10. Setting the scene for further inquiry.

Introduction

In this chapter I will be 'setting the scene' for further inquiry in two ways. Firstly by describing and commenting upon further developments in the work setting as I saw them, as providing a 'backdrop' against which I make sense of my further inquiries. And secondly, by outlining the methodological issues I saw as relevant to my purposes.

At this point in the research, I needed to reconsider methodological issues for subsequent inquiry. My new set of lens provided by a feminist critique and a gender analysis enabled me to place all my experience within the field of research as potentially relevant to the questions at hand. I was now able to see the inquiry into my own practice as 'research proper' and not 'merely practice'.

The immediate effects of this with respect to methodology were twofold. Firstly, I was able now to accept more easily that Cooperative Inquiry did not need to be the only methodological framework available to me. It still held its original appeal but I was more accepting that the current circumstances did not lend itself readily to its particular form of inquiry. I still harboured ideas that I may use it in the future, but I was more relaxed about the notion that there needed to be a greater degree of mutual receptivity or 'fit' with the environment. I reserved it as an option for the future.

Secondly, Torbert's earlier ideas from Collaborative Inquiry (Torbert, 1981) became more relevant as a guiding frame for continued inquiry into practice. I had previously seen Torbert's ideas as speaking more to practice than to research. Now that I had a less compartmentalised and more mutually intertwined conceptualisation of the relationship between inquiry and practice, which was now more thoroughly grounded in experience, I saw his strategies for inquiry as having more to say to my purposes as a researcher. Using my 'fine print-bold print' analogy, what had previously been fine print now became bold print.

As a practitioner I believed my colleagues and I needed to move beyond individual cases and consider how we could develop more systematic ways of working with complex cases as a group. In other words, we needed to develop a more widely shared appreciation of the issues at hand, and gain some closer agreements about how we needed to work together to meet the needs of complex cases in a way which allowed for growth and change for all concerned.

'Sushi's story' had made explicit to me the degree to which different staff groups in the department had differing perspectives on the work they did with any one client. The role I had seen myself playing in this case was to visit the different groups in the interests of getting sufficient integration or interweaving of views, which in turn allowed for actions which supported both stability and change.

As a researcher, I wondered what methodologies could support this process. Collaborative Inquiry offered a framework for an inquiring interpersonal strategy at an individual and an organisational level. However, at an organisational level within my own department I saw many limitations. There seemed little possibility in the short term for development of the type of consensus Torbert (1981) advocates as being necessary for the beginnings of a Collaborative Inquiry, where the initiating actor-researcher and other participating parties need to come to share the aims of a Collaborative Inquiry and the model of an interpenetrating attention span. I could see possibilities for collaboration with certain individuals, but not across groups. Given the difficulties I had experienced so far, I could not see such a diverse group of individuals easily agreeing to develop a consensus about either the nature or the importance of researching the 'management of complex cases'. I believed that I would need to be the person who moved across the groups and held any threads of inquiry initially, as I had in 'Sushi's Story'. I needed a framework to help me manage this as a researcher. This was offered by Guba and Lincoln's (1989) Hermeneutic Dialectic Process which I will describe below.

It is ideas from Collaborative inquiry and from a Hermeneutic Dialectic Process I wish to present here because they provide two guiding frames for subsequent inquiry reported in following chapters. I did not hold these frames in the same way as in Eddie's story, in the sense of holding them in the foreground of awareness with the clear intent of applying them in action to explore their usefulness. Rather, I held them as one of many frames available to me, noticing when they came from background to foreground to aid in making sense of complexity and in informing action. I was not only a researcher but also practitioner, permanent insider and member of the department, carrying many different aspirations and agendas. My experience so far had taught me that I could not be prescriptive ahead of time about exactly how I would implement an inquiring strategy while at the same time being alive to complexity and multiple opportunities and risks.

The development and the refining of an inquiring strategy was a more emergent and discontinuous process, one I note now but which I learned about experientially over the course of subsequent inquiry and will reflect on at the end. I will turn first to developments in the work setting then to methodological issues.

An 'update' on developments within the department.

By now the Mental Health Unit had become a self managed NHS Trust and had clearly separated from the local Health Authority. We were a provider unit and they were purchasers whose job it was to assess the health care needs of the local population and commission services to meet these. Similarly, other health districts were now in a position to choose whether or not to continue using our service - they could purchase a tertiary specialist addictions service elsewhere, or alternatively could redirect funding within the district to other services.

It soon became apparent that some districts were not going to enter into contracts with us. Some because geographical distance and difficult transport links precluded this, others because of a history of conflict between local providers and our department. Some of the latter perceived us as not being responsive to their views of what was needed. At this time, both William and Stewart believed that they knew what these districts needed and were critical of how services were organised within them. In several instances this led to overt conflict between the consultants and their consultant equivalents in smaller local services.

On the other hand, several of the senior nurses had regional roles in linking with those services from other districts, providing consultation and support to workers and facilitating liaison with our department when a referral to us was needed. They found themselves the 'meat in the sandwich', trying to work between the views of the two consultants and those of the district service workers. There was a climate of mutual suspicion.

In the same way, there tended to be a more 'stand-off' competitive relationship between our two consultants and those working in other departments in the Trust. Our two consultants were often overtly critical of their colleagues, perceiving them to be lax or less than fully competent in doing their jobs. This conflict arose particularly around their 'out-of-hours roster' in which consultants across the Trust were on call to deal with emergencies in evenings and weekends. William and Stewart frequently found in doing this that they were having to 'mop up' after their colleagues, doing their work for them, as they saw it, in crisis circumstances which could have been prevented had the other services been better organised. They saw many of their colleagues as lazy and cynical. This view meant that they were very opposed to our department having any links with others in which it might seem that we were "doing their work for them". They constructed an 'outsiders' and 'insiders' world view in relation to how the department's resources were used. William could be particularly confronting of his colleagues about this, which earned him some severe 'bruises'. It was less clear what Stewart's public stance was outside the department. One outcome of this within the department was a degree of confusion among staff as to how to relate to colleagues across departmental boundaries - any such encounters tended to be kept to the private domain, and not for public discussion.

The major significance of these events was that the department now had only eighty percent of its budget secured through a contract with our local health authority. There was to be a 'lead-in' period during which we had to find ways of securing the other twenty percent. Failure to do so could lead to either of two options: merging with another department (adult psychiatric services); or staff

redundancies. This created a very real 'edge' for change as the moves or the redundancies would most likely have to come from senior staff who would be seen as superfluous to a purely local and non-specialist district service. The two consultants often jokingly referred to being made redundant, but in such a way as to hint at a sub-text that they would engineer this deliberately if things did not go their way, a sub-text which was made overt by them on one occasion.

Jan as business manager was proposing that we engage the help of outside experts to develop a marketing strategy, to systematically explore the options and develop a business plan which would take the department through the next five to ten years. We aired the issues regularly in the core group and began looking at the way we could develop our services, talking about taking a stronger role in managing the sort of cases that 'fell through the net' of other services in the Trust as one of several possible directions. These later came to be recognised as 'complex cases' but at this stage there was little agreement about how we would 'manage' them. The two consultants were also very wary about any closer involvement with other departments implied by this direction, although William was the more enthusiastic of the two as it fitted more with his interests in eventually becoming a general manager.

We had by now lost social workers from the department due to reorganisation in the Department of Social Services. We were now only four in the core group - William, Jan, Stewart and myself. In anticipation of the forthcoming changes we had employed a full time Occupational Therapist and a full time Physiotherapist to provide the backbone of a more developed day care programme. I will tell more of the significance of this development later.

These changes created a dilemma as I saw it for the two consultants. The alternative options of merger or redundancy were anathema to them, but the marketing option also challenged their world view that they as consultants knew what was needed (the problem being that others would not always accept what they prescribed). There was an acceptance of the need to market, but there was conflict about how to go about it. The two consultants wanted a marketing expert to perform only a limited external role and to leave the rest to us. On the other hand, Jan and I were committed to the department but were much more neutral about the other options, seeing interesting possibilities for joining with other departments if need be. Together we were in favour of outside expertise, and moreover we were interested in hiring people who would include us fully in the process so that we all learned the relevant skills for future needs. I will return to this in more depth in a subsequent chapter where I am confronted with power in relationships.

As individuals on their own, William and Stewart dealt with these issues differently. Stewart saw management as "flannel" and was frequently critical of management theory and practice. He saw it as thinly disguised code for implementing central government changes to the NHS with which he could not agree. There were times when I could wholly agree with him, but I also recognised that his core views about management were very different from mine. To the extent that I was able to discuss it with him on odd occasions, I came to believe that he constructed a world of management and management practice in which managers controlled others, by direct or indirect means. Alternately, they interfered with what others (who were more knowledgeable) wished to do. However if this was his starting position, I observed him over the years to cling less tenaciously to this, except when change was afoot with which he did not feel a part or with which he did not agree. He was a ready acceptor of change brought about by effective management if it met his needs. This was not an isolated position - I recognised it as a sub-text in the conversation of many consultants who had never been 'managed' before and were anxious and uncertain of the implications. However, like Stewart, many could be skilful entrepreneurs in gaining new resources. I will ground some of these observations in later experience recounted below.

On the other hand, William saw himself as a beginning manager and that this might be a strand on which he could develop his career. Outside the core group meetings he took a different attitude. Jan and William had developed a working relationship with each other in which there was increasing mutual trust. William was open to looking for alternative frameworks for managing and Jan had introduced him to Torbert's writings as a way of supporting this and as a means of providing a language in common to support their working relationship as Clinical Director and Business Manager. At that time there was a senior registrar working for William who was also doing an MBA and William shared some of Torbert's work with him. I would regularly join the three of them in informal discussions about

his ideas. The two doctors were particularly interested in the developmental model of leadership and began using some of the stage names in relation to themselves and colleagues. They became aware that there were alternative interpersonal strategies for inquiry than the ones they had developed through their training.

Finally, with the move to being part of a self-managed NHS Trust, all departments were under an obligation to develop a range of quality standards to meet the requirements of central government (for example, 'The Patient's Charter') and the various purchasers of our service. As Business Manager, Jan led this in the department and created a 'Quality Circle' of department members who were responsible for the day to day delivery of the various aspects of the service. In this setting we learned with each other about setting quality standards and auditing our work. The two consultants did not join this, exemplifying a pattern whereby they expected to lead, but from a distance rather than alongside others.

In the next chapter I introduce a concept from clinical audit to aid the development of a 'map' or set of 'good practice' guidelines for working with 'complex cases'. In the meantime, I will next describe the methodological possibilities I saw as being available to me for further inquiry.

Methodological Issues.

More 'Fine Print' from Collaborative Inquiry.

I will present here those aspects of Collaborative Inquiry which were formerly 'fine print' and which did not suggest themselves as being salient to me in my early foray into research. These features have become 'bold print' through the process of the inquiry so far, now speaking to and grounded in the actual experience of initiating an inquiry. The following quote from Torbert (1981) helped orient me more accurately towards the 'real' task facing me as a researcher in using Action Inquiry in my own setting, namely the development of conditions under which increasing collaboration can occur.

> "Because no acting system begins with the sort of embracing, interpenetrating attention advocated here, each actor requires others' best attention and sincere responses in order to learn whether his or her own purposes, theories, actions, and effects are mutually congruent. In other words, the aspiring action scientist requires others' friendly collaboration. A second reason why *collaborative* inquiry is necessary for effective action is that the 'topology' of social situations is determined by the qualities of each actor's intuitive, theoretical, sensual, and empirical knowledge and being. Consequently, each actor can gain increasingly valid knowledge of social situations only as other actors collaborate in inquiry, disclosing their being, testing their knowledge, discovering shared purposes, and producing preferred outcomes. As the actor-researcher increasingly appreciates these motives for collaborative inquiry, s/he increasingly wishes to approach situations in everyday life as real-time, mutual learning experiments - as experiments-in-practice." (p147)

Torbert warns of adverse responses to the notion of collaborative inquiry and 'experiments-in-practice', from the indifferent to the hostile. While he advocates an inquiring approach to hostility (presuming the initiating researcher possesses sufficient virtuosity) he also sees attempts to either defend or impose collaborative inquiry as counter to its spirit. These possibilities show that the structure of an experiment-in-practice cannot be fully pre-defined and stable, but rather evolves over time.

• Experiments-in-Practice

The following are a set of characteristics of experiments-in-practice from Torbert's (1981) model of a Collaborative Inquiry which include but extend those noted in chapter four. They contain a richer appreciation, in the light of experience, of how they spoke to my inquiry so far and suggested ways of continuing for the future.

> • The researcher's activities are included within the field of observation and measurement, along with the study of other subjects.

- The structure and variables are not fully pre-defined but rather may change through dialogue between the initiating actor-researcher and others as the inquiry proceeds.

- Interruptions are welcomed , symbolising that which is not present within the researcher's awareness at the moment of interruption, inviting a more encompassing awareness of what is at stake.

- Conflict between different paradigms of reality is anticipated and welcomed as an opportunity to make explicit and test as far as possible the assumptions held by participants. Such conflict will not only be intellectual but will also have immediate emotional and practical implications as well. Thus the aspiring action scientist is challenged from the outset to seek and offer information which is politically timely and aesthetically appropriate, as well as analytically valid.

- The ultimate criterion of whether a given action is aesthetically appropriate, politically timely and analytically valid is whether it yields increasingly valid data about issues significant to the effectiveness of any acting system. And whether it does so in such a way as to encourage a more encompassing, interpenetrating attention by these acting systems.

Experiments-in-practice have four conceptually separate 'media' of research (again, Torbert, 1981) as follows.

- An attention capable of interpenetrating, vivifying and apprehending simultaneously its own ongoing dynamics - the noticing and seeking to correct incongruities across the four territories of purpose, strategy, actions and effects. Such an attention spans the immediate and the long term.

- "Symbolic, ironic and diabolic thinking and feeling" (p.148) capable of apprehending the significant issues at stake, the values assumptions in actors behaviour, the degree of congruity or incongruity between purposes and effects, and the efficient paths for common effort.

- Action (movements, tones, words and silences) which is sufficiently "supple, attuned and crafty, to create scenes of questionable taste, to demonstrate the good taste of collaborative questioning and to listen silently to responses" (p149). Such action invites tests of its own and others' sincerity and effectiveness, and does not screen out strangeness and disconfirmation.

- The collection, analysis and feed-back of empirical data. The sort of empirical data sought is that which sheds light on the degrees of congruity and incongruity between and across the different territories of purposes, strategies, actions and effects.

The fundamental type of empirical instrument is a record of experience which comes as close as possible to an analogue of an embracing interpenetrating attention. This will be in the form of tape-recordings, field notes, personal diaries and so on. Such a record will allow participants and interested others to find post hoc clues about what else apart from pre-defined variables and explanations was occurring in any given situation. Torbert (1981) also maintains that such records can generate process data which can help determine whether the design of the experiment was open to challenge and reformation, and whether dialogue among participants was conducive to increasingly appropriate design decisions.

A final consideration which became relevant for me was Torbert's comments on the development of relationships between the initiating actor-researcher and other participants. He discerns three stages to this development.

- No matter how well prepared, the *primary question* for the initiating actor-researcher is whether s/he and the system/s engaged can come to share the aim of collaborative inquiry and share the model of interacting qualities of experience (interpenetrating attention). It is only if this agreement about aims and models can be reached that the next stage can proceed. (Torbert uses the term "shared model of reality" (p.149) to refer to this agreement, but I prefer not to use this because of the epistemological assumption of a reality independent of the knower implicit in the term. He could be referring to a social consensus about what constitutes a co-evolved research 'reality', but as he is not clear on this I will avoid the term).

- The second stage represents a shift to examining incongruities across the different domains of experience. In this stage the participating systems are actively collecting and analysing experiential-empirical data, but they will focus more on the general direction of the findings than on the precise outcomes.

- The third stage is possible only if the first two are attained. The focus then becomes obtaining precise high quality results in terms of aesthetic appropriateness, political timeliness and analytic validity.

In short, Torbert (1981) says “valid social knowledge becomes possible only as fundamental changes occur in people’s commitment to personal learning and in their ways of organising socially.”(p151)

Elsewhere, Torbert (1981b) talks in terms of developing a Community of Inquiry, a lifetime circle of friends dedicated to helping clarify, and if necessary challenge, each other's purposes and actions. While teachers and leaders can certainly initiate such a process among themselves, he warns that they must also maintain a paradoxical balance across dilemmas about how they use their power ethically to encourage an inquiring interpersonal strategy in others. He also notes that participants in collaborative inquiry may experience an initial sense of loss of control as they attempt to develop competencies in using inquiring interpersonal strategies which require self disclosure about one’s experience, supportiveness and empathy towards others, and confrontation of incongruities across domains of experience. He speculates that this may be due to the disorienting effects of being participants in encounters where there is a move away from implicit acceptances towards explicit questioning of rules and incongruities.

It is in his Power of Balance (Torbert, 1991) that he links collaborative inquiry with his theory of power and his model of leadership development to begin defining how to go about creating a community of inquiry in one’s life and in one’s work organisation. However, at this stage of my inquiry, the above characteristics of collaborative inquiry seemed to speak more to my purposes and my actions than did the theories of power and qualities of leadership.

Torbert describes the use of experiments-in-practice, at the heart of Collaborative Inquiry, as an experiential process occurring in a more or less distorted and incomplete fashion at any give moment. It was this quality I understood now in a more grounded sense by my newly made sense of my inquiry so far. It suggests a more emergent and discontinuous process (which matched my own experience to date) by which an inquiring interpersonal strategy develops individually and organisationally. It also describes in more detail some guidelines for how the individual needs to think and act in order to co-create with others the sort of wider relationships and an organisational context which will contain and support increasing mutuality of commitment, authenticity and collaboration.

Contributions from a ‘Hermeneutic Dialectic Process’.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) detail an approach to programme evaluation based on their constructivist philosophy (described earlier in Chapter Four) which seeks to take evaluation away from a technical 'fact-seeking' exercise to include the myriad social, political, cultural and contextual factors involved in the delivery of any service - be it an educational or health care programme. They call such an approach 'Fourth Generation Evaluation' and take the position that any findings of an evaluation represent a set of constructions, including those of the evaluator, with associated values which are formed in the multiple contexts in which the persons involved live. Furthermore, they recognise that any evaluation

can be shaped to either enfranchise or disenfranchise the multiple 'stakeholders' associated with a programme. Therefore they advocate a form of evaluation which seeks to honour the constructions of all the stakeholders and in so doing create the conditions for educating, empowering and preserving the dignity of all involved.

Fourth Generation Evaluation draws both draws upon and extends their earlier (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) constructivist paradigm for social science informing their model of Naturalistic Inquiry. The process by which the constructions of all the stakeholders are elicited and negotiated in a fourth generation evaluation is called by Guba and Lincoln (1989) the Hermeneutic Dialectic Process, and this is linked with their Naturalistic Inquiry to form the overall methodology for evaluation. It is the Hermeneutic Dialectic Process that I will describe here and consider for my own use.

"The major task of the constructivist investigator is to tease out the constructions that various actors in a setting hold and, so far as possible, to bring them into conjunction - a joining- with one another and with whatever other information can be brought to bear on the issues involved" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 142). This suggests implicit links between aspects of Collaborative Inquiry and aspects of Naturalistic Inquiry. The former places much emphasis on developing a self reflexive interpenetrating attention in acting systems, the latter on elucidating the constructions of all the stakeholders in the field of inquiry. Carrying a constructivist set of lens while exploring collaborative inquiry and experiments-in-practice did not seem mutually exclusive. I will present the key elements of Guba and Lincoln's Hermeneutic Dialectic Process then consider how I saw this as contributing to my inquiry.

The authors take the view that constructions held by persons consist of certain available information configured into some integrated, systematic 'sense-making' formulation whose character depends on the level of information and sophistication (in the sense of ability to appreciate/understand/apply the information) of the constructor.

Constructions come about through the interaction of a constructor with information, contexts, settings, situations, and other constructors - not all of whom agree. The process used is rooted in the previous experience, belief systems, values, fears, prejudices, hopes, disappointments and achievements of the constructor/s. Within this heuristic there are as many constructions as there are constructors, and they are both self-sustaining and self-renewing. Constructions are changed whenever new information and/or an increase in sophistication to deal with information becomes possible.

• Conditions for change.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) propose four possible conditions under which changes in constructions can happen.

- Condition 1. *Stability*. New information is introduced that is consistent with the existing construction and does not require any change in the constructor's sophistication to deal with it.

- Condition 2. *Information Disjunction*. New information is introduced that is inconsistent with existing construction, but does not require an increase in level of sophistication. A usual first response is to regard the new information as error, but repeated presentation of the same information leads to a change in the prevailing construction to accommodate the new information. Such change is slower and more reluctantly engaged upon than in condition one.

- Condition 3. *Sophistication Disjunction*. New information is encountered which is consistent with the existing construction but which requires an altered level of sophistication so that the constructor can appreciate/understand/apply it. An example would be a scientist who collects more data which leads to a more refined data set, but who realises that existing theory no longer adequately accounts for the data. She then sets about developing a more sophisticated theory. Such a change typically does not require a paradigm shift leading to wrenching shifts in

interpretations, but may prove challenging and puzzling, leading to a re-examination of the constructions held.

- Condition 4. *Information and Sophistication Disjunction.* The extreme form of this condition is a paradigm shift which places much stress on the holders, leading to a period of bewilderment and confusion. Constructors are immobilised so long as they are unable to gain the perspective needed to facilitate the paradigm shift. Change is very slow and painful and may be beyond some individuals.

The ease with which a construction may be changed thus depends on which of these four conditions is encountered. If the holders of a given construction are to change, it is essential in Guba and Lincoln's (1989) view that they be exposed to new information and/or given the opportunity to grow to whatever level of sophistication may be needed to appreciate or understand or use that information. "What is needed to effect change is an open negotiation during which all available constructions, *including that....which the inquirer/evaluator brings to the inquiry*, must be open to challenge - and to the possibility of being discarded as not useful, unsophisticated, or ill informed. All constructions must be afforded an opportunity for input and must be taken seriously, that is the input must be honoured." (p148).

Guba and Lincoln propose a process they call Hermeneutic Dialectic which they see as fulfilling the above conditions. It is hermeneutic because it is interpretive in character, and it is dialectic because it seeks to compare and contrast divergent views with a view to achieving a higher-level synthesis of them all, in a Hegelian sense. The major purpose is to form a connection between different constructions that allows for an exploration by all parties concerned. The aim is for consensus, but if this is not possible, then at the very least the process exposes and clarifies the multiple views and allows the building of an agenda for negotiation. The authors see all parties to such a process as simultaneously educated and empowered. They propose conditions for such a successful process.

• Conditions for a successful process.

- A commitment from all parties to work from a position of integrity. That is, there must be no deliberate attempts to mislead. The authors believe their process minimises this likelihood.

- Minimal competence on the part of all parties to communicate. Thus special consideration needs to be given to children or learning disabled adults or the mentally ill.

- A willingness on the part of all parties to share power.

- A willingness on the part of all parties to change if they find the negotiations persuasive.

- A willingness on the part of all parties to reconsider their value positions as appropriate.

- A willingness on the part of all parties to make the commitments of time and energy that is required for the process.

At this point, I wondered about how achievable such conditions were in my work setting. I reflected that these conditions mirrored my own sense of authenticity as a person and that I also chose to see that others did their best in any given circumstances, taking into account their own values, view of the world, history and current circumstances. Nonetheless, I recognised this as a set of ideals which I held on to in the knowledge that I would be disappointed from time to time with both myself and others. However, as conditions for a successful hermeneutic process, they offered considerable challenge to the evaluator/inquirer, the participants and the process. Guba and Lincoln draw these from their own experience and believe them to be necessary, but are not yet sure if they are sufficient to achieve their aims of evaluation being an educational and empowering process.

• Carrying out the process.

A cyclical process is recommended whereby the investigator visits each respondent or stakeholder in a sequential fashion, eliciting their constructions on the issue at stake, then offering the constructions of previous respondents for comment.

The first respondent (R1) is either chosen or nominated for a salient reason. R1 is engaged in an open ended interview to determine initial constructions of whatever is being investigated. She is asked to describe the focus as she sees it and comment on it in personal terms. R1 is then asked to nominate a second respondent (R2) who is as much different in views from her own as she is able to identify. The central themes, concepts, ideas, values, concerns, and issues proposed by R1 are then analysed by the investigator into an initial formulation of R1's construction (C1), using a comparative method the author's describe in their model of Naturalistic Inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Next, R2 is interviewed and allowed as much freedom as R1. However, when R2 has volunteered as much as appears probable, the themes from R1 are introduced and R2 is asked to comment. As a result, the interview with R2 gains not only their views but also their critique of R1's. The inquirer then seeks a nomination for R3 and completes an analysis C2, a more informed and sophisticated construction based on two sources, R1 and R2.

So begins a process of building an increasingly more informed and sophisticated construction of the issue at stake. The process is repeated with new respondents being added until the information received becomes redundant or falls into two or more constructions that are at odds in some way (typically because the values which undergird the constructions are in conflict).

As the process continues, the degree of detail sought in the interview and the degree of structure can change. As salient issues begin to emerge, the investigator can seek a more detailed and articulated view of them, and can change the structure of the interview from being open ended to asking more focused and pointed questions. When the circle of respondents has been completed, a second pass can be made and so giving the earlier respondents an opportunity to comment on a more refined and elaborated construction which hitherto they have not had. Alternatively, the circle may be 'spiralled', making a second pass with a different set of respondents who are similar to the first.

Finally, the investigator may introduce perspectives for comment from other sources. These may be from another set of stakeholders in another part of the organisation, from observations made during the process, from the literature and so on. The investigator's own constructions may be introduced for critique. The authors suggest a neutral presentation of constructions from other sources, such as 'some people think....' to avoid undue influence arising from perceived status or power of the sources.

Circles can consist of persons who are widely different from one another, but the authors warn that the minimal conditions for success are less likely to be met because the individuals, for instance, may have widely different power within the setting.

The criteria for the quality of the knowledge gained are those I outlined in chapter five.

My reflections on the potential usefulness of the methodologies.

I saw the context and the purpose for which Guba and Lincoln propose the above process as being different from mine. They see this process as one of primarily evaluation, where the investigator comes into the setting explicitly for a bounded and negotiated purpose, even though that may change as the evaluation proceeds. The framing of their involvement as 'evaluation' and the process by which they go about it may increase the likelihood of their conditions for success being met.

By contrast, I was considering using this as an insider, without explicit invitation to evaluate or investigate. I was a participant and a stakeholder and as much as anybody else needed to be on the same level with respect to the inquiry in making my own values and constructions available to the process. Furthermore, the use of this process would necessarily involve individuals with differing types and degrees of power, and different degrees of willingness to make commitments to give time and

energy, to change if they found negotiations persuasive, to reconsider their value positions if appropriate, and to share power. I saw a failure in the method to draw distinctions between what were necessary initial conditions for success at the outset, and what conditions might be approximated more closely through the process of evaluation.

Nonetheless, I saw within the Hermeneutic Dialectic Process a core notion of how I could move around different individuals or groups in our department and both seek and honour their constructions of events while at the same time enrich and elaborate both my own and others around dealing with 'complex cases'. The challenge at the time seemed to be one of creating the conditions where such collaboration as outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1989) could be achieved. Torbert's (1981) Collaborative Inquiry offered an interpersonal strategy which could help towards this. The two modes of inquiry seemed as though they could interact and inform each other in a complementary manner. In the following chapter I explore the utility of these two in a 'mini inquiry' into the possibilities for collaboration around the point of referral for a 'complex case'.