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NEW ENTERPRISE LEARNING

a portrayal of ***being*** *in business*

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Thesis for Master of Education by Research

Date of submission
October 2001

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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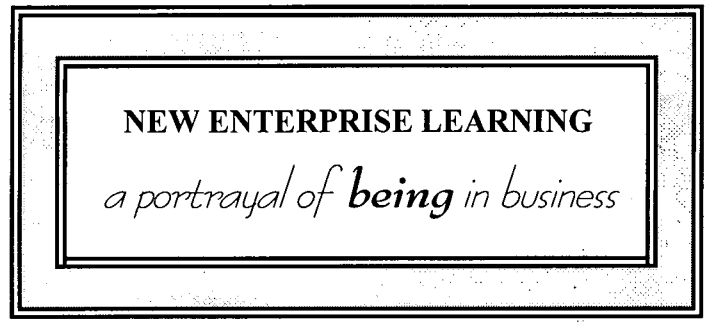

Abstract

New Enterprise Learning, which is the title of this study, seeks to explore experiences of people learning to form and start small, new enterprises in which the learner-owner-operator becomes self employed. The learning is viewed from the learners' perspectives. The title of the research, *New Enterprise Learning*, is deliberately open to interpretation. 'New Enterprise *Learning*' principally includes researching people learning, as they form and start small, new enterprises (businesses) in which they become self employed. The word *new* identifies specific early stages in the development of a new business, summed up as new enterprise formation. Additionally the research interprets '*New* Enterprise Learning' to reflect what will be brought into the light, in researching the learning people undertake to form and start small, new enterprises. People with small, new enterprises at this newly forming stage are those whose learning is researched.

The attention of *New Enterprise Learning* moves away from the dominant discourse of training and delivery, improving employment, economic development and small business management. It situates the inquiry at the heart of business improvement initiatives, with people. Further, *New Enterprise Learning* is explicitly interested in the process of people coming to know. At the core of the inquiry the research asks ***How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?*** This is an important contrast with many texts that discuss learning in workplaces that are nevertheless more concerned with outcomes of learning.

Using constructionist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective, the processes of people learning to start small, new enterprises are explored qualitatively with phenomenological research methodology. Viewed through the lens of these research elements, the study seeks to explore, with the learner, their engagement in experiences in and from which they learn to form and start small, new enterprises. Portrayal with graphic and interpretive dialogic reflections and qualitative theme analysis are used as method.

Despite the attention in both funds and effort put into business improvement, all with a view to people learning somewhere at some stage, it is suggested that *New Enterprise Learning* is possibly the first research of its type. The hard question, "how" do people learn, is asked and a different means by which to respond to this question has been explored.

Emerging from the research is an expressive text that is an absolute polarity to numbers, measurement and conventional wisdom of economic rationalism. The words of this text seek to rouse and evoke an atavistic rapport, they enable reconnection to and recovery of an earlier type of understanding of business. The text resonates with an often heard, but seldom noticed, expression: *being in business*. The text also has the potential to connect with a wider audience of people who are starting out on their own, people who have been alienated from employment and work, as a result of counting only the bottom line. *New Enterprise Learning* has found an answer to the question it asked. It has perhaps uncovered fertile ground for a new perspective on more questions relating to people, learning and small business.

Table of contents

	Page
Abstract	
Table of contents	i
Abbreviations	v
List of figures	v
List of tables	v
List of photographs	v
Declaration	vi
Acknowledgments	vii

Section 1
INTRODUCTION 1 - 7
A short guided tour through New Enterprise Learning
The research focus and question
Who's new or what's new?
New enterprise formation
The researcher
A note on methodology
Thesis plan

Section 2
RESEARCHER'S LEARNING AND HEURISTIC 8 - 25
In and out of Africa
Introduction
Africa - the grounding safari
Australia - employment and work
Learning and education as an adult - towards a personal philosophy

Section 3
SMALL, NEW ENTERPRISES 26 - 45
New enterprise formation displayed
Enterprise or business?
Small business research and learning
How big an enterprise?
Small business vital statistics
Small Business Management Competency Standards
Reviewing the learning literature
Exposing the gap
The paucity of like research, the opportunity for New Enterprise Learning
Adults learning
Adults learning at work
Focussing on people
Highlighting human values

Section 4
METHODOLOGY **46 - 56**
Phenomenology's perspective
A people inclusive way of seeing learning
Ethical considerations

Section 5
METHOD **57 - 69**
Data generation
Research credibility
Recruitment
Ethics
Interviewing
Locating and generating portrayal display sequences
Working the data for themes
Trustworthiness

Contents continues over the page ...

Section 6
EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING TO FORM AND START SMALL, 70 - 123
NEW ENTERPRISES
Introduction
Function and relationship of each stage
Foreground
Portrayals

Foreground
The people, the times, their businesses and some key events
Alexandra
Alexandra
Your own island in a storm
Something from nothing, apparently
Margaret
Margaret
Opening the doors
Invasion
Vignettes
People's own perspectives of learning to form and start small, new enterprises

Portrayals (92)
Alexandra's experiences - portrayal 1
Map reading
Changing place, placing change
Trekking
Human dignity and statistical nicety
Letting me hear myself
Prospecting for learning
Diary reflection
Small is big
Margaret's experiences - portrayal 2
Map reading
Breaking through
Trekking
Open gates
Diary reflection
Corresponding with the world
In-side-out
It, learning

Bringing the portrayals together
Intuiting
Lived body, space, time and relations
Catching perceptions, conceptions in the making
Distilling
Connectedness and Unexpectedness ... like dancing
Like dancing

Section 7
WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXPLORATION 124 - 130
Reconciling things and being

References 131 - 135

Bibliography 136 - 147

Appendices 148 - 152

Table A1 Specialists in small business research, research methodology and others
1. Letter of invitation
2. Information sheet
3. Consent form

Abbreviations

Initials	Title
VET	Vocational education and training
ASF	Australian Standards Framework
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework

List of figures

Section.fig no	Title
1.1	Matrix of type of business person and stage of small business
3.1	Stages of business development
4.1	Langenbach's continuum
6.1	Structure of foreground and portrayal

List of tables

Section.table no	Title
3.1	Criteria for defining small business size and total of people employed
3.2	Summarised features of the research shown as a dichotomy
4.2	Crotty's research elements, the string of elements for this thesis and their implication

List of photographs

Section.photo no	Title
6.1	" 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 " - photograph of whole painting
6.2	Enlargement of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 "
6.3/4	Enlargement of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 "

Declaration

Thesis Title: New Enterprise Learning

Candidate's name: Teresa Arnold

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own research, that it does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material submitted for a degree or diploma in any University and that it does not contain any materials previously published, written or produced by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed 

Date 22 January 2002

Acknowledgments

My sincerest thanks go to the people who started small, new enterprises. It could be said that without you there would have been no possibility of carrying out this research. But such a statement is but a pale reflection of acknowledgment, that this work is your work, as much as, if not more than, it is mine. Amidst all the attention that a small new enterprise demands, it is you who dug deep, to share your life's work, often to talk of things that do not, in the normal run of things, see the light of day. You have privileged me in sharing such views and ways of your lives. In so doing, it has enlightened mine. Thank you.

Thank you also to my family and the friends, colleagues and finally, but not least, supervisors who have borne and endured my questioning and talk of business and economics, learning, learning and more learning. Thank you.

Teresa Arnold
October 2001

NEW ENTERPRISE LEARNING

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

A short guided tour through New Enterprise Learning

The research focus and question

New Enterprise Learning, the title of this research, seeks to explore experiences of people who are learning to form and start small, new enterprises. Actual, lived experiences of this learning are viewed from learners' perspectives. As learners' perspectives of lived learning experiences, *New Enterprise Learning* seeks to explore to better understand how this learning happens as a process experienced, rather than learning as an outcome. Thus, as an attempt to better understand how this learning happens, the question posed is ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"***

The focus is people and their experiences of their learning as they form and start their own small, new enterprises. In a world of large, established businesses, international business, globalisation and organisational learning, this study goes in a different, seemingly opposite direction. It is interested in the learning of individual people who are learning to form and start small, new enterprises.

Such "coming to know" operates within the thesis in several ways. Firstly, the coming to know of the people taking part in the research - their experience of their learning to form and start small, new enterprises. Secondly, patterns of coming to know in my own life, these contribute to the backdrop of the current work. Finally, there is a coming to know as a wider understanding of learning to be in business that is explored at the end of this thesis.

In the sub-sections following, features that give this study its definition are elucidated. There is further purpose for this than straightforward clarification. Beyond also bringing in defining features not included in the title, the further purpose is to draw attention to and thus avoid assumptions that can often be made in this area of work. In so doing, the potential of and interest inherent in the research area are also brought both out into the open and to the fore. Firstly, clarification with respect to the people involved is discussed.

Who's new or what's new?

This study concerns people forming small, new enterprises. Figure 1.1 depicts the research environment, what is going on and with whom. The differentiation provided by the matrix gives clarity that explicitly illustrates the environment of this study, where "newness" can often inadvertently and variously be allowed to slip-slide between a person and/or a business.

The top, horizontal axis concerns business people and their prior expertise or not in managing a business; either they have experience in managing businesses, or they are novices. The left hand, vertical axis concerns the business itself and whether it is an existing or established business, or is newly forming and in its early stages. The matrix clearly shows both business people and businesses each have "newness" and "oldness", with four different combinations resulting.

In the current work, the specific focus is the shaded window 4. In the top horizontal axis, the interest is people who are new to managing a business, that is they are novices. In the left vertical axis, the interest is businesses that are new, that is they are being formed and starting to be operated.

Thus in response to "Who's new or what's new?", both are. The thesis concerns the learning of people who are new to managing a business and they are also managing the formation and start up of small, new enterprises. It is suggested learners' perspectives of the experiences of their learning and their being new to managing a newly forming small enterprise are each individually important. A closer look at the newly forming business, new enterprise formation, is now taken.

Business stage	Business people: Experienced	Business people: Novice
Existing	**1** People *experienced* in managing a business, managing operations of an *existing* business	**2** People *new* to managing a business, managing operations of an *existing* business
Forming	**3** People *experienced* in managing a business, managing the *formation* of a new enterprise	**4** Focus of research: People *new* to managing a business, managing the *formation* of a new enterprise

FIGURE 1.1

MATRIX OF TYPE OF BUSINESS PERSON AND STAGE OF SMALL BUSINESS

New enterprise formation

There is a large quantity of literature on starting new businesses and business planning, with many books found in everyday book stores, for example Sampson and Burkitt (1994), Dunn (1994), Bangs (1996), Blackwell (1992), Vogelaar (n.d.), Martin (1988), Bangs and Halliday (1997), SBDC (1989), and Goldstein (1995). By and large most texts make one or more assumptions. Such assumptions include that skills can be easily and quickly learned (for example accounting, cash flow planning, business law) or bought in via specialists; financial resources are not limited; the idea for a business has been feasibility tested; or the scale and size of operations are indeterminate. It is as if these texts are time insensitive, accessing finance is taken as a given or as if a business can easily or spontaneously be created.

With the exception of the work of A. Gibb (1987), which is detailed later in Section 3, little popular or academic writing seems to explicitly acknowledge a gestation-like stage of forming and starting new businesses from "raw ingredients", which at times can also need to run pragmatically in relative "slow motion". In the current work, forming and starting a small, new enterprise includes this gestation-like, formation stage, actually starting operations - that is actually "opening up" - and the first two years of operations. The stage of new enterprise

formation is delineated to differentiate this early stage from the usual interpretations of business development and its cycles of growth and renewal in the operations of a business whose existence is established. The current research, with its focus on new enterprise formation as just defined, may offer a useful contribution to maintaining later viability, establishing later growth and ultimate business success, through and beyond the two year, critical milestone.

Thus far learning as a focus, the person's prior experience, or not, and the new enterprise formation stage of a business have been briefly introduced to begin to delineate the research project. The type of business, that is small, has also been mentioned in the opening paragraph. Further definition of smallness is spelt out later, in Section 3. An influence of the wider context on the current research is the next feature to be outlined.

The researcher

This research grew out of my work in an organisation founded on social justice and delivering services with care at the forefront. Over decades, employment and unemployment were the *raison d'être* of the organisation. "Social justice" and "care" were words in the slogan celebrating a significant organisational anniversary. These long held organisational values were at odds with those rampant all around it. It was a time when government economic ideology was eating away at many services, for example education, health and local government in the state of Victoria in Australia.

My employment position was titled Enterprise Facilitator. My role was part of a small team whose overall purpose was to find *new* pathways to employment with self employment as the prime focus; multipliers of new employees in such new small businesses and economic development were distant but defined outcomes. In the Victorian rural centre in Australia, where I worked, unemployment rates at the time were in the mid teens.

In fulfilling the employment role as a business educator, I saw a need for a new response to learning for self employment. A tacit concern for narrow economic models of what is happening to business indicators, that are ultimately outcomes of what people have learned to do, as opposed to what is really going on with the people learning in business, was beginning to emerge. Also, in part, this concern fed off working with people who were new to self employment and who did not yet have a business "opened up". These people reported little

value in learning about what seemed, to them, theoretical business or economic stuff that was remote from practical issues they were at the time confronting.

Already clearly evident however, was my concern regarding competency based training being the sole means to recognise people learning in employment. What could be done that would better meet the needs of the people wanting to form and start small, new enterprises in which to become self employed, and which would also meet the formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) system requirements and accommodate my commitments and concerns? Two initiatives emerged: an accredited small business training program and a small business finance scheme. They are discussed in a later part of Section 3.

Getting to grips with how people experience their learning to form and start small, new enterprises involved the use of portrayals of their learning experiences. A note on the overall research methodology follows; it finalises the introduction of key attributes that together make up the research work in *New Enterprise Learning*.

A note on methodology

The epistemological foundation for this study is constructionism with a theoretical perspective of interpretivism. A phenomenological interpretive research methodology is used, with portrayal of graphic and interpretive dialogic reflections and qualitative theme analysis. In the current work constructionism conveys the sense of meaning formed by people as they engage in and out of their interactions with other human beings and their social world (Crotty 1998, p. 42). Interpretivism, as the theoretical perspective, and drawing further on Crotty (1998, p. 67), 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world'. The phenomenological interpretive methodology provides a means by which prevailing understandings of things are set to one side, so that they can be revisited afresh. In this way an exploration for the possible emergence of new meaning, which enhances former meanings, can take place (Crotty, p. 78).

This thesis follows the recommendations of A. Gibb (1995, pp. 19 - 20), Carson and Gilmore (1997) and Cahill (1996), who suggest moving outside positivist methods in small business research. Thus, the research adopts a methodology described via Crotty's scaffold (Crotty 1998). Crotty's scaffold takes research back to its epistemological foundations and forward to congruent methods, steps that ground the research in practical research action.

Through this methodology selected from the scaffold in Crotty (1998), the thesis seeks to explore new aspects of small business: learners' perspectives and experiences of their learning to form and start small, new enterprises and learning as a process experienced, rather than learning as an outcome.

The thesis closes with melding influences in the inquiry. A metamorphic passage that transports and reconnects abstracted, conceptualised learning, learning as *things,* with learning as lived experience, learning as *being*, or learning *to be* in business. In so doing this study aims to build a fuller understanding, to complement and enhance existing knowledge about people learning in small, new enterprises.

To summarise, the key features of the research are:

- learning experiences and the learners' perspectives;
- small, new enterprises, and
- the means of conducting the research, phenomenology.

Points of interest in each key feature have been briefly pointed out. Each key feature alone is likely notable. It is the conjunction of these key features however, that thus generates particular synergy and special interest.

Finally, to complete this introduction a plan of the thesis follows.

Thesis plan

In the current work, *New Enterprise Learning*, understanding of how things are normally understood is brought into question. Paradigmatic thinking associated with familiar subject matter is made problematic.

In the next section, Section 2, the thesis proceeds with a researcher autobiography. It paints a picture of travel and a portfolio career covering scientific research, health service management, self employment and education. The autobiography outlines the stance of the researcher; it shows an evolution of interests and concerns and tells of insights into education,

within which the germ of the current work is visible. This section, Section 2, together with the next section, Section 3, provide quite different, but complementary, research background.

In Section 3 the two main areas of study - small, new enterprises and learning - are covered. New enterprise formation, as a central research feature briefly outlined above, is elaborated. A selection of small business literature is introduced, including some of the Australian Bureau of Statistics data on small businesses; consideration of the location of the current work with respect to vocational education and training is also given. Having clarified the nature of the small, new enterprises involved in the study, the literature with respect to learning is reviewed.

Whilst a special point of interest in the current work is the conjunction of small, new enterprises, learning and the method by which the study is undertaken, methodological issues and the literature related to it are nevertheless treated separately in the next section.

Section 4 concerns Methodology. It incorporates a major part of the review of literature. The literature covered first concerns learning and education; it is followed by the literature as it connects with learning and small business. Section 5 details Methods - the procedures and techniques used to gather and explore collected data, steps that ground the methodology in practical research action.

Section 6 contains the portrayals of the peoples' experiences of learning to form and start small, new enterprises. It phenomenologically explores and expressively reveals what this learning is really like. With graphic and interpretive dialogic reflections, the portrayals seek to reveal the lived experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises. Using phenomenological exploration of the question posed - ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** - perceptions emerge of what the learning was like.

The thesis concludes with Section 7 'Wider understanding of the exploration'. The findings to emerge from the portrayals are discussed in the light of features of phenomenology as described by Sokolowski (2000). This section seeks not so much to explain, but rather to showcase and display what has come to light in the research.

Section 2

RESEARCHER'S LEARNING AND HEURISTIC

In and out of Africa

Introduction

An autobiography forms part of the current work for a number of main reasons. The research as a whole concerns researching *with* people, or participants. A conversation that displays myself and my learning in coming to know, alongside the conversations (interviews) with the participants, is a contribution to the data of the current work. The autobiography illustrates the origins of my adult educator - community developer - action researcher style; it reveals the evolution of my stance and orientation within the research. As a reflective piece, the autobiography particularly focuses on events and experiences over time, which, as for the participants in the research, have stood out to me and from which I have learned and come to know. It picks up and looks at landmarks in a life map.

This autobiography has three parts. In 'Africa - the grounding safari', an African childhood through to first working years is told. It represents roughly the first half of my life and is essentially chronological. This sub-section takes on a patchwork-like form, but whose form is revealed as the autobiography progresses.

The second and third parts cover the second half of my life. This period is located in Australia. Two broad themes are covered: 'Australia - work, employment and service' and 'Learning and education as an adult - towards a personal philosophy', they follow a looser chronology.

In the first of these two sub-sections, patterns of work are displayed and some dispositions and values begin to emerge. In the third, final part, the contributions of earlier sections come together in terms of how they have informed where and how I now see myself as educator and, at the same time, learner. As a learner undertaking the current work, changes in my life are displayed. My change and development illumine the change to do something different in the form of the current research. Yet, at the same time they are nested changes. Within this

last part, the biography concludes with a personal philosophy, as best it is known to me at present.

I have returned to this autobiographical section as the research and writing draw to a close. The intent of this return is to add "foot notes" that emphasise and lend prominence and consistency to the purposes of the autobiography in the current work. This applies in particular to earlier times of the autobiography where connections are less self evident.

The "foot notes" are displayed alongside paragraphs that tell of significant points, in a format now shown in this final introductory paragraph.

Africa - the grounding safari

My parents, with my two elder sisters and elder twin brothers, went to South Africa from England a few years after the end of the second world war. They sought a new post war life and a move to warmer climates. With four children under four years old, Mum and Dad sought out a life without lingering war rationing. Mum's family and grandparents had a tradition of life in the colonies. Dad like his Father, Grand Father and Great Grand Father was a vet in private practice. Dad with his family had fled the Irish uprising in 1921. His family were Royalist Protestants, a risky business in southern Ireland. His father's maid tipped off my Grandfather that he would be killed that night. They left in the clothes in which they were standing to go to Wales. As children we later visited Dad's Irish haunts on many occasions. At the time I was not aware of how he had departed Ireland in his childhood, the details only emerged in my own adulthood.

World wide travel for varied reasons had been part of life in several generations of my family. Travel across seas and through different countries of the world for me and my family was also something we came to know well. I was born in South Africa before apartheid had become enshrined in law. Mum's Father had returned to India, where he was born, with Mum's mother. Grandfather on my mother's side had been in the Indian Army during and after the first world war. He returned to India to be a part in the transition of India to independence. So Granny and Grandfather on Mum's side were in India whilst Mum and Dad were in South Africa. Granny flew from India to South Africa to be with Mum when I was born in 1949 - I have the air ticket of her journey.

By 1953 though, we were all back in England. India was independent and South Africa was on a tortuous pathway of apartheid and growing exile. Apartheid particularly troubled my Mother. Mum did not want to raise a family in a political environment she knew was not right.

After 14 years back in England and a new young brother, my secondary schooling was at a turning point. With Mum and Dad both in their forties we returned to Africa; all my elder sisters and brothers were at universities in England. The destination this time was Kenya. In 1966 Kenya was also newly independent. Rather than private practice, Dad took a United Nations job. He was to teach Kenyans to be veterinary nurses, pending a time when there would be greater numbers of fully qualified Kenyan vets. Mid way through his career Dad became an educator.

The nature of Mum and Dad's disposition and feeling towards African people started appearing to me as early as I can remember. Africans were people just like us. Dad loved to tell the story of my eldest sister when she saw her first African person. To me it is as much about Dad. A good Irish story teller, Dad could spin it out, but its message is short and simple. He had wondered what his children would say when they saw people who looked different. They were flying from London to Capetown. It was a two day flight in 1948 with no night flying. The night was spent in west Africa. In the morning they had been in London, surrounded by Europeans, by the evening they were in Africa surrounded by Africans. My eldest sister's comments at the bottom of the aeroplane steps were: 'Daddy, he's not got on any shoes!' My sister today tells me, although a mere four years old, no shoes is what stood out, not that the people looked different. Dad's love of this story, its simplicity and a truthfulness, that people are people wherever they live and whatever their circumstances, has always stood out.

This story lives on in my life, not only as a family story. More significantly, it lives on in a belief in a need to appreciate people for who they simply are. It guides me in facilitating learning and manifests as respect for how and what others learn, with these then informing me. My development of a different type of small business course, but nonetheless nationally accredited, was as a result of learners informing me - the course is discussed shortly. Learners' responses also fuelled my decision to undertake the current work.

Whereas peers at the boarding school I went to in England chose not be at school in Kenya - along with many other overseas countries - I chose otherwise. We returned to Africa in 1966, for my final years of secondary school. This period is perhaps what stands out the most for me in my childhood.

What to do about school was a priority. Mum, Dad and I ended up choosing a convent where most of the teachers were nuns; there were many non Catholic students including Sikhs and Muslims. This seemed to be a bigger cultural change than changing continents. The change was nothing to do however with a religious side of things. Rather it was the education. The school could not officially offer me all the subjects I wanted to do. I wanted to do chemistry, botany and zoology for university entry into zoology, they offered only chemistry and biology. The problem was solved by me doing the extra work to "separate" biology into botany and zoology and the teacher would help wherever she could.

The school year in Kenya is like that in Australia, it runs with the calendar year. England has its school year break mid calendar year in Australia's winter. So when it came to leave Kenya at short notice I realised that I would be back in England in time for a new school year in September. The problem was that my finishing exams were normally to be held just after I left Kenya. However if I took the exams of a different examination board, still in Kenya, I could line up myself with the English school year. I sat exams for what should have been two years work after only 18 months work. I passed botany and zoology that I had taught myself with some help via doing biology and some extra attention from the teacher. Chemistry that I took as a normal school subject I failed. I still chuckle, as did the nun who taught me chemistry, at "teaching myself" and passing and failing what I was taught. This *in*dependence, from being taught by a teacher, was not to be the first and only.

It has taken my own move to an educating role to more fully understand the significance of this experience, of not needing to be taught in order to learn. Reminding myself of this never fails to brighten up my prospects when something is weighing on me. I find it heart rending when I encounter a teacher dependency; such affect, though, is a salient reminder to listen carefully to what the issues really are for the other person and that people are different. Careful listening, other than the facts of spoken words, is epitomised in phenomenology and is vital to the intent of the current work.

My African life experiences are foremost in my childhood. My experience of Africa with the influences of my parents is summed up with "There are ways you help people and ways you don't, particularly where there are differences in culture, resources and power." These days I feel this strongly and struggle to avoid dissonance and ensure that what I say and do reflect this position. It is not always easy to get it right. With Dad continuing in a teaching role, we went on to call Zambia home, before returning again to England in 1972.

My African safari was not limited to African Africa. After university, where I managed a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Zoology, I knew I wanted to continue my travels. I did a six month secretarial course that would support my travel habits more flexibly than a degree in Zoology. In the last year living in the northern hemisphere I worked in Algeria in a provincial centre for three months (prior to Algeria I also completed a three month placement in what was then communist Bulgaria). This was Arabic Africa where we spoke French. Africa is such a diverse continent, yet people who have not been there speak of it as if the whole continent is one country. So, counting my birth in Africa, Algeria was my fourth spell of living in Africa. None were tourism-based visits to that continent.

Starting noticeably in Algeria and increasingly over time, I have come to appreciate diversity. This is not a straight forward or simple diversity, a diversity of contrast or fixed polarities. Rather it is a diversity where some people tend to see things being all different, others tend to see things being all the same and others again switch easily in and out of difference and sameness; it is a diversity characterised by a state of flux and choice.

With the benefit of hindsight aided by phenomenology, I now appreciate diversity as the importance of a person's perspective, the vantage point from which they view their world. Equally, it is now also profound appreciation of the limitations of the means of seeing in my first chosen career as research scientist. I can remember thinking, as a child, if I can get my hands on lots of this knowledge that teachers and science give me, I will know plenty and everything will be set. No longer is it what I know, rather it is now how I can choose to know. It is the means of and what becomes knowable with phenomenology that connects so well with getting to grips with the experiences that are the focus of the current work.

Most nights, as the sun set over a north stretching tentacle of the Sahara Desert, I stood on my fourth floor verandah to enjoy a cool night breeze off the Mediterranean. One night, late in November 1974, I heard on a world service radio transmission that from January 1975 entry to Australia would require a visa and a return ticket. I elected to spend Christmas 1974 on home leave. December saw me resign both my overseas posting and my London based employer. I walked out of head office, down the road to the head office of British Airways and purchased a single ticket to Melbourne. I packed my bags again and sent other bulkier belongings to a sister to be forwarded at a later date.

Australia - employment and work

My first job in Australia was conducting fresh water research for the Environment Protection Authority in Melbourne. Whilst a scientific background had been useful working as an administrator in a technical engineering environment, this was my first job really using my degree. I was investigating what was contributing to some of the earlier significant outbreaks of blue green algae. It was 1975.

To me there seemed to be some straight forward responses that could ameliorate the problem of blue green algal blooms. The purpose of this point is not to become involved in debate of scientific validity. Rather, the recommendations I made at the end of 1975 have taken more than twenty years to become accepted practice.

This was not the first time I had campaigned for green issues. As a young teenager in the early 1960s in England, before returning to Africa, my Dad and I were activists to stop the use of DDT, dieldrin, aldrin and other related pesticides. Dad was concerned for their persistence in the food chain. As a vet he had had to investigate and to report unprecedented animal deaths when contamination of waterways happened as a result of leakage from premises of pesticide manufacturers.

Last year, nearly 40 years later, the local newspaper, that is still published, tracked down and contacted my father in Australia about his earlier work. There had been higher than normal rates of a particular cancer in the area and authorities were wondering if there were links. Dad is much older now and unable to participate in this sort of dialogue and work. I do not know what became of the inquiry.

The work on blue green algae and the pesticide campaign, was not just green issues, they were both well ahead of their times. It took decades before countries started banning DDT and its family of pesticides, and further decades to complete the ban. Better management of blue green algae has been started, but more still remains to be done.

The above flashback to earlier times (the sixties), before coming to Australia, is included as it is the first of a string of work, employment and service where I felt a consuming passion at the time. It was however a time where it seemed there were few like me, the dawn of an issue.

Is the current work another dawn? Could it be one day, that phenomenology is more widely used to better understand how learning and experience work together?

Another case, that followed some time after the blue green algae (the seventies), was when I was working in regional health services management in the 1980s. People from other centres used to comment about how much our small centre seemed to achieve in the time we had, where several staff were half time, and within the budget we had.

I remember drawing a representation of the organisation, its structure, where different responsibilities lay and how we made operational decisions; strategic decisions were made by the board based on recommendations formulated by everyone and presented to them. I remember the look of confusion and disbelief of the small group of people, from outside the centre, listening at the time. At the time I was not sure about their reaction.

After resigning some time later with a major onslaught of frustration, I undertook some formal management training. I slowly began to understand the confused looks of disbelief. I began coming to terms with my frustration with strategic decisions falling short of our expectations. I felt an embarrassment when some staff wept as they told me they had learned so much whilst they worked with me, more than with anyone else at other times, as they left to go onto new jobs with significant prospects or promotions. An understanding of what I was doing in the eighties continued to emerge over a number of years. Occasionally, still remaining pieces of the jigsaw fall into place, sometimes pieces are even reworked.

What we had unintentionally developed in the early 1980s is what some people call project or work-teams. These highly participatory work-teams involved different combinations of the

same people coming together for different purposes at different times. It was more like a fluid collaboration in which different paramedics retained their core specialism, but mixed and matched wherever possibility allowed. Staff were invariably enthusiastic. They commented on how differently the place ran and how they enjoyed the variety, responsibility and rights that they had not experienced elsewhere.

I learned in this role the impact the four traditional tenets of management - planning, organising, leading and controlling - have on the work people undertake. Particularly I learned the value of managing levels of control needed in different situations, where often little control is needed when responsibilities and rights were well matched between the person and situation. I have since come to better understand the value of keeping decision-making and action as close together as possible and the connection this has to capacity, capability and willingness to learn from the experiences that people have, when they decide *and* act on *their* decisions.

To this, I can now add that I have learned, from other people learning with me, that learning cannot be controlled, there are no real boundaries that can even be put up to channel or guide learning. Knowledge is power, true; but also being able to choose the means by which to come by it is the real buzz (not that more power is important). I dream of the freedom that knowing how could bring, if only it could be more widely shared. I think many people do know this - about how - but do not see easier, lower risks ways to put such choice into action. This is echoed in what the research participants have recently said to me. It is summed up in, "If only more people could listen as you have and understand how phenomenology enables us to know. The way life is dominated by single right answers puts anything else, including myself, at risk."

This management role was however only part-time. I had preschool children at the time. In fact, before taking up this regional health service job, I had started up my own small business based on value adding to a market garden that used to be on the property we owned. At the beginning of the eighties I was making gourmet foods for local speciality outlets and sale at markets. I discontinued it after more than ten years, when I committed my career path to workplace training.

By now it was the start of the 1990s. The labour government idea of a "clever country" caught my imagination. I was completing a two year, part-time management certificate and was familiar with the TAFE training system, not just from the management course, but also from employment as a TAFE college registrar in the seventies. After 12 years I still knew many of the staff.

Before finishing the management course I also launched myself into one of the early "train the trainer" courses. I am self-conscious now of my thinking then of what was involved. I had notions of a "clever country" being more a function of instruction, supervision and management. It did not take long to realise there was more to learning at work than this. I am not ashamed however with the conclusions I came to on completion of a second level "train the trainer" course in 1991. I can still be annoyed with what I consider to be a naivety of competency based training. By and large, however, I am more excited by what is left after competency based training is considered.

One day I asked the trainer, whom I had known for 15 years, how come there are three year diplomas of education courses for school teachers, but five days is enough if you want to teach people at work? His light hearted reply was "I'd only get a question like that from you, Teresa, it's a good question though." Saying little more, his look formed more of his answer than his words.

Amazingly, it seemed, soon after I saw an advertisement for a Graduate Diploma in Education (Adult and Industry Education). It was the first of a new type of diploma of education, not directed to primary or secondary school settings, not only for adults in general but also adults in employment. This was more like the answer to my question, but it was not available at the time I asked that particular question. I was in the second intake to this new course. I had done two "train the trainer" courses and concurrently with starting the diploma of education, I finished the management certificate. It was an interesting combination of education systems and formed the basis of an assignment for the post-graduate course.

I also used this assignment as the basis of a submission I made to *Developing Life Long Learners Through Undergraduate Education* (Candy 1994). I was quoted in the National Board of Employment, Education and Training report on page 147 in the section on

'Reflective practice and critical self awareness' alongside luminaries such as Donald Schön and David Boud. What I said is not especially the point here.

The point is that an inspection of people who contributed to and were quoted in the report showed that I was the only person "off the street" to be quoted in the 300+ page report. Everyone else quoted was a lecturer, library person, student from within a focus group or in some way directly connected to or part of the formal education system. I was too, but I responded of my own volition as an interested individual. Sometime not long after, I met Phil Candy when he came to work in Ballarat and was able to confirm that yes, I was the only person "off the street" in the report.

I am still working out my lone submission to the above report, I feel it says something about how I value learning and education. David Boud's work was a feature of part of the graduate diploma; it is where I first came across phenomenology, but I could not understand it at the time! In some way I was lured back to it. Whilst phenomenology gives a means to understand understanding - it provides a meta-move - I have still not been able to come up with a particularly satisfying sorting of sense making on my submission! Along with the research participants, I continue to consider how much direct experience can offer learning, in addition to learning that asks learners to learn "facts" from the experiences of other people (this is not to suggest everything needs to be continuously re-created as the means to learn).

The graduate diploma paid off. Along with having started my own new small business, I am sure it helped me get the job from which this Master of Education has grown. I have left that job now. I was in it for five years. It was essentially an employment initiative for people who had an idea for a business that would self employ them. We had funding from a philanthropic organisation, so there were no ties to government funds or criteria that attended such funding.

There were two main initiatives to emerge from my work during this time. I researched and developed for national accreditation the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) (Arnold 1997c and Arnold and Murphy 1997); I will return to this towards the end of this section. Other work involved researching and developing the Ballarat Enterprise and Employment Fund (BEEF), (Arnold 1999b and 2001). BEEF is a not-for-profit organisation with integrated services in small enterprise growth, start up finance and coaching and

mentoring; its start up finance is the only scheme of its type operating successfully in Australia (Schooneveldt, 1997).

On a week to week basis in this role people within the region wanting to start a small, new enterprise either came to me of the own volition having heard of my work or were referred to me by other agencies. I worked out of a central site and locations within the wider community. People could attend workshops in new enterprise formation conducted by myself and/or follow the intent of the workshops on their own. There were multiple entry points, the groundwork in starting a small, new enterprise could be covered which ever the point at which they entered. Broad practices in the workshops echoed those of operating a business; in a nutshell the workshops were a form of self help with support. It was in this context that the people taking part in the current research became known to me. Their stories are told as foregrounding, prior to the portrayals of their learning experiences in Section 6.

Learning and education as an adult - towards a personal philosophy

With relative adult maturity, absolutely assisted by studies in education and learning over the past ten years, I have come to know and understand much better many reasons and influences for the diversity that I started appreciating more consciously in Algeria. I have come to interpretations of a number of events from the past.

I started out my working life in Australia as a research scientist in inland fresh water. Above all else now I see myself as an educator. As mentioned earlier on, my Father became an educator in later years. This also happened to my sister, who is also a vet, after being in private practice she has spent many years lecturing, tutoring and running lab classes in animal anatomy and physiology. My younger brother, having done physics and astronomy at university and for many years an outdoor educator, completed a Graduate Diploma of Education. An older brother has also taken on an educator role within his profession. It seems coming to a role as an educator later in life is something my family does.

It has been a transformational shift from a focus on positivism to now include constructionism, particularly in the nature of this Master of Education study. Only more recently has the dissonance between some teaching approaches and epistemology been untangled. My understanding of learning has undergone a vast change. Some of my own cognitive schema about learning have been demolished, some have been rebuilt, others have been built for the first time.

My shift is perhaps akin to the shift the research participants made from employee to being self employed and the dissonance they felt in the traditional business courses they took part in. This shift, dissonance and its untangling are at the heart of the current research question and its focus on learning experiences, for both myself and the research participants.

There is a small collection of things about learning and education that stand out. They concern research methodology, empowerment, or not as the case may be, and the impact of disciplines on learning and education.

With respect to research methodology, I continue to be utterly amazed at how much educational research is conducted without so much as the merest consideration of epistemology. Candy (1989), in discussing adults learning, notes that regrettably some research is conducted with little attention to what actually lies behind choice of method.

Willis (1999) takes the importance of research methodology a bit further. It is not just the epistemology of, or what lies behind, the method being used. Willis (p. 1) says research methodology also needs to be 'appropriate to the epistemology embedded in the question being explored'. Willis, like Candy, is also concerned to point out the nature of the epistemology of what is being researched.

Thus Candy and Willis both draw attention to the epistemologies of <u>how</u> research can be done, that is by what means of looking or knowing can things be found. Willis goes further though. He points out that epistemology needs to be thought of in terms of the thing at which the search is being directed, <u>what</u> is being looked at, that is the thing that is the subject of inquiry; how do we come to know it, how do we usually come to know it or how can we come to know it before we look at it again now? I continue the struggle of drawing attention to this added dynamic.

Second, but no less important, whilst I managed a regional health service, a new social worker was employed. She was big on empowerment, the word was liberally peppered throughout her talk about what she did. I felt uncomfortable about this thing, "empowerment". Sitting down one day, to plan out some months that lay ahead, I plucked up the courage to open up a conversation about it. I felt there must be something about it that I was missing, because to me it just did not seem to be hitting the right note in its use.

Now I feel my problem lies with empowerment being misused much of the time. In 1995 I took a two week trip to London for a conference. I bought a copy of Charles Handy's book *The Empty Raincoat* (Handy 1994). In this book I found what I was looking for, instead of empowerment. Handy (1994, p. 115) introduced me to subsidiarity ... 'an ugly word. But once you have learned to spell it and get your tongue around it, you will be unlikely to forget it', very true.

Subsidiarity is different from empowerment; its meaning is unfolded as follows. Handy (p. 115) says subsidiarity 'is a key element in learning; change if it is to be effective depends on it'. He includes within subsidiarity the importance of keeping decision-making as close to the action as possible. He nominates an interpretation of subsidiarity to mean that a higher organisation, or part thereof, should not claim unduly to itself work that can be performed well by a lower and smaller part.

In translating churches' application of subsidiarity as a moral principle, he writes (p. 115) 'Strong words. I translate them more simply - stealing people's responsibilities is wrong.' Handy (p. 115) also defines subsidiarity as 'delegation by the parts to the centre' or delegation but in reverse.

There is a similarity in subsidiarity and empowerment. It lies in people comfortably doing things that hitherto they may not have done, a similarity in end point or outcome. There is also a special difference in each, which is the current point of significance. At the other end of the spectrum from outcomes, the starting points of each are different. It seems that with a focus on outcomes, starting points, and their difference in this case, are overlooked. Empowerment, with its notions of control, seems to have prevailed over the ugly word "subsidiarity".

Finally, since reading this book, but not in a single blinding flash, I feel I have found a contribution to the explanation as to what was going on in the regional health service, and why people often say to me that they have learned so much just talking with and being around me. Arrogate is another word in a quotation of Handy's - it means to claim unduly. I feel that when people are empowered by someone or something, that empowering person, thing or activity claims unduly a contribution to whatever it is the so called empowered person then gets up to. To me, empowerment, with its tones of arrogation, seems to include a notion of being conditional ... if this or that happens or is done, then this person will be able to ... . This undue claim is part of the notion of control, mentioned above.

To me learning is more about opening up, freeing up, an allowing. There just seems to be too many variables in the learning-teaching dynamic. Learners learn, learning is only in learners, as Merriam and Clark (1991) note, learning is what people do. When someone is said to be empowered to learn, undue claim is made on the part of the variables other than the learner themselves. Learning to me is all responsibility. The load of responsibility can be made easier or "re-engineered", but to lay claim to part of the responsibility in how something is taught is to lessen the learning or, as Handy says, stealing the responsibilities of others is wrong. Learning is not something that is a result of empowerment ... how dare they!

Responsibilities are usually accompanied, somewhere in an equation, by rights. With responsibility people have for learning, there comes also a countering with rights. If learning is responsibility, where are the rights? This pairing of responsibility with rights worried me; I was not sure where it lay. Early in 2000, at the start of the academic year, I attended an address by the Vice Chancellor of Melbourne University, where my son was a fresher. It was here I found an answer about rights. He said that in attending university, there are expectations that people will do that for which they are there. With this, they too have rights to support them in their learning, rights to staff and resources.

It seems that learning is responsibility and right. Perhaps the responsibilities and rights of people learning do not form an equation, but rather a potent, in-one, same-time, nested dynamic.

It seems to me it is possible that people who are self employed may tacitly know this.

As touched on earlier, in prior employment I researched and developed the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) for national accreditation by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). In some respects I see the course as what people forming and starting a small, new enterprise had not been able to find and for which they were simply asking. Not long after it was accredited, the course was nominated as the first of its kind in Australia (Childs 1997).

Childs (1997. p. 32) discusses what is still needed in working with people in small business in the VET sector. She notes the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) 'is the first of its kind in Australia and is characterised by action-based rather than curriculum-based learning, within an overall qualification that creatively interprets National Standards.' She points out 'Under the creative direction of [the course developer, me] ... the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) ... uses action learning as a basis for enterprise development.'

Action learning is like a template of steps or processes applied to real life experiences, through which a focus on learning and knowledge may be made. The question at the core of the current work and the research participants' experiences, with specified phenomenological means, are similarly disposed.

Childs details (p. 32) other features of the course. The Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation):

- 'is valuable in that it explicitly places the [trainer] in a partnership relationship with the owner manager and requires the [trainer] to use process management skills to implement the program.'
- 'builds-in small business real time and real contexts as an implicit rather than accidental philosophy.'

- 'provides some hope of a model that potentially meets the needs of small business *and* can be located within the Training Reform Agenda.'

The Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) was also recognised as best practice in enterprise education (Curriculum Corporation 1998). It received this as a result of it including the development in people of a range of enterprising behaviours and attitudes.

The recognition of the worth of the course was rewarding. I knew it was something different and a better offering. In unpacking the details of its points of difference and why it is better, I also explored how it came about. 'The decisions made about the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) as it was being developed for accreditation were informed by people like those who would later participate in the accredited course' (Arnold 1999b, p. 10).

In the development of the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation),

> ... there were contributions from people willing to share their learning experiences, needs and dreams. Feedback from, and evaluation by, participants in early workshops in new enterprise formation provided leads and innovations ... the [course] was informed by people just like those who would later participate in the accredited ... course. (Arnold 1999a, p. 24)

This is a marked contrast with the development of many small business management courses that are often informed by personnel from existing and larger businesses (Field 1997). Although I had not deliberately set out to employ subsidiarity, it was from within this exploration that I came to appreciate it at work and the role it plays in learning, as previously noted.

The same exploration also demonstrates what to me is a highlight of Collins (1991) in which he discusses vocation in adult education. Collins describes that in letting learners learn, teachers need to be open to being taught. He speaks (p. 48) of a 'dialectical process where the teacher is also a learner, and the learner, in learning, teaches the teacher.' I feel if I had not learnt from the people I was helping, I could not have come up with what they needed that better helped them learn, where previous courses had often failed them. Simply, I could not be considering the nature of current work without an fundamental belief in this.

At this time I had started this Master of Education degree. In embarking on developing a new course in small business management, it seemed I was shifting its emphasis away from training towards learning. It was from within this work that I became interested in finding out more about what was really happening in people learning and how they did so.

I am not sure I can sequence exactly what happened; a sequence is probably not important. What is more important is what I value in both being an adult educator and in being an adult learner. The Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) has also been important to me - important in that, in unpacking it, it has exposed to me features of learning and its facilitation, of which I might not otherwise have become so aware.

A final item in my collection of things that stand out about learning and education concerns disciplines. I understand but am nevertheless amazed about the impact of disciplines, such as psychology, behavioural sciences or sociology, on learning, education and theorists. I accept that one perspective or another is useful and at times essential for developing a framework or setting boundaries around a discussion. The concern, however, is when one stance over all others is taken as "the" answer. For me there are different vantage points or ways through which learning and education can be viewed. I find it unacceptable that one, or a blinkered, view seems to be allowed to provide a means for approaching all situations.

I am coming to see teaching as service. If learning is the responsibility and right of the learner and learning is only in the learner, plus there are many ways in or means by which it happens, there is nothing more humble a teacher can do than to act as a medium through which learning can happen. It is a sort of ultimate service. It is perhaps one of the highest of trustful duties open to many people. Perhaps this is why it has been called the "teaching *service*". Some might call this old fashioned, traditional or even simply out of touch. Perhaps the ideas have come a full circle or this is a reminder of what always has been.

Service is something that has run deeply one way or another through my family and my forebears over several generations. Very few of us have been involved in the production of goods, on the other hand we have been involved in providing services. I know of a great Grandfather who made tarpaulin in England in the nineteenth century, others since that generation had occupations based on providing services in horticulture and landscaping, veterinary practices and the armed services.

Merriam and Clark (1991) write about patterns of work, love and learning in adulthood. They emphasise (p. 48) that '... so much of adult learning is tied to life experiences ... it is a lifelong process rather than an end state ...' and that (p. 195) 'how learning occurs from life experience has received little attention ...'. They cite (p. 48) the twentieth century education figurehead John Dewey whose 1930's work '... examines the "organic connection between education and personal experience", although he is careful to note that not all experience educates.' The authors point out (p. 194) there has been a focus on outcomes which are more readily identifiable, but that the 'underlying process is less discernible.'

This final point now forms the launching pad for this thesis. In researching how people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises, the less discernible underlying processes of this learning are explored. The method selected for this study is reflective of and sensitive to the epistemology involved in what is to be examined.

Before this methodology though, the next, third section provides detail on the two significant attributes of the current research, new enterprise formation and business size, mentioned in the introduction. In so doing it also outlines the limitations of the current research and existing literature. A gap, and by implication what needs to be done about it, begins to emerge.

Section 3

SMALL, NEW ENTERPRISES

Whilst the focus of the current work is to respond to the question ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"***, the sequencing of this third section is to consider small, new enterprises first, followed then by a consideration of learning. This is to be clear first about the nature of small, new enterprises - in which the learning takes place - which, as will be shown, can be prone to some ambiguity.

Firstly therefore, detail is added to the stage of new enterprise formation that was outlined in the introduction, Section 1. It is informed by a small selection of texts, one of which is particularly insightful, A. Gibb (1987), who discusses early stages of business development, it was briefly mentioned in the introduction. Further definition that hones the research follows, including an overview of some official statistics with respect to small and micro businesses and the connections of the current work with vocational education and training (VET). A move is then made to a review of the literature with respect to learning.

New enterprise formation displayed

Whilst few texts recognise forming and starting a new business from "raw ingredients", A. Gibb (1987) is a significant exception. He clearly identifies six stages of business development that focus on forming and starting a new enterprise. Gibb's commencing stage of business development (p. 26) is 'acquire motivation and raw idea'; the penultimate stage, 'birth' suggest earlier stages are akin to gestation, prior to the final sixth stage, 'survival'. The stages are outlined in Figure 3.1 below.

A. Gibb details a comprehensive list of key tasks linked to relevant key learning and development needs of the aspiring business operator. He demonstrates the scope of what is involved in starting a new business and learning to do everything, by saying '... such is the distinctive nature of self-employment tasks that there is no real previous employment experience which is wholly appropriate as preparation for those who have previously been in employment' (p. 25).

1. From the idea of having a business and acquiring the motivation to explore opportunities, to finding an actual idea: raw idea
2. From raw idea, to the idea being workable in operating conditions: valid idea
3. From valid idea, to required scale of operations (including market research) and identification of resources (human, physical, financial) needed for: the scale of operation
4. From scale, to negotiations about resources - people (labour, suppliers, customers), physical, machinery, marketing and financial resources and: business plan
5. From business plan and negotiations about resources and legal and statutory requirements, to 'opening' of business: birth
6. From birth, to survival of the early years, for example the first two years, including management control systems, business relationships, anticipation of change

FIGURE 3.1

STAGES OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, BASED ON A. GIBB (1987)

In subsequent writing A. Gibb (1993 and 1995) still strongly questions whether what is offered to people in small business courses, in general as opposed to only start up, is what is needed. Field (1997 and 1998) and J. Gibb (1997 and 1998) have similar concerns. A. Gibb's (1987) frank detailing of new enterprise formation and the significant learning associated with it and needed by aspirants is important. It was the only text found that is explicit about this stage. New enterprise formation is an important differentiation.

Earlier work of mine, (Arnold 1999b and 1998), picks up this differentiation and explicitly focuses on learning to manage the formation of a new enterprise. This differentiation is the basis of the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) that I researched and developed for national accreditation. Differentiation in some terminology is now quickly mentioned.

Enterprise or business?

Throughout the text of this research the expression small, new *enterprise* will be used, rather than small, new *business*. Whilst the words "enterprise" and "business" are commonly used interchangeably, in this research this is not the case. "Small, new enterprise" is used in the current work. This is to emphasise the differentiation of the person's prior experience, the

business stage and its size and the distinctions that can be clearly made, but which can also be easily missed.

Use of the word "enterprise", rather than business, is also made to further the notion of initiative in bringing together these three attributes in the current research. Where small, new "business" is used, it will be being used when the context is more commonplace small business activity. Some of the existing small business research that sits alongside the current work follows.

Small business research and learning

Cahill (1996), Carson and Gilmore (1997) and A. Gibb (1995, pp. 19 - 20) point out that positivist method in business research does not always do justice to the area the method seeks to serve. In Cahill (1996) and Carson and Gilmore (1997), discussion points to the way people learn at the coal face about business marketing, not being the way the same coal face is researched. A. Gibb (1995 p. 19) goes further, saying, specifically with respect to people learning in small business, teaching is 'still embodied in the objective/abstract mode. And our research has the same positivist pattern'. He continues (p. 20) 'Objective surveys of business needs, using questionnaires and checklists, matched samples and all the paraphernalia of positivist type 'objective' research has helped very little to answer these questions', that is questions regarding best teaching and learning needs of people in small business.

In a previous paper of mine, Arnold (1999c), the dominance of positivist method in business research is discussed; it is suggested such dominance does a good job, but not all the job. Thus with support coming not only from literature on marketing in business, I question the degree to which such research findings are useful when they are then cycled back to people in small business during small business education and training. I suggest there are different pathways, roads less travelled, that may offer a better match to the reality faced by people at the coal face in small business. Determinants surrounding the question of size are now discussed.

How big an enterprise?

The current work is about *small*, new enterprises. More specifically the size of the business belonging to the people participating in the research is micro (less than five people involved in the business). At the time to which the research refers, there was only the

owner/operator/manager involved in each business. Official statistics on the small businesses size now follows.

Small business vital statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 1996) has developed criteria that make up the definition of small business. The criteria that characterise this type of business include size and also industry sectors, ownership, employment and business age.

Business size is measured by the number of employees and type of business. A small business is a business that employs up to twenty people in the services and construction sectors or up to 100 people in the manufacturing sector. The size of a micro business generally includes up to five people employed in the business. Agricultural business size is measured in dollar value. A small agricultural business is valued between $22,000 and $400,000.

In the mid 1990s small, non-agricultural businesses accounted for 97% of all private business (OSB n.d.). This percentage figure represented 786,000 businesses employing 2.7 million people. Although not defined specifically as micro business, at the smaller end of the small business scale, there were 427,600 businesses employing 640,500 people (see Table 3.1).

Along with these size and sector guides, other characteristics of small business (ABS 1996) include:

- Independent ownership and management;
- Financial control and major decision-making by the owner, and
- Operations located in one place.

At the same date, the total number of people employed in all large and small, private and public business sectors was 7,378,000 people. Thus 36% of all employed people worked in small, non-agricultural businesses. Nearly 9% of all employed people worked on their own in their own micro business. The contribution to the Australian economy by non agricultural small and micro businesses was significant.

Table 3.1

Criteria for defining small business size and total of people employed

Small business			**Micro business**
Agricultural	*Non agricultural*		
	Manufacturing	*Services and construction*	
$ p. a.	No. of employees		
$22 - 44,000	< 100	< 20	< 5
	= 97% all private businesses		
	358,200 businesses		427,600 businesses
	785,800 businesses		
227,000 people	2,035,800 people		640,500 people
	= 2,676,300 people		

More recent figures enabling a comparison with 1995 are not available. It is possible however that economic restructuring and attendant organisational down sizing, in large businesses and the public sector, have contributed to percentage growth of employment in small and micro businesses. This change would add to the significance of the sector. Anecdotal evidence in the form of former employees with redundancy packages starting out on their own in small businesses tends to support this position.

With regard to length of operation, or age, of small businesses, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 1996) indicates that 13% of small and micro, non-agricultural businesses, had been in operation for less than one year; 34% had been in operation for 1 year but less than five years. Young businesses were a significant part of the overall scene. The entry rate of smaller businesses (less than ten employees) was twice the rate of larger small businesses.

Exit rates of small business operators, changes in the number of small businesses or change in the number of employees over time are not given. Therefore it is not possible to say what happens to operators, or employees. However there must be counter balancing factors, for example business sale or failure, somewhere in the cycle, otherwise there would be significant growth reported in the small business sector.

The length of operation represents the number of years the business had been operated by the current operator. The research does not indicate whether or not the business was newly started and/or whether or not the operator was new to managing a small business.

There are other characteristics and many statistics available on small businesses in Australia that make widely ranging combinations of variables. However, it is the characteristics of business size and stage that are central to this research. Albeit limited by these characteristics only, the picture emerging is one in which small business is the major player and there is a large number of people in small, relatively young businesses.

Expressed in most straightforward terms, there is more than three quarters of a million small non agricultural businesses, each with someone who owns and/or operates the business; just over half of these people are from micro businesses. Exit movements from small businesses are not clear, but combined with rates of operation less than a year, it is reasonable to suggest that in addition to large numbers of people there is also considerable movement by operators, who may also be the owners. For example 13% of people in 500,000 micro businesses "on the move" equates to 65,000 people moving in and out of a micro business in a 12 month period, or 178 business operators, not employees, change businesses each day!

This information paints a clear picture of the impact of small business on employment and the economy. Training in small business is also important.

Small Business Management Competency Standards

The Revised Small Business Management Competency Standards (RSBMCS 1996), form a template for all nationally accredited, small business vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. These standards indicate (p. 2) that 'Each small business is unique'. The standards cover *all* industry sectors and are *not* aligned to a particular level of the Australian Standards Framework (ASF). The principal concerns of the ASF (now the Australian Qualifications Framework, AQF, 1995 p. 13) relate to the level of knowledge, variables, complexity, application, interpretation and authority relating to learning outcomes.

In these two respects, of sectors and alignment, the small business management national competency standards are somewhat different from other national competency standards, where industry type and level are usually specified. Thus for competency standards in small

business management, because of the variability of small businesses, it is not possible to be as precise in the definition of learning specifications. Whereas VET normally lays claim to a generalisability of learning outcomes, in small business its grip is weakened. On this occasion, it is officially acknowledged that, due to an ultimate diversity - each small business being unique - people in small business are spared some of the prescriptive nature of learning in VET. VET in small business confesses to a limitation.

VET's normally perceived strength of generalisability, here is an weakness. This chink, though, is a window of opportunity for the current research. The particularity of this research would normally not sit easily with VET's generalisability. In small business however, and as this study indicates, particularity does have a place. Section 4: Methodology, next in this thesis, expands on the significance of this position.

The research of *New Enterprise Learning* does not necessarily draw on the learning that people experience from participating in VET. The learning people experience, that which is researched here, comes more from learning "on the run", unstructured, non formal learning. Although I view the particularity of the current work is relevant in VET, formal learning is largely, but not exclusively, outside the range of this study.

The first sub-section above detailed the significance of new enterprise formation and the learning involved. Attention was paid to whether positivist research is adequately representative of small business. The statistical sub-section draws out the importance of small business to employment and the economy. With significant employment coming from newer small businesses, research that is relevant and appropriate to the sector becomes particularly valuable. The next sub section reviews the literature around the second theoretical element embedded in the inquiry: learning in small business.

Reviewing the learning literature

In the early stages of this research, it appeared that little literature on the focus of the current work and its methodology could be found. There was plenty on learning and small business and phenomenology each separately, but not both together, that is phenomenology applied to learning and small business. Electronic communication with international leaders in both what is being researched and how the research is being conducted failed to generate any closely aligned leads - this is elaborated shortly. With the exception of the current work that is now drawing to a close, this position, of no phenomenology applied to small business, still holds.

There is a clear gap in which to locate the current work. Whilst the significance of the current work lies in the conjunction of topic and methodology, this sub section includes a review of the literature concerning learning and small businesses. The review of literature that attends to methodological issues, as they connect to the focus of the current work, is included in the next or fourth section, Methodology. The ensuing review commences with comment on learning of a more general nature and progresses to more specific learning at work.

Exposing the gap

With respect to education, training and learning as a whole in any context, the proportion of literature on the learner's point of view is small. It seems disproportionately small, considering that the outcome of the delivery effort is learning or that in a group or class there is generally one teacher and many students. In the context of small business training and its delivery, there is similarly little on the part played by learners throughout this effort, that is adults learning in the context of small business. There is even less, if any, on actually arriving at this learning as opposed to the outcomes of their effort.

A table of dichotomies (see Table 3.2) summarises and shows the features of the research of *New Enterprise Learning* in the centre, shaded column. The dualities serve a utilitarian purpose to draw attention to the focus of the research. However, reality is not a rudimentary split; to suggest reality is so would be to ignore its richness and over simplify.

TABLE 3.2

SUMMARISED FEATURES OF THE RESEARCH SHOWN AS A DICHOTOMY

New Enterprise Learning	**Is ...**	**Is not ...**
Business type	Forming → new; small and micro	Existing; larger
Business person	Novice	Experienced
Education	Adults learning	Teaching (children)
Nature of research	Lived human experience portrayed	Categorised abstracted phenomena
Object of research	People - arriving at learning	Things - learning outcomes
Research methodology	Constructionism: interpretivism	Objectivism: positivism

The literature covering the territory of this study appeared thinly spread. Nevertheless, there was a variety of authors who have made contributions that add detail to more specific points of interest if not within, then alongside, the territory. Following roughly the sequencing in the table above, the literature that staked out and informed the territory of this study included:

- Field (1998), A. Gibb (1987 and 1995) and J. Gibb (1998) on small, new businesses and people learning in them (as detailed above);
- Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984) on adults' learning and Boud and Griffin (1987) on learners' perspectives of learning (following);
- Brookfield (1990) and Collins (1991) on both adult learning and research methodology (next section); and
- Candy (1989), Crotty (1996 and 1998), van Manen (1990), Vandenberg (1971) and Willis (1998) on research methodology (next section).

The paucity of like research, the opportunity for the research, New Enterprise Learning

After two years progress through different parts and stages of the research, there had still been little closely related literature turned up through typical literature search endeavours. With direct contact with leading figures and the above authors made extremely easy via the internet and/or professional associations, it was decided that there was nothing to lose in making direct contact via e mail or in person at conferences for example. Specialists contacted are detailed in Table A1 in the appendix.

Each specialist contacted was briefly advised of the features of the current research. It was also outlined that there had been difficulty experienced in finding similar research. The question put to them was could they provide any leads or suggestions to track down like or

related work? Respondents provided either suggestions about the research, where to look further (for example journals or articles) or people to contact.

In a nutshell, the small business specialists were unable to nominate any researchers who were employing a phenomenological research approach more specifically in researching people learning in small business, nor more generally in small business as a whole. Similarly the methodology specialists could not think of any researcher using a phenomenological approach with people learning in small business or the wider context of small business. All suggested leads were followed up, but all failed to turn up something similar to the current work. The paucity of like research is simultaneously an opportunity for the current work.

Adults learning

It has been pointed out that small business research method and teaching practice are often informed by scientific method. A consequence of this is an abstract approach to its reporting. Boud and Griffin (1987) are alert to this and draw a contrast with this abstract focus. In discussing the title of their book *Appreciating Adults Learning: Learning from the Learners' Perspective*, they point out in the introduction (p. 7) 'The addition of one letter [that is 's' on adult] changes the theme [of learning] from a thing to be studied to a dynamic process that people experience.'

Boud and Griffin (1987) are not only interested in learners' perspectives of their own learning, they also draw attention to the absolute connectedness of people and experience. Similarly, van Manen (1984) points out how much of eduction literature is about teaching, training and teachers' perspectives and there is much that can and should be learned about learning from the learners' perspective and their experiences.

It is the less discernible underlying process of adults learning from their experiences (Merriam and Clark 1991, p. 194) that is the focus of the current work. The less discernible, underlying processes of adults learning concerns the getting to, before arriving at, what is actually learned, that is how they learned. More specifically it is the less discernible, underlying processes of adults learning at work, learning to form and start small, new enterprises, that are explored.

Adults learning at work

As a brief overview and before citing details, for some authors the concept of learning defies a short statement or tight definition; there are too many variables, so it is around these that a general view of learning is established. For others definition is possible. By and large though writers write from an educator's perspective and generally based on larger organisations. With varying degrees of intent, a small selection of writers write about learning from the learner's perspective. Thus, the following review of literature on learning is framed around authors' different perspectives on and/or contexts for learning.

In the workplace, Garavan (1997) provides an overview of the concepts of training, development, education and learning in the context of employees; he shows how different organisational models of human resource management and development influence the interpretation of each. He draws both similarities and distinctions between each and concludes (p. 39) that training, development and education are an integrated whole with learning being 'the glue which holds them together.' With respect to learning, he notes (p. 41) 'There is great difficulty in defining learning largely due to the lack of a widely accepted definition.' Garavan refrains from developing a definition of learning and summarises (p. 41) that different meanings of learning 'focus on different types of learning'; he includes (p. 41) externally induced behaviourist theories, social and cognitive theorists and a variety of adult learning theorists.

In another article, also workplace based, O'Donnell and Garavan (1997) develop a germ cell model of skills, learning and training. They acknowledge (p. 136) that 'a germ cell model is, by definition, supposed to be simple' but complexity, the dynamic nature of factors involved and a constantly changing employment environment, generates challenges, particularly in actually providing learning activities. O'Donnell and Garavan develop a mathematical formula indicating that development is a function of learning plus skill plus training, where learning, skill and training are each a dynamic of the others. They emphasise (p. 131) that for learning to be 'effective' it must be demonstrated at a 'desired level of expertise', learners should be able to 'demonstrate thorough understanding of underlying principles', the learner should 'experience an awareness of growth' and an 'increased sense of personal control'. Both Garavan (1997) and O'Donnell and Garavan (1997) positions' are arrived at via strong critique of behaviourist models and their limiting interpretation of learning.

With an added meta dimension to learning, Smith and Associates (1990) provide full and ranging interpretations of the concept of learning to learn throughout life. Adults learning, including in employment, competences of learning how to learn are identified and issues for research are discussed. Smith points out (p. 5) that 'learning to learn' was chosen to convey a sense of continuous process, rather than attainment, without 'implying that *how* to learn is necessarily more important than what, why, when, where, and whether to learn' (author's italics).

Smith summarises his opening chapter saying (p. 25) the shift to a learning perspective, from a teaching and education perspective, still requires attention, with learning to learn also needing attention. Such a move, he says, will be very challenging, with the pay off of getting it right being large, and equally serious implications for getting it wrong. In an earlier work (Smith 1987), it is noted that learning is 'something that is yet to be disclosed' and that understanding learning will require research 'trying to describe and to understand learning as it's experienced by learners themselves' (p. 113).

Of particular interest in Smith and Associates (1990) is Candy (1990). This section explains learners' commonsense views of the concept of learning, as they learn to learn, as opposed to text book definitions of learning and points to the importance of this learners' perspective. Two interpretations of learners' concepts of learning are detailed. In the first, learners view the concept of learning as knowledge that is external to them and which needs to be transferred into their heads. The second view learners have of the concept of learning is that knowledge is constructed by learners 'through active efforts to extract meaning and to relate it to an internal explanatory system.'

In focussing on learning, rather than learning to learn, Candy summarises (p. 37) learning as meaning 'an interpretive process aimed at the understanding of reality'. He adds this definition of learning is richer than learners' views, but that learners' views are not wrong, rather the different interpretations span extremes and represent distinct patterns for success in different contexts, such as formal instruction and real life. He discusses the making of sense from life experiences. He concludes that self-evidently it is the learner's perspective that is paramount; albeit the learner may be faulty or biased. Candy draws on Archimedes to say it is the educator's role to give learners 'a new place to stand from which they can move their respective worlds.'

In Smith and Associates (1990) a chapter focuses on learning in the workplace, with particular reference to meta learning. However the meta learning discussed takes the form of trainers learning learning-management and learning-strategies, rather than the more general interpretation of meta learning as "how".

Rogers (1986) provides a substantial interpretation of the concept of learning from the perspective of teaching adults. He is careful in particular to point out (p. 42) that 'overall theories [of teaching] should be pressed into service concretely to assist the teaching process' and that this is now starting to happen. He considers (p. 42) learning how to learn to be more important and that explicit awareness by teachers of the process of learning is essential, although it is 'a huge field, fraught with dangers and complexities.' He refers to teacher centred behaviourist theories, subject centred cognitive theories and learner centred humanist theories with additional factoring relating to hierarchies of learning process and also attention to factors concerning the environment in which learning takes place.

Rogers acknowledges (p.67) his discussion provides 'a comprehensive explanation of all learning situations and all educational activities - for children, for adolescents and for adults, covering both informal learning and formal education.' The central question for him is how teachers of adults view the adult learner; he goes on therefore to develop characteristics of learning episodes with implications for teacher practices.

From earlier times, but nevertheless still relevant, Dewey (1938) discusses learning, education and experience. John Dewey's *Experience and Education* was published when he was in his late seventies, he was born in 1856 and died in 1952. An introductory page of a 1975 edition details (p. 7) that the book 'shows how Dewey reformulated his ideas as a result of the intervening experience of the progressive schools and in the light of criticisms his theories had received. Consequently, it represents the best concise statement on education by the most important educational theorist of the twentieth century.'

Dewey contrasts (p. 19) traditional and progressive education. He notes that learning in a traditional setting means 'acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders.' He continues 'that which is taught is thought of as essentially static ... with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally built up or to changes that will occur in the future.' He points out that societies from which such books came 'assumed the future would be much like the past' but that change is now 'the rule, not the exception.'

In contrast, progressive education moves away from 'imposition from above' towards 'expression and cultivation of individuality' ... 'free activity' ... 'learning through experience' ... 'means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal' ... 'opportunities of present life' and 'acquaintance with a changing world' (pp. 19 - 20). Dewey identifies (p. 25) the 'organic connection between education and personal experience' but that learning does not always happen from any experience.

He sees (pp. 25 - 31) experience as more than a two way street, where learning comes from and is also put back into it, he variously uses the words 'of', 'by', 'for' and 'within'. For Dewey, the importance of experience to education is summed up (p. 28) in 'The more definitely and sincerely it is held that education is a development within, by, and for experience, the more important it is that there be clear conceptions of what experience is.' Learning and experience are a dynamic and often are in a compound form. In this statement, so important is experience that Dewey emphasises his interest is being clear about conceptions of experience. Experience is important also to the current inquiry, but rather than conceptualise it, the current work turns to the very lived experience from which learning has arisen.

For Kolb (1984), experience is also absolutely central to learning. Kolb details (pp. 25 - 38) how learning is best thought of as process, rather than outcome. In being grounded in experience, it is continuous within the dynamic interactivity of people with each other and their environment. It is from these processes that knowledge is derived.

Boud (1985), Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), Boud and Walker (1990), Boud and Walker (1991) and especially Boud and Griffin (1987) stand out in their disposition to learning and learners' learning. Experience is foundational to these texts and to how they conceive and speak of learning. A more recent work (Boud and Garrick 1999) shows advances in learning and work over the 1990s, with expanded analyses of contexts, growing detail or new aspects of concepts, new terminology and the introduction of new concepts.

It seems however, few educator-practitioner-writers are able to completely let go some form of influence or restraint. In some way each seek to add to or have a final say on learners' perspectives. Collins (1991) was the only author to be found who is outstandingly and consistently an exception; he is also an author who most frequently cites phenomenological

work in his discussions. Collins' attitude to and valuing of learning and the learners' perspective is, for me, epitomised in the section 'Friends education friends' (p. 48) where he sees adult education as a 'dialectical process where the teacher is also a learner and the learner, in learning, teaches the teacher.'

In researching adult education he suggests (p. 36) phenomenology as being particularly 'promising', with this sort of study method clearly showing up marked limitations of 'pre-packaged competency based learning formats.' (p. 52). In Collins (1986), he details how phenomenology works and helps. Phenomenology systematically examines facets of phenomena through careful 'descriptions of actual lived experience' ... 'this leads to a better understanding of the phenomena itself and, subsequently, of those taken-for-granted assumptions that get in the way of our ability to grasp the deeper meaning of the activities ... of everyday living which is the context of adult learning and development' (p. 5). He continues (p. 6) that it gives credence to learning how to learn, or, in the case of the current study, how a particular learning happens. Phenomenology is detailed in the next section. Collins in valuing learning arising out of dynamic between people, provides connection to the ensuing line of thought.

Focussing on people

Texts abound with concepts that are the products of people's actions, both the actors' and writers' who speak of such actors. As noted above (pp. 39 - 40), Dewey sought to develop a concept of experience. However the actual people, from whom such concepts emanate, both the actors' and writers', often seem to be silent partners. Putting people, both the actors and writers, back into the research in a direct, first hand sense - rather than an assumed sense, with limited clarity as to what is attributable to actor or writer - is an important aspect of the current work.

It is as if people, as the subjects and agents of actions, become written out of texts, this easily happens with different turns of language and words used afford an abstractness (Sokolowski 2000), the more so in written media. People become detached from their actions when the actions of them are parcelled up as concepts and then relayed to and discussed in literature. It is as if, after people are written out of texts, there is a collapse of the place they once had as conscious, active agents. Concepts, with perhaps a passive voice remaining, instead attempt to fill out collapsed spaces. This is apparent in a piece of literature, Reuber and Fischer

(1999) following, that was one more closely connected to the current work; it echoes Dewey's move to develop a concept of experience.

Reuber and Fischer (1999) discuss options for classifying types of experiences of people founding businesses. They suggest (p. 31) that empirical literature lacks any 'conceptual basis for the way in which experience is studied' and set out to address the gap. They view experiences (p. 31) as 'things that happen, or events that occur, during a specific *time period.*' Their italics acknowledge and draw out a temporal flavour to experience. Experience is 'the antecedent of present or future states, and it is this temporal property which makes it relevant and interesting' (p. 31).

Their article is useful in drawing attention to experience as a topic in need of research. The ventures on which their paper draws are in many cases new ventures, but on the whole they are larger businesses or organisations. Experience as something that involves people is acknowledged, together with learning that can arise as a result of different experiences. However, they conceive experience as something that is more abstract and "out there", as opposed to sensate people being central to a conception of what is an experience.

Reuber and Fischer (1999) are not alone in adopting a mode of writing that demonstrates a detachment from people. In contrast and in order to draw attention to people as active agents in the current work, how they are left out of some literature follows. In texts from wider sources, for example commentaries, newspapers etc., the detached nature of the texts is perhaps more profound. In these texts, people as the subjects of actions are written out of the text. This is achieved not only by the use of the passive voice, but also by making things rather than people the subjects or agents of actions.

Such a stance is typified in the literature of the learning organisation (Senge 1992) and literature spawned from it. An organisation, as an association of people with a common purpose, is likely the meaning intended in the use of the word "organisational"; it is not the intention of the text for people to learn only about organisational matters. Nevertheless organisations cannot learn, but people who are part of an organisation can. Whilst clearly such writing is about something only people do, that is learn, somehow the words selected to convey the concepts and ideas manage to by-pass the humanness of it all. The value of people learning as members of smaller and larger groupings within an organisation is not in doubt. Rather what is called into question is the degree to which what can only be a function of being

human is in danger of becoming over abstracted. The field book by Senge, Ross, Smith, Roberts and Kleiner (1994) is however clearly about what people do as learners in a learning organisation, it is chock-full work based activities designed to bring to life such a concept.

It is acknowledged that the criticism levelled at the title of Senge's book *Organisational Learning* (Senge 1992) could also be directed to the title of this research, *New Enterprise Learning*. Its abstractness was an issue of which I was aware at the time it was coined. It was not appreciated, to the same extent then as now, how much is really lost. The research title can be seen to commit the same error, in it also adopting an abstract de-peopled form. The intended meaning of each word and the parts they play in conveying overall meaning in the title *New Enterprise Learning* were detailed in Section 1. The word "enterprise" can be both a noun, as in business, and a second, ing-form verb, as in being enterprising. The words "new enterprise" in *New Enterprise Learning* are open to interpretation and could be interpreted as being adverbial to learning. They do not work in the same way as "organisational" in organisational learning, which in this case does not have a verb-role interpretation.

This to not say that texts have got it wholly or even partly wrong, rather there is an incompleteness. Perhaps it is time to remind readers of what, or rather who, is really central to what is written. This type of forgetfulness is the focal point of Vandenberg (1971), where he discusses what is left out in educational endeavours, when an objective scientific approach is continuously and unquestioningly employed. He suggests (p. 8) that objectivist constructs of the behavioural sciences are naive in their forgetfulness of ontology, the 'study of being ... the nature of existence' (Crotty p. 10).

Like Collins (1991) previously, Vandenberg's (1971) ideas and their impact on methodology are further developed in the next section. Again too, Vandenberg provides a lead to the importance of human values that are discussed next.

Highlighting human values

In its strongest manifestation over the past two decades, economic rationalism, in the form of profit as a principal value, global markets, measurable outcomes and immediate utility (Lutz and Lux 1988), has taken detachment, de-peopling, abstraction, counting and measurement to new heights. More generally, economic rationalism has become an expression used to sum up market deregulation, that is freeing up and removing constraints to economic activities. The

one ultimate value of freedom, is combined with a bias for the autonomous individual. Linear relationships exist between different things and are reduced to relative monetary values.

However it is interesting to note that Lutz and Lux (1988) detail the origins of term "rationalism", as a word modifying "economic", lie in the eighteenth century. It was introduced for several purposes. The word rationalism with economic was intended firstly to convey that what was included in the calculations was a good and adequate approximation of reality. It was also intended as a cover or euphemism for self interest, to lessen the negativity of self interest and overcome notions of greed that can also fall within understandings of self interest.

This is a marked contrast to the usual understanding of the word "rational" when it is used in other contexts, for example rational logic, cause and effect. Rational or "rationalism" in economics originally had a different meaning than the meaning it had in other contexts. Now, however, understandings of the original different meanings of "rational" in different contexts has been lost in everyday circles and all but disappeared quite probably in various economic circles. Given the current nature of economic ideology it is not surprising that the non economics meaning of the word rational has overlaid its former economic meaning.

Having unravelled what was the meaning of rationalism in economics, there remains an odd twist. Self interest, that was intended to be masked, is now what stands out; at the same time self interest does not always sit easily with an everyday meaning of rational, as in rational logic or objective cause and effect. Perhaps in this light economic rationalism has become akin to an oxymoron. One thing remains however. There is a groundswell of people who are uncomfortable with the way contemporary economics is exclusively used as a template or pacemaker to inform government decisions. This disquiet was clearly manifested in the Victoria state elections in 1999 where liberal economic government was unexpectedly thrown out.

In *Humanistic Economics* (Lutz and Lux 1988), *Real-Life Economics* (Ekins and Max-Neef 1992), *A Humanistic Approach to Socio-Economic Development* (Lutz 1992) and *Humanistic Economics: history and basic principles* (Lutz 1992), the authors detail the inadequacy and limitations of not just more recent economics, but economics of the past 50 years, in its capacity to reflect complex factors that really represent fuller dimensions of human values and wealth. They highlight a number of interests that are important to people, interests that are

difficult to reduce to monetary value and have complex relationships and are excluded from economic rationalism, for example ethical principles, social justice and personal relationships. Some important forms of work are not included, for example caring for younger and older people. Things that can be damaging such as motor vehicle accidents and deforestation are recorded as pluses. Things that can be good and right such as education are recorded as costs.

Whether economic rationality as it is now understood and practised, as opposed to the way its meaning was originally intended, is still a good and adequate approximation of reality has become a pertinent question. As a context or lens through which the research of *New Enterprise Learning* is considered, it generates noteworthy points of interest.

Detached, de-peopled, abstract texts are often seen in the context of reporting market activity, for example markets are saying ... , markets do not talk, people say things. The roles people play, in activities that lead to changes in the market and the rise and fall of figures that represent the results of people making decisions and doing things, have been subsumed to an efficiency in the language used to report such activities. Such efficiency of language does make a useful contribution in overcoming wordy reporting. However it is suggested that the efficiency has been so sustained and zealot like, it is over done. Over done to the extent that connectedness to human activity, underlying everything that ends up being reported, has been lost. People have been subsumed to the constructs and concepts, albeit the constructs and concepts are developed by themselves.

A recent article from *The Age* (Greenblat and Batt 2000, p. 1) provides illustration. The article reports on commentators and responses by investors to recent falls after fast rises in the cost of stocks of technology companies. It shows how people are written out of texts and concepts are attributed human qualities. The journalists quote a noted business strategist as saying '... failure [to perform as forecasted] by any company will be dealt with harshly by the market.' The journalists continue to make their point and the journalists themselves comment on the performance of a company and reaction to its performance with 'The market was unimpressed, further selling down ... '.

When "the market" operates on a global scale and the way it does, the notions of a market-of-yore are dim and distant contributions to its meaning. "The market" of nowadays is perhaps economists' collective noun for people. On the other hand, the market refers to part of current economic thinking that is merely an abstract concept. In this form, the market is de-peopled;

people as active sensing, individual participants trading goods and services are written out. Nevertheless the human qualities are retained. Thus the market is attributed capability to act harshly and feelings of being unimpressed. Abstract concepts cannot perform as such, neither are they sensate ... just as an organisation cannot learn, it is people alone that should be attributed such actions and responses.

This is not to assume an elite superiority of people over other living creatures. Rather it is to point out a way of writing and speaking that has been widely adopted. An adoption that has come at the expense of the nature of being a human being. The reporting of situations as quantitative, objective data derived via objectivist and positivist methods has no doubt also made a contribution to de-peopling texts.

This section has added detail to the stage of new enterprise formation outlined in the introduction, Section 1. It was informed by a small selection of texts, one of which is particularly insightful. Further definition that hones the research is included. Through these, the gap in the literature is opened up, with the scene set to explore the lived experience of people forming and starting a small, new enterprise. The next section, Section 4 Methodology, reveals how the search will be conducted.

Section 4

METHODOLOGY

This section sets out the means by which to explore the question ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** The previous section laid out the intention in the current work to foreground people with their learning, rather than to conceptualise their learning. Different learning literature reviewed pointed to the centrality of experience to people learning. In this way, in the people's lived experiences of learning, the less discernible underlying processes of adults learning and how they learn are explored.

A methodology that provides the means by which this learning can be understood as a phenomenon of human experience is sought. A phenomenological methodology was thus selected. In response to the question being asked, the nature of what is being explored and the nature of knowledge being sought from the exploration, phenomenology enables the construction of portrayals; this in turn uncovers the human feat, and current research question, ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** Whilst located alongside familiar empirical inquiry outlined in the previous section, the current work also seeks to provide interpretive perspectives on meanings the learning experiences had for participants in the research.

Phenomenology's perspective

Sokolowski (2000) provides a particularly valuable contribution to the current work and its particular intent. Sokolowski shows how phenomenology offers perspectives not enjoyed by other methodologies, methodologies that are more frequently used in learning and small business.

Discussion on the relationship of phenomenology with science and its methods is a major issue in Sokolowski (2000). Scientists are dared to consider whether there is another world for knowing and the value it can yield. Sokolowski shows how science is in fact 'built upon things given to us in a prescientific way' (p. 148). He shows how people live in the life world, which is complemented by science, but people cannot live in the world projected by science.

He in fact goes on to recommend rounding out science by inquiring into science's own means, by inquiring into exactly what is done when people do science, ie. how science establishes *itself.* He shows how scientific method seldom completely declares itself and is thus without its proper context. Sokolowski clearly exposes just how science does see and thus also the richness of what is missed by such method. It is this richness that is often missed that is the focus of the current work.

Sokolowski (2000) offers several definitions of phenomenology: 'the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience' (p. 2); 'phenomenology is reason's self discovery in the presence of intelligible objects' (p. 4); and
'the science that studies truth' (p. 185). Thus phenomenology offers the opportunity to understand understanding.

Sokolowski (2000) lifts the lid not just on the impact of method on a topic and what can become known, or not as the case may be. He also raises the question as to whether the research method applied to a discipline is itself in tune with how the thing usually or commonly comes to be known in every day lived life. This resonates with Willis (1999), whose concern is the nature of knowledge to be generated by research and Candy (1989), who is concerned with what lies behind research method. Sokolowski moves the reader easily outside technological entrapment and the contemporary domination of science and the quantifying company it can keep.

In this way, whilst being a path less travelled, the current work seeks to complement. It follows through, perhaps, on what A. Gibb (1993 and 1995) says is not present and is needed in small business research and what Cahill (1996) and Carson and Gilmore (1995) suggest might resonate with people in small business - see earlier in Section 2.

Thus phenomenology especially focuses on the *how* of *what* is to be handled and exhibited, but without recourse to disciplinary or other delimits. Phenomenology thus comes to the fore when exploring and understanding people learning. Learning is often attached to a discipline, eg. psychology or behavioural sciences, or some other discripter, eg. workplace learning, informal learning, action learning. However, overlooked or hidden in any of these abstractions of learning, is learning as something that ultimately only people do. Thus, regardless of a visible descriptive superstructure of learning, it is people who are the ultimate

source and real site of action and therefore interest. It is phenomenology that facilitates access to such sources, to people learning and how. In this research portrayals are constructed and from them, continuing with phenomenology's ways, the essential elements of the learning are brought to the surface. The strength of phenomenology lies in its advocacy for completeness and establishing clearer relationships between human experience *and* things such as concepts and abstractions of science and other disciplines.

A fellow phenomenologist, Vandenberg (1971 p. 9) nominates that without thought for ontology, statistical analyses of empirical researchers are merely abstractions of real occurrences; he points to psychology, psychology of learning, vocational guidance, social psychology and sociology as example areas. In researchers' work, great interest is put into 'letting the object of inquiry be what it is' and 'to letting what is be' (p. 8). He continues (p. 8) empiricist researchers however, particularly in the behavioural sciences, insist on a 'dogmatic stand toward eliminating subjecticity (sic) from the data', with letting *what is be* being forgotten too often. The person who is the subject of research and, for that matter, the researcher also - both of whom are conscious beings - are almost denied.

It is tempting to suggest that either, given the current nature of research and writing, a concept of experience in empirical literature must only be a short time off, witness Reuber and Fischer (1999), in the previous section. Or, perhaps more hopefully, given the intent here, that as a person is central to a conception of what is an experience, then perhaps an abstracted concept of experience is out of reach of the empiricists.

Vandenberg (1971, p. 8) discusses empiricist presuppositions. He is clear about each of what happens when people and "letting what is be" are not fully included in research, and the consequences of what is left when scientists demand such objective data.

> It is the "empiricist" who first of all ought to accept the data as it is given. This is what a genuine empiricism ought to be, by definition, but to the contrary it is first of all the "empiricists" ... who take a dogmatic stand toward eliminating subjecticity (sic) from the data.

He proffers (p. 8) '... the constructs of [research] more than a little contribute to the meaninglessness and alienation from the world, from one's self, and from others ... ' In summary, he insists that a philosophical component is essential to educational research. Without an ontological dimension, mere abstractions of real occurrences are all that is left.

Abstractions are an incomplete understanding, an insufficient explanation and an inadequate description. Although outside the scope of the current work, the replacement of the words 'stolen "generation" ' with a '10%' number - of Aboriginal children taken from their parents - is telling and easily recognised illustration of the inadequacy of a reductionist approach, with a focus on numbers over words and meanings.

Sokolowski (2000, pp. 208 - 209) makes a similar point. In speaking about phenomenology and human experience in current times, Sokolowski details the strength of phenomenology in that it escapes the traps and pitfalls of the way in which science reports on its perspective. He says phenomenology does what science does not. Phenomenology helps science by clarifying its partiality and 'bringing out what is absent'. Phenomenology shows that what is identified through science can be seen from perspectives not enjoyed by science; phenomenology ' ... counters both the self-forgetfulness of modern forms of science and the self-denial of postmodernity.'

In commencing an unfolding, comprehensive definition of phenomenology Sokolowski (2000 pp. 51 - 56) details argument in support of it. He points out what science does not declare about itself. Sokolowski, says of science (p. 52) that it provides 'truth about things, but we have no truth about our possession of these things.' Whilst science enables us to know a great deal of and about things around us, it does not reveal the themes that underlie its own means. For science to be comprehensive it 'will ultimately have to inquire into the very achieving of the science' and what it is that establishes science itself (p. 53). He continues (p. 53), like Vandenberg (1971) above, with startling clarity on the deficiency of science ' ... so long as [physics or biology] do not look at the activity by which they are achieved, they are really abstract.'

An extended period of knowing via science seems to have created a dependency. There is not only a blindness to its own means, but also other means by which people can come to know seem to have gone missing.

A people inclusive way of seeing learning

This methodology section thus far has largely served the purpose of reviewing and commenting on how phenomenology steps beyond positivist method and thus, in broad terms, what phenomenology surfaces in research that science's methods do not and cannot. How different methods see is crisply put in Crotty (1998 p. 55), who quotes Oakley (1974 p. 27), 'a way of seeing is a way of not seeing'! Methodological issues that turn to and detail the particularity of the current work now follow.

Candy (1989) makes the point that much educational research method and teaching practice has been informed by scientific method. Regrettably, he points out, rarely do people look at what lies behind method that is selected. 'Despite its central importance, the subject of epistemology is frequently ignored in programmes of educational research' (p. 109). Flowing through unquestioningly, there has been significant work done inquiring into learning, but such learning has typically been viewed abstractly.

Interested in adult learning, Candy (1989) laments (p. 95) 'a dissonance between the assumptions underlying the research approach and the topic being researched.' He advocates constructivism as a congruent approach to research of self direction in adult learning, rather than the positivist/empiricist paradigm. He sums up (p. 95) congruence between self direction and constructivism with their emphasis on 'active enquiry, independence in the learning task, and individuality in constructing meaning.'

Candy (1989) makes sure (p. 112) of the emphasis and integrity in the dynamic between subject matter and method with ' ... the perspective which has been almost entirely neglected is that of the learner'. In this he is not just interested in how the looking is done, he is also determined to emphasise the real purpose of teaching effort, that is learners' learning and not teachers' views of learners' learning. Candy is determined to be quite clear about not just the means by which things are seen, but also through whose eyes.

In terms of considering what lies behind research method, Crotty (1998) provides a clear and simple schema for tracking numerous different research pathways. He elaborates detailed thinking and reasoning to facilitate making informed decisions on an appropriate research method pathway. Crotty is quick to point out (p. 1) the lack of clarity and limited understanding of what should be explicit in research methodology, even where better might be

expected. Similarly to Candy, Crotty backs difference from objectivism and positivism for social research. Moving rapidly to and fro throughout his scaffold schema, he gleefully reveals what is usually overlooked when an understanding of a fuller range of options available is lost. His warm and lively "come and look" is almost joyous; it is at the same time however perhaps a lament.

Crotty (1998) offers a guiding scaffold within which the overall research process of *New Enterprise Learning* is built. The scaffold ranges from philosophical underpinning informing the research as a whole (epistemology), to concrete techniques that may be used to gather and consider data (method). Crotty's scaffold contains four elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and method. The epistemology of the current work is constructionism, the theoretical perspective is interpretivism; a phenomenological research methodology and interview, interpretive and expressive portrayal and theme identification methods are used.

Crotty (1998) points out the four elements of method, methodology and theoretical perspective and epistemology each inform one another. Each element contains choices, with many methods, few methodologies, fewer theoretical perspectives and objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism as three, but each not perfectly watertight, epistemological options. Depending on the question(s) asked, the purpose of asking, the philosophical stance and the theory of knowledge, it is possible to select a string running through the four elements.

Crotty (1998) details the four elements of the overall research process, each needs to be considered. The method and methodology that answer the question in mind need to be identified. In addition a theoretical perspective must be established, together with clarity about the understanding of what human knowledge is, epistemology. Crotty describes how choices from options within the four elements are strung together to construct different research processes.

Each of Crotty's elements is shown in the first column of Table 4.2. The second column shows the choice made in each element and the implication of the choice as it informs this thesis.

TABLE 4.2

CROTTY'S RESEARCH ELEMENTS,

THE STRING OF ELEMENTS FOR THIS THESIS AND THEIR IMPLICATION

Crotty's four elements (Crotty 1998, p. 3)	**This thesis**
Method: 'The techniques and procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis.'	*Interview and theme identification*: Interviews of adults learning to form and start small, new enterprises. Portrayal with identification of headlines, headline grouping and theme identification. It is not intended to count frequency of occurrences or to identify causal links or relationships; software is not being used.
Methodology: 'The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes.'	*Phenomenological research*: Adults learning to form and start small new enterprises understood as a phenomenon of human experience and represented as lived experiences.
Theoretical perspective: 'The philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria.'	*Phenomenology*: Experiences as they present themselves to consciousness, as the origin and living source of knowledge (Crotty 1998 p. 85).
Epistemology: 'The theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby the methodology.'	*Constructionism*: Meaning and understanding people construct as they engage and interact with forming and starting their small, new enterprise.

A chain through Crotty's research schema for this thesis follows constructionist epistemology, interpretivism as the theoretical perspective and a phenomenological research methodology. The techniques and procedures used to ground the methodology in action included interviews and qualitatively working the data such as searching for themes - these are detailed in the next section, Section 5: Method. This methodological string attends to adults learning (in small, new enterprises) as they experience it. The string facilitates a different way of seeing, so that what has hitherto been overlooked and is missing, is picked up.

He notes that quantitative methods are not limited to objectivist research and qualitative work is not limited to constructionist research. Research may be qualitative or quantitative or both. Crotty continues (p. 15), the problem does not lie with being qualitative at the same time as quantitative. However there is a problem in 'any attempt to be at once objectivist and constructionist ... '; it is important to be consistently one.

Although not aligning very fully with Crotty's research scaffold, Langenbach (1993) discusses program development and evaluation and a curriculum for education in the workplace and the impact of ontology on them. Langenbach's schema can also be loosely applied to workplace research method.

The schema simply illustrates, for this stage in the thesis, the difference between most positivist and post positivist, workplace research methods. Like Crotty, however, he details thinking that should be considered when deciding which methodology to use. Langenbach charts (p. 2) a continuum between post positivist perspective-seeking and positivist truth-seeking. A representation of his schema is shown in Figure 4.1.

Perspective-seeking		**Truth-seeking**
Internal	⇔	External
Subjective	⇔	Objective
Post-positivist	⇔	Positivist
Soft data	⇔	Hard data
Value laden	⇔	Value neutral
Inventing	⇔	Discovering
Mind-body integration	⇔	Mind-body dualism
Individuals as participants	⇔	Individuals as subjects

FIGURE 4.1

LANGENBACH'S CONTINUUM (LANGENBACH 1993, P. 2)

As seen by Sokolowski (2000) and Vandenberg (1971), it is as if the dominance of positivist methodology is allowing researchers to overlook what really needs to be considered when deciding research methodology; that is a people inclusive way or not.

Brookfield (1990, pp. 327 - 341) is also an advocate of phenomenology as a methodology for developing understanding with respect to how people learn. He notes that it is also useful when research in the area is limited, there is 'a paucity' (p. 331) of rigorous instruments and few agreed concepts exist. Brookfield points out that although phenomenological work in understanding learning via learners' perceptions of their own learning is generally

idiosyncratic, details embedded in learners' accounts nevertheless yield 'what is particular, concrete, and contextually specific' (p. 328). Whilst such features are not generalisable in a positivist manner, they are nevertheless 'generic' in nature or are part of the 'essential structures' of learning processes.

Crotty (1998) says quite clearly how experience and phenomenology are central to both understanding learning and how people learn. Crotty (p. 85) gives phenomenology a double billing: phenomenology 'is both starting point and touch stone'; learning takes place within social setting experiences and calls on researchers to return to the actual experience itself. Crotty says (p. 85) that returning to experience and using phenomenology is 'a vigilance that never lets us forget the origins of all our knowledge.'

Sokolowski (2000, p. 2) is similarly clear about what can be found out about learning with phenomenology. As already mentioned, he offers a preliminary definition of phenomenology as 'the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience.' Amongst other elements and dimensions of phenomenology, this happens through intentionality, that is people are always conscious of something, something to which they direct their attention. He thus draws out (p. 8) how phenomenology is essential to a theory of knowledge.

Sokolowski (2000) does not speak of knowledge as learning having arrived or of learning as knowledge in the making, he only speaks of knowledge. An attempt at this connection based on the text, is made simply, without undue recourse to phenomenological technicalities. In arriving at knowledge, a move is made from receiving "in the raw" perceptions that are, or are part of, an experience, to an understanding, making meaning or naming. It is a move from perception and receipt of perception to intellection. It is a something, a transition and synthesis and a registration or clicking into place. This is not to say this happens quickly or slowly or that there is a simple linear, cause and effect string - what is going on is after all "pre" such knowing. The "meta" move, to understand understanding that generates knowledge, is what phenomenology is and does. Phenomenology provides vantage points and devices to do this. Phenomenology details on which sort of hill top to stand and how to look to see things differently, phenomenologically.

The appeal of phenomenology is to receive and contemplate inward bound perceptions that are always there in the thing itself, as the perceptions themselves are as they are being

received and experienced; before we became all but hard wired to conceiving; before we learned ("were told") how the thing was to be seen; before we habitually stereotype the thing. Perceptions of a thing are always there, it's just that we usually rush through such perceptions to the security of the conception of the thing. In phenomenology two actions of rushing to conceive are "switched off". Set to one side, first of all, is what is usually known of the thing, the things as they are usually known are not entertained. Secondly, set to one side also, are the ways usually used to think about the thing. (These equate to the term bracketing, which is more commonly found in phenomenology texts, van Manen 1990, Willis 1996, Willis 1998, Crotty 1996, Ehrich 1996 and Sokolowski 2000.)

Thus in a "laid back" mode, with the thing as the-object-of-our-experience, the thing is allowed to speak and all the time we remain silent, using all our visceral senses to receive but not to rush to process what is arriving and name (they have been switched off). The thing is perceived from all angles, as it were. In this way we are able to receive and contemplate perceptions.

Ultimately though, words, speech, grammar and syntax are all in the service of perceptions, so too are marks, such as paintings and symbols.

There are rules to the new game, some of them sound like a twist of words. That's the trick though, to hear their difference and adapt, to adopt a different stance. This is the move from the everyday or natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude or transcendental attitude and what goes on in the "meta mode". The previous paragraph is restated again: words, speech, grammar and syntax are all in the service of perceptions, so too are marks such as writing, paintings and symbols.

So, when things are being spoken or written about, traces of perceptions are always within the words, or pictures, so used. Remembering that phenomenology is not a pro active outward bound picking out, the traces can be phenomenologically pieced together to form perceptions. This enables an understanding of the understanding, a means by and on which the conception and knowledge of the thing were formed.

The intent of picking out and piecing is to achieve a description of only the essential things; the things that are left, that if any thing else was removed, it would no longer be just what it is, just as the thing is ... before it was named.

This is *what* phenomenology is. Phenomenology gets down to a new type of "bare essentials" of our understanding.

This is *doing* phenomenology. The above are the "steps" of phenomenology.

What happens though is that because what is happening is "pre" knowing, in transit at it were, the things are spoken of as being *like* something, because to say it is something *is* to name and know it. In phenomenology things are suspended in an "as if" mode. Metaphor and other figurative means of speech are important and valuable in phenomenology.

There are many rules to the game of phenomenology, but each is explicit about the distinctions they make. Going into all of them in phenomenology as philosophy is outside the scope of the current work. Rather some main moves, that are distinct to phenomenology as research, that set the direction of phenomenology and set phenomenology in motion, have been outlined.

Thus, the main enquiry is largely informed by an interpretive and expressive stance. Researching and constructing situational and contextual background nevertheless called for empirical approaches; a critical approach was then used to uncover various interests.

Ethical considerations

Whilst often being within a methodology section, ethical considerations are, on this occasion, included in Section 5. Ethical issues in this research formed an important foundational issue, however different aspects of issues of authenticity and validation in this research required practical actions, grounded in returning to the research participants on several occasions. Piantanida and Garman (1999, p. 153) detail how ethics in qualitative research become heightened especially where, based on strong bonds of trust, close relationships are formed. Ethics in this form, as something that is more an interactive daily constant, as well as an underlying foundation, is thus included in the next section, Section 5: Method. This is now addressed.

Section 5

METHOD

Data generation

The method chosen for collecting data needed to be consistent with its intent and phenomenological approach. The current work seeks to explore, to find new insights, and to describe and portray the experience of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise, in response to the research question ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** To this end, data was sourced from detailed interviews with three people forming and starting small, new enterprises. The interviews took place in settings natural to the real world from which each person came.

Participants spoke about the experiences of their learning during the new enterprise formation time frame. The time frame of new enterprise formation in the current work includes the gestation-like stage, starting operations - that is actually "opening up" - and the first two years of operations (p. 4 in the current work). The stage of new enterprise formation is delineated to differentiate this early stage from the usual interpretations of business development and its cycles of growth and renewal in the operations of a business whose existence is established.

In this section on method, issues of research credibility are brought to attention. This is followed by elaboration regarding recruitment of research participants, ethics, conducting interviews and theme building and working the data and finally research trustworthiness.

Research credibility

Prior knowledge of and expertise in the overall area of inquiry had been gained from four years employment providing services to people starting small, new enterprises and a comprehensive background in adult and work based education. Other exposure to the area of inquiry had also been gained through first hand experience in forming and starting a small, new enterprise more than twelve years prior to the research commencing; the enterprise had

operated for approximately ten years. Overall there has been a prolonged involvement in the area of study; the work has also been persistent.

Evidence of this activity, of a more independent nature, is seen in the research and development, for national accreditation, of the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) Arnold (1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c and 1997d) and Arnold and Murphy (1997); this is all earlier work of mine.

The genre of the curriculum provided both motivation and contrast for the research in *New Enterprise Learning.* A bridge between the different philosophical positions of the curriculum (positivist) and the current research (constructivist) is alluded to by Childs (1997), as previously detailed in Section 2. Childs notes (p. 32) that the Certificate III in Business (New Enterprise Formation) requires facilitators to use a process management approach and is explicitly designed so a partnership relationship is establish between facilitator and course participants. The action-based course explicitly involves real businesses, in the real world and real time.

This three part encounter, course participant, in a partnership relationship with a facilitator and working in real world, resonates with a position of "being" being central to education (Vandenberg 1971). In Vandenberg's view (p. 147) learners, with sincere help of a facilitator, need to be allowed to both involve a vital authenticity and to explore and restore being, in who they are and what it is they want to be. His position is exemplified in ' ... pupils wanting-to-be-someone-himself is the fundamental means of educating', anything less generates a detachment and alienation as 'He lacks the power of being.' (p. 149).

The autobiography (Section 2) also provides a wider context within which to place the current work. Each part seeks to make a contribution to the back drop from which motivation for the research arises. The autobiography provides a look out or vantage point that is intended to fill out and enrich the perspective of the research, its form and nature. Piantanida and Garman (1999, p. 147) suggest that researcher authenticity contributes verité to their research. In this sense the autobiography reveals how the line of thinking adopted in the research has evolved and emerged.

Recruitment

Direct contact with about two hundred people considering self employment, with many opting to go on to form and start small, new enterprises, had taken place over the four year employment period. Many people who had used the service in its first two years were no longer in contact, although the whereabouts and new enterprise activities of most were known. The records of these people provided the initial point of contact; access to a data base of another record holder was considered and found not to be necessary; this position was to be reviewed depending on the progress of the research.

Conversations about the research in general terms were held with 20+ people who were actively involved with services being provided. Both potential participants' interest in the research and their availability to take part (be away from their business) were key determinants in the recruitment. The intent was for people with typical experience to self select, rather than to recruit for statistically significant representation.

Following early stage verbal expressions of interest, potential participants were provided with more detail regarding the research. A concern of potential participants emerged. The concern was the perception that potential participants did not yet have "real" businesses. The non reality centred on not yet being "opened up", being smaller than shops in the street, or that they were not yet making significant profit. It was important to advise potential participants that these conventional yardsticks of having a business were not important or necessarily relevant to the research. These conversations served also to provide an orientation to the research.

The initial step was to interview only three people. A letter of invitation (Appendix 1) and information sheet (Appendix 2) were given to them. More people were to be interviewed depending on the progress and outcomes of interviews. At the same time discussions were held regarding ethical considerations; the conversation focussed on what was contained in the consent form (Appendix 3), which was to be signed prior to interviews actually being conducted.

Ethics

The people who participated in the research were known to me for varying lengths of time. One I met late in 1993, a second in early 1994 and the third in 1996. The earlier two people were much better known to me and me to them, than the later third person. The two earlier people first met each other in 1995 and had occasional contact over the following years. All three people came together for the first time as a group in 1998.

Up until this time each person had been approached individually as to the possibility of taking part in the research. Ethical issues were discussed before any detail about the research was discussed, only the broad context of learning and their own small, new enterprises and a different sort of method had been outlined. Discussion on possible participation was iterative, at each stage going into more detail as each person was ready to move forward. Letters of invitation, written information, including confidentiality and anonymity, and consent forms were similarly presented.

Communications at all times were clear and open. At each stage, each person was able to decline continuing or confirm proceeding. The progress of these discussions was slow due to other constraints on all parties. Maintaining a professional service delivery relationship was also more important than an imperative for research.

Progress reporting throughout the research was two way, this is detailed further in the later sub-section 'Working the data'. Under these circumstances ethical issues were well served.

Interviewing

A group interview was nominated, but each research participant was also offered the opportunity to be interviewed alone. A face to face group interview was agreed to and arranged for a weekend day. The venue was the home of an independent party; the venue reflected the situation of each research participant forming and starting their business as a home based business. The orientation to the research that had previously been outlined was recapped, participants were reminded that conventional yardsticks of having a business and associated, often more formal, learning were not necessarily part of the research. Consent forms were signed. The pre-interview discussion included brief attention to learning experiences, rather than the outcome of what was learned; how - of getting to, rather than

what - of arriving, was highlighted. The pre interview discussion concluded with drawing attention to learning experiences of forming a small, new enterprise, in broad terms, as the focus of the research.

The group interview took place over two time blocks, approximately two hours before lunch and one hour after lunch, more than three hours in total. The interview was recorded and later transcribed. The interview was unstructured. Initially each person spoke about what their business was. The conversations were allowed to develop so each participant spoke freely of different experiences from which they had learned.

Each research participant and their business was previously known to me, the interviewer. Clarification of points made by participants of each other was sought as each felt necessary. The part played by the interviewer was minor, each participant also offered probing questions to invite expansion on points and prompting to offer suggestions to each other. The focus of the interview was maintained on the participants' perceptions of experiences from which they had learned.

Beyond the earlier orientation to the research and introduction immediately prior to the commencement of the interview, the interview was a non directive, participant as informer interview. The relationship developed and established in the conversations between research participants was democratic.

A transcription of the recording was made. Pauses in speech, stammers, "ums" and "ers" or non verbal gestures are not shown in the final form of data transcribed presented in the current work. The intent was to generate data for its richness and wider readability. The tone, temper and fluidity of spoken words were nevertheless noted, by myself, in repeated replaying of the tapes, for both transcription purposes and later listening only. The original "first edition" transcription showed many such pauses, etc. Through these means, there was significant recollective flow of such features when the data was later phenomenologically worked on. Each research participant received a copy of the transcribed interview and was asked to verify the record.

A follow up recorded interview took place with one person; this interview mirrored a major artwork that was nominated by the participant as an autobiographical learning journal. A short follow up written response was invited and received from a second person. Brookfield

(1990, pp. 332 - 340) recommends three methods for collecting data for phenomenological work: interviewing, critical incidents and written autobiographical material. In effect each of these were covered in the data that was collected. Other contact took the form of discussion to clarify and/or elaborate detail or incidents.

Locating and generating portrayal display sequences

Although, as noted earlier, three people were interviewed, it was ultimately decided to use the learning experiences of only two people, known as the characters Alexandra and Margaret. On-going access to and contact with the third person became difficult as they were moving from the area.

The response to the question at the core of the current work came out of interview data, which is then worked so as to be presented in the form of portrayals. Preceding the portrayals, however, are foregrounds. They include descriptions of the people, the times and their businesses, key events that tell of learning insights and finally vignettes synthesised from the interviews. The foregrounds made up of descriptions, key events and vignettes, provides concrete foundations that set the overall scene for the major portrayals that follow. The research participants were involved in the production of the foreground.

In the subsequent portrayals, phenomenological social research progresses with descriptions of "slices" through experiences that are the focus of attention. Such slices are brought together to form the first half of the portrayal. Thus the portrayal is made up of different elements in a sequenced display. Each is designed to look from different vantage points at the same experiences of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise. Each vantage point provides views of different aspects or perspectives of the same thing; they are like different slices through the same experiences, akin to an architect's elevations and sections.

In phenomenological terms, this is manifold of appearance (Sokolowski 2000, pp. 27 - 33). As outlined in closing the previous section, this is not so much a rapid reconnaissance, seize and retreat. Rather it is slower and quieter, to ensure appreciation of that which previously was not shared, seeing as others might, over and above prior stereotyped views. This stage of the portrayal is presented in Map reading, Trekking and Diary reflections - these are further detailed in the next section, where they are closer to their actual appearance.

In the second half of the portrayals, themes were differently generated. van Manen (1990 pp. 101 - 106) employs themes based on the existential themes of lived body, space, time and relation. van Manen cites (p. 101) these themes as being central to research of experiences as no matter what the human experience, regardless of culture, history or social influences, these four themes are a part of all experience and are called existential themes.

Other themes were generated by using Crotty's metaphors (Crotty 1996). Crotty (1996, p. 279 - 280) recommends using stem sentences, sentences that invite completion, to elicit what is often missed in everyday conceptualisation of things. On completion, each sentence is a metaphor. There is both similarity and difference in each metaphor. Similarity arises because all the metaphors are directed to the same thing, but each is also different as they 'evoke different dimensions of the phenomenon.' (p. 280).

Metaphor is useful, because if something is named it has already moved through perception. In a metaphor, something about something is transferred to another something, where the other is analogous, but different from that to which it is normally applicable. In order therefore to catch perception, in transit to conception as it were, it can be likened to something. In this way something about things, as they are received before they are identified, can be captured.

Sokolowski (2000, p. 171) says of metaphor in phenomenology ' ... the nature of metaphor is to bring together terms from different regions of discourse in order to articulate new aspects in the things we are talking about. A metaphor flaunts its incoherence in order to make a point.' He says (p. 145) metaphor and other tropes are used ...

> ... to adjust the terms that are normally used to name things and processes in the world. Worldly terms need to be modified in order to get at what underlies the presentation of things and their ability to be named.

The themes generated by the above means have a sense of being already labelled, that is existential or metaphoric, or "programmed". These themes contrast with other freely emerging themes or "un-programmed" themes. Such freely emerging themes were generated through the reiteration of analysis and working with themes, these were not a straightforward re-running of what had gone before. Rather it was doing theme analysis in different ways, such as starting with a big picture and looking for detail that stood out. Then as an

"opposite", looking for detail and building a picture, not the picture as the previous picture but a different one; then again, now what stands out?

"What stands out" needs careful interpretation. van Manen (1990) details themes extensively. To say what this sort of theme is in the current work, it is handy to start with what it is not. van Manen (1990, p. 32) says it is not found by looking 'in a reflective grasp [for] the facticity of this or that particular experience.' It is not a pro active "go out and find", an outward boundness. Rather it is more receptive. Such receptiveness is to contemplate what the experience itself is saying, an inward boundness, to be open minded and put to one side and leave out everyday senses made of it. It is without the person on the receiving end rushing to closure, to bed down the experience, or to categorise it and place it in a catalogue. Themes emerge out of what the experience tells of and about itself as it is received, again and again, each time freshly so. Themes that emerge in their own right were used in particular in the final distilling element of the portrayals.

Piantanida and Garman (1999 p. 135) suggest analysis and/or interpretation 'may take the form of concepts, themes, issues, dilemmas, problematics, and so on' that recur and can be clustered. Theme generation, those that emerge in their own right, is detailed in the following sub-section: Working the data. These latter stages of the portrayal are presented in *Intuiting* and *Distilling* - they are further detailed in the next section, where they are closer to their actual appearance.

In the current work the participants were involved in each element generated in the portrayal. Such involvement included direct use of their first hand stories and responses to, for example, metaphoric stem sentences, to verification and to other feedback along the lines noted above and as recommended by Brookfield (1990).

Participants' involvement in process and outcomes were especially important to the inclusion of poetised texts that make up part of the portrayals in the next section. In these texts, data gathered in the interview was viewed as having been "turned out of a mould". The task was to then construct the mould, from which the data gathered in interviews had come. The construction was done by the researcher in an "as if" mode, as if in the shoes of the participant. As such feedback from the participants, on the construction of the mould, was sought. In both instances, each gave positive feedback on the poetised text as it had been constructed.

The current research concludes with discussion on meaning attributed by participants to the events and their experiences. This interpretive aspect takes form in the close of the portrayals. It is elaborated in Section 7, which the participants in the research have also supported and endorsed.

Working the data for themes

Following transcription of recorded materials, transcriptions were given to each participant for their verification and clarification as necessary. The transcription given to each person was a full transcription of what each person had said.

The data was reiteratively considered or contemplated for generating "un-programmed" themes - in distilling. The transcribed text was in a column on the left hand side of each page; both the blank right hand column and the reverse of each page provided writing space for analysis of the transcribed interview.

The data was considered along lines similar to Willis (1998). There were five steps.

1. *Headings* embracing major sections of the interview were identified and recorded in the blank right hand column of the transcript.
2. *Headlines* were developed that summarised each thought in the section or paragraph to which it was attached; the headline was also noted in the right hand column. Data tended to be included, rather than excluded. Notes, memos and points potentially of special note and cross referencing were also recorded.
3. The *headlines* were then *re-viewed.* This re-viewing was not an everyday or simple looking back. The nature of the re-view involved the adoption of a perspective from a position of standing back, to allow a more receptive view; this also facilitated opportunity to reflect and consider different perspectives. This type of re-view sought to allow *categories* or *themes* grounded in and emerging from the data to be identified. The re-views were exhausted or taken to extinguishment, although in various passes through the data, different parts remained unused or were residual to the pass in question. The development of headings and headlines and re-view sought to take apart the data in various ways and commence sorting.

4. Following re-viewing, the categories or themes were organised to develop *clusters* that had some intrinsic similarity or connection.
5. The data was then rebuilt to *portray* the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises and *illuminated* with text from the interviews.

Being systematic, organised and reflective were essential to the data analysis. These attributes assisted with both thorough exploration and ensuring data that contributed to the richness of portrayals were not lost. Reiteration of the steps, particularly re-viewing, and verification with the research participants were undertaken. Perseverance with being systematic, organised and reiterative nevertheless contributed to trustworthiness, which is elaborated in the following sub-section.

As progress with working the data was made, it was presented for critical review. Inquiry initiated by participants as to the progress of the research occasionally took place. Other more formal progress reporting initiated by myself was also undertaken. Dialogue to establish, develop and ensure mutual understanding of processes and staged outcomes of the processes was ongoing.

The on-going involvement of participants ensured that sharing took place, together with development of insights by participants and myself and their agreement, or discussion surrounding points of contention. Acceptance, without implying necessarily agreement, was central to the work. Brookfield (1990) endorses an on-going involvement of research participants beyond data collection. He includes such involvement as a criterion for success in conducting phenomenological interviewing. He identifies (p. 335) the degree to which participants 'feel they have gained some increased insight into their own actions as a result of participating in the interview' as being important. Similarly (p. 339) he suggests sharing of participant's work, progressive interaction and feedback as adding to the quality of the inquiry. Such activity was a feature of the current work.

Acceptance of process and outcomes were important to the authenticity of the overall work. Throughout working the data, participants were involved in discussions to share what was being generated and how it was being put together for this thesis.

Trustworthiness

In discussing qualitative adult education research, Smith (2000, p. 141) re-conceptualises the 'empiricist heritage' of validity and reliability as trustworthiness. For Smith trustworthiness takes on the need for researcher self reflexivity and transparency (p. 143). Self reflexivity and transparency bring out, openly and clearly, the contribution or partiality of the researcher to the research in both process and outcome - both how and what - together with various relational issues in attending to this dynamic, for example who is speaking and about what and from what perspective, who is doing what and when.

Smith (2000, p. 146) also connects moral reasoning and persuasiveness with self reflexivity and transparency, all are part of trustworthiness. Moral reasoning calls for a sense of helpfulness for the people involved in the research, the processes and outcomes; persuasiveness, in part flowing from the preceding criteria, also brings to the research a sense of lifelikeness (or verisimilitude, as outlined below) and 'how the author establishes the locus of his/her argument' (p.149).

A similar stance is noted by others, where for example, interpretive research calls for a different sense of validity and reliability, than the counterpart meaning of these words in positivist research. Eisner's contribution (Eisner 1997) is to pave the way for different interpretations of familiar words when applied to a 'new frontier' of qualitative research (pp. 262 - 263); Piantanida and Garman (1999, pp. 147 - 153) and Barone and Eisner (1997) elaborate criteria that show whether research will stand up to scrutiny.

Piantanida and Garman (1999) name seven criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative work: integrity, verité, rigor, utility, vitality, aesthetics and ethics. An earlier work (Garman 1996) includes verisimilitude as an eighth criterion, it appears to be is included in "vitality" in the more recent work. Each criterion is now outlined.

Integrity concerns whether the study is conceptually structurally sound, in that the claims to knowledge created and their truth is justifiable given the epistemology on which the work is based. The criterion of *verité* relates to intellectual honesty and authenticity of the study. Is it consistent with like in its field, or if it is different, does it say why? It includes how the researcher has come to do the research in a particular way (see Section 2: 'Researcher's

learning and heuristic') and reflection on the processes of the research, which underlies Section 7: Wider understandings *Reconciling things and being.*

Rigor covers depth and quality of intellect, care and creativity to create thick and rich data that is thorough and exhaustive. *Utility* speaks to the significance and professional relevance of the work. *Vitality* and *verisimilitude* mean a lively, lifelike, aliveness in the inquiry; is it recognisable or plausible, does it "fit" and spring to life? With vitality and verisimilitude, research participant, researcher and reader of the research can each vicariously connect with the portrayals in the inquiry or the metaphors used by the researcher.

Aesthetics in qualitative research is not so much about being artistic, but more to do with whether the work makes connections in someway between the individual and universal or spiritual; it also includes a sense of conceptual elegance in the way it is put together. *Ethics* as interpreted here has been touched on at the end of Section 4 and again as an earlier sub-section in this section. The close relationships established in doing the current work could not have been established and become workable without a strong sensitivity to ethics, care and honesty.

Barone and Eisner (1997) detail seven features or design elements that stand out and infuse arts based educational research. The first element is to create a *virtual reality*, 'a work of fiction which nevertheless mirrors the lived world and somehow makes the familiar fresh' (Willis 1999, p. 7). In virtual reality readers enter less familiar territory, but are nevertheless able to recognise and intimately relate to different elements; in so doing both see the unreal as possible and can throw light on aspects of real life that had always been there, but unnoticed.

Ambiguity allows spaces into which readers can enter to both participate and enrich the text. *Expressive language* includes metaphor and creativity, that invites readers to 'fill gaps with personal meaning.' (p. 75). *Contextualised and vernacular language* calls on the writer to use the sort of language used in lived experience. In p*romotion of empathy* the perspective of the participant is important; this prompts readers to 'reconstruct the subjects' perspective within themselves', through it they are able to 'vicariously experience events from a different perspective' (p. 77).

A *personal signature* of the writer is needed to create an individual feel to the work. In this element the researcher/author is inclusive of self and is seen to appear. Readers are

'encouraged to participate in a variety of perspectives and to arrive at a single, correct version of reality.' (p 78). The final element, a*esthetic form* needs also to be present, the work needs to be 'good art as well'. Whilst positivist research follows its pattern, so too will arts based research, including framing a dilemma and identifying problems with a main issue, to create tension and significance. The reader, in being drawn in, sees the drama unfold to ultimately find a resolution, but not 'necessarily a tidy summation, or definitive solution' rather something 'has changed or grown as a result of the detailed events.' Barone and Eisner in concluding discussion of the elements say (p. 78), when that change happens, the purposes of the work have been served.

Sokolowski (2000, p. 156) notes that science provides 'a special way of exercising the power to be truthful' - a 'truth of correctness' (p. 158). However adopting a phenomenological stance and being a human being in human life, truthfulness concerns 'the human attempt to disclose the way things are' - a 'truth of disclosure'; where 'the truth of correctness depends on the truth of disclosure' (p. 159). Building on phenomenological truthfulness, Sokolowski puts forward (p. 174) 'consistency' and 'coherence' as cornerstones of direct experience of the way things are. Although Smith (2000) treads carefully around "truth" in arriving at trustworthiness, Sokolowski's truthfulness, as outlined here, resonates with Smith's (2000) trustworthiness.

The words validity and reliability, that are so familiar in empiricist research, are re-conceptualised in the current work as trustworthiness and, with the different word, comes also different meaning.

In the next section, Section 6, the turn to the portrayal of the lived experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is made.

Section 6

EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING TO FORM AND START SMALL, NEW ENTERPRISES

Introduction

This section sets out to construct a response to the issue at the core of the research: ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** - what is the experience of this learning? Progressive stages and different textual media are used to reveal how people experience this learning. The data are worked as two characters, Alexandra and Margaret, in two parts, the foreground and the major portrayal.

The people, the times and their businesses with key events and snapshot vignettes foreground the portrayals. Together, these foreground components provide the impetus to move onto the major stage of portrayal. The portrayals of the lived experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises reveal what emerged from reading the scene to re-view and assess what mattered most.

The portrayal's display sequence is built and employed to illumine the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises. The elements of the portrayal display are designed in a sequence through which themes emerge and are revealed. Ultimately the themes work to express the essential features of the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises. From being embedded within the early display sequence, the themes emerge in the later display sequence. The latter reading-the-scene took place in having adopted a phenomenological stance, or attitude, to the experiences of people learning to form and start their own small, new enterprises; it was not in an everyday sense of reading the scene. The structure of portrayal display sequence is presented along the lines of those developed by Willis (1998).

The overall structure of the foreground and portrayals is mapped out and shaded in Figure 6.1; Willis' corresponding headings of the portrayals are shown unshaded along side.

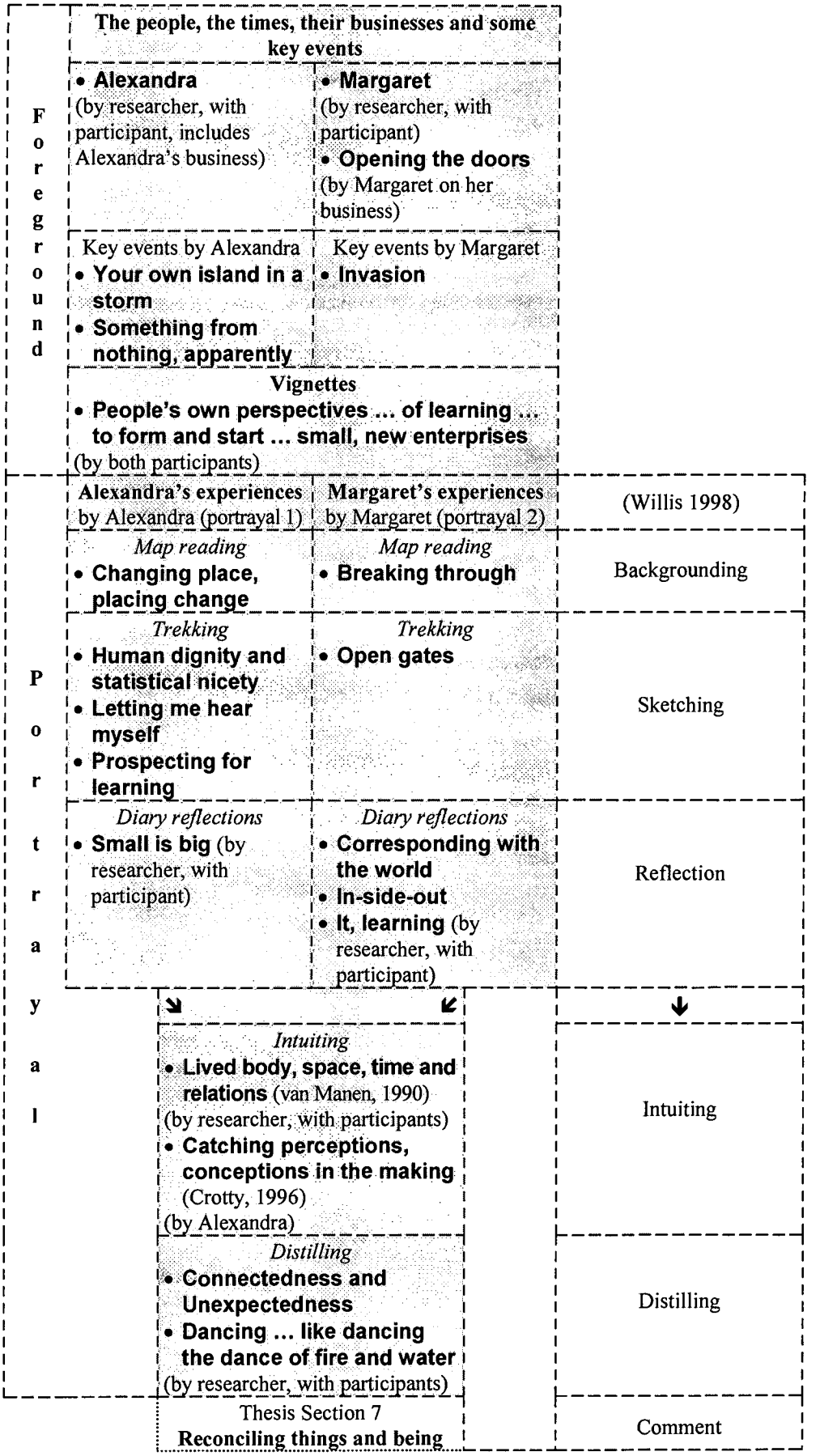


FIGURE 6.1
STRUCTURE OF FOREGROUND AND PORTRAYAL

Function and relationship of each stage

The foreground components and the elements in the portrayal display sequence each serve different but related purposes. To reduce disruption to the overall flow once begun, the function and relationship of each stage of the foreground and portrayals are now elaborated.

Foreground

The foreground is made up of general background comprising the people who took part in the research, their businesses and the era. Key events in the participants' business formation and snapshot vignettes provide some focal specificity within the general background.

The vignettes reflect early encounters within the context of the research. They are synthesised from comments within the transcribed interview. Each vignette is built around emphasis on the four different elements of the statement *people's own perspectives ... of learning ... to form and start ... small, new enterprises*. The vignettes follow the same sequence as each element of the statement, with each of their emphases, that is as each is said in the statement as a whole. Each paragraph in each vignette are comments of different people participating in the research.

In this way, the early working of the data, represented in the vignettes, serve as a platform from which learning and business, as ordinarily understood, are left behind. Setting off therefore from the foreground, it is the portrayals of people learning to form and start small, new enterprises that are encountered in the platform's beyond. In looking phenomenologically with portrayals of the experience of people's learning, new understandings are constructed and brought to light.

Portrayals

The portrayals that are developed to uncover what phenomenology sees have several elements. Each portrayal is designed to progressively, but not necessarily steadily, evoke, reveal and ultimately expose the essential nature of the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises.

There are two portrayals; they start separately, but end in an integrated manner. The two portrayals start in parallel as they draw on two different sources of data. The first came more directly from conversation in recorded interview. The second came in a similar manner; in

addition though, it included conversation recorded in a second interview that mirrored a piece of art work. The first half of the portrayals, where they run in parallel, align with the two characters, Alexandra and Margaret. The portrayals are integrated in their second half, where the intent is to allow the common essentialness from each to emerge.

As mentioned, the first half of the portrayal display sequence is made up of two portrayals that run in parallel, see Figure 6.1. There are three elements, 'map reading', 'trekking' and 'diary reflections'. This sequencing serves a similar general progress function as Willis' panels of backgrounding, sketching and reflection (Willis 1998). In contrast to Willis' gallery metaphor, the terms used on this occasion evoke the sense of travel. Travel was raised intermittently in the overall research and specifically in a stem sentence metaphor (in the metaphor that best conveys learning to form and start my small, new enterprise is riding a stock car train). Further learning as a "journey" is a metaphor that is commonly spoken of more widely. The particular functions of each portrayal element have differences to the panels in Willis (1998); the sequencing and functions are now elaborated.

After *map reading* of each portrayal, there are different numbers of *treks* and different numbers and types of *diary reflections*. The portrayals are separate at this stage, as they are of different places and terrain. The expression "the map is not the territory" is relevant: looking at a map is nothing like actually travelling the territory to which it relates. Nevertheless reading a map provides an important orientation to what may be encountered, hence *map reading*. On the ground travel takes the form of *trekking*. Several treks are made, each with their own detail of different highlights. As travellers often do, diary records are made and can take different forms, text or poetry-like, poetised, text. The *diary reflections* play a similar role.

In the current work mapping, trekking and diary reflections serve different purposes and their texts are presented in different ways. Each is intended to present views from different vantage points of the same thing, in this case the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises. Like an architect's drawings, each is different, whether elevation or section; or just as with a sliced orange with different angled cuts, the cut surfaces have different appearances. Whether vantage point, drawing or slice, what is "under the spot light" is the same thing.

Map reading here is intended to provide an orientation to what might be encountered in later travel. It provides a sense of context and circumstance, after and on which the reality of trekking activity takes place. Map reading prepares readers so they are better able to locate the detail of a trek. Map reading provides relatively dry information, it is more impersonal.

Trekking relates a telling incident or issue, a point of special interest; a selection is told. Trekking describes an event, or a group of related events; the treks bring action and life energy to the orientation of the relatively static mapping. Trekking tells of highways and by ways, detours travelled, it gives meaning to what was only information on a map. Every route or pathway travelled is not told.

Diary reflections, as in real diaries, are more private or subjective. In this way in the current context they serve to wake up the reader's senses, out of their slumber of this learning as conceived conventionally. The reflections are perhaps startling. They say wake up, open your eyes to seeing differently, slow them down and see now what is perceived, rather than hitherto conceived. The diary reflections take the form of text and poetised reflections that allow a freer expression, to evoke. The poetised reflections are a free form style, without conforming to conventions of formal poetry or punctuation and letter capitalisation.

In the second half of the portrayal, the two parallel sequences are integrated into a single sequence, to reflect the themes that emerge are common to both portrayals. Two elements in the second half, intuiting and distilling, use the same headings adopted by Willis. As terms used variously but nonetheless characteristic of phenomenology (Willis 1996, Willis 1998, Crotty 1996 and Ehrich 1996), intuiting and distilling (to essences) are also adopted in the current work. Willis' final panel 'comment', although used differently here, is presented as the final Section 7 of the thesis.

Intuiting and *distilling*, as less metaphoric terms than the sense of travel, seek respectively to phenomenologically attend to and focus in very closely on the features that are unique to this learning and at the same time leave out, or bracket, conventions and stereotypes of common conception.

Intuiting is accomplished by two means of theme development. Firstly, by using existential themes identified by van Manen (1990, pp. 101 - 106), who draws in Merleau Ponty (1962), and secondly, by means of stem sentences, sentences that invite completion; when completed

each is a metaphor (Crotty 1996, p. 279 - 280). The themes developed in intuiting in some way sum up an essentialness about the thing that is the focus of phenomenological attention, in this case the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises.

As noted, the themes were generated in two ways. Techniques included firstly looking for the themes of lived body, space, time and relation (van Manen 1990) and secondly using Crotty's metaphoric stem sentences (Crotty 1996). van Manen's and Crotty's themes both have a sense in part of being already identified and named, they are viewed in the current work as being "programmed".

Themes of a different nature are also developed in the final distilling element of the portrayal. The themes of distilling are distinct from intuiting's programmed themes in that the distilling themes emerge in their own right. Themes in distilling were those that emerged and were generated in their own right through processes of discovery; that is, they were dis-covered as they were un-covered. The discovery processes involved the development of headlines, as detailed in the previous section. In distilling, the ultimate themes to emerge are shown, together with responses to phenomenologically framed questions at the core of the current work.

The various processes and techniques used thus far, which ground the phenomenological methodology of this research in action, together with the outcomes so arrived at, were discussed with and supported by the research participants.

All but the first foreground components and the elements in the portrayals are presented in bordered boxes. The font of the text in the bordered boxes is different from the main text, so they are easily identified from other text. Each box has an identification in its top and bottom right corners to help with charting progress. An example appears below.

Identifier of each box

Heading

Different fonts are used within the bordered texts.

Identifier of each box

Finally, interpretive issues of how people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises, together with consideration of the tenets of phenomenology in a philosophical sense and the implications of these on the current work, are incorporated in the concluding Section 7.

Foreground

The people: the times, their businesses and some key events

The current work draws on the early to mid 1990s, roughly late 1993 to mid 1998. At this time unemployment was at an all time high. It was not unusual to see unemployment in the low to mid teens, say 12 - 16% within regional communities. There had been some significant and wide reaching financial failures. A building society had collapsed and - through a chain of events and, to put it simply, poor risk management - the State Bank of Victoria was taken over by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The state Labour government lost power and a Liberal government took over with a clear majority vote.

The new state Liberal government followed a pathway of fiscal stringency with the intent of restoring the state's international credit rating. Funding of the state public service including schools and hospitals was cut, there were thousands of redundancies with closure of services from public offices, schools and hospitals. All local governments were dismissed and were replaced with a small group of commissioners appointed by the government; they were restructured over a two year period, with most local councils amalgamated into larger ones. Government owned utilities were also privatised. It was as if the Liberal government was almost run by one person, the premier (G. J. Kennett). His way of operating involved little, if any, consultation, even with his own government members; he felt the mandate of his election was *carte blanche* to proceed as he sought fit, which was the one goal of restoring economic standing. Kennett's ends justified means, a stance running counter to notions of self determining humanity.

At the same time in the private sector, industry change continued apace with restructuring, the introduction of information technology and staff redundancies. At a national level similar economic measures were also having an impact across the state. A second state election saw the Liberal government retain power with one of the biggest majorities ever.

With international credit ratings restored and unemployment falling, the end of the nineties saw the Liberal government call an election and, to everyone's complete surprise, lose office. This change of government however is only recent, since data gathering for this research has largely been completed. In many respects this Liberal government era and its climate were not very different from other places and countries. The one thing that stood out however was not so much what was done, but how it was done, that is according to the edict of essentially one person.

This era was the world in which people were seeking to secure employment, but *un*employment seemed to be the only growth industry. It was in this climate, in desperation for not only income but also a sense of meaning and purpose, that many people felt that if employment as an employee was not available, as it seemed always to have been, then they would make their own by being self employed.

In this way many people sought to form and start small, new businesses in which to become self employed. Some people sought to start up new businesses based on previous occupations, others sought to develop new skills for a new business, others commercialised hobbies; some people had redundancy packages to help them set up, many did not.

My work, helping people become self employed in their own small, new enterprises, was often daunting. Many people who came to the service had sought out other similar services, but the services left them still looking for help. The service within which I worked was the only non government, independent philanthropically funded service that was also no cost to the users of it. They came in defiance of defeat, a last chance; they saw the services' independence as a ray of hope. It was daunting because what I was to offer had to be different from the offerings of others that were being rejected by the people coming to me. I had to find a new mode of transport to the destination of self employment. Modes that worked for many, clearly did not work for some.

For the purposes of the current work, and like the portrayals that follow later, pictures of two characters who sought to form and start small, new enterprises in which to become self employed are created. The characters are Alexandra and Margaret; their businesses are described with incidents of key learning following each character. Alexandra, her business and key events for her now follow.

Alexandra

Alexandra had been in business, supporting her life partner, in a capital city. On separation from her partner, she set out to start a new life in a regional centre; her children were grown up. At one stage she had also taught English and French, but school staff cuts eliminated that part of her from her life.

Bruised but not hardened by what had happened and the situation in which she now found herself, she was able nevertheless to summon the courage not only to hold everything together but also to go where many normally fear to tread. In the sweeping gaze of hindsight, this sounds a simple case of gathering enough of whatever to move on and keep moving. The time sensitive reality was very different.

The time sensitive reality was more like surviving the sort of total devastation wildfire can bring. The exciting emergent post fire, but shallow rooted, new growth was then either flushed away in flood or crisped in drought, or, one way or another, both. The time sensitive reality for this woman was consecutive and repeated get up, knock down. She was, and of course still is, a talented artist; but that was not to be her line of business on her own, it had been before, but not again. Instead she channelled her artist's inquiry and expression into recreational work. Teaching and things related were never to be mentioned again.

Alexandra was in her forties when our paths first crossed, in late 1993 or early 1994. She had had contact with several organisations providing varied initiatives and government funded employment services. She had followed up many leads and recommendations and fulfilled stipulated obligations. There was nothing left undone that should or could have been done. She unfailingly supported people in similar situations and gave generously to still others who had no need of or claim on such.

Well intentioned help and so much effort on her part did not bring sought after

employment. Tiredness and exhaustion prevailed. In self preservation in the onslaught of adversity, this was a person who had come to hide her light under a bushel. By this time, there seemed little point in showing it. It was deeply buried and securely hidden out of sight.

Alexandra was a comfortable figure. She often wore dark coloured clothes, which went well with her dark hair, with poster coloured contrasts. She moved with grace and a composure that defied the turmoil of her surroundings and indeed circumstances. The mortgage payments were a priority before food, keeping the car on the road came a very rapid third; the mortgage and upkeep of the car were supplemented on any number of occasions by small windfalls via barter or sale of goods and chattels. It was a way of life that left me bereft, a shame of limited understanding. I had no similar real experience as a basis for a deeper level of appreciation, I was concerned not to show careless insincerity.

In her recreational art work, Alexandra finds and creates portraits of fictional people from fabrics and stuff of nature's flowering flora. These are portraits that lie around everyone, everywhere, sometimes more or less complete, but no one before has noticed them. Somehow they manage to be simultaneously impossible and yet so real. In Alexandra's portraits, she displays remarkable ways of seeing. Similarly she seems to cause people to be able to display their ways of looking that they would never normally stop to consider, although this disclosure does not necessarily surface on its own, rather usually it emerges only with inquiry. Nevertheless conversations that seek to surface such ways of seeing, her inquiry of herself and inquiry with others, always fascinates - why and how did I [Alexandra] see that, how and why do others see the portrait? Similarly the fascination in Alexandra of finding portraits continues to spill out of her; it is as if they won't leave her alone.

In her business, Alexandra, in a manner of feet firmly planted in life itself, provides pet minding services, for when their owners are away from home. Services can also include house minding, plant and chook minding etc. She provides a visible presence, together with care and security, a lived in-ness that makes a house a home; her services are usually provided on a live in

basis, but she also does day visits on a daily, or other regular, basis. The business can only grow so much because her foremost intention is personal care and she can only be in one place at a time. If double bookings are on the cards, she has a handful of back up helpers. Mainly though, there is a group of people (customers) who repeatedly use the service, they ring her first before their travel arrangements become locked in by dates. Her clients come from throughout the central highlands, with a few in Melbourne.

Alexandra's business is a really small business, she is the owner and essentially sole operator. It is a business in every sense, although the intentions she has for it do not conform with conventions of typical business growth. She does not want it to grow beyond her own capacity. It was a great frustration to her in her business formation and planning, and discussions with others that this stage always involves, that people could not accept the idea of limited growth. Business success seems to be predicated only on on-going stages of growth and renewal. Limited growth and a levelling off at capacity did not match an assumed expectation by advisers that growth is good. At best she was deprecatingly labelled a "lifestyler", at worst gurus for growth, circling like birds of prey, dived on and killed her ideas.

In the case of Alexandra, another suggestion of yet another well intentioned service provider to which she had to, or felt she should, respond was not the answer. Helping this lady meant [me] daring not to intervene, daring not to suggest this or that. This lady wanted to be herself on her own terms, to let be. Time and hindsight enable this to be said with an ease and simplicity that belies the doing of it. The doing of it on my part. The doing of it on her part. The doing of it on her part the more so. She was the one who was still daring, also, to ask for help; she was the one not giving up. She was the one accounted for in a measure of unemployment; a mere digit embedded in a statistical nicety, a number devoid of human dignity; part of a collectivity labelled a "pool". Yet dignified she always remained.

Alexandra's outward grace and composure sheltered an inner self that people who drove everyday business systems seemed unable to see to appreciate. In recent conversations to clarify some points of discussion within the current

work Alexandra still feels this. The lessor appreciation is not on account of her inner self being inaccessible. Rather she feels it is that the current systems still just do not "get it". Nevertheless she has worked her way around them and operates her business, her way, on her terms most successfully.

Alexandra manages and administers her business from home, a Victorian cottage set back from what used to be a major thoroughfare in the days of mining wealth, a road that followed the natural meandering of such life, rather than a city planner's straight axes. Her office is simple. It comprises a diary, small data base and phone with answer phone, set up to suit where ever she is. The nature of her work is that it is actually done in the homes of other people. The homes are of many types; large new homes with sophisticated security systems on bush blocks, small holding farms, stately homes with "good" addresses.

Alexandra

The first key event relating to Alexandra is made up of a number of segments of conversation from within the transcribed interview recording, they are now brought together into a single whole. It is shown as Alexandra largely talking of and reflecting on her own story; it includes however complementary "side line" stories of other participants, re-told as "active listening". In so doing, this key event synthesises and points to a pattern observed in formal small business courses.

In this way, the conversation is a critical incident that was fundamental to unintended, yet nevertheless powerful, learning on the part of the participants. Whereas the learning in this work is cited as being largely non-formal learning, the incident was drawn out of a formal learning situation and included, because it was seen by the people participating as being informal learning - but nevertheless critical - since it was not an intended outcome of their participation in the course.

A second "simple" key event with out "active listening" follows immediately after the first.

Key event 1

Your own island in a storm

I did a proper business course. It was government funded, a self employment program. You did one too? I thought so, from what you were saying. I agree with you in saying business courses are intimidating, especially when the business is domestic in scale and type. They take the people out of the courses and put in statistics and theory, which is hopeless. Yes, they do seem to unnecessarily complicate.

Hopeless! In the outside world, courses and related things, I'd stopped being me. I was what the outside world expected me to be, that was unemployed. I'd stopped telling jokes, I didn't have an opinion on anything, I didn't talk much. I didn't have conversations because they didn't want me to. It was ... like ... stifling.

I said to myself, I am in a strange place here [after leaving Melbourne]. I've travelled to lots of places, countries and cultures and never felt strange. They don't recognise me at all, they don't recognise anything I say. I was in a strange land.

I wanted desperately to show the world who I really was. I wasn't this person that I thought they thought I was. You felt you had failed, when you left being an employee to do your thing? A drifter, operating out of other people's agendas? I felt I lost my identity, being someone I wasn't.

I was a reasonably nice person. I was reasonably intelligent, reasonably capable, a caring person. I had to find a way to present myself so I was a person again. One of the reasons I got my business going was it said everything about me. But I think my business, and I, still do not conform. I am still not what the typical business course, business adviser or another business person expects. Artists? I don't know why they don't give artists credibility.

I can see [recalling] a presenter, a grab bag guy ... bald head ... pacing, phone

in hand, thinking of something to say to impress. The suit! He thinks up crazy things, he's got money and can get people to go along. It's daft. Popular culture is very frightening. The way people can be led down the garden path by marketing and its business "principles", making money. I wonder when people are going to wake up, or if it's gone too far. It was soulless, a spiritual desert, a hateful struggle. It was a tacky place too. The old building and its rooms were tired. Going into the class-room was like going into a furniture op shop. It had the possibility of potential, but mostly it didn't. It's all changed now though.

That's right. It is so important to be who you are and live your life true to your own integrity. If you can do it in a business sense as well, that's very good, because you become your own island in a storm.

Key event 1

Based on another key event, Alexandra continues.

Key event 2

Something from nothing, apparently

There were lots of people, employment placement people, trainers, advisers, employers, people in business, family, friends. I did what they said for a long time. I did everything, went everywhere. My first idea had been to be employed, an employee, not to be self employed.

I was sitting at home. I had cut back, closed doors. Physically I was out there but mentally I retired from everything. There was no one, nothing left. My back was flat against the wall. There was nothing left, it was up to me to pull myself out of it all. I put together a list of all the things I had done; it came out to self employment.

If I had been reliant on them to tell me what to do, what to do next, I would not have survived. I would have faded, collapsed completely, because the world was telling me that I don't fit in.

It came out to self employment. "Welcome home!", pet and house minding for

my people. Homes away from home for me. I have always travelled and loved it, going to different places and meeting different people, people I'd never come across otherwise. I enjoy looking after animals and working with them. I always visited people's homes in the Melbourne business. It does not worry me to walk in off the street and settle into a different place.

I'd seen something similar in English home magazines for a number of years. I felt that my age, maturity and life experience were the things that were excellent for this, this was something I could do. The fact that I actually did like moving around, I did like going places, I did like being in other people's houses and having a break from my own environment made sense, especially as normally I live alone.

My very first client, her confirmation and delight that what I was offering worked for her, was really important to me. She said it was really good and that she had had such fun being away and everything at home was being taken care of and that it was a gorgeous welcome home. I needed that. All the stuff before, brochure making was nothing, until I had that first client and they said this is good, this was what I needed. It really validated what I was offering. I needed to go on to the next client!

If I had done what I was being told, if I had done what they wanted, in the way they wanted, I would not have survived. It was really nothing. I found my business myself and created it in my own way, on my terms and it works. From a different, spiritual, perspective: when you can achieve a sense of vibrancy of true life, it effects everyone around you. It is the essence of what I needed to go forward. It got me through the stuff I had to go through.

Key event 2

Margaret

The second character in the current work is Margaret. The actual date of our very first encounter is not clear, it was about Spring 1993. Margaret also sought a new beginning from metropolitan and married life, in a rural community. Margaret's business is described separately by her.

Margaret

After half a lifetime's career teaching, Margaret turned to the artist in herself that lay dormant, suppressed in childhood. She completed an arts degree and set out to establish an arts workshop and trading gallery.

She too was in her forties with grown children. On the surface, Margaret appeared to have a quietness about her, but through it bursts riotous, perhaps to some, bohemian colour. In everyday life she appeared to move slowly, her production of art and related work though was vast in variety and quantity. She also worked tirelessly and simultaneously on community projects; a critical appraisal of where she was at with that part of her work brought the effort to a halt. Margaret made her own work the priority and directed all her energies to this.

Margaret is a different person when she is at work in her studio, than as she appears to me. Rather than a quieter, listening person, in her studio or wherever it is her current work or project takes her, she works at a frenetic pace. It is a pace that outstrips what could be imagined from her "social" appearance.

Margaret moved to a rural community in the early 1990's, before the Liberal government came into power. The community in which she chose to live quickly and very intensively experienced every dimension of the Kennett government's economic drive. Considerable community wealth was lost with closure of banks, the hospital, transport services and businesses; the community fell into a malaise. The community experienced very low prices and rents for homes that in turn attracted an influx of families. In an odd twist

the primary school experienced one of the biggest growth rates in the state. Much of the community's infrastructure though was in steep decline, at worst to demise, at best to slumber.

Margaret

Margaret speaks about her business.

Margaret's business

Opening the doors

I've lived in the Old ButterFactory since 1991. It's an open plan living space, a gallery space and a workshop. I'm a working artist, a painter, a sculptor. I see myself as a painter, but the three dimensional element is very strong in me, I can't help doing sculpture. I'm multi disciplinary, I work in different areas. The gallery shows works of other artists, as well as work of myself.

When I came here, there was always an aspect that I would sell what I produced, that was how it would be. It could be just a gallery and gallery sales or selling like a shop as well, from a small part of the gallery. I thought I'd have a small area, to be just like a shop, selling small things of my own, made in small runs, limited editions and one off pieces. There was also commissioned work and commission on sales of work by others shown in the gallery. Gradually the whole space was improved, the holes in the floor repaired, I painted the walls and put in new lights. All of that sort of thing. I saw it had a potential for being larger, than I initially thought when I first went there.

The back part, which is now the workshop, was in such bad condition that I thought I'd keep the door closed, it would just be a store house. Gradually that was improved too. I put the kiln out there in the end, I was going to put it in the gallery space to begin with, so all the back store house part became workshop space. And so then I could use the whole gallery space for a gallery and selling.

The ButterFactory is surrounded, by roads on two sides and on its third side the creek with platypus. I'm separated from one neighbour. So, there's no

one attached to me ... I am sort of sitting here like an island. It's a very interesting thing that I didn't have any notion of being. I am seen as different, because as an artist I am different, and because I am a woman doing it on my own.

I only have totally original, creative work in the gallery. It's a true gallery; it has exhibitions, openings, and the work is regularly changed in and out of it. So its not like the majority of places that call themselves a gallery, that have art works in them that are always there on the walls and they might just change them once or twice. I have a turnover; being a gallery owner makes a lot of administration as well. A gallery director - owner is a lot of work and a lot of time is expended talking to people.

The interesting thing is, as gallery director - owner, I have to talk up an event before it's happened. That's the entrepreneurial aspect. Saying "Look, it's going to be great show. This person is in it, they're producing such and such." I've got to enliven all the artists. As an artist, you only know that you're in a show, but as a gallery owner I have to say "I've got this work or person lined up and they're working on some really interesting things."

Lots of artists won't be seen with certain people. Some are very precious about themselves. They are not risk takers. They see me as being out in the country, they say "I don't deal with you." There are all those attitudes that I have to encounter. I think, well I don't want them anyway, if it is like that.

The problem with a gallery is it takes a long time to get artists' trust and to reassure them of the way I deal with them. Artists have a problem. They have to expend everything. Not only their energy, but all their financial reserves to do a piece of work or series of work. Then it goes out. It mightn't sell for years, but then again they've got to keep producing. Their faith in themselves has to be enormous to be able to keep producing and putting out, without anything coming back. That's enormous, it takes a great deal of effort, to stay fresh.

Where I am, Clunes, has extra ordinary history. It's the history of the state

really because its the founder of the state, its wealth from gold. Many people have relatives who came out of Clunes. They went to the four corners of Australia after the gold was finished. So there's an incredible pull back to here. Many people come back looking for histories in the museum. The stories and the things that went on back then, that nobody knows about. There's just an extraordinary source of really great excitement, the characters and the lives on the gold fields.

I came to Clunes because the building was everything I wanted. It was a dream, an artists dream, the space, the size. The fact it was freezing cold and all the other problems were secondary. It was an opening of the doors, I saw it as a chance to actually live my life as an artist.

Margaret's business

Margaret's first key event is simple, without active listening as the first key event of Alexandra.

Key event 1

Invasion

I had this person come to me, they came out of the blue, no phone call, nothing. Someone I knew suggested they come to me. They asked if I would illustrate some books for them. They just arrived one day, when I was putting together an exhibition that was about to open. I had a look at a few of the books. I just did a quick drawing, there and then, the time wasn't good, I was preparing a new exhibition. She grabbed it, just like that, [snatching action] it was exactly what she wanted. She'd written the story, so she took the picture, she saw it as an ownership thing. The thing is though, it wasn't her ownership. The drawing was exactly what was in her mind and that she wanted. The drawing was mine, but she took it. She didn't know the definition, I think that people that write do not, they forget. I suggested she take a copy, the original drawing was actually mine. She didn't return my drawing to me. I didn't go ahead with it. I think as far as I'm concerned, to write the story and do the book illustrations is the best thing, instead of illustrating for someone else.

I couldn't believe it. She came to me, here in the gallery. She walked in as

though *she* owned the place. She plastered her comments over everything. Her eyes pilfered through a pile of work waiting to go on display. There was no "May I?" or an inquiring gesture seeking approval to look. She pushed her way in when clearly I was really busy. Then she grabbed the picture I quickly did for her and left, with it. I should have kept hold of it and organised a copy for her.

The business side of things didn't get half a chance. I didn't even get the chance to talk in art terms about what I had done, as simply an on-the-spot possibility. It's not just wrong, people don't easily recognise art work as work and what goes into it as work. She was not right, what she did was not very nice. It happened in my place. It was like she invaded me, she invaded my place. The episode hung around me, in my place. It took time to cleanse the place and myself of it all.

I'd rather spend my time and energy on positive things, than dealing with an unpleasant lot as this. Coming across this sort of thing is difficult times; working out what to do is difficult; it's wasteful of precious life.

Key event 1

Vignettes

As noted earlier, the vignettes are built around emphasis on different elements of the statement 'People's own perspective of learning to form and start small, new enterprises'.

- People's **own perspectives** ...
- People's own perspectives **of learning** ...
- People's own perspectives of learning **to form and start** ...
- People's own perspectives of learning to form and start **small, new enterprises.**

People's own perspectives ...

My life and business experience were relevant, rather than there being theory.

I wasn't what course trainers, business advisers or employment placement staff wanted me to be. I was trying to see myself as everyone else wanted me to be, what they wanted from a business. It was really bad for me to do that. Possibly I needed to go through that to understand where I stood in the scheme of things. I'm sure it would have been easier not to do it that way. But possibly it helped me to work out a greater grounding in myself, once I'd actually understood that.

They take the people out of the courses and put in statistical numbers and theory. And columns for heavens sake, it's intimidating. The courses can be very intimidating. If I'd done a full blown business course I wouldn't have even started.

... of learning ...

Looking at my experience of learning to start my business, manifesting my work into physical reality. I can't detach that from the way I view life or the way I live life as a whole. It's probably because I have the skills that I have behind me, to give me the confidence to be that way. I don't know whether it is that or not. But to me they are an unconscious element of the passages or workshops or whatever I have learned through my life. They're in the background always, they are always there.

Things like time and motion just don't work; the rules have to be thrown out. That's the only point that I got going, is when you throw the rules out. Make your own as you go.

... to form and start ...

I found that if I didn't start trying to do and think of the typical things that people do when they manage a business, I got going. I decided just to ignore everything, not think of the typical things. I started letting my imagination run. It worked, the more I used my imagination and didn't worry, the more I found I could do it. Suddenly I was able to start.

I've done small business management courses, if I tried to do it from their level there was no way I was ever going to get this started, it was just all too big for me. What I was actually starting was something on a micro level. Mine was too small for what they call small business. Small is big. I found that if I tried to do it that way it was just impossible, there was no way I could ever do it.

... small, new enterprises

They complicate things, those business courses. When you want to start off something that's very small and domestic, it just unnecessarily complicates. That's hopeless.

Elsewhere I was expected to follow procedures from larger businesses that did not translate to my scale of start up.

I went to an accountant. He said to factor in more time. If I did that I'd never make anything. I love what I do, so I don't care if I don't factor in that much. My accountant could not be made to see that. He's based on the theoretical way of viewing things and it's statistically correct or whatever, or as the books say. But this is a heart position, doing what I love.

People's own perspectives of learning to form and start small, new enterprises

These vignettes of people learning to form and start small, new enterprises show a clear gap between what is expected to happen in learning to form and start small, new enterprises and their own interpretation of their real experience of it. The research participants' critical review, in the vignettes, yielded insights of preferences for something that was better geared to their circumstances. They are astute observations that not only resonate through the foreground, but clearly also show how the problems encountered were resolved. Each resolution was achieved by constructing a new meaning that emerged out of their experiences; it was what they learned, what they learned could barely have been intended by a trainer!

The vignettes complete the foreground of both Alexandra and Margaret. Thus also set is the point of departure, from which to commence the exploration, to form new understandings, of how people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises, as unfolded and displayed with phenomenological portrayal.

Portrayals

Alexandra's experiences - portrayal 1

The first portrayal brings together the lived experiences of learning that draw on the character Alexandra, as established in the preceding foreground. There are five elements in this first half of the portrayal. There is a single mapping element that provides orientation, followed by three treks that show detail of different highlights; there is then a single more subjective, poetised diary reflection.

Map reading

Alexandra outlines, in her own words, the circumstances leading up to her deciding to explore self employment.

Portrayal 1, Map reading

Changing place, placing change

Starting the new business came out of leaving Melbourne after thirty odd years, being married, another business and doing part-time teaching. Now there was no marriage, no one to live with. It was a whole sea change. Times were very difficult, not being able to get employment, to work with others. Self employment, to work alone, was not the original intention; living alone was enough of being alone. Two difficult years were spent trying to get employment. The climate was very harsh.

A whole lot of unemployment scene stuff, training, retraining and computer training, was done. Not being seen as an individual, being seen as unemployed and [older in] age were very hurtful things. A mature age (un)employment group was started. A lot of time, effort, hope and care went into it. Funding was found, it did well for a couple of years. It was tiring, too long spent volunteering. It fizzled out for the original members.

It was back to the start. Decisions had to be made. Everything that could be found had been done. Physically the body was still out there. But mentally, everything was being retired, doors closing, cutting back, retiring back. There was nothing left.

For very practical reasons at that point, a long time was spent sitting at home. There was no body else. It was up to me to pull myself out. It had to be done by me, for myself, by myself. A list of all the things that had been done in life was put together. All the things achieved, practical things that had been done and things that appealed were made into a list. There was lots that could be done, lots that appealed; but it needed to be something for me and that others would allow and accept. It came out to self employment. There were some changes very early along the way.

Portrayal 1, Map reading

Trekking

In this first of three treks, Alexandra tells of how she was made to feel leading up to and including the immediate time of her decision to become self employed.

Portrayal 1, trek 1 (of 3)

Human dignity and statistical nicety

I am not what the unemployment scene and business courses want me to be. For months and months I have been trying to see myself as everyone else wants me to be, what they want for a business.

I have stopped being me. I have lost my identity. All the time I am bombarded, everyone telling me this and that, be this, do this, do that, go here, wear this, your appointment is at ... , be at this place on ... . It's relentless parading at a never ending show. There's all sorts of people and no shortage of action, but the pay off is scant.

I am told you must always smile when you are on the phone. Can you imagine being at home, desperate and talking to people on the phone with a smile. It is all false, it isn't real. I am never me when I leave home. I don't feel myself any more, I don't feel recognised as me, I don't feel recognised as a person either. If I rely on them and all their things, I will fade, this world is telling me I don't fit in.

It's much harder trying to find out what's expected of you by this person and that person, what it says in a book, then again another telling: the important thing you should be doing ... . When they start talking about cash flows, I know money and me don't go together. I mean cash just doesn't flow, you have to cash to start off with. I am the originator of a real idea, that's totally different, it's not passion for making money, do everything to just to make more. Effort that is important to me, is not being given credibility.

I believed in myself and found I could sell my service. So all that, it's not my path any more, it was telling me you're not what is wanted, change. One of the reasons for starting my business was me saying this is who I am, this is what I can and do do. If I hadn't found my business idea and done it my way, then I wouldn't have survived. It's not self indulgent, it is now the essence of what I need to go forward. I have found a way to present myself so I am a person again.

My back was up against the wall. It was, but that opened up everything. I've had to have a lot of faith, it got me through stuff. I now have a deeper core feeling. I had to challenge myself and get some feedback from somewhere, someone to ask for the courage. I couldn't just say right I'm going to have a go. I had to say to someone, please give me the courage. Then I had challenged myself and then I had a go. It's the best reason, not a directive from someone else. When you are on your own right path, your skill, talent and determination get rewarded.

So even though I did a business course and it didn't work, it still did! I had to go through it to know what doesn't work. Then do it differently. I am now more creative, I surprise myself with the ideas I come up with now, with their blinkers off. It woke me up and changed how I see the world.

Portrayal 1, trek 1 (of 3)

In the next telling incident, the second of three treks, Alexandra speaks about her need to be heard as the means to support her in forming her small, new enterprise.

Letting me hear myself

I do a lot of the work, well everything, myself. But I find I can't do it by myself all the time. Starting my business and being on my own, I find I spent days without saying anything. I can think of all these wonderful things ... it's just all in my head, so I start talking to myself, it's natural. The days have gone when they used to say you're crazy if you talk to yourself. A lot of people live by themselves, so I talk to myself and when I go out I want to talk to people.

As I am starting my business, most of the time I'm not talking to anyone . I am just writing things down, it drives me crazy. I need outside stimulation, I need feedback for what I am telling myself in my head, writing things down isn't enough. I have no board to jump from, I have no spring board because it is all in my head, it is all written down on pieces of paper and I am by myself.

Then I discover a place and people to talk with. Luckily eventually, I am able to talk to someone. They don't need to do anything for me, just listen to me. I need feedback for what I am telling myself in my head and writing things down, that only isn't enough.

Talking, having someone listening to me, made the difference to me being able to create my business. I couldn't get anywhere just thinking about it and writing it down. My business would never have got going if I hadn't been able to talk to someone who could let me hear myself. It gave me strength, it made it real if I could talk about it.

I went to the workshops, encouragement was what I needed. That was the spring board, I got everything out of the workshops. I heard what other people were doing, I realised some of them were stronger in certain aspects than I was and others weren't as strong as I was. It all equalled out that I have nothing to lose. Financially I was desperate. I had nothing to lose at that point, my back was actually against the wall, I had no reason not to do it.

In this following final, third trek, Alexandra speaks about a learning event in forming a new, small enterprise.

Portrayal 1, trek 3 (of 3)

Prospecting for learning

I have been an employee, way back. I went straight from school to work. I had always been attracted to people in business. I admired their worldly ways and worldly cunning. I thought I had none of it, so I have to try it, to see what is involved and whether I can do it. I think I can if I am ruthless enough. It's just a question of how far I want to go and how much of my time and myself and my money I want to give up. All roads are leading to Maryborough for an new line [stationery] I am working on. That's where some multinationals get their work done. I go there and I am told about an agent, so I contact them.

I follow lots and lots of leads. Everywhere I go, I see a particular product, it seems very successful. This is interesting I say to myself. I hear it's been going for fifteen years, but the person who makes them is not very happy with this same agent. I hear rumours that they don't pay very well and don't actually do much. The arrangement has stopped now.

Eventually I ring them [the person with the successful product]. The call costs a fortune. I speak long distance for ages. They are very forthcoming with information; they say they made it by getting a niche. They now only supply flower shops. They supply a stand and charge the shop for it, all the products go well with flowers. Then they approach a multinational with their work, they sell all their work. But they only get I think something like two hundred dollars a piece plus a six percent commission on sales, so it doesn't come out to very much money. I'm not sure how they find out what the sales are. They can't use any of their work in any other way. These are all the things I discovered.

It was a good phone call, it gave me lots of ideas. I realise now there needs to be more cohesion in what I do, targeted to a special niche market. There's a very groovy place in Melbourne, a trendy shop for young teenagers, twenty year olds and I think I am mainly designing for them. I speak to one of their buyers and they were really enthusiastic with my prototypes. I have more

made and I go there. They say, "Oh well, we've changed our design direction." All they're selling now is photographs from the fifties. I went for a very fashionable market and it changes every six months. They didn't buy them. It was going to be my main outlet. There are lots of false leads, it takes a lot of courage.

Portrayal 1, trek 3 (of 3)

Diary reflection

A single poetised text that reveals personal anguish of challenge and resolution, comprises the diary reflection of Alexandra's experiences. Whilst not written by Alexandra, the processes and its finished form met with her enthusiastic support.

Portrayal 1, Diary reflection (poetised)

Small is big

Employee with others.

Challenge to expectation
must behave.

but feel outside
must bend, not break.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained
Nothing to lose.

Mainstream paralysing
but been here before?
can't fit in, small is big.
Change
its size.

Service
recognition

A new direction ... of the future
Achievement.
Where's the feedback, support?
no future
stock take
detach.

Call on inner strength
don't overlook coming this far, so well
I can, I will ...
... build on prior strengths.

Supreme effort
need someone off whom to reflect
Found at last
reference points.

Intuition
check the market
grow it
employ ... as I wished to be,
enjoy others and their places.

Invent new means to suit
with natural creativity
it works

Abandon rules
belief in self
believe in business ... will sell.
Learning.

Portrayal 1, Diary reflection (poetised)

The above poetised text completes the first half of the portrayal of Alexandra's learning experiences. Running in effect in parallel with the portrayal of Alexandra, the portrayal of Margaret now follows.

Margaret's experiences - portrayal 2

The first half of the portrayal of Margaret's experiences also has five elements. There is a single map reading element followed by a single trek. It concludes with three diary reflections, one of which is poetised. Margaret's poetised reflection was developed in the same way as Alexandra's, that is by me with participant's approval. In this portrayal, the spoken word re-tells the experience of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise as originally manifested within a single, large art work that Margaret had completed.

Margaret selected the painting as it best re-presented her experience of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise. The painting was undertaken over a crescendo of Margaret's learning to form and start a small, new enterprise, where a critical stage and point in time in the small, new enterprise were reached. The experiences, in which learning to form and start a small, new enterprise were embedded, were, for her at the time, a significant part of her life and are shown in many ways in the painting. At the later time of the research, it was the best means for Margaret to re-express and re-reveal her experience of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise. Photographs of the painting are included on the pages following the text that tell of them.

The painting was completed in 1996, by which time Margaret and I had known each other for several years. However, at the time when the art work was undertaken, the possibility of taking part in the research had not arisen.

The painting is a twentieth century interpretation that reflects a political and social environment from the participants' locality in recent times. The contemporary portrayal describes the events of 1873 in which the community of Clunes in Victoria stood against and triumphed over unjust gold mine administration.

The painting is acrylic on canvas board, it is highly and boldly coloured. It is large, fifteen and a half feet wide and eleven and a half feet high. It is made of 225 butt joined small canvas board with narrow gaps visible. A single image spans the greater canvas, Photograph 6.1 " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 " - photograph of whole painting; a tracing paper coversheet indicates the location of some of the painting's key features, of which Margaret tells in the forthcoming portrayal.



Photograph 6.1 " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 " - photograph of whole painting

For the purpose of this thesis, the spoken word portrayal is to be read as the person talking "directly" of the experience of learning to form and start a small, new business, rather than as talking about the art work or simply describing what is painted. This spoken word version is in effect a "second take". There are, thus, times when it reverts to contextual issues and points of history for example. These are, however, retained in the portrayal to add to understanding the painting.

Map reading

An orientating map reading is the first vantage point from which to view the experience of learning to form and start a small, new enterprise. In it Margaret tells of some of the background to the artwork and how it connects with her deciding to start a business based around her art work.

Portrayal 2, Map reading

Breaking through

One of the reasons for doing the large [15½ ft x 12½ ft] painting of "The Chinese Riot" is that it was painted and located where the riot actually happened, in Clunes [Victoria]. The Chinese Riot was a major Australian event, but it is little known.

Everyone knows about the Eureka Stockade, [Ballarat, Victoria] where miners were claiming rights to reasonably priced mining licences, the miners lost to government forces. Out of loss and adversity nevertheless, Peter Lalor emerged the miner's hero. He went on to become an establishment man and became a member of parliament.

Rebellion was taken from Lalor, and the working man was made an establishment hero. Lalor changed suits. It was a complete transformation, from working rebel into power player. He retained his mantle of the people's hero; little was heard about the other people, who worked equally as hard, at Eureka.

It is the story of people in high places that has prevailed. But the Eureka Stockade along with the Chinese Riot is also a story of power and greed, they are very connected. But the history of Eureka overlooks the Chinese Riot. The point is, as an establishment man, Peter Lalor provoked the Chinese Riot; it was

19 years later, just 30 km from Eureka.

In the Eureka Stockade the townsfolk with Lalor, the miner's man, lost to the powers of government forces. Whereas in the Chinese Riot, the government's men, now lead by Lalor the miner's man, lost to the townsfolk. The townsfolk won. That the townsfolk won is not well known. The changed face of Peter Lalor is not recognised either. In this way he was a speculator and villain, he jumped onto the side of the powers that be and became one of them.

In the Chinese Riot, Lalor was bringing in Chinese people to work the mines as local people were objecting to working shifts seven days a week, to working the one day of the week they had off. Physically, the working conditions in the mines were appalling, miners had miner's disease; they came above ground only to eat and sleep, with some of Saturday and Sunday off. Mine management was now insisting that miners also work on Sundays. Contracts were rescinded on the spot and for no extra pay.

The miners turned their backs on mine management. The whole township of Clunes stood against the people coming in, government people and Chinese miners were recruited instead of local people. In standing up for their rights, Melbourne papers reported the townsfolk as riff raff and low scum. They were seen as an angry mob, not able to behave in accordance to rules. Although a Ballarat paper supported the miners. They had no guns, just a barricade, sticks and stones. It was also reported that the townsfolk objected to Chinese people coming in. That was not so, the Chinese had been approached by a local delegation of miners not to come. The townsfolk were saying no one should work in the conditions of the mines as they were, seven days a week.

The same is happening again now in many respects. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. People are being defeated by elements of the times, breaking their spirit. Like back then, unthinkable things need to be done to keep achievements and conditions. Contracts are being summarily made and broken again now. It is dangerous. Similar conditions can be seen to be happening under the present state [Kennett] government.

I see the riot as a necessary element. There was a point where strictures and

rules were so overwhelmingly on the side of those in power who wanted to gain more wealth, as against the masses of people just requiring good safety work practices, which didn't exist then. Actions, like these town's people took, were like a forerunner of safety work practices, a better deal for individuals to be given a fair go. This century has, I think, been largely about that, the common man striving for some sort of equality, the guts of being human, like against other life. Achievements that had been fought so hard to get were, and are again, being taken from people.

[In addition to it depicting my learning] the painting is the first step, it is an attempt to remind local people of what had happened before, in our town. The town is being robbed of different services, banks, rail and hospital. It is the last straw, again.

Portrayal 2, Map reading

Trekking

Margaret speaks here of coming face to face with challenging problems and her telling resolution of them in the face of being seen nevertheless as the odd one out. Although a trek, its challenge and resolution has common ground with the poetised text of Alexandra.

Portrayal 2, Trek 1 (of 1)

Open gates

I was quite outraged, I wanted to leave this place. I was outraged with the way people just took it. Then I realised they did their best because they didn't know how to stand up against it. They didn't know how to get a campaign going that would keep their hospital [that was being closed by Kennett government cutbacks], they didn't know how to stand against the powers. They probably saw me as a revolutionary, for not shutting my mouth. I opened it large, doing the painting. It is still open.

The painting is the moment of confrontation between the townsfolk of Clunes, men, women and children, and the government men, lead by Sargent Larner, with the Chinese mining recruits in three coaches. The coaches are at the barricades that the town's people have erected to prevent the coaches getting into the town and onto the road to the mines.

At the beginning the biggest scare was how in the hell was I going to do it. I used a style of the Fauves, the French artists who used brilliant colours, to represent the furore, the activity, the excitement and the chaotic element. The picture is big, I didn't have any sight of parts of it, usually an artist does. I would be working in one part of the painting and not able to see the rest. That to me was a fair concern, because I had no peripheral view of the whole thing, only a mental idea.

I painted on faith and passion for an idea. The whole canvas is covered with a huge crowd of townsfolk rising up against the powers. When I look here [the right hand centre], the energy is here, it almost screams out. I can almost hear those people, like it is happening now; there are quieter parts too, though. It was the hardest part of the whole, I painted it last. [Photograph 6.2 enlargement of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 " and Photographs 6.3/4 enlargements of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 "].

I had difficulties with this large individual figure [pointing], which is a full-on figure. Also with this area in general because there were lots of figures, it was a problem in my head, I avoided it. I had to counter each figure, I used all the colours of the rainbow, there is no colour I missed.

When I did it, it just happened. When it happened, it worked. It all resolved. It was painted in just one afternoon. It is in the doing of the thing, in the facing of it, that the resolution often comes very simply. I was avoiding it because I didn't know what to do. When I just went and did it, without being conscious of thinking here is a move, I am going to paint him red, it worked.

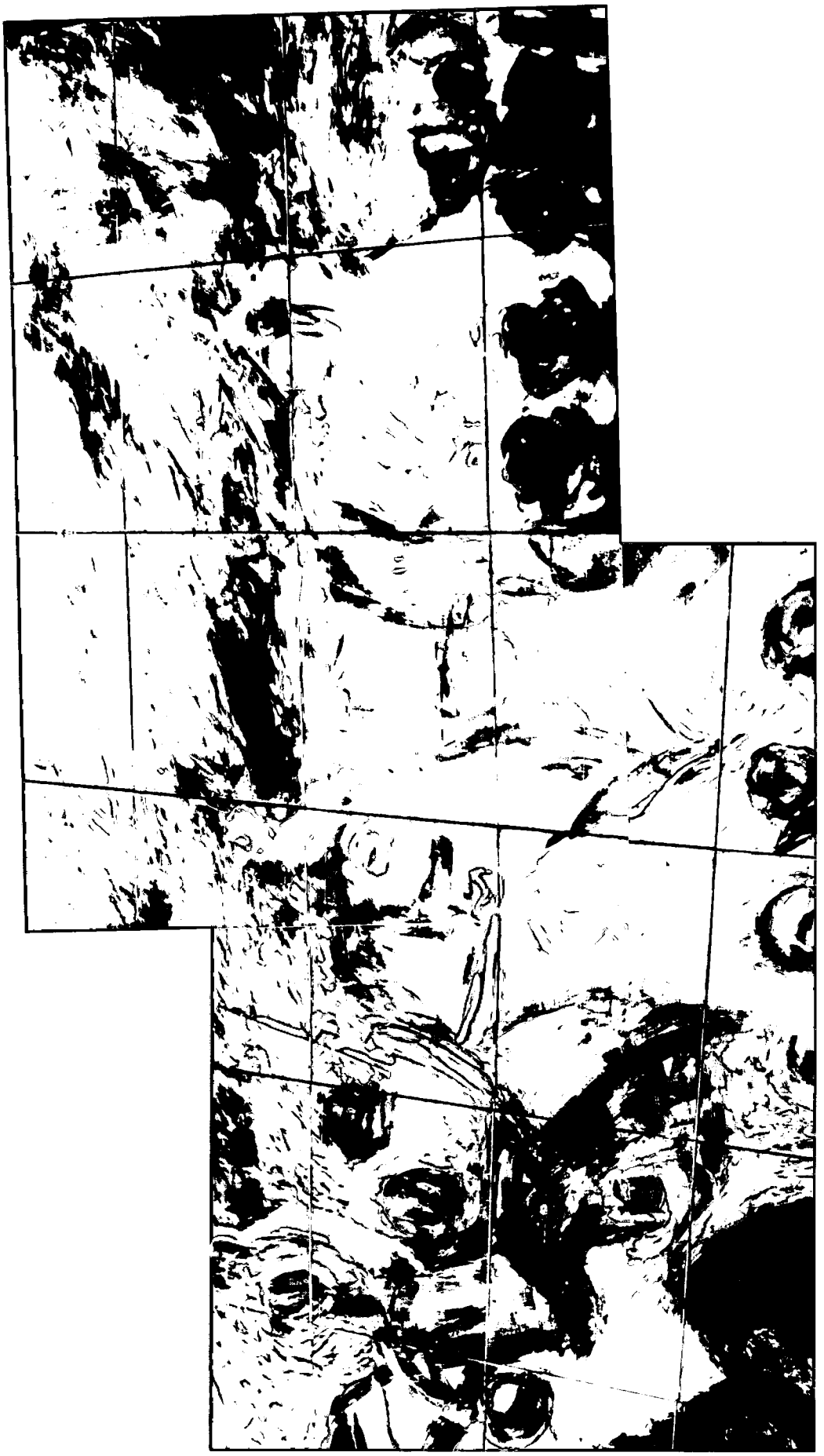
I just picked up the paint. I had paint on the heel of my hand. I had white on my thumb. I had blue on the other finger. I had four brushes with black and white. I was just going like that [acting brush strokes]. I became the painting, there was nothing separating it from me. I just had no consciousness, not even thinking that I was doing a man's face or an arm. I was just into a vision. My head was connected into something outside of myself, here [pointing to the part of the painting].

It was like all the gates were open, and I was just in it. There was no consciousness of it. The top part painted itself like that too. There was absolutely no conscious decision. That man sitting up in no-man's-land with no visible means of support, he painted himself. I thought I am not going to do the rest of it [around him], as he was out on a limb. I wanted him to be seen out on a limb in no-man's-land, he was. He thought he could break the barricades down. He was the head driver for Cobb and Co. He was a crack driver so he was alone trying to break through the barricades.

Portrayal 2, Trek1 (of 1)



Photograph 6.2 enlargement of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 "



Photographs 6.3/4 enlargements of section of " 'The Chinese Riot' Clunes 1873 "

Diary reflections

Three diary reflections are shown in the portrayal of Margaret's experience of learning; the third is a poetised text prepared in a manner like Alexandra's. In the first diary reflection Margaret reflects on the importance of her artwork to her. This importance to her is twofold. The importance stems from her artwork not only being what is sold in her business. The importance is also because the works capture, in an object, formerly intangible and passing conversations that reflect her personal values in the business world in which she finds herself.

Portrayal 2, Diary reflection 1 (of 3)

Corresponding with the world

Life is too precious to live in a repetitive manner, to stay in a situation that doesn't provide growth or development. Everything undertaken needs to be a challenge, interest needs to be stimulated, without the outcome being known. Trying to get there by employing various methods (art, sculpture, painting and other ways) is my whole aim and my means of corresponding with the world.

I do art as a personal revelation of my life. It's like a spiritual journey, with the most important thing is in the doing of it. The visual imagery that I come up with is a mirror of the time. Art is the essential nature of things. People don't realise that, that art is actually presenting people with the myriad of existence. Part of what I was doing was trying to help people understand. But if you're trying to make a point in the community, then you're setting yourself up to be shot down.

All my operations come from within the self, my actions and reactions, interactions, my capacities and incapacities to solve a problem, usually always my art solves a problem for me. If it's successful, if I pursue it enough, it gives me an incredible sense of wholeness, a sense of rightness; a sense of this is who I am, this is exactly what I should be doing; a sense of unique peace, it's almost a sense of self you get in a meditation where you reach a bliss, like a core of yourself. There is no other way that I can be, really, because that's such as nice way, it's a nice place to be in; to feel that in some instances.

I feel I am like a highly sensitised sieve where the elements of life come into me and I push them out the other side in some form of art and it is my way of dealing with these times, that are very difficult. The mass culture has lost a

sense of a value system, because they are constantly coming up against people in important places, people who have a loud voice, espousing all these ridiculous anti life, anti human hype ... like greed is good, and all that sort of outrageousness that that actually means for humans.

Greed is good comes through in the painting. It's closely related to ... if you put power in the hands of a few people, greed can have a wider parameter other than dealing with things like money. I see it also as power and abuse of power and because the painting involved miners and gold and all of that sort of thing, it is played out in a very ... it's a great metaphor for gold and greed. It was greed that actually forced this situation to actually take place.

It's an interpretation of events I have sensed that are historically incorrect. The powerful, greedy people's interpretation of events that held sway over popular culture and ended up in the history books. The townsfolk were seen as racist, were seen as an angry mob, not able to behave in accordance to rules, all that sort of thing. Whereas I see it as a totally different event. I see it as the common man striving for some sort of equality, it emanates right throughout the painting, in all the actions of all the people.

That is part of the energising. As an artist you need incredible energy to keep outputting into new things. When I do big works, I never really think of the process. The end result inspires me so greatly, that the process becomes absorbed in the desire to reveal. I am learning that I mustn't get frustrated by the slowness of time [of big works] that it takes to eventuate. Because whatever I do always takes twice as long as I think in my head it will take. I am getting past being concerned about that now. I am realising that that's the process with me and that whatever you do that is new, there are so many diverse things that are unthought of come in, that effect the outcome, once you have made the choice. If you follow along and continue it, it always requires facing challenges.

But there's the growth and the self satisfaction that you choose in completing it. That is the wonderful dream. I think that small businesses are probably like that. What you think is going to happen, doesn't. You can only predetermine some things, but if you activate all sorts of energies into some sort of reality by

taking action, events will take place that are unheard of. Persistence will pull you through, it has happened to me often. Activating out, certain things come to help you. Since I walked this path, a fairly lonely path, that's been a very strong lesson ... of learning.

Portrayal 2 Diary reflection 1 (of 3)

In the second, of the three diary reflections, Margaret speaks of the investment of herself she makes in her work and something of its nature.

Portrayal 2, Diary reflection 2 (of 3)

In-side-out

Reasons for doing works of art usually come from an inner part of the self. They are motivated, propelled by really strong feelings that make it necessary to manifest work out, in some form or another. Usually painting is the far more intimate way of corresponding with the world. The needs are greatest there, because it is where I see injustice or inhumanity. My work is promoted by reaction and outrage to these. I get locked into day-to-day being-and-doing of works; they are engrossing.

So, the way the figures have been drawn is my emotive response to the roles that they were playing in the event. The sergeant who has ordered the attack is at the top, high, up front, close to the point of conflict. He's been painted as if he is a bird of prey. This is a bird of prey, this is the beak [pointing]. He has been painted black to represent symbolically the darker element. So have all the other troopers, the men with guns. I have painted them in simplistic ways, a black beard, flat head, a person operates completely under the power of another. They are prepared to do injustice to other human beings, vested interests. So I have made them dark, simple, stupid.

I took a risk in the proportions of painting the two townsfolk miners defending the barricade. I painted them white. There's two people painted white, they are quite distant. To give them their correct perspective and position, they shouldn't have been painted white. But they are white because they are white against the black, two elements together. See, the raised fist saying we will not be moved, this is injustice. Fists, hands, everything is painted out of

proportion as far as what they would have looked like in reality.

Right in the centre of the painting there is a figure that has two faces, one side is blind justice, the other is anarchy. This is central to this painting because various people's views saw this as anarchy, but others as justice. I am of the view it was a justice rising in people. I don't believe it was anarchy even though it appears that way. In a superficial sense people coming and seeing this may be repelled. It appears like anarchy, but it was a necessary step in humans evolving last century. It got better working conditions for people. At the time it didn't effect them, didn't give them any better pay or better conditions, but it evolved to, as part of the process of better conditions for labour this century. They are now being eroded.

Another person is Judy of Punch and Judy. It shows a woman who is quite violent in her outrage in what is being done, she is ugly featured, just as Judy in Punch and Judy; that is part of this era. In the painting she has her fist raised. She is either throwing stones or just thrown one, she is shaking, angry and shouting. Around her are other people shouting. She has turned blue in the face, she is [painted] blue.

There are various figures that are not really figures at all, they represent elements of human nature. There is a triad, two at the bottom left corner and right corner and one at the top, middle. The top middle is the hero, the courageous. He is standing and saying, "We will not tolerate this any more, I put my life on the line for this." The bottom left is two figures. They are taken from the great painting of Gericho last century, The Medusa Raft, where the men, survivors of the ship that had been shipwrecked, built a raft. Hundreds got on it but only very few survived. They ate each other, they were lost to sharks, they killed each other.

The image [The Medusa Raft] is two men at the mast of the raft, they have just seen a ship in the distance, they struggle to their feet and they are waving. In this painting they are like a universal image of the fight to survive. They are identical to the [original] image except they are painted differently. I have made them more primitive looking, very large muscles, they were originally

painted with big muscles. Part of what is said is, personal human strength cannot outweigh the collective abuse of power. They are flotsam and jetsam in the big players. I think the whole situation is current today.

The bottom right hand corner, she is one of the "superimposed" figures. She represents a goddess figure. She is painted in red and yellow which is fire and passion. She represents passion, anger and rage, about the situation repeating itself over and over, century after century. The people don't learn the lesson, that you can not abuse the whole, it will eventually flow back. This refers to you reap what you sow. It comes back. She is actually the only one shown with a bag with stones. Women took stones in stockings so they could hurl them right over the mob, so they didn't hit their own men behind the ear, so it could get over to the policemen. The bag is the scrotum, it looks like the balls.

There are various other figures. The reason being, the whole gist of this painting as far as what I perceive, is that all those elements of greed and power, the parts of the individual ego that are self motivated, have no compassion or care for the other person. Rather, everything is one; what happens to me, happens to you. Whether it takes years, weeks, or straight away, there is a counter effect. You can't take the riches of the world and not have some sort of horrific out-of-balance. There is no excuse for that.

If the people, who lust after great power and wealth, had any introspection about the ramifications of any actions or decisions that they make, like the "tri-continentals" [the bank failures] taking over powers and those economic structures and countries, that if each person individually did this, had a responsibility to self ... all the other things would be counter balanced and we would have a lot more equality. We would have equality, everything would be bound to society and personal integrity and care and concern for everyone else. That is what I believe can happen.

The symbol I have included for this [equality], is the sword in the rock at the base. Like Arthur's sword was to be drawn by the man who was to be king. The sword here is the symbol of Thoth, which is the healer, the healer of self. It is struggling to get free, it is embedded in the rock, because no one has

turned and tried to withdraw it. Because the turning requires a lot of introspection about the way you operate in the world.

There is one figure here, in the miners' section. He is bending down and picking up a stone. He is facing the viewer of the painting, he is turned away from the action. I wanted to paint him very dark, he is in dark purples and blacks, he has no features. He is a mysterious figure, so he has a hat on. He represents the predator in everybody, the element of negativity, the element of shooting yourself in the foot, being aware of that part in all of us. He represents the dark part that prevents us getting to our dreams, that goads us into behaviours or activities that don't have fruitful outcomes. He is important in this painting, it says that we all have this element within us that stops ourselves growing in our lives and manifesting our dreams. It's constant vigilance with that sort of figure, I know it's part of me as well.

I have heard people say that an artist's life can be living a life of divine discontent. I am actually projected by it, I am actually activated out of it. I'm easily prodded. Like with injustice, I get, what would you say, easily pricked. So I react. It is a dynamic spark that causes me to create art. Once you create something or you work towards something that works out for you and is successful in your own eyes, there is a moment of euphoria. Then you go back, others things prod you, and the whole creative process happens again.

I try to take away all frameworks that I've learned and go from the heart. It's an ebb and flow. Everything is interdependent on you and you on it, you are connected to everything, everything that you see. Like a voice or medium for your surroundings. I see myself sometimes as an egg timer, but not as timing eggs. My physical being is the little narrow slip in the middle. One side is the outer, the cosmos. The other side is the inner, my subconscious, or my unconscious, all my DNA, all my historical aspects ... a sample of mankind. Like the grains of sand moving in and out as the timer is turned, it's an in and out movement. An ebb and flow between provocation in the outer world and the symbols that appear unconsciously from within my consciousness, my inner world, that are spontaneously manifested as art works.

Margaret's final reflective piece is a poetised text that speaks of how she sees learning, the potential it offers, yet at the same time in the absence of critical thought, traps and pitfalls for the unwary.

Portrayal 2, Diary reflection (poetised) 3 (of 3)

It, learning
endless, limitless resource
the really big one, ultimate potential
provocateur

correspondent
connectedness, wholeness
everything
sorted and processed
better good

to me it is not as it appears to others
to me it is not as others look at it
its kidding many at present
it is like the boy and the king's new clothes
morphing looking

confronting
use me for good
wake up
take care, look around you
take care, look around you
challenges
gives life
invites, asks for faith

It says
look carefully,
look every which way,
try, see,
be daring,
take care with judgement,
mind the history,
spread the word

keeps on
watch for waste
uses energy
great rewards
invitation acceptance
keeps on
self renewing

Portrayal 2 Diary reflection (poetised) 3 (of 3)

The above poetised text completes the first half of the portrayal sequence of Margaret. The first halves of the portrayal of both Alexandra and Margaret, which have run in parallel hitherto, are now complete.

Bringing the portrayals together

The phenomenological exploration of experiences of learning to form and start small, new enterprises now proceeds to the second half of the portrayal. To this point, two portrayals have run in parallel; they are now brought together into a single portrayal as the essentialness common to both is un-covered and dis-covered. There are two elements that complete the portrayal, intuiting and distilling. Each was detailed previously, both in the method and earlier in this section, but is again very briefly outlined.

Intuiting

In intuiting, themes were generated and developed in two ways. Firstly, themes of lived body, space, time and relation (van Manen 1990) were developed, by me. With support also coming from the research participants, description of the existential themes follow.

Intuiting, lived body, space, time and relation

Lived body, space, time and relations

The *lived body* of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is crowded activity, constant movement, stopping and starting, chopping and changing direction, a churning, a ferreting. The crowdedness is also like pressure, of deeper diving. Movement and pressure together make a sense of being jostled. It is not just physically demanding. The belly screams, it is gut wrenching, anxiety. The heart and soul sing, euphoria. On balance it is more going out, than staying in. There is a sense of outward goingness, the thing to which this is directed demands attention.

The *lived space* of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is bottomless. There are always places left to go, stones that could be turned. The trick is to find workable limits, some are found easily, others with great difficulty. Some insist on remaining fluid; in the absence of limits, points of reference, "lighthouses", are sought. Space looms large, here it directs long

and linear; it can also direct zigzagging, hither and thither. Lived space is also small, precision and laden, here it is rounder, surrounding and enclosing.

The *lived time* of learning to form and a start small, new enterprise flies. It is consumed as if it is renewable. There is always more time, but it is not renewable. Equally lived time can be proverbial, like watching a glacier move or grass grow.

The *lived relations* of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is everything. It ranges through connecting in the most sincere way and at the deepest level, a warmth, to a facelessness and ersatz, coldness. Meet and greet work demands, sole and soul work invites.

The lived body and lived relations are especially intertwined. There is a sense of deeply personal work in doing things, the doing of which is loved; then there is a need to morph into sales-personing, operating in the commercial world.

It's a bit like standing over the pivot of a see-saw, with a leg on each side. At one moment centre of gravity is over one leg doing loved things, the next centre of gravity is shifted onto the other leg and selling is under way. The lived experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is mastering this shifting of centre of gravity. Mastering the shift also involves being simultaneously mindful of what's going on on either side. Mastering the shift also involves getting off the see-saw to service it, so to speak.

Intuiting, lived body, space, time and relation

Secondly, themes were developed by a research participant using Crotty's metaphoric stem sentences (Crotty 1996). In the following selection of Crotty's metaphoric stem sentences (Crotty 1996), different features of learning to form and start small, new enterprises, normally unseen in small business, are revealed. Only Alexandra took part with the metaphoric stem sentences.

Catching perceptions, conceptions in the making

Learning to form and start my small, new enterprise ***is like*** walking through a hall of mirrors. You get to see what has always been there, sometimes unrecognisable, sometimes distorted by a point of view. Fun to look at, or complicated forms or perfect reflections. It's up to you to work out what is real, what is useful.

I picture *learning to form and start my small, new enterprise as* an abstract of circles and squares. Moving back and forth, upward and down, in and out, in front and behind. The circles are made from gentle fabrics, gossamer thin, easy to get into, easy to get through; some circles have pockets into which to climb and swing, while choosing the next move. The squares are made of coarser material, rough to touch, hard to penetrate, unwelcoming. I look for weaknesses in the make up, I scratch the material, push and pull, sometimes I make a hole, other times I bounce off the surface. The challenge remains. Will I like what I see when I break through? I already know I prefer the circles to the squares.

Learning to form and start my small, new enterprise ***feels like*** walking the tight rope of myself. Whatever I look into for my business, starts with me dealing with something about myself.

I recognise *learning to form and start my small, new enterprise* as being a journey through life. The road of life is basically a straight one. But we all take side tracks with promised views. We take rest stops, or complicate things by walking through tourist parks promising mazes, forest parks, mountain climbing. We look, feel and listen and become lost on the way. I see that the road continues forward if we're on it or not. My view of life is like a conveyor belt. Once we leave the road we do not return to it at the same place as we left it. Hopefully we are more, we have grown, we have learned as we complete our journey.

The metaphor that best conveys *learning to form and start my small, new* enterprise is riding a stock car train. Where jumping aboard has its risks. A journey without a definite destination, one goes along for the ride, for the adventure. An expression of freedom. An instant decision to be made and then you're miles away from here. Sights to be seen, characters to be met. You're

doing it because this is where you are and there is the train going slowly past. Getting on or off whenever you want. You feel alive. You are doing something different, maybe something desperate, but at least you're doing something. Taking back some control, taking full advantage of your new freedom.

Intuiting, stem sentences

Distilling

The processes and outcomes of theme development in distilling were also discussed with and supported by the research participants. There are two main themes that emerged in their own right.

In working up the themes and potential clusters for the purposes of distilling - as detailed in the previous method section - there was a degree of difficulty in being clear about them. The clarity related to a theme's emerging discreteness, for the theme being phenomenology's essentialness. A single, or limited selection of themes, that alone spoke of the experience of the learning did not clearly emerge through the headings and headlining process as previously described, in the method. It was easy to make a range of different themes work just as well as another.

However in adopting a receptive phenomenological attitude (as detailed in the methodology), with both rushing to conceive and what is usually known of something "switched off", the traces of perceptions that were always there that describe only the essential things were ultimately revealed. The theme to be un-covered and dis-covered in this way was *connectedness*.

Although, in working with different themes in different combinations, it was noted how they nevertheless ranged often from one extreme to another. This was seen in particular in van Manen's existential themes, for example *bottomless, small* and *large* lived space, *racing* and *glacier moving* lived time, *sincere* and *faceless* lived relations. Thus, whatever was looked at as potential clusters, there was something common to them all. The shared feature was contrast. However connectedness and contrast have qualities of an oxymoron, they come as something of a surprise. The second discovery to emerge, yet nested with connectedness, was thus unexpected *unexpectedness*.

From the different vantage points from which to view the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises that are intuited and now distilled and received in the phenomenological attitude, connectedness and unexpectedness are the essential qualities of this learning experience.

Connectedness and with it the need for movement that enabled spanning all contrasting connections and unexpectedness are metaphorically and together re-presented as being like dancing; such crowded activity, from lived body, is summed up below.

Distilling 1 (of 2)

Connectedness and Unexpectedness ... like dancing

Connectedness

This sense of connectedness is more than every-which-way works well. It is, rather, that each is still needed. This connectedness is not necessarily about finding and working boundaries either. The constant of connectedness, whatever-which-way and wherever, concerns movement.

Unexpectedness

Whatever the theme, it ranged from one extreme to the other, contrast emerged. But connectedness and contrast are odd bed fellows, hence unexpectedness.

Connectedness's movement ranges through contrasts and, as a nested partner, creates unexpectedness ... metaphorically and together re-presented as being like dancing

Distilling 1 (of 2)

In addition to the distillation thus far, a particular observation is now recalled. It includes wider interaction with people seeking to be in, or already in, business during the course of employment on which the current work draws. Its exposition grounds the second and final distillation.

People who are self employed and own and operate a business are often heard to say "I am in business". Participants in the research were not asked the sort of question that would elicit

such a response, as the focus of attention was on the question, "What is the experience of learning?" Thus, in the current work the statement, "I am in business" does not appear in the portrayals.

Nevertheless, the statement "I am in business" contrasts often, though not exclusively, with how, as employees, people of many other occupations often speak, "I am a customer service operator", "I am a speech therapist", "I am a truck driver". All use the verb to be, as seen in "I am ... ". With "I am in business" however, there is the use of the preposition 'in' with 'business' with no use of an article "a" or "the". With the latter the indefinite article 'a' is used with the noun that names the person's occupation. This syntax of not using an "a", or what is called zero article, creates a different type of relationship between the speaker and their occupation (self employment), than the other people and their occupations (as employees).

This is not to suggest that the way language is used by self employed people in their own business or employees in other occupations is without exception, it is not. Rather, it is to suggest people use a different way of saying what they do, as they in fact are conveying not just different occupations, but rather something about the nature of the occupation and the nature of the relationship they, as a person, have with what it is they do for a living. That is, people who own and operate a business have a different relationship with and experience of their occupation, than other people and their occupations. This is conveyed and manifested in the way words are used and sentences structured, albeit no doubt unconsciously.

Sokolowski (2000) in discussing language and phenomenology offers insight. He notes (p. 173 - 174) that in human speech 'All our meanings, with their syntactic and semantic structures, arise from experience and are geared towards experience and the things being disclosed in it.' He continues saying that linguistic structures are instruments in the disclosure of things and the mind ultimately works to evidence what is as it is given. It seems saying "I am in business" works like this. "Being in business" means a more direct, closer investment of the person in what they do. Being in business means an intimate, more direct, relationship between the person and what they do for employment. The relationship, between the person and what they do for employment, is not mediated by an employer.

Thus with the vantage points and eyes of phenomenology, it becomes possible to understand from a new perspective what has hitherto been commonly understood of learning to form and start a small, new business. Phenomenology is a means by which understanding itself may be understood. Learning to form and start small, new enterprises can thus be seen differently. In so doing, such learning undergoes a metamorphic transformation. The phenomenological, lived experience construction of this learning reveals that this learning passes into realms of *being*. There is a special investment of the very self. Whereas positivist method mines and extracts concepts or things out of such being in business, being in business phenomenologically is inclusive and subsumes learning as abstracted, objectified *things*. Learning to be in business is more than some*thing* a person is able to do, as is the template for competency based training with its positivist methodology. Learning to be in business is itself *being*.

It needs also to be noted that the vantage points are takes on or slices through one and the same group of learning experiences. They pick out different faces of the one group of learning experiences. Although the medium of written text creates a linear consecutive juxtaposed impression, the vantage points are not simply consecutive views juxtaposed. Views afforded by the different vantage points possess an essential relatedness. In addition, it is similarly pointed out that connectedness and unexpectedness, in distilling, are nested or inclusive of each other. The vantage points, intuited themes, essential themes of distillation and their metaphoric re-presentation all have a nested relationship, rather than linear consecutive and juxtaposed relationships.

So finally in phenomenological inquiry, the question, ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** becomes threefold: What is learning to form and start small, new enterprises? What does this learning mean? What is this learning like?

Bringing together, in a nested rather than juxtaposed manner, the metaphoric dancing re-presenting each of the themes that emerged in distilling and being in business as being, the response to each of these questions in a phenomenological attitude is now shown. As before, these processes and responses met with participants' approval.

Like dancing

Learning to form and start small, new enterprises, **it is** the stuff of being who I am in what I do to make a living.

- It is what I do in who I am.
- It is being-in-business, not merely being in business.
- It is the investment of self and soul in the "ness" of crowded activity that is "busy-ness" ... being-in-*busyness.*
- It is also about the "ness" of *being* in being-in-busyness ... the beingness of being-in-busyness.

Learning to form and start small, new enterprises, being in business, is ***the beingness of being-in-busyness****.*

It means coming to terms with trading self's "soul parts" for mere money.

- It means coming to terms with the remote determinism of economies and globalisation that are un-reactive to self's "soul parts", invested parts of people.
- It means discovery of betrayal, a betrayal exposed in finding that today's system of trading has no place for the beingness of being-in-business.

Learning to form and start small, new enterprises means ***investment of self's body, mind and spirit****.*

It is like dancing.

Learning to form and start small, new enterprises is like dancing ***the dance of fire and water****.*

Distilling 2 (of 2)

These final statements (in italics above) that respond to each question posed (on the previous page) are now elaborated. The statement that finally responds to the first question, "What is ... ?", appears to be categorical, that is conceived and named according to established fact, rather than perceived and still to be attributed an identity. However the heart of the final statement lies within the "nesses". "Ness" is the suffix that usually turns

adjectives into nouns. It is used here in two ways. In "busy-ness", not only is the nature and meaning of the first syllable modified, "busi" to "busy", but what is held within the "ness" is also spelt out. The second use of "ness" is to turn "being" into a noun, or noun like word, that is "beingness".

In an everyday sense, neither busy-ness or beingness are real words. The statement is, in effect, figurative or of a metaphoric nature, a trope. It says the experience of this particular learning is like a special type of likeness to who I am. This way the statement is not categorical, as it appears on the surface. The final form of the response to the first question is not included as the answer to the third question which is statement of actual metaphor; it is not a strict, like something, metaphor. Further, to have made it the response to the third question would take away from the uniqueness of humanity's being and in so doing threaten this particular essentialness.

Thus to complete the unfolding of the statements that describe and respond to what is this learning, the phenomenologically constructed answers ***"How do people experience learning to form and start small, new enterprises?"*** (with 'it' being the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises) are:

- What is it? It is the beingness of being-in-busyness.
- What does it mean? It means investment of self's body, mind and spirit.
- What is it like? It is like dancing the dance of fire and water.

Detail to the first response is already shown above. With respect to the second response, the investment of self is the investment of all of one's self: body, mind and soul, as the elements of humanity. In the third response, the likeness to fire and water draws on the two ritual elements that, in traditions of many cultures, are necessary for spiritual development (Lohrey 2000). They are used here to confer the sense of a storyline, of development, on what without them would be only movement as dancing of the body, mind and spirit.

Thus, ultimately it is the spiritual development of the whole person, represented by fire and water, that describes this learning experience. *New Enterprise Learning*, the experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises is like dancing the dance of fire and water.

The next and closing section of this thesis is subtitled '*Reconciling things and being*'. The intent of the current work has been to use a means of looking that sees differently, differently from, in particular, positivist means more often applied to learning and small business. Thus rather than focussing on concepts, or things, that positivism abstracts from the lived world, the current work has returned to the lived world itself and in so doing has sought to recover being.

Things and being, or concepts and ontology, were brought to the fore in Section 4. Sokolowski (2000) and Vandenberg (1971) inferred things and being are inextricably bound - see page 49. It is not a case of *either* and *or*, rather it is a case of *and* and *both.* The next section seeks now to reconcile things and being. *Reconciling things and being* reflects on looking differently itself and on the outcome of looking differently; it locates the findings within wider understanding intended to support what has now been revealed.

In the light of the current work, the next section in effect also appeals to the reader to remember in future, to make time to look at and listen to people with a disposition that is full of care and thought, to look and listen carefully and thoughtfully.

Section 7

WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXPLORATION

Reconciling things and being

In this final section of the thesis, the intent is to re-build a bridge to re-establish the connection between the march of positivism's abstracted concepts or *things* and a lived world of lesser encountered *being*. The eons of lived world is the ultimate source from and on which the current times' predominating positivism establishes itself. *Things* are derivative of *being*. Although *being* is lesser encountered, *being* is in fact itself more than positivism's *things* that categorise *being*. Thus, that which positivism commonly misses and leaves behind in the lived world is now brought to the fore, alongside typical efforts of the current times. In so doing, the detachedness that positivism is allowed is annulled. In so doing, a reconciliation of things and being becomes possible.

The phenomenological return and portrayal of lived experiences of people learning to form and start small, new enterprises are a strong reminder of what this learning is like in the lived world and the experiences to which this learning is inextricably connected. The lived world of this learning is in marked contrast to the same learning as it is conceptualised in a competency based catalogue of skills, abstracted out of reality, that state what people will be able to do. To view learning abstracted business things either without learning to be in business, or the same as it, is to forget and in so doing make a mistake or to "miss-take".

Essentially characterised by positivist methodology, competency based training is noted in earlier sections for its learning outcomes, which are statements of what people will be able to do on completing their training. Such learning outcomes can also be constructed as pre-packaged catalogues of predicted and generalisable statements of desired skills (pp. 33, 36, 42 and 123 in the current work).

Predicted learning as conceived and named in small business learning outcomes is clearly different from similar learning explored as lived and perceived, as portrayed in the previous section. The former are *things*. The latter is the lived real world, of *being* in business. Predicted learning as conceived and named, learning as things, is exemplified in learning outcomes of training, positivist behavioural science methodology. Such learning as things are

abstracted out of the lived world from which they originated. They are then applied or generalised to businesses, no matter their size or stage of development or prior business experience, or not, of the person so involved.

By contrast, the essence of the lived experience of learning to form and start small, new enterprises, this learning un-covered by phenomenological methodology as it is perceived, is *being* in business. Its context sensitive, plausible lived story character is quite unlike corresponding learning as it is conceived. Phenomenology enables ordinary life to be seen as if it were made new, fresh again, or as if being seen by a stranger. Phenomenology serves to remind of what is taken for granted in an everyday rush to understand by categorising and naming. Phenomenology provides vantage points that facilitate looking differently. A recent paper of mine, (Arnold 2000), traces a pathway that displays how phenomenology affords a means of thinking and understanding that enables *reconciling things and being.*

Sokolowski (2000) says phenomenology helps us to understand our understanding. In getting to grips with some basic dimensions of phenomenology, he details first (pp. 22 - 27) the importance of parts and wholes. In any whole there are parts; there are two types of parts. There are parts that can subsist apart from the whole to which they belong, these are independent parts or pieces. The other type of part always needs to be kept together with its whole; that is, these are non independent parts or moments.

He continues that often mistakes are made about pieces and moments. This gives rise to problems that should have never arisen in the first place, the more so because it is possible to speak about inseparable moments as if they are alone, when in fact they are not: 'We let the abstractness of our speech mislead us into thinking the thing we talk about could present itself concretely to us. We introduce a separation where we should simply make a distinction' (p. 26). He explains (p. 27):

> ... we articulate some of the parts in a whole, but neglect others; or we try to segment the moments, taking as pieces the moments we have singled out; or we take one moment as being equivalent to another, that is, we fail to sustain a distinction.

Sokolowski says of science, that its findings are abstractions from reality of the lived world, we cannot however live in an abstracted scientific world. Science and its favoured status in contemporary life, numbers and measurement and its mined and extracted, abstracted

concepts leave behind a great deal. The grounding of science and its findings in lived life are essential; yet, at the same time this same groundedness is taken for granted. Empiricist researchers are not noted for either thinking about the assumptions of their methods or looking at what the assumptions also leave behind (Vandenberg 1971).

Abstracting can lead to a forgetfulness of what really is. Vandenberg (1971, p. 9) intones 'The manifestations of this forgetfulness appear everywhere in the supposedly research-orientated environment.' He illustrates (p. 9):

> There is no vocational guidance without a phenomenological description of existential working situations in the context of the working world, yet guidance personnel are not noted for their ontological inquiries. There is no social psychology or sociology that does not take for granted the existence of the phenomena of communication and intersubjecticity (sic), yet neither social psychologists nor sociologists are noted for their ontological inquiries. There is no statistical analysis of data unless variables have been first of all grounded phenomenologically to insure their ontological independence, yet empirical researchers are not noted for their ontological inquiries.

He cites (p. 9) an additional range of disciplines, involving people as subjects of research, each of which cite the importance of the essentialness of grounded, lived world experiences of their subject; however he says such researchers are not also known for their ontological research. He continues (p. 9) with what is in effect an oxymoron, saying there is an ' "unconscious ontology" ', if interest in being is essential to work on the one hand, but is then, on the other, ignored.

Sokolowski (2000) makes a similar point concerning the importance of remembering to maintain lived groundedness. Throughout the book, in different ways, Sokolowski says abstractness that is possible with scientific method, risks hijacking our thinking. Similarly, as mentioned, abstractness that is possible in speech risks hijacking our thinking. Rather, people engage in and out of their experiences, the perceptions so involved and concepts arising.

Whilst words are in the service of conveying perceptions, speech's abstractness can nevertheless trick. So much so that sometimes we make mistakes about what are parts, and their types, and wholes. Building on an earlier quote (previous page of this work), Sokolowski (2000, p. 27) illustrates such mistakes:

> What sometimes happens ... is that we articulate some of the parts in a whole but neglect others; or we try to segment the moments, taking as pieces the moments we have singled out; or we take one moment as being equivalent to another, that is we fail to sustain a distinction. We may confuse politics with economics, within the whole of human relationship, or we may think that economics, which is really only a moment, is the whole.

Viewed phenomenologically, economics in human relations is not *the* whole. Economics is not even an independent part, a piece, something that can stand alone from the whole. Economics is an interdependent part, a moment; it is not meant to be taken outside its whole of human relations, in which all people live. Yet this *is* the economics of the economic market at the new millennium.

Like learning *things*, economics and its abstract concepts are developed out of lived reality. It is a "miss-take" to single out economics, to temper so much else to it, as a lone template for thought, as the lens through which so much else is viewed, as the pacemaker of action. To view new small businesses through a lens of economics alone is a "miss-take".

Returning to remember and consider what is left behind, alongside abstracted concepts, avoids "miss-takes". The current work returned to experiences that were the source of a particular learning. It has reminded us of this learning as lived. Drawn out now, in this section, is learning as lived with its relationship with learning, and economics, as conceived. Learning and economics as conceptualised alone is a "miss-taken" segmentation and singling out of each.

Instead of threatening the relationship through abstraction and miss-taken separation of learning, and economics, the current work has portrayed adults learning as lived and has now also remembered the non independent part played by economics in human relations. So consistently overlooked as to be forgotten, near lost, it is these recovered understandings - and their right relationship, of each with the other - on which reconciliation of people and learning to be with learning things, and economic things, is based.

Learning things and economic things are, in reality, nested with human relations (as is science). By and large at present though, conceptions of learning and economics are "miss-taken". Both separation and cause and effect linearity are conferred on each and the lived reality of people falsely detached. People are antithetically overlooked and left behind and left out; the nest of human relations, with which learning and economics are interdependent, is

undone. Economics is by and large the lens through which business is viewed and constructed, as if economics were the whole. A separation is made, rather than a mere distinction.

Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus (1995) draw on Heidegger's *Being and Time*, a central work in early phenomenology. The authors focus on overlooked aspects of the concepts of entrepreneurship, democratic action and solidarity; that is, what it is that people really do in enacting these concepts. This is not to confuse entrepreneurship with the small, new enterprises in the current work; there are many differences and some similarities. Among several, a similarity is what the authors are discussing that is overlooked. In a section headed 'Involved vs. Detached Business: what is lost in the Rationalization of Business Skills' (pp. 18 - 19), they illustrate the above in discussing business owners enacting concepts of self employment and what economic ways of seeing overlook ...

> ... when one starts thinking in this way [economically] one is not seeing profit as part of work as a whole and work as a part of a whole life but breaking up this gestalt into a set of steps which then appear as a series of means to further ends, and since everything can be converted into money, money looks like the supreme end ... this detached, rational account distorts our sense of being involved in the continuous, on-going activity of making sense of our lives.

They continue (p. 19) ...

> [Business owners] work for the enjoyment of their competitive skills in the context of a life where competing skilfully makes sense. The money they earn supports this way of life ... one might think that their businesses are nothing more than machines to produce profits, since they do keep accounts to check whether their business is profitable. But thinking in this way replaces the point of the machine's activity with a diagnostic test of how well it is performing.

The thinking of Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus (1995) resonates with and confirms the current work. They point to a sense of detachment that is seen by them, but the everyday concept of entrepreneurship overlooks this aspect. They also point to a sense of skill for life's worth, rather than only making more profit; this has similarities with the perceptions of the people taking part in the current work, in being-in-business.

Abstracted concepts are important and in our service to help clarify and understand, but not to become traps and pitfalls for the unwary or forgetful. Reconciliation starts with recognising failed distinctions, that are being allowed to intervene and intercept, thus leading to

separations, and with recognising the collapse of common sense that this potentially is. It progresses with freeing ourselves from thinking that is trapped in habits of the mind and abstracted concepts, and entertaining once again also life as lived, not only as its moments (inseparable parts) are conceptualised.

Although with larger businesses in mind, Flood (1999 and 2000) makes a move in a similar direction. He points out what has been missed in the much read, scholarly discussed and highly conceptualised learning organisation (Senge 1992 and Senge et al. 1994). Flood critiques reductionism, breaking down and simple parts where reductionism disavows dynamics. He points out what is beyond and not captured in sciences' fragments and how problems of separation get in the way of complex dynamics. He points to a futility in traditional practices because much of real life human being is beyond control. Flood (1999, p. 83) succinctly and with alliteration speaks of the misery of mastery over mystery. He suggests that such approaches are hostile in their attack on spiritual well being. He articulates a moral responsibility for wholes and interrelated parts and advocates healing of wretched alienation, with life of thoughtful tolerance.

When the oversights of our abstracted concepts of thinking, what is left behind, are remembered, recovered and appreciated, a reconciliation can commence. When what are *our concepts* of economic and learning *things* are reconciled with people and their sincere and authentic learning in life as lived, there will be people in small business *learning to be* in business. Viewed otherwise, such human endeavour, whether learning and/or economics, is serial means to further abstracted ends.

Whilst such a reconciliation might be deemed unnecessary because its first and only right relationship cannot be denied, Sokolowski (2000, p. 181) points out that the 'inexorable necessity of certain things' often results in them being taken for granted, with there being 'no reason to assert them', so much so that 'despite their obviousness, some people deny them.' He continues (p. 181) 'Philosophy always has to recall things that are obvious because people do in fact overlook or even deny them.' A further, more positive, reason (p. 181) to be reminded of the obvious is that it is 'humanly gratifying' to become aware of essential necessities, 'what has to be ... help[s] us see the eternal things.' He continues that some say such things are trivial, but this is not the case. Absolute necessities can never be trivial, they take imagination and simply bring out 'the way things have to be' (p. 181).

Sokolowski discusses (pp. 156 - 176) reason, truth and evidence. He details (p. 174) that what people know as evidence of things and what people know as things of evidence are 'not just sources of idle information', rather that 'things we know are valuable'. He continues (pp. 174 - 175):

> Things solicit our interest and provoke articulation: they do so because finding out about them satisfies various needs and interests that we have ... because the things themselves are beautiful and reward our curiosity. The things we know are not just dull lists of indifferent information, but sources of marvellous appearance.

In the world of the new millennium, it is essential to remember the contrasting natures of the abstracted construct that is "the market" at a new millennium and the vitality of "the market" of yore. In a world characterised by the remote determinism of globalisation, business is more than rising and falling indices, units of measurement, sets of financials, world's best practice or benchmarking. Business is even more than behaviourist statements of what people in business are able to do; people learning things in small business also need to be learning to be in business, not forgotten and left out or mistaken as being the same.

Whilst generalisation is not the intent or nature of the research of *New Enterprise Learning*, it nevertheless brings into question the importance of not just research methodology, but the complete string of theoretical perspective and epistemology that lies behind a methodology. The paucity of research like the current work suggests scope for more. The methodology has enabled a re-emergence of the fundamental nature of human activity that is business. It is time perhaps to consider both the limits of positivist approaches to small business research and training and the benefits of using different and complementary methodologies. Complementary methodologies that have the capacity to pick up on what is more than just equally important - which is in fact an essential groundedness that is nevertheless taken for granted, overlooked and left behind - are also needed.

"I'm in business" is a familiar phrase of small business owner operators. "*I am* in business" is an atavistic call, it invites people to hark to what really is, to remind and avoid forgetfulness. To say "I'm in business" is to dance the dance of fire and water.

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Appendices

TABLE A1

SPECIALISTS IN SMALL BUSINESS RESEARCH, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND OTHERS

Specialist	Role	Key literature
	Methodology specialists	
Michael Collins E mail	Advocate of interpretive research methodologies in adult education, significant author in adult education.	Collins 1991
Max van Manen E mail	International leader in phenomenological research methodology	van Manen 1990
	Small business specialists	
John Bailey In person	Member of the committee informing *Enterprising Nation.* International Council for Small Business (ICSB) member	Bailey and Ciastkowski 1990 and Karpin 1995
Laurie Field Phone	Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training, University of Technology, Sydney.	Field n.d., Field 1997 and Field 1998
William B. Gartner E mail	Henry W. Simonsen Chair in Entrepreneurship, Grief Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies, Marshall Business School, University of Southern California	Vesper 1999
Brian Gibson In person	President of the ICSB (1998 - 1999) Co-editor of conference proceedings of the ICSB 40th World Conference: Skills for Success in Small and Medium Enterprises in 1995 in Sydney	Dunlop and Gibson 1995
Rebecca Reuber E mail	Associate professor, Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. Reuber's research interests include entrepreneurs' experiences. ICSB member	Reuber and Fischer 1999
	Other specialists	
Philip Candy E mail/in person	Adult education specialist, Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Ballarat.	Candy 1989, Candy 1990 and Candy 1994
Roger Harris E mail/in person	Director, Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work, University of South Australia, second M.Ed. supervisor.	Harris, Guthrie, Hobart, and Lundberg 1995

The table, above, lists people contacted and mode of contact. Shaded horizontal rows highlight specialist functions, methodology, small business or other, that form the basis on which comment was made. The third column cites different types of literature; either directly relevant to this thesis, or that demonstrates the nature of their work areas; in some cases they have been the sole author, joint author, or they have played a major contributing role.

Appendix 1: Letter of invitation

[redacted]

Dear

Looking at learning about your new business

I am doing some research on people learning about new businesses. You are invited to attend an information session about researching how people learn when setting up and operating a new business in which to become self employed. This is your opportunity to find out more about the research, what is involved and then to decide whether you would be interested in taking part.

Enclosed with this invitation is an information sheet about the research, this will help you make an initial decision about attending the information session. The information session may be held on a one to one basis or in small groups of two or three people, depending on what you wish. There is no obligation to participate in the research when you come to the information session.

If I do not hear from you over the next few days, I will ring to confirm your intentions or you may like to contact me on [redacted] to arrange a time to talk further with you about the research.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Yours

Teresa Arnold, Researcher

Further information about this research may be obtained from:

The University of South Australia, Faculty of Education

Underdale Campus, Holbrooks Road, Underdale 5032

Contact Peter Willis, Faculty Supervisor, ph. 08 302 6553

or John Hepworth, Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee ph. 08 302 3965

Appendix 2: Information sheet

Research into how people learn whilst setting up and operating a new business

Purpose of the research

Learning people accomplish is often seen as being something they are taught, generally in courses. Being taught, however, is only half the story. It is also the half which usually receives much of the attention. The other half of the story - what is happening for the people doing the learning - is often overlooked. It may seem odd that the purpose of teaching and being taught is to learn, but learning details are often overlooked. The simple explanation is that it is easier to know what is happening on the teaching side of things than on the learning side - this research begins to address the learning side of things.

Benefits and risks of the research

There will be some benefits to the wider community, some to educators and probably benefits to yourself in doing the research. It will provide educators and trainers with a closer view of how people learn in this particular situation which will help them in their teaching. More generally it will help people in situations similar to you to better make the transitions which are necessary to becoming self employed. I believe also that in taking part in the research you will gain some useful insights and understandings of learning in general and learning about change in work and how to turn these opportunities to your advantage. Equally, participating in the research may cause you to think about things which would not normally occur to you - this can also be a challenge to you.

What you will be expected to do

Participating in the research will involve you in in depth discussions with the researcher on a one to one basis and may be also in small groups, this can be negotiated. The discussions will take place over a number of months and will be arranged to suit your convenience. To ensure you are comfortable with the research you will be able to give feedback to the researcher on the progress of the research. This research does not involve working with people in a 'control' or 'blind' situation or group. People who agree to take part in the research complete a consent form.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality is assured, your name and personal details will not be disclosed in working or final documents. Anonymity will be arranged should you wish, personal details about you which would enable you to be identified need not form part of the research.

Rights of people taking part in the research

Participation in the research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time should you wish to do so. Special assistance is available to people who take part in the research if they become uncomfortable during the research or at a later date.

Keeping of records

You should know that it is a requirement of research that information collected as part of the research will be kept securely for seven years.

For further information

Further information about this research may be obtained from:

The University of South Australia, Faculty of Education

Underdale Campus, Holbrooks Road, Underdale 5032

Contact Peter Willis, Faculty Supervisor, ph. 08 302 6553

or John Hepworth, Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee ph. 08 302 3965

or Teresa Arnold, Researcher, [redacted]

Appendix 3: Consent form

University of South Australia

Consent Form

Research title: New Enterprise Learning

Researcher: Teresa Arnold

Research Supervisor: Peter Willis

1. I have read the Information Sheet and the nature and the purpose of the research has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
2. I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the research
3. I understand that while information gained during the research may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
5. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this study with family member or a friend.
6. I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

Name of volunteer .....

Signed ..... Date .....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer shown above and consider that he/she understands what is involved.

Signed ..... Date .....