

TOWARDS THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND A REFLEXIVE BODY OF PRACTICE.

4. Engaging with new theory and methodology.

Introduction.

The next step for me in entering the research field was to engage with the literature through reading and discussions with fellow researchers at Bath. To continue the journeying sense of the research I will present those ideas which initially suggested themselves to me as being relevant in searching for a way to begin. This will be a 'first look', or a presentation of what appeared in 'bold print' to me at that time. However, as the inquiry process unfolded and my appreciations of what I was about changed, so too did my appreciations about the theory and methodology. I call this my 'second look' or 'the fine print' appreciation which I will return to later in the journey. But first, the 'bold print'.

From what little I knew about qualitative research methodology, Action Research in its broad sense seemed to fit best what I hoped to achieve. My original psychology training was steeped in the quantitative and quasi or applied experimental tradition. The great bulk of research in the clinical field was rooted in this tradition, and even research in the family therapy literature which was not of the individual case study type leaned on this tradition implicitly. I felt ill equipped and I was to find that there still existed a strong 'mainstream psychologist' part of me which required a methodology which was robust, valid and would provide structure to what felt to be a complex mixture of ideas which refused to cohere together into one clear question which could be put to the test. It took some time for this influence to become fully apparent. The first concept in my new reading which helped give structure to my confusion was that of the research cycle.

Research as a cyclical process.

The concept of 'cycling' is more or less present in many models of experiential inquiry, particularly in the forms of action research in which the researcher/s move between action and reflection, or between paying attention to differing aspects of experience. Rowan's (1981) model of the research cycle helped most in bridging my movement away from traditional research models into the more qualitative action forms I was seeking. He intended it to be such a bridge for those making the same transition.

Rowan outlines a dialectical paradigm for research, locating it in the context of day to day life as a dialectic engagement with the world and as a more or less continuous process of inquiry. The researcher and research move through a cycle of stages or phases, moving from one to the next at the point the researcher/s transcend the contradiction of 'too much versus too little' of the activity each requires.

The usual starting point is the *Being* stage, where the researcher is resting in day to day experience but is faced with a problem or inadequacy in practice which gives rise to dissatisfaction. This calls for new thinking.

The *Thinking* stage is an essentially inward movement, a creative process of entertaining new ideas from various sources. It is also a processing movement, adding and combining new information into unfamiliar relationships and comparing against some form of template, asking 'will this do, will it be acceptable?' The nature of the template is dependent on the level of consciousness available. The contradiction between needing more information and having too much information needs to be transcended before moving on.

At a certain point the researcher abandons this stage, aware that thinking is not enough and feeling that there is too much information already. A decision is needed as to what to aim for. An action plan is required, one which may involve daring or risk-taking, some breaking of the bounds. A *Project* is needed which involves others, an essentially outward movement. This involves a degree of assertion ("...or even aggressiveness..."p99), planning and decision making which will create an act of bridging

distances, to another person, field or theory. When the researcher has transcended the contradiction of 'plans should be adequate versus no plan can be perfect' then the next stage can be entered.

At this point, action is required. In action the researcher is fully present, here and now, and needs to be ready to improvise if required and to be fully engaged with others. *Encounter* is a stage for testing, for experiment, for comparison in which the researcher needs to face the possibility of both confirmation and disconfirmation. Rowan argues that disconfirmation can provide the more valuable learning. Encounter is a place for involvement, commitment and spontaneity. It is a stage of height and depth, of rhythmic movement inward and outward.

The researcher moves on to the next stage upon feeling 'This is not enough, I must withdraw and find out what it means.' Here the researcher contemplates what the experiences so far have meant for those involved, what are the different ways of seeing them. *Making Sense* involves both contemplation and analysis, turning experience into meaning and knowledge. The contradiction here, according to this model, is between reducing the data to understandable simplicity, versus expanding the connections within the data until they say everything.

From there the process moves to an outward one of *Communication*, telling people what it means and what those involved have been through. This can be done individually or collectively through publications, seminars, lectures and so on. At this stage the researcher has digested what the research has meant and has made it part of a "new accommodation to reality"(p100). [I reflected at a later stage that this latter phrase could be replaced by 'an accommodation to new realities' from within an inter subjectivist or systemic epistemology]. The contradiction here is between the need to get the data more finally processed and accurately expressed versus the awareness of the impossibility of communicating to anyone outside the experience.

At a certain point the researcher returns to daily practise but now on a higher level of awareness, incorporating the new knowledge. This is a return to *Being*, described by the dimension of height and depth, resting content in being a three dimensional person. The contradiction here is between acceptance of things as they are versus a dissatisfaction which may propel the researcher around yet further cycles.

Rowan notes that the sequence can start anywhere and warns that some individuals may get "hooked" on certain stages without moving on.

My attention was drawn to the intellectual model of a cyclical process, with clearly defined stages, which seemed as though it would provide a link between the research process as I had known it in more traditional terms and the more experientially based action research paradigm I was looking for. I felt that the descriptions of the early stages of this model, of *Being* and *Thinking*, captured my own experience at that time and so located me even then as being in the territory of research, with a sense of how it might develop from here. However, the 'fine print' describing and affirming the phenomenology of going through the whole research experience eluded me until much later. In looking back, I "got hooked", in Rowan's terms, on the *Project* phase, looking for the perfect plans when in fact there were multiple possibilities for inquiry already occurring in my practice. I will make this more apparent in subsequent chapters about beginning the inquiry process.

Philosophical underpinnings to 'New Paradigm' approaches.

Another bridge into the research was provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who addressed the philosophical underpinnings of the 'New Paradigm' methodologies and articulated clearly the inadequacies of the traditional Positivist or 'Old Paradigm' as a basis for a human science. I found that what had been intuitively felt or only partially perceived by me in the past was now articulated more clearly, validating and legitimising in a wider academic and practice arena what had previously been partly private and shared only by a seemingly small community. Furthermore, it became clearer to me as I read that within the Family Systems umbrella, the epistemological shifts behind the practice models had been only partially articulated, and were more implicit in practice than explicit in outright theorising in the field.

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While it felt intuitively right to me to be using qualitative methods, my reading of these authors provided a sounder theoretical and analytical base and satisfied that part of me which liked to have an intellectual appreciation of what I am doing. While my training and reading in Family Systems therapy exposed me to a new epistemology, it had not placed it in a wider context of a paradigm shift which was occurring across many areas of science. I imagined that I would have a critical audience of colleagues who might either challenge my choice of research methodology or who would have questions about the intellectual rigour of such an approach. This had certainly been my experience in relation to family therapy as a 'treatment' approach or way of intervening in mental health and mental illness problems over the past decade. I anticipated a similar challenge with regard to research.

Quantitative methodology and the supposed precision it offers occupies a central position in much Psychological research. Once the choice of specific methodology is made it then organises the activities of those involved, with richness of meaning and applicability taking second place. At this stage, I felt that my reading could also provide a language for me to help bridge the gap for those immediate work colleagues who might want to join with me in a research venture, and who might need support at this level of 'knowing' in making the commitment to doing things differently.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the term Naturalistic Inquiry to cover research endeavours in the new paradigm and they offered me an introduction into some of the philosophical assumptions which lay behind both the old and the new paradigms. Historically philosophers concerned with knowledge and knowing have asked three fundamental and interrelated questions:

- *The ontological* - what is there that can be known?
- *The epistemological* - what is the relationship between the knower and the known ?
- *The methodological* - how can one go about finding out?

Positivism as the philosophical basis for traditional science.

Using the above three questions as a philosophical framework, Guba and Lincoln (1990) summarise the basic belief system of conventional positivistic science as follows:

- *Ontology*: Realist. There is a single external reality 'out there', separate from the observer, which is driven by immutable laws and mechanisms. Our knowledge of this is summarised in the form of time- and context-free generalisations, some of which take the form of cause and effect laws.
- *Epistemology*: Dualist/objectivist. It is both possible and essential for the observer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture that facilitates 'putting questions directly to nature and getting nature's answers directly back'. Values, whether those of the inquirer or of anyone else, are automatically excluded as exerting influence on outcomes.
- *Methodology*: Experimental/manipulative. Questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subject to empirical testing under carefully controlled conditions to prevent bias or confounding. As a basis of a science for people, this denies their self-determining nature and renders them subordinate to the interests of the inquirer or researcher.

They argue that these underlying assumptions are increasingly difficult to maintain in that they deny the role of human judgement and experience, giving "data" a voice over that of those involved as subjects in research or inquiry. They cite what they term "disabling characteristics" of this paradigm as being: its absolutist nature (we are all subservient to only one truth); its objectivist character (in being determined by 'natural laws', humans are reduced to the status of objects); its disempowering character (alternative views are shunted aside, thus maintaining the status quo); and its unethical character (the

manipulative nature of the methodology denies the rights of individuals to choose their own fate). Thus prediction and control are seen as the goals for conventional science.

Guba and Lincoln (1990) lay out the philosophical underpinnings of newer and alternative paradigms which recognise the shortcomings of positivism and seek to amend them in some way. They are clustered together under three broad headings: post-positivism; critical theory; and constructivism. They see the first as prone to the same dangers inherent in positivism, and the latter two as more radical departures. They declare themselves adherents to constructivism.

Post Positivism.

This heterogeneous category was particularly interesting for me because it described what I had come to recognise as the difficulties with which much contemporary and mainstream applied psychology research is struggling. The features of this category were immediately recognisable to me also as characterising the personal struggle I had had over the past few years in looking for a way to do research which honoured how I attempted to practise. Within this category, researchers recognise the methodological short-comings of positivism and attempt to adapt them without recognising the ontological and epistemological contradictions contained therein.

From within this broad category, positivism is recognised by critics as containing a series of imbalances which must be redressed to make the paradigm serviceable again. Guba and Lincoln see these imbalances as occurring between a number of polarities and see 'post-positivists' as failing to transcend these polarities, instead remaining within them and seeking to redress imbalances by merely moving away from one pole towards the other. In this way the authors see the advocates of post-positivism remaining trapped within the conventional positivist world view or paradigm. The following are the polarities which the two authors see 'post-positivists' as remaining caught within.

- *Rigour and Relevance:* Laboratory studies provide rigour through the supposed experimental control over events but severely limit generalisation and hence relevance. The redress is to move out of the laboratory into natural settings.
- *Objectivity and Subjectivity:* The impossibility of a detached stance is acknowledged and the redress is to find some position between the two by adopting qualitative measures of objectivity.
- *Precision and Richness:* The redress is to include more qualitative methods such as ethnographic or case-study methods.
- *Elegance and Applicability:* Broad theories aid generalisation but have little 'fit' at local level. The redress is to adopt a 'grounded theory' approach so that the theory is a product of the inquiry and fits local circumstances.
- *Discovery and Verification:* The process by which a priori theories (the starting point for conventional research) emerge is traditionally left out of consideration as being part of the scientific enterprise. The redress is to conceptualise a continuum of inquiry, from discovery (of theory) to verification/falsification (of hypotheses arising from a priori theory)

While Guba and Lincoln see these accommodations as laudable, their criticism of post-positivism is that it leaves untouched the paradigm level of discourse and its assumption of an objective, foundational reality. Because of this they view this approach as rendering researchers vulnerable to the same dangers inherent in positivism, namely the practice of an unethical and disempowering form of human science.

Critical Theory.

Guba and Lincoln include in this category a wide range of research approaches which they see as being linked together by an acceptance of the role which values play in any field of endeavour. Thus inquiry

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actively seeks to articulate the values at work and the influence they have on the findings and interpretations. Thus research is as much a political act as any other. Nature cannot be seen as it 'really is' but only through some value window. While Guba and Lincoln allow that this approach makes an epistemological shift to acknowledging the interconnectedness between the knower and the known, they challenge it as not having made the ontological shift away from an implicit acceptance of, or belief in, one objective reality.

This is inferred through language used by critical theorists such as use of the phrase "false consciousness". The goal of much critical theory is to raise consciousness of the participants about the forms of oppression under which they live in order to then act and transform the real world. Thus methodology is characterised as dialogic and transformative, rallying people around a new point of view in order that they can transform their situation.

Critical Theory is summarised as:

- *Ontology*: Realist (albeit critical realist)
- *Epistemology*: Monist/Subjectivist
- *Methodology*: Dialogic/Transformative

Constructivism.

Guba and Lincoln see sufficient risks within Critical Theory, in their view, that they discard it for Constructivism. In particular they see an uncomfortable closeness between Critical Theory's goal of transforming the world on the one hand, and Positivism's goal of predicting and controlling the world on the other. They also see it as failing to take sufficiently into account the theory-ladenness of fact, that the selection of one 'fact' over another presupposes a particular theoretical framework, and the ultimate failure of inquiry to establish unequivocally a given explanation or theory as ultimately true.

They argue for an ontological position of accepting no one 'reality out there', but rather an acceptance of multiple interpretations of any given event, with inquiry having the major task of working toward some consensus among the holders of different constructions. In other words, knowledge is a human construction, never certified as absolutely or ultimately true, but problematic and ever changing. This is the central challenge which constructivism offers to positivism. The underlying set of interrelated beliefs are summarised as follows:

- *Ontology*: Relativist. Realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, and dependent on their form and content on the persons who hold them.
- *Epistemology*: Monist/Subjectivist. Inquirer and inquired-into are fused into a single fused (monist) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two.
- *Methodology*: Hermeneutic/dialectic. Individual human constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.

Guba and Lincoln promote this as the preferred alternative to positivism because it puts humans at the centre of the inquiry process, is educational to all participants, it "tilts towards" ethical inquirer behaviour, makes scientists 'humans too', and is both empowering and emancipatory. It sees social change as resulting from changed constructions. By virtue of their participation, they argue, individuals are enfranchised to assist in determining what to do and how to do it.

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I found I could map the ontological and epistemological set of beliefs of constructivism onto various personal experiences. The epistemological position was similar to that implicit in various family therapy models. My experiences in working with Maori people had shown me glimpses of very different 'realities', as had various personal transcendental experiences. However, the methodological position left me unclear about how as a researcher I could actually go about setting up an inquiry process whereby such an "emancipatory" participation became possible.

I found myself hovering somewhere between critical theory and its preference for transformative action in the "real world", and constructivism and its preference for transformation in the mind of constructors, human beings. I resolved this at that stage by assuming that if constructivism allows for multiple realities then it should allow the positions it criticises as being potentially useful at certain times, as possibilities for seeing or interacting with the world at any one time. In other words, perhaps there are times when it is useful, transformative and so on to act 'as if' there were a certain 'truth' whether it be a truth about a political reality or about a particular objectivity. I recalled Bateson's (1979) concept of 'wisdom' as having an awareness of how all the elements in a system were connected. There seemed a resonance here in that the challenge posed by constructivism was to know when one was acting 'as if' something was 'true'. It seemed wise also to bear in mind critical theorists' critique of constructivism as running the risk of equally valuing all constructions and hence paralysing political motivation of groups who are socially, politically and economically disenfranchised. (e.g. Burman, 1990)

Nonetheless, in their earlier work, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed some implications for conducting inquiry which appeared as a more general set of guidelines at a conceptual level. Again, these seemed as if they would be useful to share with others entering any inquiry with me to help 'make the leap'.

Implications for New Paradigm Inquiry

- Research is carried out in the natural setting or context of the entity to be researched for the fullest understanding to be gained. This stems from an assumption that realities are wholes which cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts.
- People are the primary data gathering instruments.
- Tacit or intuitive knowledge is legitimised in addition to propositional (theoretical/analytical) knowledge. This allows for subtle nuances, different realities, and differing value bases to be appreciated.
- Qualitative methods are used in preference to quantitative, although not exclusively so. They are more sensitive to mutually shaping influences and value patterns.
- Purposive sampling or theoretical sampling is elected over representative or random sampling. This allows for a greater range of data to be exposed and also maximises the ability to develop grounded theory which takes account of local conditions.
- Inductive data analysis and interpretation allows investigator-respondent interaction to be made more explicit and accountable. Also this process is more likely to describe the setting and context and therefore make transferability to other settings easier. Conclusions are drawn in terms of the particulars of the individual case and any conclusions about broader applications are tentative.
- The guiding substantive theory emerges from or is grounded in the data because: no a priori theory could possibly encompass the multiple realities or frameworks that are likely to be encountered; the researcher wishes to approach transactions as openly and neutrally as possible; and a priori theory may not provide an idiographic fit to the situation encountered.

- The research design and boundaries of the inquiry are allowed to emerge in the interaction with other participants because insufficient can be known in advance about what will be encountered.
- Meanings and interpretations from the data are negotiated with those involved.
- A case study reporting mode is preferred over scientific or technical report mode, allowing for a richer and more authentic description which in turn allows for easier transferability to other settings.
- Special criteria for validity or trustworthiness are required because conventional criteria do not fit well with the assumptions of the new paradigm.

These felt as though they would be a solid set of principles to put into my researcher's tool kit, ones which satisfied my need to have theoretical frameworks which helped me make sense of and account for what 'I do', and ones which I anticipated might be helpful in supporting colleagues into joining me in a research venture into teamwork and practice. However, I was left with two related questions. If the emphasis in new paradigm inquiry is on people being the primary data gathering instruments, requiring multiple forms of knowledge, then how do individuals go about 'calibrating' the instrument and utilise tacit and intuitive knowledge. Secondly, how do I as a researcher go about setting up inquiry which is both empowering and emancipatory.

Knowledge - for action and in action.

The two approaches of Cooperative Inquiry and Collaborative Inquiry seemed to offer some answers to my two questions. Both take the epistemological approach that knowledge is gained in and for action, and that the primary purpose of inquiry is to produce well-informed action. Both offer explicit ways of developing collaborative relationships among those involved in inquiry. However, they differ in the ways data is collected and analysed

Cooperative Inquiry

In sketching out a philosophical basis for a new paradigm of inquiry, Heron (1981) challenges orthodox research methods as being inadequate for a science of persons on the grounds that they undermine the self-determination of their 'subjects'. He argues that what distinguishes the human person is the ability to choose how they will act, and the capacity to give meaning to their experiences and to their actions. It is this "self-directing ability" which he argues is undermined in conventional research, where subjects are 'other-directed' by the researcher and are systematically excluded from all choice about the subject matter of the research, the appropriate inquiry method, the creative thinking that goes into making sense of the data, and the communication of the results. He proposes that it is possible to conceive of an approach where all participants are self-directed. He use the term Co-operative Inquiry to describe an approach where the distinction between 'researcher' and 'subject' is dissolved to the extent that in its fullest form both are fully involved in the action and experience to be researched. This approach draws upon differing forms of knowledge and it is these I wish to highlight here.

He argues that empirical research on persons involves a subtle, developing interdependence between three forms of knowing - propositional knowledge, practical knowledge and experiential knowledge.

- *Experiential* knowledge is knowing an entity (person, thing, place, process, and so on) in sustained face to face encounter and interaction. It is often tacit or intuitive and comes from a perception of spatio-temporal wholes or gestalts which always transcends any set of propositions about the entity in question. It tells us of the interplay between the posited world and the presented world. It comes from sustained perception and interaction, construing and doing, with some degree of commitment to get to know the phenomena in question. It is knowledge through acquaintance.

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- *Propositional* knowledge is that from the realm of theory, analytical concepts and propositions (which in traditional science have come to assume the status of facts or truth). It is expressed in the form of statements and tells us of the researched world. Traditional research draws heavily on this form and it is the main form of knowledge accepted in our society. It comprises laws, theories, propositions, concepts and statements about facts. It may be latent and partially inform our perception the world. Research findings are typically expressed in this domain. It is 'knowing about'
- *Practical* knowledge is a set of skills, 'how to' proficiency or knack, whether physical or mental. It tells us of the world of action and in research activity is a set of interrelated skills which cannot be reduced to a set of written instructions. This form takes primacy in qualitative/experiential/action research.

At a later date, Heron (1992) goes on to extensively develop this extended epistemology and elaborates a fourth domain of 'presentational' knowledge.

- *Presentational knowledge* occurs through perceptual imagery whereby we become aware of metaphor, analogy, and symbol. Art and music are particular representations of this form of knowledge. Awareness of pattern connecting the elements of our awareness is the key outcome within this domain of knowledge and it forms a bridge between experiential and propositional forms.

In this later work Heron describes what he calls an 'up hierarchy', moving from experiential up through presentational and propositional to practical, each grounded in the preceding one. Although each form or domain will predominate at different stages of experiential research, practical knowledge takes primacy.

At the outset of my research journey, Heron's conceptualising of these forms of knowledge opened up the personal processes I had been partly aware of in practice, but for which I had no language or name. It legitimated intuitive and tacit knowledge, and in the naming of different forms allowed more explicit noticing and developing of them. It had been a regular experience for me in practice over the years that in difficult situations, where there was a mass of seemingly contradictory information, I would tend to redouble my efforts at making sense in propositional terms, being wary of trusting intuitive and tacit knowledge. Heron had provided me with a beginning language which legitimised further exploration and ownership of these domains of 'knowing'. As these domains are described in propositional form, they also provided a language for communicating more fully with others who might become involved in the research.

Reason (1988) develops Cooperative Inquiry considerably further. He defines it as:

"...a way of doing research in which all those involved contribute both to the creative thinking that goes into the enterprise - deciding what is to be looked at , the methods of inquiry, and making sense of what is found out - and *also* contribute to the action which is the subject of the research. Thus in its fullest form the distinction between researcher and subject disappears, and all who participate are both co-researchers and co-subjects. Cooperative Inquiry is therefore also a form of education, personal development and social action."(p.1)

Clearly, Cooperative Inquiry is not always possible in its fullest form, and within the methodology there are a range of possibilities in which participants can be involved in an authentically collaborative way at different stages in the inquiry process. Reason argues that the minimum criteria for a research strategy to claim the term Cooperative Inquiry are: that the involvement of all participants be openly negotiated; that all participants be involved in the creative thinking that is part of the research; and that relationships should aim to be genuinely collaborative.

This was appealing to me at a number of levels. Firstly, it directly addressed my discomfort about my first and only formal experience of research as excluding the participants from all but a very small part

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of the process, leaving them with very little gains from the endeavour. Secondly, it addressed my belief that effective mental health work involved change, at both personal and social levels. Thirdly, it laid out a clear methodology which gave me a framework as a beginning researcher for guiding the process and also for engaging colleagues whom I anticipated would also welcome this as a step into a new way of researching. It also had criteria for validity to answer questions I and colleagues would have on this topic

Fourthly, Cooperative Inquiry introduced me to the concept of authentic collaboration as a principle vehicle for conducting research. It highlighted the importance of negotiating the genuine involvement of participants at each stage according to interests, commitment and availability. The model seeks to create conditions in which authenticity of participation can be made explicit and attainable. This fitted with some of the values I held about multi-disciplinary teamwork and so as a methodology it had a degree of congruence with the area I wished to research and also with the possibility for developing professional practice.

Cooperative Inquiry involves the participants in recurring cycles of action and reflection which move through a number of stages. This appealed to me as a map for venturing into unfamiliar territory as a researcher, linking theory with practice. As a preliminary step the initiating researcher meets with interested participants to inform them about the methodology, its underlying principles and to outline the area of interest. From there the following cycles unfold.

- The researcher facilitates the group in discussing and agreeing on the exact focus of the research; what ideas and theories they bring to the inquiry; what kind of research action they will undertake to explore these ideas; how to observe, record, measure and otherwise gather their experience for further reflection. This stage is primarily in the realm of propositional or theoretical knowledge.
- Participants then take these decisions about research action into their professional work. They engage in what ever behaviour has been agreed, note the outcomes and record their discoveries. This may involve self observation, reciprocal observation of other members of the inquiry group or other agreed upon methods of recording experience. This stage is primarily in the realm of practical or 'how to' knowledge, involving skills and abilities.
- There follows a 'deepening' of the previous stage, where participants as far as possible bracket off any preconceptions or ideas they started with in the first stage and become fully immersed in their practice. They become deeply engaged with the subject of the inquiry, opening themselves to new experience and paying close attention to what is happening. This stage is primarily in the realm of experiential knowledge, or knowledge by encounter which is intuitive and holistic.
- Participants now return to reflect on their experience and make sense of it. This will involve revising and developing ideas and models they started with. This reflection will involve all forms of knowing. When this stage has been completed participants can then consider how to engage in further cycles of inquiry, systematically honing and refining ideas, practice and experience.

At the completion of an agreed upon number of cycles, the participants will have reached the point where they have finished 'making sense' and will wish to communicate their findings.

There were other distinguishing features relating to the practice of Cooperative Inquiry which caught my eye as connecting with the knowledge and interests I brought with me.

- *Participatory and holistic knowing:* We are each part of any system we are observing and hence participate in how events are framed or constructed. Holism is concerned with understanding the systemic whole, rather than studying the parts in isolation from each other.

- *Critical Subjectivity*: Developing a quality of awareness which seeks to bridge and integrate both subjectivity and objectivity, honouring individual experience and including this as part of the inquiry process. Such a quality of awareness would embrace all ways of knowing as outlined by Heron (1981).
- *Knowledge in Action*: Knowledge is formed in and for action, rather than in and for reflection.

I imagined that Cooperative Inquiry would provide a process whereby members of different disciplines could work with each other in inquiring into their own and each other's practice and explore the possibilities for teamwork. I saw this method as capable of carrying some of the questions I had at the outset of the research about teams, team working and my role within. The inquiry process also offered potential for making explicit some of the professional world views which inform practice and which I saw as critical to understanding and resolving some of the dilemmas about multi-disciplinary teamwork - as exemplified in the 'dance' metaphor in the earlier NZ story about my experiences in an acute psychiatric ward. However, these very issues raised questions for me about how to engage colleagues from different disciplines in such an inquiry. So far, in my new work setting, my observations of tensions and differences among members raised my anxiety about how I would be able to facilitate a Cooperative Inquiry group as initiating researcher. This anxiety was to pursue me for some time.

There were also questions for me about the 'making sense' phase of the inquiry process as the method itself does not offer specific means of data analysis (although Reason (1988b) describes a range of methods other researchers had used in this phase). However, at this stage I was more concerned about getting the inquiry under way and assumed that in any Cooperative Inquiry group the decision about the most appropriate means would be made within and by the group.

A final issue for me at this stage in relation to Cooperative Inquiry as a potential methodology was the actual practice of a 'critical subjectivity' and 'knowledge in action'. Although they were conceptually clear enough to me, and grounded in Heron's extended epistemology, the operationalising of them was less clear. I imagined that 'critical subjectivity' might be similar to what was referred to as an 'observer' position in some psychological therapies, a state of self awareness which the therapist adopted from time to time to monitor personal and interpersonal process. I had some experiential understanding of this but was interested in gaining a more sophisticated understanding of how this could be developed for research purposes. This personal reflexivity was to become a major challenge and point of learning for me as the research proceeded. In the meantime, Torbert's model of Collaborative Inquiry offered a potential framework for developing a more systematic means of achieving a 'critical subjectivity' and it is this to which I now turn.

Collaborative Inquiry.

Torbert (1981) was able to develop much further for me the concept of knowledge in and for action at the individual level of being both a researcher and practitioner. His model of an 'Action Science' which he termed Collaborative Inquiry seemed to me to provide some directions for how individual researchers could carry their research into their practice in the second and third stages of a Cooperative Inquiry.

Torbert starts from the position that scientific knowledge from traditional research is based on unilaterally controlled experimental conditions. This, he points out, is only one particular kind of social context and an "authoritarian" one at that. It fails to take into account that research subjects, students or colleagues and subordinates may have a different viewpoint from the researcher on what is important or at stake. In this context research is implicitly unjust.

Furthermore the knowledge gained from such a venture is a 'disembodied' knowledge which is focused away from the actor toward the external world where it is assumed there are simply facts which are there to be observed independent of the observer. So there are underlying assumptions about the nature of reality which traditional science fails to test in any systematic way.

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What the traditional models lack, he argues, are the qualities necessary to help us as actors increase the effectiveness and justice of our actions. Therefore he proposes that what we require is a kind of knowledge that we can apply to our own behaviour in the midst of ongoing events. This needs to be a type of knowledge which helps us inquire more effectively with others about our common purposes, and about how to produce outcomes congruent with such purposes. This knowledge should not be bounded by the immediate events under consideration but should take into account all information as potentially relevant. Torbert considers we should be able to respond justly to challenges or interruptions from events outside our immediate focus and inquire into their relevance for us.

To meet these requirements, Torbert proposes a model called Collaborative Inquiry, based on the assumptions that knowledge is always gained in action and for action, and that research and action are inextricably intertwined in practice. This model is an extension of earlier work done by Argyris (1976) and Argyris and Schön (1974) on leadership in organisations and the links between theory and practice in professional practice. Argyris and Schön showed that individuals seldom developed the necessary quality of attention to test out whether their purposes, strategies and actual behaviours are congruent with one another. They observed that, despite values espoused to the contrary, many individuals in business and professional organisations employed an interpersonal strategy they termed *Mystery-Mastery*. They characterised this strategy as narrow, goal-oriented and manipulative. It has four governing variables.

- Define goals and try to achieve them (participants rarely try to develop with others a mutual definition of purpose, nor do they open themselves to be influenced in their perception of the task at hand).
- Maximise winning and minimise losing (changing goals is seen as a sign of weakness).
- Minimise generating or expressing negative feelings (to do so is seen as ineptness, incompetence or lack of diplomacy - permitting others to do so is seen as a poor strategy).
- Be rational, objective and intellectual, and do not become emotional.

The outcomes of the mystery-mastery strategy are often, ironically, feelings of loss of control over use of time and feelings of being victimised by external pressures. The strategy also engenders competitive relationships and prevents any clarification of purposes or discovery of the extent to which participants can either work cooperatively towards shared purposes, work separately towards different but non-hostile purposes, or resolve conflicts among purposes. The result is often a sense of isolation and mutual mistrust. This strategy prevents participants from publically noting or personally acknowledging incongruities among purposes, strategies, practices and effects, thus preventing any learning from experience. So this strategy tends to lead to individual and organisational patterns which are self-sealing and defensive rather than self-correcting.

It was a strategy I recognised well at individual, team and organisational levels and one which I noted myself sometimes accommodating to, by adopting its tactics when strongly feeling its presence. A strong sense of personal unease highlighted its presence, as it contrasted strongly with my overall strategy in my work setting of 'joining with' and trying to meet people where they 'were at'.

Torbert seeks to take Argyris and Schön's work a step further by proposing an alternative model of practice which he terms an "Action Science" and which aims to develop "genuinely informed" action, increasing our effectiveness as either researchers or practitioners. To act in a genuinely informed manner, the acting system (be it individual or organisation) requires valid knowledge about the its own purposes and about the quality of interplay between itself and the outside world. This requires the cultivation of what Torbert terms an *interpenetrating attention* span which embraces the interplay back and forth between intuitive purposes (using intuitive knowledge), theoretical strategies (theoretical knowledge about options available), behavioural methodologies (behavioural and sensory knowledge) and external effects (empirical knowledge about effects of action on people/the system).

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This quality of attention can allow the development of "sensual awareness" and "supple behaviour" which enables the acting system to learn from experience. Valid knowledge can only be developed by an acting system to the extent that it examines incongruities between these four domains of experience. This may then lead to a science of reflection in action, or 'experiments in practice', as the acting system acts to inquire further into possible incongruities between the four territories of experience and seeks to align them more congruently (or live more awarely with the incongruities).

The concept of an interpenetrating attention span stood out to me at that stage as being the most interesting feature of Collaborative Inquiry. As with my reading of other theories and methodologies at the time, many features about conducting Collaborative Inquiry remained as 'fine print', only becoming salient or 'bold print' later on as the research progressed and as I was able to ground them in actual experience.

However, what I was able to read and see as directly relevant to beginning the research were his range of distinguishing features of "experiments in practice". Some of these carry assumptions which are similar to those in Naturalistic Inquiry. Those features of experiments in practice which were most salient for me were ones I saw as most challenging of the role of researcher in the old paradigm and which were most immediately challenging for me personally. I was aware that I had a part of me which liked to 'get it right' and go into situations 'knowing' as opposed to 'not knowing'. These features are as follows.

- Experiments in Practice.

- The structure and variables are not merely pre-defined but rather may change through dialogue between the initiating actor-researcher and others.
- 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 test assumptions and explicated as far as possible.
- The interest is as much in knowledge uniquely relevant to the particular time place and people of the experiment as in knowledge that is generalizable (this compares to Lincoln and Guba's concept of 'transferability')
- The ultimate criterion of whether a given action is aesthetically appropriate, politically timely and analytically valid is whether it yields increasingly valid data about the effectiveness of any acting system.
- The media of research are: interpenetrating attention; symbolic, ironic thinking and feeling capable of apprehending the issues at stake; action; collection, analysis and feedback of empirical data.

Collaborative Inquiry is described by Torbert as an experiential process occurring in a more or less distorted and incomplete fashion at any give moment. However, at this stage of my reading and understanding this was somehow in 'fine print'.

Collaborative Inquiry also provided a further bridge from practice into research in that it spoke to my interest in family systems therapy. In this field there are many contradictions between the level of thinking about therapy and the level of practice of therapy. At the level of 'thinking about', the ideas of Gregory Bateson were extremely influential. His analogy of 'mind' as the pattern which connects the elements in our awareness (1979) contained within it challenges to our commonly held conceptions of self. He maintained that 'self' was an artefact of how we chose to punctuate the pattern which connects, and did not have a separate existence in the sense of being a foundational reality independent of the knower. In the process of operationalising his ideas at the level of therapy practice, much got lost in the translation. So the concept of self and the individual remained muted. Yet, implicitly, the use of 'self'

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by the therapist in the more active forms of therapy was the main influence for change. As a result, there is a lot at the level of 'performance' written in the literature, but little at the level of self as an instrument for collecting data and making sense.

However, this has changed more recently as constructivist and social constructionist ideas (e.g. Gergen, 1985) have infiltrated the field, with the thinking of the therapist being 'part of the field'. There is a return of interest in the individual and the self, but the emphasis is on knowledge for-action rather than in-action. The thinking of the therapist is taken into account in hypothesising about the nature of meaning and relationships before and after sessions, but not in-action. In Heron's terms, the emphasis is on propositional and practical knowledge, not on experiential or presentational. It seemed to me that Torbert may have something to offer in terms of knowledge in-action. This then provided another bridge into the field of research from my base as a practitioner.

These then were the salient features from my reading of the new paradigm research ideas and methodologies at the early stages. There were many intersecting features between Naturalistic Inquiry, Cooperative Inquiry and Collaborative Inquiry, but through reading and discussions at Bath I came to understand at a propositional level that there were distinguishing features, that they asked different questions.

Distinguishing features of the models

Distinctions between the above models became apparent from reading and from discussion with fellow researchers at Bath.

- *Rowan's Cycle of Research* is part of a dialectical paradigm for research which seeks to locate the researcher fully in the phenomenology of the research process, and asks questions about the awareness of the dialectical relationship between the researcher and the phenomena in question (including the self). It seeks to reduce alienation between the knower and the known and to bridge the old paradigm with the new.
- *Naturalistic Inquiry* emphasises knowing about the world and its concepts of validity or 'trustworthiness' come from high quality awareness of epistemological considerations.
- *Cooperative Inquiry* makes assumptions about people as being self-directing and concerns itself with authentic collaboration. Its concepts of validity are embedded in the processes necessary to establish and maintain authentic collaboration, harnessed with the co-researchers/co-subjects personal process or 'quality of knowing' which draws on all of Heron's four ways of knowing. Its primary data are those collected through action and then subsequently analysed both individually and collectively.
- *Collaborative Inquiry* has a concern with timely action and its primary source of data is through 'on-line' self awareness in the midst of action, with less of an emphasis on more systematic collection of data and subsequent analysis. Validity comes through seeking congruence between the four territories of experience (purpose, strategy, behaviour and outcome) or living awarely with incongruities.

In following chapters I will describe how I began using these ideas and what I took from them as I made further steps into the research field. At this point I would like to make a narrative comment. Rowan's (1981) conceptualisation of the cyclical nature of inquiry appealed as a more generic description of the research process. Although in retrospect this model clearly includes my early questions and dilemmas as a legitimate part of the inquiry process, and ought to have alerted me to the possibility that I was at that stage 'inquiring', I was unable to see this. In my view at the time, as I had not yet entered the 'project' phase, I had not yet 'begun the research' and so continued to stumble for some time yet. This was not the only occasion in which I was 'standing outside' the process, not including my day to day experiences reflexively within the field of inquiry. There was a contradiction

which persisted for some time which went as follows - despite my interest in and practice of systemic therapies, as a researcher I was still unawarely located in the mainstream paradigm as an observer who was not applying theories and models about human experience reflexively to his own experience. Thus for some time I was operating in a frame of 'I have not begun the research yet'.

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