher education in New Zealand will have different emphases in their programmes and draw upon different student populations, so caution needs to be exercised in generalising these findings. Furthermore, it should be recognised that while there were two students of Asian origin, there were no Māori students amongst the research participants.

14.4 Further Research

There are six areas that are worthy of consideration for research in the future. These are presented below:

- This study has not resolved possible connections between beliefs about a caring teacher and the influence of these beliefs on behaviours. What it has done is suggested that the relationship may be much more complex than it is frequently portrayed.

- Similarly, the concept of caring needs further exploration so that there is a clear understanding of how it is conceived by student teachers, associate teachers and university staff. It was stated in this research that the concept of caring might well be one that student teachers believe can be demonstrated through a variety of actions and practices.
- In order to determine the tenacity of new beliefs, future researchers should consider research that follows early childhood student teachers into their first year of teaching. It could be speculated that some ideas might be recognised as more pertinent once a person is actually in the teaching role, with all the responsibilities that that entails.
- The compilation of the participants' stories was very successful. It may, however, have proved to be an even more useful tool had the writing of it begun in the second year. It may have enhanced the reflective process for the participants.
- More attention could now be directed at the influence of teaching practice on the beliefs student teachers hold.
- If longitudinal research similar to that reported here is being considered for the future, serious consideration should be given to the use of NUD*IST, or some other computer programme, that assists in the conceptualisation and coding of data.

14.5 Practical Implications

Students neither enter a teacher education programme with the same set of beliefs, nor does change eventuate in the same way for each of them. When beliefs are expressed, individuals often experience difficulties in locating their origins and in recognising the implications of their beliefs for their role as a teacher. However, it is widely accepted that in order to be effective, teachers need to be able to think critically, to question assumptions they and others make, and to be able to articulate clearly their philosophy and practices and the theories underpinning them. Belief change does occur and this research offers some practical suggestions for teacher educators for enhancing this process with student teachers.

- Clearly, student teachers need opportunities to explore their beliefs and their origins from very early in the teacher education programme. Teacher educators should allow students time to develop an awareness of their beliefs so that they are able to make these explicit. On occasions, beliefs will need to be confronted, particularly when these are contrary to good practice.
- Opportunities for reflection should be provided and the origins of beliefs probed. Some participants did not acknowledge the influence of school experiences, for example, and yet it is highly unlikely that extensive experiences in school would have no impact on educational beliefs.
- Teacher educators should ensure that they have an understanding of the beliefs held by individual students. The opportunity to share ideas in a secure environment and to reflect on new knowledge and experiences should be an ongoing component of a teacher education programme. This often requires a high degree of tolerance when student beliefs are very different from those of the teacher educator.
- The beliefs student teachers have should be taken into account when presenting new information, theories and practices. Educators and students need to be part of a process in which there is constant evaluation of beliefs and the premises on which they based, otherwise it is likely that many new ideas run the risk of rejection.
- Monitoring of beliefs by students and teacher educators should be developed as a collaborative enterprise, and might take the form of reflective journals and the writing of an ongoing story, once a base has been established.
- Teacher educators should be aware of the beliefs they hold and consider whether these are open to change or whether they have become more fixed than is desirable. These should be made explicit within a teaching team and discrepancies analysed. Changing demands on teachers also bring changing demands on teacher educators and necessitate constant review of the most effective policies, philosophies, theories and practices.
- Teacher educators need to appreciate that changing beliefs does not simply involve dropping one belief and replacing it with new ideas. The change process is more complex and challenging. Beliefs of students are likely to vary in their status and their complexity. There will be a high degree of stability in some beliefs and others

will be undergoing change. Tensions in beliefs, conflicting ideas and practices need airing and reasons why these are occurring examined. Possible ways of resolving these need to be explored.

- Tensions and belief conflict need to be seen as positive and as part of the questioning of existing beliefs and accommodating to new ideas. These tensions and conflicts may not be short-lived, but may persist for a considerable period of time.
- Consideration should be given to beliefs which were expected to have a high profile in this study and which participants barely mentioned. These included, for instance, beliefs about the teacher's role in a team, assessment and evaluation, and programme planning. Ways of promoting these ideas so that they impact more on students' beliefs may be worth considering.
- Student teachers should be given opportunities to revisit ideas in increasingly complex ways. Bruner's (1996) concept of a "spiral curriculum", where one begins with an "intuitive" account that is well within the reach of the learner, and circles back later to a more formal or highly structured account, repeating the process as many times as necessary or feasible, has value when considering how beliefs might be developed.

14.6 Conclusion

This chapter marks the completion of the research journey. The chapter has presented an overview of the study, presented the research findings and outlined limitations of the research. Suggestions have been made for future research and practical implications for teacher educators offered.

What was very clear in this study was that teacher education does impact on student teacher beliefs. It will be most successful when the beliefs that the student teachers use to construct their teaching identity are recognised, and used as a starting point for further development.

APPENDIX A: SELECTED TEACHER BELIEF STUDIES

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
Acker, 1995	To explore primary teachers' work cultures	Ethnographic	Teachers in one school	Discussion of feminist views of caring, teaching & mothering
* Ayers, 1993	To examine the work of preschool teachers through their stories	Ethnographic, observations, interviews - autobiographical	6 teachers	Teacher chooses & creates world influenced by particular context
Barnes, 1989	Review of literature & reflective comments on structuring knowledge for beginning teachers			
Beijaard, 1995	To elicit teachers' practical knowledge	Biographical	28 secondary teachers	All perceived their professional identity as positive
*Bell 1991	To describe & evaluate operational theories of early childhood teachers	Observation & interviews	4 children, 6 teachers	Implications for teacher education. Significance of implicit theories
Bernstein Colton & Sparks-Langer, 1993	Developed a conceptual framework to guide the development of teacher reflection & decision making			
*Borko & Putnam, 1996	Review of literature & reflective comments. on learning to teach			
Bullough, 1989	To identify the problems faced by a beginning teacher	Case study of first year teacher	Secondary teacher	Some problems faced, common to others, others unique
Bullough & Knowles, 1991	To gain insights into processes of self-formation & change	Case study using a blend sources for methodology	Secondary teacher	Changes in perceptions of self as a teacher over year
Burden, 1990	Review of teachers' developmental stages			
Cabello & Burstein, 1995	To examine beliefs on teaching in culturally diverse classrooms	Case studies	10 teachers in special education programme	Modification in beliefs & practices.
Clandinin & Connelly, 1986	To examine rhythms in teaching	Narrative	1 primary novice teacher	Learning to teach means, in part, learning to live in a certain cultural, historical and uniquely cyclic situation
Clark, 1988	Explored contributions of research on teacher thinking to teacher preparation			
Clark & Peterson, 1986	Review of work on teachers' thought processes. Beliefs & implicit theories examined			
*Cornelius, 1989	To examine the beliefs of early childhood educators on children's play	Beliefs about play scale	100 primary and early childhood teachers	Teachers needed a more comprehensive knowledge base regarding value of play
*Da Ros and Swick, 1995	Review of literature & reflective comments on the socialisation of beginning teachers			
Duncan, 1996	Discourse analysis of texts from the National Kindergarten Teachers Collective Employment Contract negotiations illustrated gendered position of teachers			
Goodson, 1991	Discussed listening to teachers' voice as a means of understanding their lives and development			
Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989	Explored teachers' knowledge for teaching & the role of beliefs			

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
Hollingsworth, 1992	Reported on aspects of a 3 1/2 year longitudinal study	Conversations, self report instruments, observations, narrative	7 beginning teachers	Personally & contextually relevant issues emerged. Clarification of relational & political issues
*Kagan & Smith 1988	To examine relationships between beliefs & behaviours of teachers	Self report instruments, observations	51 kindergarten teachers	Perceptions & behaviour highly interrelated, appeared to operationalise beliefs
Kagan 1992	Examined implications of research findings on teacher belief			
Kagan & Tippins, 1991	To develop a system of analysis to evaluate teachers' classroom cases	Written narratives, peer interviews to elicit assumptions	24 experienced & 22 preservice teachers	No clear relationship between narrative solutions & teachers' beliefs
Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994	To see whether the study of life cycles can provide insight into change.	Biographical, interviews	Teachers	Well developed individual identities of self. Professional self develops over time as result of interactions
Kemple, 1996	To describe beliefs & reported practices on socio-dramatic play	Questionnaire, interviews	11 kindergarten, 13 preschool teachers	Placed importance on dramatic play but reported limited methods for encouraging it
*Kihlstrom, 1994	To present the nature of the profession as described by pre-school teachers.	Phenomenographic interviews	29 pre-school teachers	When a psychological perspective is adopted, the adult's actions are the focus; didactic perspective, children's actions
*King 1978	To examine infant education	Sociological, observation, interviews, document analysis	Teachers & children in 3 infant schools	Insights into the nature of teachers' problems & their practical solutions
Knowles, 1988	To understand how a teacher establishes a teaching role identity	Biographical	Beginning secondary teacher	Influences on beliefs
Koerner, 1992	To investigate the images teachers hold of themselves	Talked with teachers		Several different images emerged
Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 1996	Explored the relationship between teacher thinking & teacher behaviour & concluded that their professional knowledge cannot be separated from other knowledge including their commonsense knowledge			
Ladson-Billings, 1995	Interested in critically relevant theory of pedagogy	Critical theory, ethnographic interviews, observations	8 successful teachers	Implications for teacher education programmes
Munby, 1982	Discusses research models & the significance of beliefs, suggesting appropriate methodologies.			
Nespor, 1987	Explores the role of beliefs in the practice of teaching & the implications for teacher education.			

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
Nespor & Barylske, 1996	To see how teachers represent themselves & connections between biography & career.	Interviews, narratives. Discourse analysis	2 teachers in middle school & elementary school	Selves are constructed or "crafted"
Nias, 1984	To examine the self image of teachers	Interviews, observations	99 teachers, infant & junior schools	Well defined views of themselves, shared some common views
Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 1995	To explore the nature of teaching	Observations, interviews	2 primary teachers	Caring significant part of role.
O'Loughlin, 1992	To explore the effects of a summer school that provided opportunities to reflect on beliefs & teaching	Interviews	Teachers	Looked at ways of bringing about change & difficulties teachers face in making radical change
Orton, 1996	Examines how teacher beliefs about student learning may be justified			
Pajeres, 1992	Reviews and reflects on teacher belief research			
Raymond, Butt & Townsend, 1992	To understand the nature of teachers' knowledge & development	Interviews, autobiography	Teachers	Accounts emphasise importance of pre-teaching influences & processes for teaching identity and for change.
Schubert, 1991	Argues for a study of teacher lore as way of understanding teachers' beliefs.			
*Spidell Rusher, McGrevin & Lambiotte, 1992	To determine differences or similarities in teachers' & principals' beliefs	Questionnaire, Likert rating scale	500 kindergarten teachers & 167 elementary principals	Some differences, found teachers significantly more favourable towards child centredness than principals
Spodek & Rucinski, 1984	To identify the beliefs that underlie decisions in 3 primary classes	Observations, interviews	First grade teachers	Statements of beliefs organised into 10 categories by the researchers.
*Spodek, 1988	Reflected on implicit theories of early childhood teachers as foundations for professional behaviour			
Spodek & Saracho, 1990	Examined professionalism in Early Childhood Education & value beliefs.			
*Stipek & Byler, 1997	To explore relationships among beliefs, goals & practices	Questionnaires, observations	60 preschool, kindergarten & first grade teachers	Significant relationships found but teachers reported difficulties in implementing appropriate programme
Thompson, 1992	A synthesis of the literature on teachers' beliefs & conceptions			
Tobin, 1990	A commentary on the changing of metaphor & beliefs in a five year study of teachers.			
*VanderVen, 1989	To examine the relationship of practitioners' concepts of the purpose & meaning of caregiving to stage of career development	Questionnaire	Beginning & experienced practitioners	Strong emphasis on nurturing function & few see policy making as an aspiration
Weber & Mitchell, 1995	Examined the images and identity of teachers in popular culture			

*Indicates involvement of early childhood teachers

APPENDIX B: SELECTED STUDIES OF STUDENT TEACHER BELIEFS

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
Ashley, Cohen, McIntyre & Slatter, 1970	Sociological, quantitative. To determine students' reasons for choosing teaching as a career	Survey questionnaires. Study one: reasons for becoming a teacher. Study 2 tried to get ratings	Student teachers	Not totally satisfied with model used
Barnes, 1989	Review of literature & reflective comments: Thematic teacher education programmes			
Beyerbach, 1988	To focus on form & content of student teachers' technical language related to teacher planning	Quantitative & content analysis of pre and post concept mapping - in a semester course	52 student teachers and their instructors	Students' maps more similar to instructors' maps in post course mapping. Interindividual differences striking
Bolin, 1988	To determine how student teachers develop a concept of teaching & think about their role	Qualitative, reflective journals, primary document analysis & interviews	1 student	Growing realization teaching more complex than first seemed on surface level
*Borko and Putnam, 1996	Review of literature and reflective comments.: Learning to teach			
*Brantlinger, 1996	To investigate beliefs preservice teachers hold about children, learning & schooling that are likely to interfere with inclusion	Analysis of narratives,	182 undergraduate	Existence of 7 anti inclusion beliefs that seem to emerge out of personal experiences
*Britzman, 1986	To analyse the reproductive mechanisms at work in teacher education	Uncovering biography Critical analysis		
Brousseau & Freeman, 1988	To explore the beliefs of teacher educators & students	Belief questionnaire Likert type scale	57 teacher education staff 896 students in education psychology course	Teacher educators likely to reinforce prevailing beliefs
Bullough & Stokes, 1994	To illustrate an approach using metaphors as a means of teacher exploration. Constructivist	Education related histories generated own metaphors Action research	22 secondary teachers	Changes & episodes that make the person more or less open to change detailed
Burgess & Carter, 1992	To examine reasons for entering teaching education	Discourse analysis. Examined teacher ideology	Small number of primary students	Major theme: Being mumsy - caring vocation for women.
*Cachevki Williams, 1996	To explore reasons for choosing early childhood teaching	Qualitative analysis of survey questionnaires	119 undergraduate students with early childhood specialisation	Discussed qualities a teacher of young children should possess

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
*Calderhead, 1996	Review of literature & reflective comments on teachers' knowledge and beliefs			
Calderhead, 1989	Review of literature & comments on reflective teaching and teacher education			
Calderhead, 1993	Explores the contribution of research on teachers' thinking to the professional development of teachers			
Calderhead & Gates, 1993	Discusses the role of the entrenched ideas & beliefs students bring to preservice programmes. Related to reflection in teacher education			
Calderhead, & Robson, 1991	To investigate knowledge student teachers have of teaching & learning & how this influences what they abstract from it	Interviews, comments on videos & analysis of script for lesson. Images explored. Qualitative	12 primary students followed through year one	Different ideas about teaching held
*Carter, 1990	Review of literature & reflective comments			
*Cohen, Peters & Willis, 1988	To investigate the effects of four different models of early childhood education on the behaviours & feelings of students	Students assigned to one of four models. Programme preference questionnaire, teacher belief rating scale, observation	55 beginning & 25 advanced students	Preferences changed. Evidence both preferences & beliefs can be altered by influence of practicum
Cole, 1985	To explore background experiences & influence selecting teaching as a career Ethnographic	Interviews, questionnaires	14 experienced teachers; 12 student teachers; 40 completing students; 10 former students	Considerable reporting of negative school experiences. Family history of teaching in 50% of participants
Conle, 1996	To understand how student teachers engage with & reconstruct their	Narrative inquiry, journals & observations, field notes	Preservice & in first 2 years of teaching	Interested in resonance & metaphor. Process of change subtle
Copeland, Birmingham, DeMeulie, D'Emido-Caston & Natal, 1994	To describe the meaning respondents made of a classroom vignette & to develop assertions about teachers' understanding	Semistructured interviews, video viewing, sorting task	28 subjects included 7 with an interest in teaching, 7 nearing completion of course, others experienced	Less experienced tended to frame statements of educational purposes in rather simplistic terms
*Da Ros & Swick, 1995	Review of literature and reflective comments on the socialisation of beginning teachers			
*Doliopoulou, 1995	To investigate why kindergarten student teachers chose their profession	Questionnaire based on preliminary interviews	241 senior students	Motives for selecting career idealistic
Doyle, 1990	Review of literature & reflective comments on teacher education			
Gibbs, 1995	Student perceptions of self & others, effects of teaching practice	Questionnaires and rating of vignettes using Likert type scale. Quantitative	Over 100 students	Disconfirms claim that student teachers are unrealistically optimistic.
Ginsburg & Clift, 1990	Review of literature and reflective comments on the hidden curriculum of preservice teacher education			

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
*Goodman, 1988	To explore the professional perspectives of student teachers	Language, thoughts, feelings, perceptions explored through observations & interviews. Ethnographic	23 students, initially 12 as the primary research group	Viewed teaching as problem of control, & as facilitating children's learning, impact of early childhood & school experiences
Graber, 1995	To examine how student teachers incorporated pedagogical knowledge into lessons	Naturalistic paradigm, formal interview - course work & field experience documents analysed	20 student teachers, 7 teacher educators, 8 cooperating teachers	Degree to which knowledge gained during programme incorporated, contingent on setting student placed in
Gunstone, Slattery & Baird, 1989	To explore the processes by which individuals change & appropriate research methodologies for this purpose	Case studies, interviews, written evaluation, reports, self report. Constant comparative methodology	20 student teachers	Change & development occurred in each of the individuals
Hollingsworth, 1989	To explore beginning teacher beliefs about reading instruction & how they adapt to education cultures	Baseline interviews, observations of teaching, thematic examples that reflected belief change. Constant comparative	14 secondary & primary students	Suggested preservice teachers can learn ideas they did not bring into the programme. Implications for teacher education outlined
Holt-Reynolds, 1992	To explore the relationship between personal history-based beliefs & principles of reading & writing	6 loosely structured interviews. Personal histories written for each participant	9 preservice teachers	Beliefs are typically generalisations based on references to selves. Content of beliefs relied on lay definitions
Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990	To examine influence of student teaching experience on orientations toward control, social problem solving & efficacy	Quantitative questionnaires, scales, some use of Likert measures	191 arts majors with some preparing for primary & early childhood education	Found a custodial pupil-control orientation. Became more confident in abilities "to get through to difficult student"
Jones and Vesilind, 1996	To examine how the organisation of preservice teachers' knowledge about teaching changes	Multidimensional scaling, concept mapping, structured interviews		Explored sources of teacher knowledge & conflict between naïve ideas & experiences in practice
Kagan, 1992	Review of research on teacher belief			
Knowles, 1988	To explore beliefs of beginning teacher		1 beginning secondary student	Impact of mother's influence on beliefs
Knowles & Holt-Reynolds 1991	To uncover meaningful agendas & a purposeful pedagogy for working with prospective teachers	Narratives or personal histories, biographies	Preservice teachers	Students rely on & trust as models, significant experience as a student

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
LaBoskey, 1993	Reviewed literature on reflection & teacher education & presented conceptual framework for reflection in teacher education			
Ladson-Billings, 1995	Interested in critically relevant theory of pedagogy	Ethnographic interviews, observations, video taped observations. Critical theory	8 successful teachers	Examined conceptions of self & implications for teacher education programmes
Lang, 1997	To identify students' knowledge of schools & teaching, personal teaching style & preparedness for teaching	Interviews	9 primary preservice teachers	Found evidence of reflection on practice
Lasley, 1980	Review of preservice teacher beliefs about teaching			
*Lin & Spodek, 1994	To examine images of teaching & how they influence practice, changes & images	Case studies, observations, videoing, journals, documentation	2 early childhood students	Images of two students different. Small changes in beliefs
Liston & Zeichner, 1990	Commentary on reflective teaching & action research in preservice teacher education			
*Lowell Krogh & Nikko, 1994	To make explicit the tacit views of learning & teaching held by entering students	Picture drawing & written explanations of elements of the picture. Metaphor & image	34 elementary & early childhood students	Influence of past experiences
Mahlis & Maxson, 1995	To identify root beliefs that entry level education students bring with them to a teacher education programme	Questionnaires & selection of metaphor questionnaire	134 junior level students	Emphasis on nurturing role. Vague views of schooling
Mayer & Goldsberry, 1987	To see how student beliefs & practices develop during the student teaching experience	Ethnographic methods including participant observation, interviews & journal analysis	2 secondary education student teachers	Implications for teaching practice explored
McNeely & Mertz, 1990	To examine what & how pre-service teachers thought about teaching during student teaching	Journal, seminars, completion of papers, classroom observations	11 pre service students	Individuality retained throughout research idealised constructs, expected to be liked by students
Morine Dershimer, 1989	To examine novice teachers changes in thinking about content & pedagogical associations	Concept mapping & case study approach for analysis of data	4 matched pairs of senior and masters' level students in strategies for teaching course	Substantive changes in frequency of references to goals, skills, strategies & evaluation
Nettle, 1998	To examine student teachers' beliefs about teaching before & after practice teaching	Questionnaire	79 primary students	Consistency & change

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
O'Loughlin, 1990	Introduce the notion of teacher beliefs as complex ideological systems which are likely to have a complex bearing on actions			
Pintrich, 1990	Examined the implications of psychological research on student learning & college teaching for teacher education			
Quicke, 1996	Examines the reflective practitioner & teacher education			
Raymond and Santos, 1995	To study students' beliefs in mathematics	Observation, discussion, interviews, document analysis. Quantitative & qualitative	Preservice elementary teachers	Students questioned beliefs as a result of the course
Richardson-Koebler, 1988	Examined barriers to effective supervision of student teaching	Participant observation, interviews. Grounded theory	14 elementary students & 14 cooperating teachers	Practical experience seen as influential at the beginning of the semester 7, shift as the semester went on
Richert, 1990	To investigate four structures or mechanisms designed to facilitate reflection	Journal, portfolio, reflective essay, recorded reflection with partner, interviews, questionnaires	12 secondary student teachers	Found organisational & cognitive barriers to reflective practice that made it difficult for novices
Rodriguez, 1993	To examine beliefs of science students	Ethnographic. Participant observations, interviews, videotaped, informed conversations, journals	6 science student teachers	Well defined views of learning which they readjusted
Rovegno, 1993	Investigated physical education students beliefs & adaptation to constructive teaching approaches		12 physical education majors	Critiquing prior experiences & learning about an alternative approach needed to be combined with practice to develop "personal practical knowledge"
Serow, Eaker & Forrest, 1994	To examine the public service ethic as it exists among recruits to public school teaching	Short survey, follow-up interviews	Middle & high school teaching students	Able to identify key person who had influenced career choice. Aims of teacher's role identified
Shealy, 1994	To begin to develop an understanding of the teacher development process	Interviews, observations, written artifacts. Grounded theory - comparative analysis	1 secondary math student	How one teacher struggled with new ideas & reconciling with existing beliefs
Smith, 1991	To examine the influences of prior school experiences on student teachers' thinking	Interviews, discussion groups	6 student teachers	Looked at broader forces shaping students' lives. School experiences influenced beliefs on teaching, learning & education

Authors	Paradigm/purpose method of inquiry	Methodology	Subjects	Results/Discussion
Su, 1992	To investigate the effect of sources of experiences on education values & beliefs of student teachers	Survey & interview	Large study	Prior experiences in school only moderate influence. Student teaching most important source of influence
*Sumison, 1995	To trial usefulness of 2-dimensional conceptual framework for exploring & identifying reflection	Unstructured interviews, analysis of assignments, personal journals	12 early childhood student teachers	More reflective teachers had an ability to articulate their beliefs
Tann, 1993	To elicit students' personal theories	Document analysis. File assignment situated within a critical & reflective framework	32 year one primary students	Defined student stages of reflection. Evaluations revealed most about their beliefs
Tatto, 1996	To examine the relationship between teaching & changes in knowledge skills & dispositions	Questionnaire data report	552 student teachers at entry & 265 at exit	Teacher education moved towards constructivist orientation to help students develop a clearer sense of identify & attitudes
Weinstein, 1988	To determine the prevalence of unrealistic optimism among preservice teachers	33 item questionnaire with ratings	118 elementary students	Optimistic about all tasks of teaching
Weinstein, 1989	To explore education student teachers' expectations of teaching	Questionnaire	113 education students	Most optimistic about interpersonal relationships
*Weinstein, 1990	To explore preconceptions of teaching	Questionnaire & interview	38 early childhood/elementary students	Heavy emphasis on affective, interpersonal aspects of teaching
*Weinstein, 1998	To explore prospective teachers' conceptions of caring and order	Questionnaire	141 early childhood/elementary/secondary students	Tended to think of about order & caring in somewhat dichotomous terms
*Yonemura, 1991	To document the influence of beliefs & values on the group and individual children	Observation, interviews, documentation	8 early childhood students with report on one student	Conflicts when she could not consistently put into practice values & beliefs. Opportunities to reflect aided development
Zeichner & Gore, 1990	Paper on teacher socialisation explores the highly interactive nature of the socialisation process			

Indicates that research involved early childhood student teachers.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE A1 AND A3**CENTRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION****University of Waikato**

1. A really good early childhood teacher is one who:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

2. Write a paragraph explaining how you think young children learn.

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE A2

CENTRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

University of Waikato

1. A really good early childhood teacher is one who:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

f. _____

g. _____

2. Write a paragraph explaining how you think young children learn.

5. What made you decide to apply for this programme?

Thinking of the future

6. At the end of your programme where, on a scale of 1 to 7, would you like your position to be in supporting the wellbeing and development of young children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Much below average	Below average	Slightly below average	Average	Slightly above average	Above average	Much above average

7. Where do you think you stand at the moment in supporting the wellbeing and development of young children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Much below average	Below average	Slightly below average	Average	Slightly above average	Above average	Much above average

8. If you get to the position you hope to, what will you be able to do that you can't do now?

9. When you compare yourself with other people in the programme, where do you think you might rate yourself in terms of your future performance in early childhood care and education?

(a) Academically?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Much below average	Below average	Slightly below average	Average	Slightly above average	Above average	Much above average

(b) In practical work with children?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Much below average	Below average	Slightly below average	Average	Slightly above average	Above average	Much above average

APPENDIX E: INITIAL CONSENT FORM**RESEARCH ON BELIEFS**

As well as using the information that you have written for selection purposes, a member of the teaching staff, Jill Mitchell, would like to be able to use this material for a research study.

Over the next three years there is to be study of early childhood student teacher beliefs. The focus will be on the role of the teacher and how students believe young children learn. It will involve answering questionnaires in each year of the programme. Some people will be asked at a later date whether they would consent to also being interviewed. The research will help us in programme planning in our early childhood courses.

Please indicate whether or not you are interested in being involved in this research by signing in one place below and by ticking the appropriate box

Yes, I do agree to this questionnaire being used for research on student teacher beliefs.

I understand that:

1. My identity will be kept confidential and my name will not be used in any reporting of the results.
2. The data will be destroyed once the material is analysed and the research written.
3. I may withdraw my consent to participate at any time I choose to do so.

Signed: _____

No, I do not agree to participate in the research.

Signed: _____

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM FOR CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

You have already indicated a willingness to participate in research on student teacher beliefs.

I am now seeking people whom would be interested in also being case studies in the research. This would mean that: you would be:

- willing to explore your ideas in more depth
- interviewed each year, and
- observed when working in early childhood centres and given the opportunity to discuss your experiences.

Please indicate by ticking and signing below whether or not you are interested in going into a pool of students from which some will be randomly selected to take part in this phase of the research.

Yes, I do want to participate in the case study

No, I do not want to participate in the case study

Printed name: _____

Signed: _____

APPENDIX G: EXAMPLE OF CODED QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Copy of Sam's original transcript for Questionnaire A1

A really good early childhood teacher is one who:

Is patient and devotes his/her time to working with children.

Listens to a child with a problem or question and works it through with them.

Is prepared to work hard.

Is helpful and friendly towards staff and parents.

Plays and learns along with the children.

Can be aware if something is not right with a child.

Loves children and wants them to have the best start in life as possible.

B. Write a paragraph explaining how you think young children learn

I think young children learn by trying things, which comes from curiosity. They learn by play and social situations. They learn by what people do around them, so they imitate and copy. They probably learn a lot from making mistakes trial and error, which helps them remember different things.

Books are great teachers for young children and I think books should be introduced at an early age, as you're never too young to be read to.

Coded data

Teacher's characteristics

Personal and professional characteristics

*B.1.A.Q.1.111 Loves children and wants them to have the best start in life as possible.

B.2.A.Q.1.111 Is patient

B.10.A.Q.1.111 Devotes his/her time to working with children.

B.12.A.Q.1.111 Listens to a child with a problem or question and works it through with them. Is prepared to work hard.

Establishing relationships

C.2.A.Q.1.111 Is helpful and friendly towards staff and parents.

Responsive to individual children and their families

E.1.A.Q.1.111 Can be aware if something is not right with a child.

E.1.A.Q.1.111 Plays and learns along with the children.

Learning

- AA..A.Q.2.111 They learn by play and social situations.
- BB.1.A.Q.2.111 I think young children learn by trying things, which comes from curiosity.
- BB.2.A.Q.2.111 They probably learn a lot from making mistakes trial and error, which helps them remember different things.
- CC.2.A.Q.2.111 They learn by what people do around them, so they imitate and copy.
- DD.1.A.Q.2.111 Books are great teachers for young children and I think books should be introduced at early age, as you're never too young to be read to.

* B.1 indicates the category code, A indicates that this was questionnaire A1, Q.1 stands for question one and 111 was the code assigned to Sam

APPENDIX H: FIRST INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What I would like you to do is to have a look at what you wrote in the first two questionnaires and see if there are things there that you would like to comment on.

Are there any differences that you can see?

Why do you think this is?

Have any of your ideas been confirmed for you in the time you have been here?

Let's focus particularly on courses you are doing. In the time that you've been doing the courses is there anything that's made you feel uncomfortable in what you've been learning? Anything that's made you really think?

Which of the courses made you think most about your role as an early childhood teacher?

And what about how children learn?

I gather that one of the things that was talked about in *Historical Perspectives* was children's management. How did you find the information presented on this?

In *Learning Through Exploration* you've looked a lot at play. Do you see that as being a preparation for school?

Cultural Studies began by looking at the Treaty of Waitangi course. Is this relevant for your role as an early childhood teacher?

In *Communication with Others* you looked at different ways individuals communicate with people. Tell me about this.

APPENDIX I: OBSERVATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Tell me how you felt about your work here today.

What were you most pleased with?

Were there any things you would have liked to have done better?

I noticed that _____. Tell me what you were thinking then.

If we think back over the time, what do you think children were learning?

The discussion then focussed specifically on what had been happening and had been observed.

APPENDIX J: QUESTIONNAIRE B1

How important do you rate these experiences and characteristics in a good early childhood teacher?

There are many characteristics that people believe are important in a good early childhood teacher. Please give a rating for the characteristics and experiences listed below. You can rate these for 1-5 by circling the number.

Not important at all	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	
1	2	3	4	5	
Wide range of life experiences	1	2	3	4	5
Experiences with children	1	2	3	4	5
Academic ability	1	2	3	4	5
Kind and caring nature	1	2	3	4	5
Patient	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of humour	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoys life, work and play	1	2	3	4	5
Interacts well with children	1	2	3	4	5
Establishes good relationships with parents and whānau	1	2	3	4	5
Works effectively in a team	1	2	3	4	5
Encourages, motivates and supports Children's learning	1	2	3	4	5
Is able to discipline children	1	2	3	4	5
Creative and resourceful	1	2	3	4	5
Has a knowledge of teaching skills	1	2	3	4	5
Is able to implement caring skills	1	2	3	4	5

Understands children's needs and rights	1	2	3	4	5
Is able to meet children's needs	1	2	3	4	5
Understands and respects cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5

Which of the three characteristics and experiences listed do you believe are the most important for a teacher to have?

1. _____

Comment:

2. _____

Comment:

3. _____

Comment:

I agree to this questionnaire being used for research on student teacher beliefs. I understand that:

1. My identity will be kept confidential and my name will not be used
2. The data will be destroyed once the material is analysed and the research written up.

Signed: _____

**APPENDIX K: EXCERPTS FROM A SMALL GROUP INTERVIEW,
OCTOBER 1995**

Interviewer: You know when you said before about having a wide range of opinions, there are some things though that are right and wrong, aren't there? I was thinking about child abuse. I would assume that all of us do not want to see a child abused in any way. There are some things that you would want to do if there was a situation where you knew a child was being abused.

Response: Yes. There'd be things as well other than child abuse. There'd be opinions that people hold very strongly. They'll say, "this is right" and nobody by doing anything would ever change their opinion of doing it.

Interviewer: Are all good mothers good early childhood teachers?

Response: My mother wasn't an early childhood teacher.

Interviewer: She wasn't, but she was a good mother? Could she have been a good early childhood teacher as well - that's what I'm really asking?

Responses:

I don't know

I don't think so. I don't think mothers could handle working with too many children.

It depends.

My mum, she worked at CCS Preschool and she got offered the supervisor's job above everybody else and she wasn't qualified or anything.

Interviewer And she was a good mum? As well?

Response: She was a good mum. She's got seven kids under the age of ten.

Interviewer: I wonder then if you disagree with what the others are saying at all, that not all good mothers would necessarily be good early childhood teachers?

Response: Yes, I'd agree and I'd go the same way that not all good early childhood teachers make good mothers.

Interviewer: Why not? They should know, shouldn't they?

Response: I think if I had have done this when I was younger, yes, I would have had more knowledge being a mother. I would have known things before I had my children. I think it would have been a help. A big help. But I did it the other way around, had children first.

Interviewer: Just about everyone says what you've said.

Response: I'm happy with my life, but it would have been helpful to do this first.

Interviewer: If we think of people who are good teachers, and when you've been out on practicum, all of you must have at times felt, oh I'm really being a good teacher now. What are some of the things that made you feel as though you were being a good teacher?

Responses: The way the children responded. And the parents' comments. And the other teachers - what they say to you. Your Associate's Report.

Because when you talk to the children and teach the children and the children go home and talk about it to their parents

A little boy wanted to take me home. To go on holiday with them. And I said, "I can't come home with you, you haven't told your mum. Mum, Emma's coming home with us, OK?"

Interviewer: You have to enjoy your job in order to be a good early childhood teacher?

Response: Yes. I think so, to be enthusiastic. Because if you didn't enjoy it you don't put one hundred percent effort into it. I suppose you could be an "all right" early childhood teacher if you didn't enjoy it, but I know with all those kids, it could get to you.

Interviewer: Do you think it's the most important thing? When I asked the whole class what was important, most said that you've got to enjoy your work. Is it that important?

Responses: Yes. I think so - working with children. I know some people who don't work with children but they don't like their job and they don't put the effort in that they could do if they enjoyed the job. So it's sort of like every day is an effort to get up and go to work and it just makes everything a lot easier if you actually want to get up and go to work.

You wouldn't be in it for the money, not in early childhood?

No, you're definitely not in it for the money.

Interviewer: Can you still learn, even if you're not enjoying the process?

Response: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you give an example?

Responses: Maths. You don't learn as much, but you can learn a little bit. *Children's Language* is one that I thought I would enjoy but ...

If you enjoy it, it makes a difference. So long ... I like learning about children's language and I always have, but it just seems too long...

Interviewer: But have you learnt anything from it even though you may not have enjoyed it.

Responses: Yes, I have. I have learnt some little tiny bits that come out of the lectures that you think, oh yea, that sort of clicks on, but if you enjoyed it more you'd want to listen more and you'd...

Pay more attention to it.

Interviewer: You think that too, Maki?

Response: Yes

We don't all enjoy everything anyway.

Interviewer: No.

Response: Because I think that Japanese people for example, and I think Chinese too, have really different views of learning. Japanese students don't expect to enjoy everything they are doing. They work really hard and they continue to work hard and I'm thinking of someone who's doing Japanese here in the first year and she says she's had to really work hard and at times she hasn't enjoyed it but she has learnt. A lot of Asian cultures don't worry about not enjoying it.

Interviewer: But you still think you learn much better if you're actually enjoying it?

Responses: Yes. Because you pay more attention to it if you enjoy it. If you don't enjoy, I don't care, you know? I don't want to learn any more.

You might pick up one or two points, but most of the stuff you sort of brush over and wouldn't learn anything.

Interviewer: Do you have to love children to be a good early childhood teacher?

Response: No. I think it would help. It definitely helps.

Some people, I don't think, could ever work with children. Because they just haven't got it.

Definitely.

Some people don't even like children. So they'd be no good.

They could be good teachers.

Interviewer: You think they can be, even though they don't love children?

Responses: They have to like children to be a good teacher.

No. I couldn't work with children if I didn't enjoy being with them.

Neither could I. I just couldn't be bothered if I ...

I've been in a situation where it's really stressful. This is not while I've been here. You have a couple of people sick and so you have like four people on and you've got like 30 kids. It's raining, which makes it worse. And they're in a confined space. And it's when you've really got to love children to actually get through the day without killing one of them. Especially when you get one who grabs your attention all the time. There's always a couple of them in the childhood centre, always, always get a couple of them. So I think you really do have to enjoy them to get through the hard bits. The easy bits, maybe not so much.

I think you need a break from them too. I think sometimes everyone gets tired and I think they need their holidays. No matter whether you like them or not.

Over in China or something they finish at 7 o'clock at night - is that China or Japan. You'd have to love them then.

Interviewer: Now you've only one year to go for the Diploma, what do you need to learn now to improve yourself as an early childhood teacher?

Response: I'd like to learn more things about inclusive programmes and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: We'll give you that.

Response: Because I'm really looking forward to that. This is my personal opinion. I don't think you really have enough here. It's good that you've got a programme, a paper that deals with it, but there should be something in every course like biculturalism and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Well there should be. Special needs are supposed to be in every paper as well.

Response: Well, since mainstreaming has really come into vogue it should be. I know some teachers who are qualified and they don't want "one of them" in there. The way they view it they see them as frightening, scary people.

Interviewer: What do you want to learn more about?

Response: I haven't been out in the kindergarten at all this year and I feel I want to feel more confident at working with other people in a team and it's most probably because I haven't done it this year.

Interviewer: Having a gap is quite hard.

Response: Yes, difficult to put learning into practice. That's how I'm thinking at the moment anyway. And I just feel there's, for me, just still so much. I think I have a lot to learn and just putting it into practice and feeling confident about doing that.

Interviewer: What about you Madison?

Response: I'd like to know more about child abuse and what to do if it comes up. I would have no idea what to do if a child approached me.

Me too.

Interviewer: Is there anything else besides child abuse you want to learn about?

Response: How to deal with children with English as a second language.

Interviewer: Mmmm.

Response: I've found *Cultural Studies* doing cultural diversity very interesting.

That's another thing. Now that there's a lot of people coming over to New Zealand who don't have English as a first language and who have very limited English language, it's something that should be incorporated in every subject too.

Interviewer: I must remember that because I was also having a look at the Calendar to see if there were any courses that people can do on this and I can't see any. Not until you're at graduate level. Have you done your Cultural Studies evaluation yet?

Response: No.

Interviewer: Why don't you put something like that in there. That's important and people do look at the evaluations. I can see that as a big gap as well.

Now I notice from the last questionnaire that people did, and then from talking to the people that I saw in kindergartens, that there's been a big change in the way that you're talking about your role in that kindergarten. You're using much more technical language. You're talking in educational terms about how you're helping children, how you're facilitating their learning. You two both did that, and both of you said a lot was coming from *Making Sense*. So do you think that course did really help you in terms of working with children? Emma did, I know.

Response: I think I knew what to do before, because I think I did it before, I hope I did it before. It was just that I didn't have the words to say what I did with it. But *Making Sense* sort of like gave me a word to stick on it - that sort of thing.

Making Sense was really helpful when you're talking to children, using opening questions and you have long conversations instead of just yes or no.

Interviewer: Did you record yourself for that course this year?

Response: Yes we did.

Interviewer: Did you get any surprises when you listened to yourself?

Response: I thought what a dumb question that was I asked.

I can't remember now.

I've recorded myself but I haven't transcribed it. I did it because I thought, oh well I know the children so I'll do it while I know them. The other thing was that I noticed that I said things that I would never have said to children, but I did it because I was nervous about the tape recorder being on.

Interviewer: Yes, well that can happen.

Response: Some of the things that I asked were sort of like (phoof). I never ask children that sort of question.

I found the tape recorder quite useful for yourself, because you can pick out what you said wrong and what you said right.

Notes:

Emma spoke of being much more rigid in her thinking at the beginning of the course and felt that she was now more flexible and didn't always feel that she was necessarily right or must stick to ideas she'd had before.

APPENDIX L: QUESTIONNAIRE B2

How important do you rate these experiences and characteristics in a good early childhood teacher?

There are many characteristics that people believe are important in a good early childhood teacher. Please give a rating for the characteristics and experiences listed below. You can rate these for 1-5 by circling the number.

Not important at all	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5

Teacher education qualification in early childhood education and care	1	2	3	4	5
Kind and caring nature	1	2	3	4	5
Flexible and open	1	2	3	4	5
Responsible, reliable and honest	1	2	3	4	5
Well adjusted and healthy and can handle stress	1	2	3	4	5
Committed to early childhood education	1	2	3	4	5
Willing to give time and effort to work with children	1	2	3	4	5
Is trusted and respected by children and in turn respects others	1	2	3	4	5
Fair in work with children and whānau	1	2	3	4	5
Spiritually strong	1	2	3	4	5
Establishes positive relationships with children	1	2	3	4	5
Establishes good relationships with parents and whānau	1	2	3	4	5
Establishes sound relationships with teachers and administrators	1	2	3	4	5

Encourages, motivates and supports children's learning	1	2	3	4	5
Has skills in organisation, preparation and management	1	2	3	4	5
Able to work across the curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Understands the philosophy of the centre in which they are working	1	2	3	4	5
Understands children's needs and rights	1	2	3	4	5
Understands and respects cultural diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Increases children's understandings of other cultures	1	2	3	3	5
Aware of current social and political issues and their effect on children, families, communities and education	1	2	3	4	5

If there are other important characteristics that you believe should be included, please add them in and rate their importance:

**APPENDIX M: FINAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS)**

(This interview was completed prior to the writing of each participant's story. Indented questions are probe questions that were employed when they were needed).

What is it about a teacher that would lead you to say he or she is a very good teacher?

Why do you believe those things are important?

Do you believe you have these qualities?

Are there things you would you like to do better?

What are some of the characteristics of teachers you've seen that you don't want to take on board?

How do you think that the profession of teaching compares with other professions?

How is it the same and how is it different?

What sort of teacher do you think you will be in three years time?

Do you see any barriers to getting there?

Are there any ways your beliefs about how children learn have changed in the last three years?

Can you remember any courses, for example, that made you think about how children learn?

When you go into an early childhood centre how can you tell when children are learning?

Think about a child you've seen who was a good learner. Tell me what that child was like.

What about a child who found learning more difficult?

Do you think there are any differences in the way children and adults learn?

Have there been any ideas presented in the programme about how children learn that you disagree with?

If you think back over the three years what courses were you most successful in?

Have there been any that gave you some trouble?

Can you think of any significant events or people in your life that have influenced your beliefs?

Let's think about the different kinds of early childhood centres in New Zealand. We know that some emphasise the role of free play and choice. Others are more structured and use preplanned tasks. Tell me how you see your dream centre.

APPENDIX N: DRAFT OF ONE PARTICIPANT'S STORY

This appendix contains the first draft of Debbie's life story and the questions at the conclusion that were employed to gain a better understanding of Debbie's ideas, prior to the writing of the final draft.

Debbie entered the early childhood teacher education programme straight from school. From a young age, working with young children was a clearly held goal. Her neighbour gave birth to her first child when Debbie was seven and as she said, her "interest came from there." She stills feels a close attachment to the children and "loves having them around." She claimed it is "bizzare" that this interest began so early in her life and has carried her through to the final year of her four-year degree. Initially she had pursued the idea of a course to qualify as a children's nanny but was too young to be accepted and was also aware of the limitations inherent in it. As she said it really "interested her for travel prospects" but "when I come back I don't want to nanny for the rest of my life".

Debbie's mother is a secondary school teacher and there has always been an expectation, held by both parents, that their three children would have a tertiary education. However, while education is strongly valued by the parents, anything but teaching as a career was encouraged first and foremost. Nevertheless, Debbie did not weaken in her resolve. Her day-to-day interactions and regular babysitting experiences with the neighbours' three children, coupled with her study break work as a teacher's aide during her senior secondary schooling year, confirmed her choice of a career.

The attainment of a teaching qualification opened the way for three possibilities that Debbie still perceives as highly desirable. Firstly, she believes early childhood teaching offers a clear career pathway with long-term career opportunities for advancement, and the possibility of eventually owning one's own business. Secondly, it meets her other more immediate aspiration to travel overseas, by giving a "passport" for being a nanny

of young children. Thirdly, before entering the early childhood teacher education programme, she had already resolved to study history as her major supporting subject so that she has a teaching subject for moving into secondary teaching, should she wish to pursue this option at a later time.

Debbie herself does not consider previous experience an essential prerequisite for being a “good” teacher (“you can learn”). Indeed she maintained that sometimes it appears to be counterproductive. She cited teachers she had seen who had plenty of experience but were out-of-date and appeared bored in their work. She believed that teachers should

not continue to do the same thing for too long because children get bored with it and won't keep doing it. You've got to be motivated. If you get there and you're not really into it then the children don't benefit as much because they can see you're not interested.

Her own very early work in the teacher education programme, and her initial questionnaire responses, appeared to build, however, on her previous experiences for she demonstrated a basic understanding of children's needs, and a desire to be an interesting imaginative teacher. When she looked back, at the end of the research, on her first responses given in the selection process she noted that they “were quite cool”. A sound basic knowledge of children and their needs was also evident within the first few weeks of the programme when students participated in an educational media course. In this course, they were required to prepare a chart and an overhead transparency for use in a teaching context with young children. At this stage, with little experience and no substantial coursework, many students focus on encouraging children to learn shapes, colours and numbers using didactic approaches, closed questioning and activities that allow little opportunity for spontaneous language. Debbie, however, prepared a chart on the seasons using interesting pictures and incorporating both the Maori and English language. Even more interesting, was her overhead transparency. This revealed only a black outline of eyes and feet. Intended to encourage children to engage in lively discussion and to predict whom the picture was of, it offered interesting possibilities. A series of coloured overlays allowed small sections to be revealed one at a time until a

complete Paddington Bear emerged so it was possible to maintain interest and encourage discussion and speculation.

Debbie could not recall just where the ideas for her work came from but reflected that one of the neighbour's children with whom she had a good deal of contact has been diagnosed as having a learning disability. He is a child that has constantly presented challenges and Debbie felt that to be successful with him she needed to take into account his needs and be imaginative in ensuring they are met. In some ways she felt she might have had him in mind when she prepared her transparency.

How did you decide what to produce for the chart and OHT in Educational media at the beginning of your first year?

In 1994 you said you really liked structured teaching. You also said you like to get involved in children's activities and "when you're teaching not to interfere but to play alongside." What is structured teaching?

By the end of 1994 you began mentioning concerns about the management of children's behaviour and differences between working with a family and in a centre? Can you explain what you believe are good management techniques in a teacher?

Do you believe teachers in kindergartens handle management of children any differently than teachers in childcare?

You believed that you would get better with experience. I wondered if this had been the case. Why or why not?

One of the things you mentioned you liked about childcare was the better staff/child ratio? What is good about this?

You mentioned that when you come back from overseas you want to work towards being a supervisor in 3 years time. You want to develop the confidence to do this? Are there other things you feel you need to learn for this position

Last time we considered how children learn. You've been successful at university. Tell me how you learn best.

APPENDIX O: TYPES OF BELIEFS EXPRESSED BY INDIVIDUALS THE QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Sam's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Judy's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Debbie's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Maki's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Madison's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Rebecca's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Emma's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Sally's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Sarah's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Trudie's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Sophie's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Lenore's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Natasha's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Trina's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Melinda's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

May's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

Karol's Profile

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	Once or twice only
The teacher: Communicates effectively with children						
Forms partnerships with parents						
Works well in a team						
Is caring						
Facilitates children's learning						
Is committed and professional						
Values diversity						
Is spontaneous and creative						
Children learn: Through observation and imitation						
Through exploration and play						
Through socio-dramatic play						
When adult supplies information						
When adult scaffolds learning						
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment						

APPENDIX P: SUMMARY OF BELIEFS

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	One or Twice only
The Teacher: Communicates effectively with children	Karol Lenore Sarah	Sam Trudie Debbie Sophie Rebecca	Emma Melinda	Natasha Trina		Judy Maki Madison Sally
Forms partnerships with parents	Natasha Emma	Sam Karol Trudie	Judy Lenore Madison Trina Sarah Melinda		Maki Sophie Rebecca	
Works well in a team	Melinda	Madison Lenore			Judy Natasha Sarah Trina	Emma Trudie
Is caring	Lenore May Melinda	Judy Trudie Maki Sophie Sarah	Sam	Debbie Sally Madison Karol Natasha Emma Rebecca Trina		
Facilitates children's learning		Sam Emma	Rebecca Judy Debbie Sophie Maki Trina		Madison Sally Natasha Melinda Sarah May Trudie	Lenore
Is committed and professional		Trudy May	Sam Sophie Sarah Trina	Judy Rebecca	Debbie Lenore Maki Natasha Madison Sally Melinda Karol	Emma
Values diversity	Trudie	Judy Trina	Debbie Sally Melinda Karol		Maki Sarah Madison Sophie Rebecca Lenore Emma May Natasha	Sam
Is spontaneous and creative		Sally	Sam		Rebecca	Debbie Trina Madison Sarah Melinda Karol

Type of belief	Reiterated	Lurking	Reorganising	Taken-for-granted	Emerging	One or Twice only
Children Learn: Through observation and imitation	Sam Emma				Maki Sophie Madison May Sarah	Judy Trina Rebecca Karol Melinda Lenore Natasha
Through exploration and play	Maki May	Debbie Sophie Madison Trina	Sam Trudie Judy Sally Melinda		Sam Lenore Rebecca Sarah Emma Karol Natasha	
Through socio- dramatic play						Trudie Trina Melinda May Sophie
When adult supplies information		Emma				Debbie Lenore Madison Trina Sarah May Sophie
When adult scaffolds learning					Debbie Trudie Sally Sarah Melinda	
Immersion in social practices – emphasis on environment	Debbie Sally Maki Sophie Rebecca	Sarah	Judy Natasha Madison Trina Emma Melinda Lenore Karol		Sam May	Trudie

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