The Affordances of Place:
Implications of Ecological Psychology for Inclusive Education

Roxanne Finn, B. Ed (University of Canberra), P.G. Dip. E/C (Macquarie University), M.Ed. (University of Southern Queensland)

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Abstract

A major challenge for places where schooling has become deeply entrenched as a way of life is to ensure that all children experience educational success. The necessity of schooling to account for diversity confluent with the impossibility of educational change, construes this ideal of 'inclusive education' as a necessary impossibility. Under increasing constraints of a so called 'audit culture' impacting the conditions for learning and teaching, coupled with the inherent exclusivity of a monomorphic model, reproducing injustice has become the norm. This thesis tackles an examination of the tensions between inclusivity, as part of a wider social justice movement for school reform, and the monomorphic project of schooling driven by neo-liberal directives in a globalised economy. As a critical ethnographic inquiry, it is positioned at the grassroots, detailing how these tensions play out behaviourally at the microcosmic level, in the context of one small school as its inhabitants encounter an innovation for inclusive education. Additionally, the dynamics are encountered with the personal investment of the researcher as a parent at the site, proffering a voice not often expressed in educational research.

Educational success or competence is rarely understood as the synergism of person and environment. This research embraces an ecological psychological stance so that the analysis assumes organism-environment mutuality. I proffer that such an analysis transcends the deficit rationality that dominates the discourse of schooling and provides direction for the future of educational provisions that are more inherently inclusive. The research evidences how spatio-temporal qualities of slowness and spontaneity, and relational qualities constituting helpfulness, more typical of learning outside of school in families and communities, may be significant to increasing the educational success of more children. A case is thus made to bring a focus to the *affordances of place* for learning, particularly, the significance of the proximity of family and community in children's education and of student initiated activity in the ways pedagogy is organised for learning. The engagement of parents and community at local levels, and in pedagogical ways, may begin to unwind this reproduction of injustice by re-introducing relational and spatio-temporal qualities that support the common characteristics of learners. In this way, educational success for all children may not be necessarily impossible.

Certification of Thesis

I, *Roxanne Finn*, declare that the PhD thesis titled: *The affordances of place: Implications of ecological psychology for inclusive education* – its ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, and conclusions reported, are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Signature of Candidate Date

ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Supervisor Date

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Signature of Supervisor Date

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Upon entering the final phase of writing up this research it truly became apparent what a collaborative venture producing a thesis is. Perhaps this is particularly true for an ethnographer who is essentially documenting a little bit of the history of a particular community and quite a large chunk of my own life. As such there are a lot of people to thank deeply and graciously.

A very specific mention of the protagonists of the Studio Learning Project (that provides the context of this research) must be made, for without their support, my research topic may not have been as full of life and meaning. I would especially like to thank the school principal for seeing the potential in strengthening school-community relationships regardless of the extra effort it meant. I am particularly indebted to Kiarnen, Bianca and Ben. The contributions they have made to supporting both the project and this research (as key informants) are invaluable.

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Prologue

This research is inspired by the years I spent as a parent transitioning three children from their home and early learning contexts to the school as a primary site for their education. As I encountered schooling from the perspective of a parent with fifteen years of experience teaching in educational settings and as someone who had undertaken postgraduate studies in education, I became increasingly interested in the ways in which education is enacted in the school context. At the time, I did not consider the practice of schooling *en masse* as a relevantly recent (in terms of human civilisation) phenomenon. Neither did it occur to me that schooling was historically tied to colonising practices described as "empire building" by Rogoff (2003), whose epic research examining childhood across cultures details the cultural nature of human development:

> By the end of the colonial period, education had been dislodged from its integrated place in the family and community life. Education became a matter of deliberate attention, shifted to formal institutions - primarily schools. (p. 341)

Viscerally I experienced the disconnect of transitioning my children from home to school as disheartening as I witnessed how they each navigated finding a sense of place in the school context amidst sudden shifts in spatial organisation, matters of agency, and approaches to pedagogy:

Child One: On the first day of school and all the days that followed it seemed no-one had any time to listen. The teachers' goal was to assess more than sixty children for the first two weeks by opening up concertina doors between classrooms in order to eventually sort the children into three classes. The rooms were dark, dismal, and hectic…Each morning the process of lining the children up to move them into the classroom wasted at least twenty minutes and seemed like forever to me as I watched with anxious anticipation. Finally, the children would parade into the classroom but each day my enthusiasm to participate in this less than perfect ritual waned. From the increasingly weary look on my beautiful son's face, his did too.

Child Two: Starting school, for my second child, was an act of surrender. He had difficulty understanding how things in the sense of 'trust' and 'responsibility' had

suddenly taken a very big, backward step. At home and in his pre-school contexts he had been trusted to manage his own time and look after resources to some extent. Now he was struggling to understand why he was not permitted to use certain equipment, or to follow his own whim, even if he had completed all his work in class, helped other children, and asked nicely!

Child Three: Unlike preschool, where she had happily recalled being creative all day with tools, resources, and collaborators, all of a sudden there was nothing much to report. When pressed, she recalled worksheets, more worksheets, and arguing about such things as which girl had the longest hair! She was confused and anxious to talk about her day, not enthused and excited as she had been after every preschool session. I knew she could still benefit from the type of encounters with the world she was having at preschool, but, like most schools, the promotion of free exploration and open-ended creativity or 'play' was elusive. (Extracts from my Reflexive Ethnographic Journal, 13/6/2013)

Figure 1.1: I would reflect upon the end of term collection of school 'work' that was brought home by my children as a representation of pedagogy.

I started with small steps, treading lightly so as not to offend, conversations with the principal and other parents just when opportunities arose, chances to discuss the dramatic shift as children transition to school, and how they resolve these tensions across the sites of their learning. From my observations this seems to require them to give up something of their agency, to surrender to the implicit power structure of the 'school', implied by its physical spaces, social relations, and temporal boundaries that divide what children are supposed to learn into 'subjects'. All of a sudden children are shifted from the secure platform of their early childhood where encountering the world, its organisms, objects and relations, and consequently learning, is just a part of daily explorations across multiple contexts.

The principal's initial response was to suggest that I become more involved in the school. She was right. What good was complaining or demanding something if I wasn't prepared to do something! I went to my first Parents and Citizens (P & C) meeting full of expectation and enthusiasm. I had heard from other proactive parents at different schools, that getting any innovative ideas through the P & C is like passing your leg through the eye of a needle. This was a small and intimate group of mums that had carved out a niche for themselves in an association whose sole purpose was to raise funds. If this was their mission, it certainly wasn't their passion! Their disgruntled demeanours and sour dispositions bore the truth of their martyrdom. Broaching the subject of feeding suggestions about the school 'program' to the principal and teachers was frowned upon. "We do fundraising. That's not our job." The comfort people find in absolutes had never been so clear!

I turned up for canteen duty for the first time . . . In the midst of warming frozen pies, cleaning a mouldy slushy machine that was on the blink, and trying to encourage people to put their packaging in the recycling bin, I failed miserably to meet the requirements of a parent volunteer. Nothing was prepared on time. I had to read the instructions on boxes of frozen food I was unfamiliar with. I created tension when I asked why we were serving products that contained monosodium glutamate. And, I was completely unfamiliar with preparing pancakes in a bottle by adding water. Pancakes were so simple to make from scratch! Needless to say the pancakes were runny.

I volunteered to assist with reading group sessions. I can't say too much about this without offending a great many teachers. It is not my intention to offend, but dividing kids into ability groups and having them undertake a round robin of activities for a duration of ten minutes is not going to teach kids how to read in a world full of rich and meaningful literature and it didn't seem the best use of a willing volunteers time either. My attempts to contribute to my children's schooling were leading to nothing but frustration. Surely if it was so difficult for me, there were other parents who could not find a way to contribute to this so called educational partnership. If that wasn't even the case, I was beginning to wonder if schools are set up to keep parents out! Were schools failing to recognise the potential pedagogical contributions of children's first teachers? The existing structures were only conducive to parent participation in a very limited range of possibilities, none of which were pedagogically rich. The principal's suggestion to get involved and the avenues promoted for involvement, led to my increasing despair. I had exhausted all of the ways to be involved suggested by the principal and confirmed as typical in the literature on parent-school relationships. Although teachers probably wished I would go away, I was empathetic with their role and aware that the source of difficulties was beyond them and seemingly beyond me too. (An Extract from my Reflexive Ethnographic Journal, 13/6/2013)

At this point I became curious about the potential to innovate from the grassroots. I was interested in creating a space within the school where children could direct their own activity, engaging in short or long term projects that encompass the personal, social and creative aspects of life, which often invoke an authentic means to employ conceptual knowledge (see, Boomer, 1992), and where their activity could be encouraged, supported and engaged with by parents and perhaps even the wider community.

These experiences foregrounded the call to action that led to my instigation of the Studio Learning Project (to be referred to from herein as the "Studio" or SLP) that is the subject of the case study and the consequent inquiry detailed in this thesis. The opportunities that presented for me to research the impact of the Studio on the school site were 'happy accidents', serendipitous opportunities that presented themselves along the journey, rather than an intention I held from the outset. As a

parent, I simply wanted a means to contribute to my children's schooling that might also benefit all children. As a researcher, the Studio afforded the examination of altered space as a means to produce pedagogical diversity in a school site.

Some notes on reading this thesis

I have selected the word 'children' more often than 'students' to refer to the young people attending the school and participating in this research. The specific project within the school that is the subject of the case study that informs this research conveyed to children a distinct atmosphere that they did not associate with a regular classroom. As such 'children' was deemed a more suitable and universal descriptor than the word 'student' which conveys a metaphorical association with schooling and subsequently a submission to being taught that did not align with the children's phenomenology. The word 'parent' is used throughout to refer inclusively to people having a particular role in guardianship of children, and a long-standing relationship whether a step-parent, grandparent or parent figure. Additionally, it should be understood at the outset that all of the participants named in this research have been given pseudonyms in line with an ethical commitment to protect their identity. Data that has been directly included in the research is highlighted with italic font and where I have made comments in these sections of data parentheses are applied and standard font resumed.

It may also be necessary to warn the reader at the outset, that I do not attempt to overly temper my enthusiasm (as parent) for the Studio Learning Project. My enthusiasm ran high throughout my engagement with the project and this enthusiasm no doubt trickles onto these pages in places. I do want to make the point early that the Studio is not being presented as a model within this study but rather a means from which alternative ways of thinking about education are possible.

Chapter 1: An introduction to the study

This research, in the tradition of a critical ethnographic qualitative inquiry, is a synthesis of "the personal and the political" (Brown, 2004, p. 302). It begins with an exploration of one school site as a place of inclusivity and turns full circle to confront the question, *what is the place of schooling?* The narratives revealed within illuminate the possibilities and impossibilities of finding a sense of place within a school, with the central concept of *inclusivity* considered along these lines. In presenting a case for the ways that education, place and learning interact and coalesce, I offer up my personal encounters with schooling tied together with the views of young people (as students), teachers and parents to present an insight into the ways that formal sites of learning might greater engage community, encouraging connection and inclusivity. As a critical ethnographer I engage with an array of viewpoints to make this case and engage with other contributors of all ages and roles that make up a 'school community'.

This thesis presents a consideration of the production of an in-depth case study of a mainstream primary (K-6) school in rural New South Wales (NSW), Australia. However, this school, unlike most 'mainstream' schools had the distinction of housing a 'Studio learning site' initiated and managed by parents and endorsed by the school principal and the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The intentions behind the Studio were to provide space within the school for children to follow their own interests and to experience an opportunity for open-ended creativity and the kind of practical, experiential and embodied knowing we are at risk of losing in the increasingly homogenised global production of schooling (Slee, 2011; Thomson, 2007; Zhao, 2012). I am in no way suggesting that typically teachers do not attempt to innovate for student engagement or to endorse dynamic and creative opportunities for learning. I do claim that within the study of this particular site that I present, can be found both typical and atypical elements of school as a site for contemporary education. A case study of this kind cannot claim to produce findings that should be overgeneralised. It can however bring some depth to understanding the complexities of the production of schooling and the enactment of roles within schools as a social phenomenon.

Figure 1.2: An image of the 'Studio' classroom

My principle interest in undertaking this study was to discover how the altered space and its assumptions about learning and pedagogy impacted those involved in the project and the school more broadly. I wanted to know what purpose the spatial and relational changes that defined the Studio served. What did the Studio afford its participants? As one of its instigators, I knew these qualities were tied to values that were not being recognised in the typical pedagogy of schooling, however I was curious about why this was so, and how this could be explained. The research was designed to investigate, in the context of a public school and the Studio classroom specifically, Lefebvre's (1974) assertion that, "to change lives… we must first change space" (p. 190). I sought to evidence exactly what it was that changed in the Studio classroom and how it impacted the lives of those directly involved; as students, teachers, parents, and one member of the wider community engaged over two terms as a resident artist.

To further introduce the reader to the Studio, this chapter will firstly describe the site and the findings of a smaller study which framed this doctoral research (1.1). The broad context of the study as an educational project in its wider global

environment will be outlined (1.2) before introducing the research problem with an argument made for the significance of this inquiry along with its anticipated contributions to the field (1.3). This will be followed by an introduction to the theoretical stance that is deployed in the design of this research to evidence the study's findings (1.4), and the articulation of the research questions that guided the research process (1.5). A brief discussion of the research design (1.6), some notes on reading the thesis document (1.7) and a summary of how I have benefitted more personally from this research (1.8) will be followed by an outline of the chapters of this thesis to conclude this chapter (1.9).

1.1 The research site and initial findings

Before explaining the research problem under investigation, let me introduce more thoroughly the case site and the previous research I have undertaken at this site. The location selected as the case site is a relatively small (65 children) rural public school in NSW, Australia. The school offers an educational program for students from Kindergarten to Year 6 in line with NSW, DEC syllabus documents. The curriculum at the school is largely subject oriented although occasionally teachers will integrate subject area knowledge around a theme. Pedagogy includes whole group direct instruction and small group opportunities for consolidation of subject learning.

The school community consists of families living on rural or semi-rural properties and a few children who bus in from the nearest town. Farming, small business, arts and crafts are well represented in the broader community. The school principal remarked that over the years: "It is usually the same few parents that participate in the school, on the P & C, doing canteen duties, or helping out with reading programs" (comment made in preliminary conversation with school principal, 2010). The majority of the students at the school have siblings in attendance and this inspires the school's 'Small school, big family' motto. Three of the students identify as Aboriginal and at least five have strong cultural connections with other countries. One child has been identified as gifted and talented, one has been identified with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), one with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD-H/D), and another has Global Learning Delay (GLD). In addition, there are several children identified with learning delays who

receive remedial instruction by the principal, parent volunteers or through peer tutoring programs.

In 2010 I completed a case study of the initial six months of Studio operations as a research project in a Master of Education program. This research detailed how a handful of parents at the school shared narratives of discontent and breathed life into the idea of converting an unused classroom, generously offered up by a school principal who also shared ideals for school improvement. The Studio is a space for student initiated or negotiated creative projects, where parents and the wider community could share valued skills in a collaborative atmosphere, for at least one hour a week. Protagonists explained key reasons for becoming involved:

The reason I got involved was that I think that it does support the way children learn. They just have this built in desire to just do things and create things and they obviously learn by doing that. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

I don't think that these days they really realise the potential they have with their hands. They get lots of writing, reading and theoretical things but they don't get much of an opportunity to create objects and experience the satisfaction about what it is to have knowledge and have skills which inevitably means they can create things. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/10/2010)

More and more over the years, I've been teaching for 30 years, I guess you evolve and you change and you find out different things but it all goes back to what I've always believed that kids learn best when they're happy, and that they need freedom to actually pursue their own interests. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 9/10/2010)

Parent protagonists believed that the Studio would support teachers to provide open-ended experiences they were unable to achieve under regular classroom conditions. The school principal picked up on the enthusiasm for such a space because she recognised an affordance in increasing the community's involvement in the school.

The research also sought to explore whether the Studio classroom made a contribution to the school's 'inclusivity', as defined by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006):

> An inclusive approach is equally concerned with learning, but instead of focusing primarily on outcomes gives equal attention to the conditions for teaching and learning, so that the resources and relationships that support the active and sustained involvement of children, families and practitioners in education are maintained. (p. 29-30)

Indeed there was evidence in this research that children's involvement with the Studio classroom engaged them beyond their hour per week session. For example, one of the parents recalled her perceptions of children's thoughtful planning of their Studio sessions:

Figure 1.3: The typical displays of 20 "something's" on classroom walls did not seem to honour the creative potential of children

I get the impression that they do spend all week thinking about what they're going to do. I mean they've told me, like when Abbey started doing a doll's house, I said, "Oh, that's a good project, when did you think about doing that?" And she goes, "Aaaah, every day on the bus, I sit there and I think what I am going to do in the Studio, and I thought about this and I thought I'd really like to do that." So she's always thinking about it, and that was the first part of the doll's house, and the next week she had the next stage that she wanted to build, and she's just totally into the process and absorbed about what she is going to do with that, that freedom!! (Laughs)…And Raiphe…comes in with a list of things in his head that he's going to do. And as soon as he finishes one, he goes, "and next I'm going to do this". And if he needs something he asks me where it is and yeah, he's not wasting any time thinking about what he's going to do when he's there. He's there to spend as much time as possible doing. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

Figure 1.4: Abbey constructed an elaborate doll's house over a whole term of Studio sessions

It seems interesting to note that resent research by Altgassen, Rendell, Bernhard, Henry, Bailey, Phillips, and Kliegel (2015), although at this stage focusing on adults, has found, "imagining the specific visual-spatial context in which an intention will later be executed may serve as an easy-to-implement strategy that enhances prospective memory function in everyday life" (p. 192). Parents also described deep qualities of their own engagement that revealed that they brought to the site thoughtful pedagogical intentions. For example:

After spending an hour a week in there for a whole term it really got to the point where I was starting to come in a little bit early because it was really quite enjoyable. There are a couple of kids in there that really show a lot of initiative and they're quite inspired by the woodworking that we're doing in there. I suppose in turn that inspires me to get in there and have a go as well. I think that brings a lot more richness to the whole experience because their enjoyment of it brings me more enjoyment and when I'm getting more enjoyment out of it, I bring a bit more to the table and they get a bit more of the knowledge and the skills that I have to bring, and it's a very perpetual exchange…I'm not a teacher and it's not my job to go in there and teach the children, it's just my job to bring any skills I have and share them with the children. It's good for me and I don't have to feel like I'm so much responsible for keeping the kids focused or anything. They're responsible. I felt coming in to the Studio in that energy, as a person from the community sharing my skills, freed me of any of that responsibility of a teacher and it allowed for a kind of richer learning because the learning was based on more of a mutual friendship with the children where we come together for a common interest. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/10/2010)

Some children perceived these pedagogical intentions. For example, a group of students undertaking to explain the Studio to a departmental visitor contrasted it to didactic classroom pedagogy: "*in the other classroom, we get told things like maths, and how to do it, and that's exactly what we have to do*". Other children added to the conversation to ensure that their 'work' in the Studio was also communicated:

We don't just do fun things like making a treasure box but we're also learning about millimetres and centimetres. And we are learning how to communicate too, and how

to cut straight! And, how not to hurt ourselves with the saw! (Transcript from NSW, DET Studio Evaluation Interviews, 24/10/2010)

There was indeed some evidence that the Studio program was making a contribution to the school's inclusivity via sustained engagement of children and parents. However, time-tabling pressure and other demands on teachers meant they were not involved in the program or this initial research. My summary of the research (see, Finn, 2013) asked whether in time they could be, and whether they would perceive any educational benefits the studio program might afford.

While the definition of inclusion I deployed above was not specific in referring to children with identified pathologies, whether or not the Studio sustained their active engagement was of particular interest as these are a subgroup of children identified as requiring alternate pedagogical arrangements for learning, often requiring the employment of a teacher's aide. I considered how these children were ordinarily 'included' in the school, such as a nine year old boy with ASD, Kiarnen:

My first interactions with Kiarnen were tentative, largely because on one of my early visits a relief teacher had been hit by him in the playground. The whole school went into action plan mode. Students were ushered away. Staff supervised Kiarnen from a distance. His parents were called to remove him until, from the safe distance of his home a return to school could be negotiated for a new day. And I was left to nurse the bruising, both physical and emotional, of a bewildered relief teacher. More often than not however, this was prevented by the constant presence of a quick thinking teachers' aide who could predict a likely trigger and remove it, or distract him away before his temper would override him. This, coupled with lots of opportunity for Kiarnen to opt out of lessons in preference for the safety, isolation and stimulation of a computer, is the basis of his inclusion at the school. In Studio he is one of the most prolific makers. (Summarised from my Research Diary, 12/9/2010)

The principal noticed Kiarnen's behavioural change across classroom and Studio settings. In an interview she recalled Kiarnen's engaged participation and the fact that he had not required a teacher's aide in the Studio:

It sort of surprised me a little bit…I wasn't sure how he would go in a self-regulated environment where he had a lot of choice. It does seem that he thrives in there and I was a bit surprised…I think it teaches us, it shows us by the way that he has responded to that environment, that if he has more responsibility in the classroom he's probably going to function a lot better. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 9/10/2010).

The evidence suggested inclusion was implicit in the conditions of the Studio classroom – its approach to time, resources and relationships which supported children's potentials beyond the standardised, one-size-fits-all approach. This supported other research findings that suggested that students with 'additional needs' can appear competent in more naturalistic settings where learner-centred, active, interest-based, and open-ended tasks implicitly support inclusion (Gable, 2003; Porter, 2002; Schwartz & Okita, 2006). In fact, in the Studio classroom, it was occasionally an academically sound student that floundered, while children with so called 'additional needs' tended to exemplify creativity and task commitment!

The Studio and its pedagogy evidenced competencies in children unseen in the regular classroom. These findings indicated that a profile of individual competence could only be understood in relation to the environment as the context for action. In making an analysis of these complexities I deployed an ecological psychological analysis of the data following the advice of a sage supervisor. Viewing the data from an ecological psychological perspective afforded a holistic treatment of the observations as, "individual – environment transactions that are spread across space and time" (Barab & Roth, 2006, p. 6). When learning is understood as an individual-environment transaction, different talents will manifest in different environments, and different individuals will appear talented in different environments.

I could also relate this to my experiences attempting to engage with the school in the typical ways constituted for parents, where my competencies to perform 'successfully' were entirely constrained by the school as a 'unit of behaviour' (Barker, 1968) offering very limited roles for parents. These findings raised further questions about how schools can achieve inclusivity as a process that creates

conditions for sustained engagement in education with a monomorphic model and its consequent limitations on what is valued for action, and therefore, what opportunities exist to manifest competence. McClamrock (2008) suggests, "focusing on ecological organism-environment interactions brings us a set of conceptual tools for explanation that have been historically underexplored and underused" (p. 249). The possibility of doctoral research presented the opportunity to extend the application of this theoretical stance to the case study over a three year period, allowing time to build these narratives of children and parents, and additionally introducing teacher narratives into the case study, thus offering a rich source of data.

I wanted to know more about the qualities of the Studio classroom and what they afforded participants. I also wanted to know why these qualities were not more common components of the schooling experience, and whether and how they would impact the school site over the longer term. Lefebvre (1974) contends: "the diversion and reappropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us much about the production of new spaces" (p. 167). The characteristics of the Studio classroom had increased the sustained involvement of students and parents at the school site, and suggested the diversification of pedagogical approaches increased the chances of more children experiencing "success", something heavily touted in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) which has informed the shaping of the Australian National Curriculum (Australian Curriculum And Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2013). Thus it was evidenced that the Studio impacted the school's inclusivity and suggested the conditions for learning and teaching in it were significant. The research had also introduced me to ecological psychology as a new theoretical tool to better understand the mutuality of organism and environment and apply it to the school context and the SLP specifically. It was this initial study and its findings which foregrounded this doctoral research.

1.2 Contextualising this research in the contemporary moment: Schooling in the second decade of the 21st Century

Calls to enact educational change are most frequently targeted at teachers and are typified by the emotivity deployed by Gruenwald (2008) in the following example:

> A critical pedagogy of place challenges all educators to reflect on the relationship between the kind of education they pursue and the kind of places we inhabit and leave behind for future generations. (p. 308)

As we shall examine in this section, which elaborates on the broader context of this research, such challenges for educators are not entirely unproblematic. It is important, before embarking on the details of this research, to situate not only the significance of 'school' as a place in the public sphere, but to briefly examine the place of schooling in the broader contemporary socio-political context. It can be assumed at the outset that this wider context undoubtedly plays its part in any research endeavour, particularly one that explores the possibilities for change at a grassroots level. This hit and run, sweeping account of the broader conditions in which educational policy and practice is currently manifesting briefly sets the scene for how the pursuit of equity and social justice through inclusive education might be problematic against a back drop of competing priorities.

It is revealing to note that a classroom became available for the Studio program due to a national initiative aimed at stimulating the Australian economy as a response to the 2007/2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC). In order to meliorate the impact on the Australian economy, schooling was chosen as a key focus of a domestic fiscal stimulus plan (Commonwealth of Australia, Audit Report No. 33, 2010). The National Building and Jobs Plan totalling expenditure in excess of $42 billion promised to revolutionise Australian education. The specific program, Building the Education Revolution (BER) was selected to improve school-based infrastructure. This program met the criteria to impact the economy due to a combination of schooling having a broad population reach, and school land not requiring building approvals (affording a timely response to the GFC), as well as building materials having a low import content therefore a higher domestic impact. This broad contextualisation of the site for this research exemplifies in one way the significant role schooling has come to play in the broader global economic system. Ironically, it was not the arguably 'fabulous' new classrooms in this school that this research is focused on, but rather, the negotiation of a run-down space left in the so-called revolution's wake.

As a cog in the wheel of the globalised economic system, education has increasingly come under the influence of growth at all costs neo-liberal policy directives, whether explicitly as in the example aforementioned, or more implicitly via increasing public private partnerships (see Hogan, 2013). Ushered by the increasing unpredictability of worldwide events to trigger instability in this global economic system, minimising disruptions via increased intervention and controls has become the new policy norm. In education this has led to what has been described as an "audit culture" driving nationalised curriculums, increases in assessment and evaluation, as the well as comparison of schools (Hogan 2013; Mills, Monk, Keddie, Renshaw, Christie, Geelan, & Gowlett, 2014). These dictates are largely unexamined in the public realm according to Gruenwald (2008) and actions such as global giant, publishing company Pearson, recently increasing its interests in the education sector with 60% of their billion dollar revenue now staked out in education (Singer, 2013) perhaps going unnoticed. However, Pearson's increasing stake in education has coincided with these policy shifts and has seen them publishing both national tests, and curriculum materials, according to Singer. Amid rising concerns that the company is now positioned as a powerful lobbying force upon governments (Hogan, 2013), claims that economic growth is determining the aims of education (Graham & Harwood, 2011; Nussbaum, 2010) are difficult to dispute. Such emerging private/public partnerships signify the increasing pressure for profit motives to impact education.

A further indicator of these global economic trends driving the very purpose of education is proffered by Zhao (2012) in his book, *World class learners: Educating creative and entrepreneurial students*. This plea to parents, teachers, and policy makers for change, appealing to proponents of creativity, child-centred pedagogy, alternative education, and problem-based learning, proposes for schools to let go of their 'old paradigm' ways, of preparing workers for jobs, and augers a 'new paradigm' where schools themselves become the sites of production. He calls upon his audience to:

> imagine the school as a global enterprise. As a global enterprise, the school makes the products for the global markets and draws on expertise and resources globally.

> Learning is conducted around these products and services. (p. 225)

Deploying his personal narrative of success, which characterises a rise above poverty as heroic, he offers hope for an uncertain audience that "many more jobs can be created because more people will have the income to consume more and more diverse products and services" (p. 61). Towards the end of his book however, he contradicts this point by claiming efficiencies in productivity and advances in technology will in fact leave more people unemployed and underemployed. It is unashamedly a desperate plea for growth that Zhao attempts to engineer by arguing that schools should take responsibility for directly producing capital. Zhao's imagination has teachers inheriting yet another new task in 'mercantilism', as they: "build partnerships with their potential customers" (p. 227). This direction for education, congruent with growth at all costs, fails to account for another signifier of our times; an increasingly disrupted ecology.

Even without Zhao's model for the future of education, Moser (2009) problemetises the future of education where the quality of life the school affords "has been brought about largely by unsustainable resource use" (p. 352). Almost 20 years ago ecological psychologist Edward Reed (1996a) warned: "It looks to be well within our power to seriously injure, and perhaps even destroy, the environment we live in" (p. 117). Alarmingly, the trajectory of growth at all costs, ignoring such warnings, has ensured the times we live in are also typified by the necessity of environmental vandalism to 'sustain' the values of a hyper-consumerist societies (Higgins, 2010). The hyper-consumerism required to lubricate the engine of late capitalism requires a population of individual units of consumption which Bowers (1997, 2000, 2006) critically contends has become the function of schooling. Similarly critical, Andre Gunder Frank's dependency theory goes further to include schooling as part of a world system that perpetuates the distribution of wealth to a small minority, keeping the majority of people throughout the world in a state of dependence (see, Sens, 2012). These arguments increasingly call into question the place of schooling in a globalised world.

While schooling is said to endorse a higher quality of life through its provision of new opportunities to acquire skills and information, some argue this

comes at too great an expense. For example, Black's (2010) documentary, 'Schooling the World: The White Man's Last Burden' describes the practice of schooling as part of the colonising process that disrupts traditional communities of practice that afford a means of authentic participation and subsistence. Along a similar tangent, Winter (1996) argues "poverty has worsened as a result of 'development' because subsistence economies have been converted to market economies" (p. 56). For a particular example of how these claims are substantiated, Helena Norberg-Hodge's (2009) ethnography detailing the encroachment of Western life and values on Ladakh, a small village high in the Himalayas, over several decades, is telling. Poverty, she argues, has become a consequence of these non-traditional values. Prior to the impact of Western culture on the people of Ladakh, no member of the community went hungry, and there was no homelessness she claims (Gorelick, Norberg-Hodge, & Page, 2011; Norberg-Hodge, 2009).

A recent and more local example of how schooling is functioning in Australia can be garnered from The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) report "Education in Australia 2012: Five years of performance" (2013). The evidence suggests the education system is not doing very well in terms of meeting its own outcomes. The terms of this report to determine the progress made across Australia over the five years from 2008, are based upon the role of education to impact the country's "economic and social goals" (p.5). The purely quantitative nature of this data collection and analysis leaves the meat off the bones when it comes to understanding what the education experience for children and their families in Australia affords. For example, the only measure of whether children are "engaged in and benefitting from school", is their attendance. According to the report, 27% of school leavers are not "earning or learning" to use the Governments catchcry, and for Indigenous youth this figure is as high as 60%. While some explanation may be garnered from increases in technology and corporate driven "globalised" economies impacting in unanticipated ways on labour forces (Brown, Lauder, & Ashton, 2011; Zizek, 2010), these figures surely suggest there is more to this disengagement.

A consideration of the impact of the monocultural project of schooling on Indigenous Australians made by Maxwell (2012) raises concerns about the lack of consultation between schools and Indigenous communities. According to Maxwell,

an interpretive framework of interest convergence theory suggests policy initiatives in support of the disenfranchised are only deployed when they support needs and aspirations of the dominant group, in this case reifying the hegemony of global capitalism that promotes the objective of one education for all. Bowers (2006) would agree, contending that schooling does not typically value Indigenous cultural knowledge or its inherent intergenerational learning. This might illuminate one difficulty of Australian policy to 'close the gap' for Indigenous students. Closing the gap is a metaphor for homogenisation, not diversity. Pedagogical diversity that moves beyond the monomorphic model of schooling does show some progress for improving educational outcomes. For example, home-schooling parents, according to Kunzman and Gaither (2013) express a desire to preserve "cultural and linguistic distinctiveness" (p. 10). The potential for Non-formal education (NFE) to transcend the monomorphic model, as well as providing a means to education the 77 million children in the world without school based facilities for education, is significant. However, as Miles and Singal (2010) contend, this is often used as a means to implement sub-standard education. As Maxwell surmises, acting to strengthen the capacity of community, as the wider site for education, not least by consultation if not partnership, is significant.

While calling attention to a concern for uncertain futures playing out socially and economically, much of the educational discourse remains convincing that schools are an interventionist socio-political strategy that can lead to societal transformation. This discourse assumes a struggle "to construct a more equal, just and democratic world-system in which socially just educational systems that contribute to the transformation of society can be built" (Griffith, 2011, p. 76). The efforts of educators to confront and ‘reform’ education are paramount. However, it also argued that even adopting a critical pedagogy in education, and its objective to “transform” education as a post-colonial movement, reinvents the very thing it seeks to disturb by perpetuating school-based values of "individualism, anthropocentrism, and a faith in progress" (Gruenwald, 2005, p. 211). This underlying tension for educators is articulated by Sellar (2009) as a “visceral ethical sensibility” where ethical dilemmas arise “from irresolvable structural tensions that beset teachers’ efforts to provide more just forms of education” (p. 18). Indeed there is an abundance

of literature from teachers themselves which calls mainstream schooling into question, from the likes of A.S. Neil (1916, 1917, 1921) and his 'dominies logs' (reflections on his experience as teacher to inspire children's learning, conflicting with his responsibilities to school 'authorities') to the more formalised critiques of Illich (1971), Holt (1964) and Gatto (1992), which embody Sellar's claims. Most pertinent to this study, is the assumption along these lines, that inclusive education may be a Trojan horse for school reform (Slee, 2011). That the disconnecting functions of hegemonic psychological traditions that inform understandings about learning and propel the project of schooling, do not merely compound barriers to inclusion, they ensure they prevail. This claim will be further expounded in this and the following chapter.

To reconcile the ethical dilemma or tensions for educators to work for better social justice outcomes within a monomorphic system, there are calls for new theoretical foundations across specialisations. For example, Gruenewald (2008) contends that place-based education is in need of a theory to inform: "so that the education of citizens might have some direct bearing on the wellbeing of social and ecological places people actually inhabit" (p. 308). In another example, Dixon and Verenikina (2007) share the sentiment that inclusive education requires new theoretical approaches to inform more inclusive approaches to pedagogy: "Regular and special educators need a template for how learning will proceed…in classrooms with diverse student populations. This problem needs to be understood within a suitable theoretical framework" (p. 197). Like Zhao (2012), who suggests his 'new paradigm' is informed by constructivism as a superior psychology to an 'old paradigm' informed by behaviourism, Dixon and Verenikina point to developing an understanding of "learning through the internalization of external cultural activities into internal psychological processes" (p. 199). What is not considered in the assumption that constructivism will provide a better direction, is that the theoretical tradition encapsulates mind-body and organism-environment dualisms, perpetuating an individualism that fails to account for the kind of relational understandings needed to overcome these tensions.

The renowned anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011) provides a more informed direction describing in his seminal work, 'The Perception of the Environment' the

impact of an ecological psychology which reconciles the separation of the biophysical and sociocultural distinctions that permeate theory in the sciences. In particular, he describes the impact on his own work of transcending the dichotomistic tendencies that the dominant theories perpetuate with relational thinking. His work deploys a synthesis of relational thinking across fields of anthropology, ecological psychology and biology, where the human being is conceived, he explains, "not as a composite entity made up of separable but complementary parts, such as a body, mind and culture, but rather as a singular locus of creative growth within a continually unfolding field of relationships" (p. 5). Ultimately, Ingold's work ensues as a study of variation in skills embedded in ecological niches, overcoming the ontological dualism of society and nature that also permeates education, as Gruenwald (2005) surmises:

> Too often ignored in education - and in all of academe - is the fact that culture and environment, or humans and nature, are inextricably connected and that our educational policies, structures, practices, theories, traditions, and academic journals continue to operate as if this were not the case. (p. 206)

This failure to perceive the interconnectivity between ourselves and the natural world also detailed by Bateson and Bateson (2005) is the crux of the problems within the wider contemporary context of this particular research project. In order to overcome our blindness to an ecological rationality, Plumwood (2002) claims: " we will need a re-conception of the human self in more mutualistic terms" (p. 142). This research will attempt to make an analysis of a contemporary research problem from this basis.

1.3 The research problem

This research develops around the problem articulated by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) with regards to the parallels between improving schools, developing inclusion, and the concern raised from their own research that suggest that: "the development of inclusive practice in school is not well understood" (p. 5). This section of the thesis will outline how this research project responds to this problem by reviewing the literature across inclusion, parent participation, pedagogy and educational psychology. Additionally, key terminology is defined as it was interpreted and applied to this particular study. How this research will specifically

address the problem of better understanding the development of inclusive practice, via a case study of the Studio program, and what this will contribute to the field of inclusive education will be summarised.

The notion of 'inclusivity' as it has been interpreted and applied to this study, is defined as the ongoing process of valuing diversity (Freebody, Watters, & Lummis, 2003; Gaad, 2004; Lindsay, 2004; Lipsky & Gartner, 2001; Ypinzar & Pagliano, 2004). This procedural definition of inclusivity invokes a school reform agenda (Gable, 2003; Lindsay, 2004; Nind, Benjamin, Sheehy, Collins, & Hall, 2004; Ypinzar & Pagliano, 2004) which presents a great challenge to school cultures where entrenched practices limit opportunities for the kind of reflection and collaboration required to progress inclusion as an ongoing process (Lindsay, 2004; Nind et al., 2004). More specifically, prominent Australian author on inclusive education, Roger Slee (2011), describes this process as a political one, where: "we seek to identify the complex ways in which barriers prevent students accessing, authentically participating and succeeding in education" (p. 84). It is a long road ahead for schools to adapt to the concept of inclusion even though in principle it has been widely accepted (Haynes, 2009). This thesis considers, as Slee (2011) suggests, "how the school could develop as an inclusive campus with programs that recognise the value of difference and use this as an opportunity to develop innovative curriculum and pedagogy" (p. 148). This research sought to address the problem of understanding the development of inclusive practices in school contexts by documenting how the Studio program is received and engaged with over a three year period in order to evidence factors that enable and/or constrain the movement towards the more inherently inclusive school campus Slee (2011) describes.

The biggest challenge to inclusivity in school based education described in the literature, and which contextualises the approach to this particular inquiry, stems from the impossibility of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, whilst improving test results for reporting on student achievement and school based performance. This contextual dilemma has been surmised by Wrigley, Thomson, and Lingard (2012):

> The inherited traditions of school-based education are socially, culturally and pedagogically inadequate because

> they are mismatched to the identities, cultures and needs of those they purport to serve. This has been exacerbated in recent decades by global commercial processes that have thoroughly transformed cultures and identities while at the same time pressuring schools and governments to accommodate to the standards incorporated in international tests. Such a situation presents a complex problem of inclusion for educators and institutions. (p. 201)

The long history of screening and ranking along with a regime of national testing and international comparison described as "global policy technology" (Lewis, 2013) produce what is conceived as "normal", a statistical construct that negates diversity according to Graham (2007), and on a global scale appears to be driving the homogenization of education.

Adding pressure on school contexts is the doubling of children with disabilities in Australian schools since 1995, and the many more children in need of learning support who do not qualify as 'disabled' and are therefore without additional support and resources (Angus, Olney, & Ainkey, 2007). Children outside of normative developmental ranges are most often understood to be needy of catch-up or compensatory approaches (Graham, 2007; Graham & Harwood, 2011; Soresi, Nota, & Wehmeyer, 2011). These efforts attempt to change the 'individual', whether from the outside (promoted by behaviourist theories of learning), or inside (promoted by cognitivist theories of learning) (McGregor & Mills, 2011). Attributing perceived "deficits" to individuals or cohorts of individuals, where problems with learning are assumed to be problems with the child (Haynes, 2009b; Hick, Kershner, & Farrell, 2009; Slee, 2011), frequently referred to as a deficit rationality, is argued to be a pervasive feature of schooling (Graham, 2006; *The Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education (Students with Disabilities) Report*, 2004; Slee, 2011; Thomson, 2007). Additionally, Smyth (2010) contends this deficit rationality extends beyond children to include families, communities, and even teachers, who are blamed for educational disadvantage via policy and media discourses of deficit. This research sought to evidence how the Studio program is impacted by these competing pressures, to inform a deeper understanding of the development of inclusive practices and the impediments to them. More specifically, the case study that is the focus of this research sought to describe the qualities of the Studio program that supported competencies in children and parents unseen in the regular classroom. Competence

or educational success, for that matter, is rarely understood as the synergism of person and environment, therefore this research investigates how the Studio program evidenced an effort to transcend this deficit rationality.

Research has evidenced that there are limited opportunities for parent participation in schools and parents face many barriers to inclusion in the school context themselves (Grant, 2011; Hughes & Greenbough, 2006; Reschly & Christenson, 2012), not least being the deficit rationality that impacts policy discourse and practices of extending the educational capacity of school to the education of parents (Conteh & Kawishima, 2008; Fullan, 2001; Giallo, Treyvard, Matthews & Kienhuis, 2010). Contrary to these findings, research and policy guidance strongly suggests all children benefit from parental involvement in school settings (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Education Today 2013: The OECD Perspective; Fan & Chen, 2001; Seginer, 2006) although there appears to be a research gap describing exactly how parent input achieves positive outcomes., for example, increasing student engagement as touted by *Education Today 2013: The OECD Perspective*. The Studio program, not only involves parent volunteers at the school site, it provides an opportunity for parents to have some say in the conditions for learning and teaching, albeit in an alternative classroom space and limited to the time-slot of this particular program. This research sought to evidence data that details the impact of these contributions, thereby addressing this research gap of how parental involvement impacts student engagement, contributing to inclusivity.

The term ‘pedagogy’ requires some unpacking to explicate the intentions for which it is applied to this research. In its most simple application to education, pedagogy is often described as the art and science of teaching. Or more simply, if ‘curriculum’ is what we teach, then ‘pedagogy’ is the how. Simon (1981) extends this definition of pedagogy as how we teach, suggesting it is the process of the application of theory to practice. Thus pedagogy entails the assumptions about how children learn that inform the conditions for learning and teaching. Simon contends pedagogy has been historically neglected in schools: “The dominant educational institutions…have had no concern with theory, its relation to practice, with pedagogy" (p. 11). According to Simon this is attributed to the dominant interactionist epistemology of developmental psychology which has influenced

schooling practices through both child-centred approaches, which place emphasis on the influence of the environment in development, and testing regimes, which emphasize the influence of heredity. Furthermore, Simon contends this interactionist epistemology points to increasing differentiation in development and adds complexity to the work of the teacher under pressure to cater to the individual needs of students, where:

> primary school teachers who have taken the priority of individualisation to heart, find it difficult to do more than ensure that each child is in fact engaged in the series of tasks which the teacher sets up for the child; the complex management problem which then arises takes the teacher's full energies. (p. 18)

Subsequently, a primarily didactic or "telling" pedagogical approach is produced by the school based model of education according to Simon which fails to recognise that children have in common, a capacity for learning that is fundamental to the human organism. For the purpose of this research a broader definition which decouples pedagogy from schooling is useful as it accounts for this common capacity for learning as humans encounter the environment. It is also epistemologically consistent with the mutually constitutive organism–environment stance of ecological psychology which circumvents this dominant interactionist paradigm and will be deployed as the theoretical approach to this study.

An unconventional yet much broader conceptualisation of pedagogy as the sometimes unnoticed but no less influential aspects of the environments we encounter is offered by Hickey (2008): "everything from the street, shopping mall, Hollywood blockbuster and magazine advertisement, to idle gossip, national myths and 'common sense' all serve to exert pedagogical influence" (p. 66). This broader understanding of pedagogy maintains the conditions for learning and teaching can be constituted as larger than the formal project of schooling. Pedagogy is in fact inherent in experiences with the environments we encounter. The characteristics of artefacts, people, and places that become influential to us, as we embody action in our world, convey pedagogical intent. Wrigley, Thomson, and Lingard (2012) capture this notion of pedagogy as everything and everywhere, and suggest effective pedagogy for inclusivity requires connecting with children, their life-worlds (referred

to here as the particularity of identity and culture) and experiences, in order to: "stretch beyond these in educative ways" (p. 196). To put it more simply, in order to challenge a child, we must know them well. The Studio provides a context for children to occupy themselves in activity according to their own concerns and interests. It is anticipated that this affords an opportunity to get to know children, make connections to their life-worlds and experiences, and potentially, challenge them. Data from this research, evidencing what activities children enact and their motivations, as well as how they are supported and constrained in their learning during the Studio sessions, will contribute to better understanding the development of inclusive practices via an examination of the shifts in pedagogy the Studio affords.

It is noteworthy that children with so-called 'additional needs' have been found to display competence and experience success in student-centred environments (Gable, 2003; Porter, 2002; Schwartz & Okita, 2006). In fact, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) ratified by 92 member states as a world consensus, demands it as part of its inclusive education agenda: "Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs" (p. viii). What is of interest to this study is how this type of pedagogy, introduced to this school via the Studio program, is encountered by children, teachers, parents and community at the site, and what insights this provides for understanding the obstacles to the development of inclusive practices in schools.

Developmental psychology, behavioural learning theory, and cognitivist psychology have vastly shaped the conditions for learning and teaching in schools, or in other words, the approaches to pedagogy, for example, separating children into age-based groupings for instruction, standardised curricula, the use of rewards and punishments, a focus on memory and representation, and compartmentalisation of knowledge, to name a few (Luke, 1989). More recently, social constructivist theory, which proposes knowledge is individually constructed and socially mediated (Fosnot, 1994; Woods, 1988), and employs the cognitivist assumption that once phenomena have been experienced, mental representations are made of the phenomena 'in the mind', has become highly influential to educational research and practice. The OECD report, Education Today 2013, confirms the extent of this

influence on pedagogy: “In most countries teachers see their job as helping students actively to develop and construct their knowledge” (p. 31). The social constructivist discourse has widespread appeal to teachers whose role, impacted by the strain of interactionist epistemology mentioned previously, is reified by the notion of the incompetent student in need of instruction.

Lev Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist who is the key contributor to social constructivist theory, and who proposed the interactional stance of an incompetent child learning from a more experienced other in the “zone of proximal development” has attracted criticism from Rogoff (2003) for this theory:

> It seems to focus especially on the kind of interaction in schooling and preparation for use of academic discourse and tools. (This is no accident, because Vygotsky was particularly interested in promoting academic skills in his nation.) The focus on instructional interactions tends to overlook other forms of engagement that are also important to children's learning. (p. 282–283)

Rogoff (2003) contends that the assumption underlying school based pedagogy that there is “One Best Way” perpetuates the cultural values of the dominant group. It is profoundly significant to this study that the dominant paradigm of psychological theories, including the highly influential social constructivist theory, and the conditions for learning and teaching they inspire, perpetuate deficit rationality. In order not to rely solely on Rogoff’s critique of Vygotsky, I will elaborate on this point further in a later section.

This research, by deploying an ecological psychological stance, attempts to move beyond interactionist epistemology and the hegemony of developmental, behaviourist and cognitivist assumptions that have influenced approaches to teaching and learning that inform the school-based model of education. Ecological psychology and its non-traditional theories, as will be discussed further in this thesis, do not prescribe to considerations of individuals as separate to their environments, and minds as separate from bodies. In particular, ecological psychology does not share the assumption that we construct representations, instead, it examines: “how organisms make their way in the world, not how a world is made inside of organisms” (Reed, 1996a, p. 11). Having had little impact on considerations of how

children learn in mainstream school settings, ecological psychology will continue to influence the field of psychology and understandings of perception, action and knowledge, according to Chemero (2013). As an alternative to the dominant paradigm of psychology which perpetuates deficit rationality, it promises new insights into understanding the development of inclusive practices in schools by accounting for the fundamental capacity for learning that is common to us all and its relational and embedded nature which has historically been neglected in school contexts (Winter, 1996; Heft, 2001; Barab and Plucker, 2002; E. Gibson & Pick, 2002; Rogoff, 2003).

This brief overview sets the scene for this research as the problem of limited understandings of inclusive practice in schools. Specifically, it will achieve insight by examining how the Studio program, as a means to diversify pedagogy, is both enabled and constrained. The study will bring a particular concern to the ways in which the Studio program challenged the deficit rationality via engaging parents in a pedagogical role, children in student-initiated activity, and how these pedagogical shifts were encountered by the study's participants more broadly. The study will achieve this by adopting a broad interpretation of pedagogy that decouples it from schooling and is epistemologically consistent with ecological psychology's claim that organism and environment are mutually constitutive.

As an altered space producing altered engagement and perceptions of competence, the Studio makes a significant contribution to what Slee (2011) suggests; that school could develop as an inclusive campus with programs that value diversity as a means to innovate what we teach and how. Similarly, Graham and Harwood (2011) agree there is little research on, "how difference itself might drive the development of new cultural practices in schools and how such practices can enhance the knowledge and resource capabilities of both students and school practitioners" (p. 137). In contrast to these calls for change and innovation, reform expert Michael Fullan (2001) articulates the challenge of educational change. In fact, he describes how successful attempts to innovate schools have been at failing to bring about educational change. For any work that does seem to make a difference, he describes the situation of maintaining it, as "fragile". It is this notion of innovation in schools as being both necessary and impossible that is of interest to this inquiry.

The significance of this research lies in addressing this complexity stated at the outset as the parallel between improving schools and developing inclusivity. In particular, this research makes a contribution to the research gap on understanding the development of inclusive practices in school contexts. It addresses a gap in understanding the development of inclusive practices from an ecological psychological stance that affords an epistemological shift from the deficit rationality of developmental psychology that works against inclusivity. This will specifically afford a better understanding of the potentialities and limitations on parental participation in school, and shifts to student-centred pedagogy. Before articulating the research questions and design of the study however, let me introduce more thoroughly the ecological psychological theoretical stance which informs this research.

1.4 The theoretical stance: An introduction to ecological psychology

Ecological psychology proposes agents and environments are mutually constitutive. By adopting this stance, an in-depth case analysis of the Studio program proffers insight into the notion of inclusion and exclusion which move beyond a causal explanatory framework. Alternatively, this research investigates the synergisms in responses to environmental conditions that operate according to intentionality. Two key theoretical contributions to the field of ecological psychology that impact this work are *affordance theory* as proposed by James J. Gibson (1979/1986/2015), and *behaviour settings theory* described by Roger Barker (1968). Both are psychologists who worked against the tide of the dominant assumptions in their field, namely behaviourist notions that an individual responds to immediate stimuli in their environment, and cognitivist assumptions that individual's experience the world and then reconstruct it in their minds.

J. Gibson's (1979/1986/2015) theory of affordances gives precedence to direct perception of the functional specifics of space. He describes this as the detection of *affordances,* or action possibilities in the environment, available to be realised by agents according to their *effectivities* (abilities and intentions). According to Barab and Plucker (2002), "Gibson's core contribution was his claim that an individual profile of ability (effectivities) can only be understood with respect to

environmental affordances" (p. 174). Environmental affordances are enabled and constrained by the social agreements that constitute the possibilities for action that make the perception of affordances actionable or even permissible. In schools for example, possibilities for action are influenced and governed by the policy and histories of practice articulated via the spatial arrangements, temporal structures, and role performances that constitute the classroom as the site for education.

Roger Barker (1968) completed his research outside of the laboratory and, unusually for psychologists at the time, put his attention to the life of people in their ordinary environments. He discovered that the setting itself was a much stronger predictor of behaviour than immediate stimulus responses. Barker's theory of behaviour settings describes how rules and resources of the spaces we encounter and their constituent functions produce *standing patterns of behaviour*. As such we can assume spaces are coercive of behaviour and our agency upon entering them is collusive. To kick a football in a cafe would be unacceptable. For a dentist to serve cake would be strange. Behaviour settings, definable by their temporal boundaries and the synomporphic relationship of milieu with function, constitute coercive forces affecting behaviour. Where behaviour is incompatible with a behaviour setting, we may volunteer or be required, to leave. Standing patterns of behaviour according to Barker (1968) occur where "characteristics persist when participants change" (p. 18) and are thus 'extra-individual' factors. A classroom, for example, is commonly constituted by the various arrangement of 25 desks and chairs oriented towards a board, (albeit these days an interactive whiteboard), in many ways predisposing children to passivity.

Both theories suggest information is 'picked up' through direct and indirect perception in order to inform action. This thesis, in following the logic of the ecological psychologists, details how the characteristics of place attune the perception of affordances, or action possibilities. The perception of affordances in schools is incumbent upon *pedagogical organisers*, or the conditions for learning and teaching that define action possibilities, both constraining and enabling behaviour. This doctoral research explores inclusion and exclusion as it is experienced and enacted according to synergisms with the behaviour setting as a site of affordances and location for action.

According to ecological psychology, an *econiche* is a functionally construed affordance structure (Shaw, Kadar, Sim, & Repperger, 1992) and for the purpose of this research the school is examined as a globally reproduced econiche for education. It was anticipated that this theoretical approach would provide new insights into Fullan's (2001) claim that efforts to "reform" do exactly that (*re*-form), eventually reproducing essentially similar characteristics making any alterations to the school and its characteristics, more than challenging; they are near impossible. Ecological psychology by providing both an explanation of how places function to reproduce behaviour and a new way to consider learning as perception in action seemed entirely appropriate to examining the Studio, its pedagogical shifts, and its impacts.

1.4.1 A brief comparison with Vygotsky's social-constructivist theory

Understanding the profound influence of Vygotsky's thinking and research on contemporary education policy and practice, it is important to highlight some of the similarities and differences across social-constructivism and the theoretical traditions I have grouped together to take an ecological psychological stance for the purpose of this research analysis. Vygotsky's work, notwithstanding concerns with translation and political criticisms (see, Daniels, 2001), has had a major influence on pedagogy throughout the world as noted previously.

Under the influence of Marx's dialectical empiricism (Daniels, 2001), Vygotsky shifted the psychology which impacts thinking about how children learn from the stronghold of behaviourism, contending development was dependent on the interaction of biology and culture. Vygotsky's cognitivism proposes that there are two means of remembering, one natural and one social, thus dividing the natural and cultural worlds we experience. Natural memory he claims is closer to perception and has a more immediate and functional quality (see, 1978, p.38-39), while indirect memory exceeds what nature provided and is based on the "culturally-elaborated organisation of...behaviour" (p.39). Key to this claim is that the culturally derived tools for remembering, say writing for example, serve to "extend the operation of memory beyond the biological...and permit it to incorporate artificial, or self-generated stimuli" (p. 39). Thus he claims 'signs' move memory beyond its elemental (natural) function to 'cause' behaviour. The nature/culture divide exists in the activity

of humans and in our psychological processes of remembering. In contrast of course, ecological psychology asserts there is no such separation.

Vygotsky's (1978) contention that stimuli in the environment derived from the cultural systems of sign-making afford one to "control their behaviour from the outside" (p.40) seems to initially align with the credence Barker (1968) gives to behaviour settings. However, where Vygotsky suggests the encounters with culturally derived products of remembering mediate a psychological processes of 'internalisation', Barker claims behaviour relevant to a behaviour setting is immediate according one's experience of the context. That is, behaving "church" or "cafe" or "school" for that matter, is immediate as we respond to information perceived directly. If we consider affordance theory in this discussion there are agentive reasons to comply or not with behaviour settings according to what this affords us. With accumulative experience we become more and more attuned to what is required for participating in behaviour settings, and likewise, more adept at using the culturally derived sign-symbol systems within them, for our purposes.

Vygotsky shifted notions of perception as isolated (as in stimulus) to categorised (as in schematic). In contrast, ecological psychology assumes perception seeks invariance from the unified whole. Although Vygotsky does allude to the function of perception as the direction of attention, as in figure from background, affordance theory provides a thorough explanation of why we act from this basis of connection to environment. Vygotsky also concerns himself with how attention is directed temporally to past and present, he views this ability as a kind of detachment that dynamically reconstructs events (or plans) internally via memory and imagination (see p.36), where affordances are understood as being nested in space-time connecting us to past actions and possible futures. Learning is a continuum; the tuning of attention that increases specificity to information in the environment, rather than this dynamic, internal, reconstruction that, according to Vygotsky leads development in stages.

Ultimately Vygotsky's work produces a deficit view of children who, he believes, are incapable at some stages of achieving what at a later stage, they might. Illustratively, the research tasks to which Vygotsky's refers involve tasks with

multiple rules that are highly decontextualized. (see, 1978, p. 38 - 45), and Vygotsky uses the findings to claim that pre-school children cannot use signs to mediate memory. I doubt anyone has told this to companies that target advertising to young children. In another example, Vygotsky draws on research where children were asked to associate an object with a 'meaningless figure', when the children tried to draw a comparison between the figure and the object to be remembered by finding some similarity, it was assumed they cannot perform at a level of mediated symbolisation. In contrast, an ecological psychological analysis would assume the children were seeking invariance across the word to be remembered and the strange symbol in order to perform the task. They might not have been successful because they were less experienced at performing this type of task say than older children or adults, however, their perception of invariance is the basis from which new or variant information can be perceived, thus allowing them to develop specificity.

Vygotsky is perhaps best known for his claim that the difference between what we can do with a more experienced other, and what we can do independently, manifests as a ‘zone of proximal development’ which he describes as:

> a general developmental law for the higher mental functions that…can be applied in its entirety to children's learning processes. We propose that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalised, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement (p. 90).

An ecological psychological stance would describe what Vygotsky named the ‘zone of proximal development’ as the child operating in affordance networks. What is important is not so much the measure between what children can do alone and what they can do with a more experienced other, but how they go about engaging affordance networks, that is, that they are sufficiently familiar with the tools of their culture, the sign-symbol systems and the people who might assist them, to actualise their intentions.

Vygotsky's (1986) pursuit of how: "systematic learning plays a leading role in the development of schoolchildren" (p.148) is where Rogoff (2003) foregrounds her criticism of his promotion of academic skills over more diverse cultural practices as sites of learning. Indeed Daniels (2001) agrees, Vygotsky: "embarked on the creation of psychological theories which he and others used as tools for the development of new pedagogies for all learning" (p.2). The general criticism here is that Vygotsky was concerned with pedagogy and not learning per se. It is the very notion that pedagogy is a distinctly human process that underpins Vygotsky's work, and provides the first point of contention with an ecological psychological stance, by suggesting that other species do not point out affordances to their young. Additionally, Daniels (2001) critiques Vygotsky's failure to attend to socio-institutional effects contending, it is in the broadest sense that pedagogic practices need to be examined. This criticism seems especially poignant where Vygotsky was concerned (as am I, in this research) with barriers to participation. In conclusion, Vygotsky (1986) surmises: "The door is closed on the issue of the causation and origin of our thoughts, since deterministic analysis would require clarification of the motive forces that direct thought into this or that channel" (p. 10). An analysis of affordances however, renders motivation for action less covert. It could be argued that in contrast, the reasons for behaviour become more transparent and it is this transparency which I seek to bring to the analysis in this particular research process.

1.5 Research questions

Framed by the experiences described in the prologue, this inquiry necessitated the adoption of an ecological psychological stance in order to revise theories impacting the conditions for learning and teaching affecting mainstream pedagogical approaches, which perpetuate deficit rationality. The learning theories that I was familiar with, from my own teacher training (specifically Piagetian and Vygostkian influences), had been unable to account for the variation in activity and pedagogy enacted in the Studio program. Understanding learning from an ecological psychological perspective, which considers the mutuality of persons and environments, offered promise for new insights into the development of inclusive practices in school contexts. For this reason, the question which provided the overarching focus was:

What does ecological psychology contribute to understanding how children learn in the Studio context and how can this inform the development of inclusive practices?

Investigating this question necessitated the pursuit of two objectives. The first objective was to describe learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance. This entailed investigating two sub questions:

1a) What activities can students enact, what are their motivations, and how are they supported or constrained in their activity within the Studio environment?

1b) What contributions can parents and community members make to engage students and learning in the Studio context?

Chapter 4 of this thesis details the data which addresses these questions of how learning in the Studio is described from an ecological psychological stance.

The second objective was to consider if and how the Studio program could inform innovation at the site in pursuit of a more inherently inclusive school campus. Pursuing this objective entailed investigating a further set of four sub questions:

2a) How is student-initiated activity as a pedagogical approach experienced and encountered by participants?

2b) How is the pedagogical role adopted by parents experienced by students and encountered by teachers?

2c) What opportunities for innovation to curriculum and pedagogy at the school site does the Studio program afford?

2d) What impediments are there to these innovations?

These questions are addressed in chapter 5 where the data is considered as evidence for the possibilities and limitations of the Studio program inspiring innovation at the school site.

1.6 Design of the Study

The methodological approach of critical ethnographic qualitative inquiry, as it is described by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), was suited to my direct and personal engagement with the Studio program. The research was undertaken over a three year period of engagement within the school community, with my roles as a parent volunteer in the Studio, professional educator, and researcher providing a critical ethnographic point of focus to this qualitative research inquiry. The interaction of my role as parent, educator, and researcher will be explored in chapter 3 as they impacted the methodological approaches taken to data gathering and analysis. Initial funding from the NSW, DEC and many voluntary hours contributed by parents allowed a dilapidated, unused classroom to be converted into a bright and colourful space full of materials found hoarded away in cupboards and recycling piles, made accessible to children for self-directed activity. Primary consideration was given to accessibility of materials, a social atmosphere of mutual respect, and a temporality which encouraged children to work at their own pace by providing space for unfinished work. Children at the school were scheduled one hour per week in the Studio in half class groupings. Additionally, children accessed the Studio with permission from the classroom teacher at other times; for example, during lunch times. The study participants from the site included, children attending the school, the school's teaching principal, two full-time, one part-time and two temporary teachers, six parents who contributed regular volunteer hours, and one member of the wider community engaged as a resident artist, all of whom gave their consent to be involved in the research.

The research was undertaken by deploying a montage of data collection techniques including, participant observation, reflexive ethnographic writing, artefact analysis, photo elicitation, and interviews with participants, both formal and informal/conversational. Data was collected during the Studio sessions as well as other formal and informal opportunities that arose throughout the course of the fieldwork at the school site.

It was not my intention to 'perfect' the Studio program as an ideal model, but rather to detail its impact on participants in order to better understand the pedagogical shifts it afforded, and the ways in which this contributed insights into

Figure 1.5: Parents worked to refurbish the old classroom during a school holiday break

the development of inclusive practices at the site. The epistemological stance of organism-environment reciprocity set the methodological tone for the research to identify the use and value of the Studio to its participants, and the scope of its potential influence on innovation at the site. The research was designed with a particular concern for unearthing the significance of the program to the community of participants, and was undertaken with the heightened sense of responsibility for maintaining an ethical stance as described by Denzin (2009).

1.7 Reading the thesis

The collection of images included in this research contributes significantly to the dataset. All data has been de-identified to protect the confidentiality of participants. The school has also been given the pseudonym, Uber Creek Public School. Other data, in the form of reflexive ethnographic writing made during the course of the data collection as diary entries, and relevant data from the previous study which foregrounds the history of this project, is strewn throughout the thesis rather than entirely disclosed in the findings chapter. This direct data has been formatted in italics for ease of reading with any of my notes within it bracketed and without italics. This data set includes reflexive ethnographic writing that details my own engagement with the project. As one of the "parent instigators" of the project my

intentions might otherwise require a confessional approach were I not to detail them in such a way. Slee (2011) recommends researchers state their ideological positions up-front when it comes to researching inclusivity. To this end the inclusion of this auto-ethnographic writing serves to illuminate my positionality as parent and researcher in how I approached this study.

1.8 How I benefitted from the research

Fundamental to my personal aspirations and the affordance of undertaking doctoral studies to advance my career, there was an even stronger personal motivation to contribute something to the school that my own children were attending. The project and subsequent research opportunities (although not initially anticipated), afforded a stronger connection to my children's school experience. It was an attempt to connect with their formal school-based education, to which, as a mother, I had experienced disconnectedness. This is nowhere more evident than in my recollection of their initial transition to school provided in the prologue to this thesis.

As will be detailed in later sections of this thesis, the enterprising nature of the Studio program, and subsequently the research, was not entirely conflict free, and over the years my enthusiasm waxed and waned with its challenges. In my role as parent I felt 'the school' as a social space was something of an absolute, and as such tended not to be critiqued by those who use it. As I encountered the literature, this absolutism was also evident to other researchers. Discussing her research into A-D/HD, Graham (2007) claims: "conspicuously absent from the field of investigation into the rise of 'ADHD' is the educational institution itself" (p. 18). Ultimately, as Ainscow et al. (2006) describe, this undertaking to make a pedagogical contribution to my children's schooling became an exploration of "a tension between the attempts to put values and principles into action, and the complexities of schools and education systems" (p. 4). The ecological psychological stance taken however, afforded a deeper and more nuanced understanding of these tensions.

1.9 Thesis outline

Chapter 1 has contextualised this doctoral research by introducing the Studio program as the subject of the study which informs this thesis. It has also established the line of inquiry that informed the research questions and design of the study

around the problem of better understanding the development of inclusive practices in schools. I have outlined the significance of the theoretical stance of ecological psychology to this inquiry and the potential contribution to insights concerning inclusivity where the mutually constitutive relationality of person and environment are considered.

Literature which contributed to understanding significant aspects of the research problem under investigation is reviewed in chapter 2. This begins with a consideration of the historical and socio-political context from which the goals for inclusive education have sprung, and how the notion of inclusivity is generally enacted in policy and practice. Then literature which contributes to a perception of the complexity and seeming contradiction of working towards inclusivity is detailed. Psychological theories which impact the conditions for learning and teaching and that perpetuate deficit rationality are reflected upon prior to providing a more thorough review of ecological psychology as it has impacted my understandings of how children learn. Following this, literature on parent involvement in education sets the context for understanding alternate forms of engagement in learning, and particular examples of pedagogical innovations that exemplify movements towards inclusive practices are muted. A brief review of how spatiality contributes to inclusion/exclusion concludes the review of the literature as relevant to this inquiry.

Chapter 3 details the more pragmatic aspects of the research and its methodology, including examples of my work as a critical ethnographer, and the manner in which data was collected and analysed.

I have detailed the research findings from the data and a discussion of the considerations of what it evidences in relation to the research questions in two chapters. Chapter 4 presents the key findings of the research from the case study data and its analysis as relevant to the study's first objective to describe learning in the Studio context from an ecological psychological perspective. Chapter 5 addresses the study's second objective to consider if and how the Studio program could inform innovation at the site in pursuit of a more inherently inclusive school campus. Taken together these chapters reveal the perception of characteristics of the Studio as a behaviour setting and the strong tendency for participants to dichotomise the Studio

and the regular classroom behaviour settings which led to the Studio manifesting as a distinguishable 'place' within the school. The qualities of this place for learning and the impacts on the school's inclusivity are detailed as the findings of this study.

Chapter 6 provides an overarching summary of the research findings and its implications as a conclusion to this study. The qualities of the Studio program, and more specifically its pedagogical organisers of student-initiated, adult supported activity, indicate important and necessary considerations for action on inclusivity in schools, particularly with a view to providing more children with the experience of success as a measure of personal accomplishment, at school.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

I have argued that what constitutes inclusive practice in schools is both little understood and presents a challenge to schooling more broadly where psychological theories that inform how we understand learning perpetuate deficit rationality. The literature encountered in this section will build upon this research problem introduced in chapter 1. This chapter will establish the context for the research inquiry with literature spanning, inclusive education, psychology, and pedagogy. Beginning with a description of the historical context from which notions of inclusivity have emerged in education (2.1), followed by consideration of the broad implications of inclusivity for mainstream schooling (2.2), the stage is set to examine the inadequacies of the current psychological paradigm informing the work of teachers to support their work towards inclusivity (2.3). A more extensive review of the ecological psychological theories deployed in my approach to this work and its analysis, is detailed (2.4). This is followed by a concern in the final sections with detailing how I have become attuned to what constitutes inclusive pedagogy via an examination of parent-school relationships, some case examples of inclusive pedagogy, and a discussion of critical spatial theory which is pertinent to the Studio as a spatial innovation (2.5). This literature review in summary suggests taking an ecological psychological stance may provide new insights into inclusive practices and exclusionary ones (2.6). More specifically, being attuned to the qualities of relationality and spatiality as key pedagogical organisers of the Studio, may help to discern significant findings to inform practice and future research.

2.1 A brief history of the inclusivity agenda

Over the past century the function of schooling to sort and rank children, emerging in the context of economic efficiencies and social justice priorities, has resulted in increased attention to where education is provided and to whom. Ellis (2013) examines how testing regimes to sort children into those considered ‘worthy’ of a mainstream education and those considered too difficult to teach emerged in the Toronto school system during the early part of the Twentieth Century. The emergence of intelligence quotient (IQ) tests, introduced to education from psychology, and deployed increasingly by the 1920s and 30s to discern and remove those children considered too hard to teach occurred in the context of overcrowding

and the prioritisation of cost effectiveness (due to economic circumstances referred to as 'the great depression'). These tests were, according to Ellis, biased to the middle class and the Anglo-American culture. Subsequent to this testing, new categories of disability, and more widespread segregation of children, emerged, and the streaming of children according to ability was popularised.

The provision of schooling according to ability underwent a dramatic shift following the Civil Rights movement in the United States of America (U.S.A.) during the 1960s. A policy turn in education from segregation to integration was popularised as social justice issues came to the fore (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007). In practice "integration" meant all children (regardless of ability) could be educated in a local school setting (Safran, 1989). There was increasing recognition that the rights of people with disabilities had been ignored, that they had suffered injustice through isolation, stigma, and low expectations as a result of segregative practices and the consequent image of disabled people as social burdens (Guralnick, 2001). Integration however, was enacted as "special programs for special kids" often in separate classrooms or buildings on the school site, thus continuing to convey a sense of separation albeit within the same school (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007).

Inclusive education was born out of this social justice agenda as a means to overcome this limited interpretation of integration (Garcia & Alban-Metcalfe, 1998). The ratification of the Salamanca Statement (1994) suggests along with this social justice agenda however, there were now perceived economic advantages to educating all children in the same place:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system. (p. ix)

This discursive shift in policy to "inclusion", while progressing a shared social space of school, did not appear to produce a congruent shift in practice. Dixon and Verenikina (2007) argue that the notion of "special programs for special kids" merely shifted into the regular classroom. In Australia, where education policy has

mirrored that of the U.S.A., it is argued that children being "included" often engage in separate activity supported by a teacher's aide (Konza, 2008). These staffing positions have become a necessary component of inclusive classrooms where children fit the disability funding criteria defined by State and Territory Governments. Konza (2008) claims: "it is often the case that the Support Teacher (also known as a teacher's aide) is viewed as the person who has responsibility for students with disabilities" (p.41). This type of intervention, along with teacher attitudes to inclusion which range from low enthusiasm to pervasive negativity, according to Konza, is actually increasing the marginalization of children within so called "inclusive classrooms".

To counter the marginalization of children according to ability in the classroom, "inclusive pedagogy" has been proposed in the literature as a means to promote 'shared activity' within the classroom (Florian, 2009; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). In other words, it should appear that within a classroom, no-one stands out as receiving anything different to anyone else. The discourse of inclusion is being increasingly honed to the teaching/learning dynamic within classrooms. It is increasingly argued that schools should, as Underwood (2008) puts it, "adequately meet the needs of all students, regardless of their diverse pathologies, characteristics and abilities" (p. 155). In Australia, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) propels this rhetoric driving the development of the national curriculum around the unified goal, for all children to be successful learners. The responsibility conveyed in policy documents falls directly to teachers who are increasingly expected to teach to diversity, by 'personalising' and 'differentiating' learning. While it seems that the new Australian curriculum offers teachers more flexibility in achieving this on paper, personalising learning to student's goals, needs, and interests, will remain the key challenge for teachers in the future. For now, "adjustments" (for students who may need them) have been introduced to the teaching vernacular as a means of achieving more personalised learning (see, Student Diversity and the Australian Curriculum: Advice for principals, schools, and teachers, *Australian Curriculum and Reporting* Authority [ACARA], 2013) and 'inclusive education' has morphed once again into perhaps the more discursively proactive, teaching to diversity.

Whilst inclusivity has become an international phenomenon, the confusion and contention historically around the definition of what exactly is meant by inclusive education, and how it should be practiced, has led to the development of fractious research groups and the positioning of researchers on a spectrum aligning with different 'camps' (Slee & Allen, 2008). Detailing the twenty years of progress of inclusive education from its policy inception in Salamanca (UNESCO, 1994), Kiuppis (2014) suggests the debate and contention has formed primarily around whether inclusion is targeted at all children, or more specifically, children with disabilities. The confusion flows from the similarity of two distinct UNESCO programmes; 'inclusive education' and 'education for all' that, according to Kiuppis, morphs into one policy agenda while both negating the original special needs focus of inclusive education. Kiuppis contends the target group for inclusion has been ill defined from its inception in Salamanca leaving space for ambiguity. Similarly, Nguyen (2010) details the overlapping policy framework of UNESCO with regard to the two programmes, but claims it is through these global policy frameworks that "education is called upon as an influential tool to meet the goals of new capitalism under the rhetoric of human rights" (p. 350). This push for inclusive education as a human right is considered in more detail by Gordon (2013) who concludes, while inclusive education is an uncriticised utopian ideal that is not readily achievable and lacks moral justification, from the current legal standpoint it has come to be considered a human right even though: "The right to inclusive education should not limit their right to freedom of education" (p.755). That is, it should not come by limiting the options for choice beyond mainstreaming. Aligning with Gordon's (2013) concerns with inclusive education as a human right, Nguyen claims: "the problems of injustice do not disappear by bringing disadvantaged groups to education while leaving the social patterns of inequalities in mainstream education as well as in the local and the global society untouched" (p. 352). Moral justification must, as Gordon contends, be considered and where we take diversity as a starting point for considerations of educational placement, then a diversity of context options seems truly inclusive.

My research is embedded in the action of changing a school by introducing a purposeful, spatial intervention that afforded child-initiated activity and a

pedagogical role for parents and the wider community. Previous research (see Finn, 2010) indicated the Studio enabled the perception of competence for some children to be flipped. That is, children understood as challenged or challenging to teach in the regular classroom were evidenced to be competent and capable in the Studio context, while sometimes children understood as typical or successful in the regular classroom were challenged or challenging in this alternate classroom. Thus I bring constituent interests to this research in the pedagogical significance of the space to children more broadly, and the reception of the space and its pedagogy to the school more widely. My research is concerned with making a contribution to an analysis of exclusion as Slee (2011) suggests, inviting "questions about how schools erect barriers" to children from disadvantaged backgrounds, immigrant children, traveller children, children of colour, children with impairments and children who dissent" (p. 82). However my interest in the impact of psychology on education brings a concern to how schools erect these barriers to learning specifically. The broad interpretation of inclusion I make is, as Slee recommends, not to be confused with special needs education being the provisions, resources and information required for specific conditions, albeit this research may have some bearing on those provisions.

2.2 The broad implications of inclusivity for education

In addition to the definition of an inclusive approach provided in the preceding chapter as a guide for this inquiry, it is within the context of the emerging discursive practices discussed above that a broader interpretation of inclusion in schools can be made. It has been argued that inclusive education has shifted the purpose of schooling from - one focused on scholastic achievement - to a contemporary purpose that is both academic and social (Williams, 1996). Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006) provide a more comprehensive definition of inclusion as a summary of their years of research in schools, which reflects this changing purpose:

- The process of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the curricular, cultures and communities of local schools.
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality.

> • The presence, participation and achievement of all students vulnerable to exclusionary pressures, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'. (p. 26)

Within the academic literature, to put it more briefly, the accepted view of inclusion, is of an ongoing process of valuing diversity (Freebody, Watters, & Lummis, 2003; Gaad, 2004; Lindsay, 2004; Lipsky & Gartner, 2001; Ypinzar & Pagliano, 2004).

There is generally agreement that school renewal is necessary to both support the inclusion of students with special needs, and shift the focus of teaching to better support the potential of all children (Gable, 2003; Lindsay, 2004; Nind, Benjamin, Sheehy, Collins, & Hall, 2004; Ypinzar & Pagliano, 2004). Thus inclusivity has become a means to invoke a school reform agenda. The ongoing process of valuing diversity presents a challenge to sustain school improvements. However, school cultures of surveillance, teachers working in isolation, and teacher reflection not being a part of daily practice inhibit the opportunities for creating a culture of ongoing improvement required for the type of school renewal necessary for inclusion (Capra, 1997; Lindsay, 2004; Nind et al., 2004). Whilst the concept of inclusion has been widely supported, it is argued that there is much work to do in creating the types of schools, curriculum, and pedagogy required for inclusion to become implicit (S. Gibson & Haynes, 2009).

Adding pressure to the work of teaching is the doubling of children with disabilities in Australian schools since 1995, and the many more children in need of learning support who do not qualify as ‘disabled’ (Angus, et al., 2007). Whilst inclusion appears, at least discursively, to have altered the stated purpose of schools, on the ground the challenge for teachers is to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, whilst improving test results for reporting school based performance.

The long history of screening and ranking in schools continues today on a national and increasingly international scale, with the additional pressure of the ranking of schools. This contemporary regime of testing and comparison undertaken by , or ‘global policy technology’ (Lewis, 2013), is echoed throughout the world, congruent to the globalisation of economies (Arnove & Torres, 2003) where

education is increasingly geared to internationally competitive markets. This is leading to what Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2011) describe as the 'global auction' for jobs. Testing and reporting produce what is conceived as "normal", as a statistical construct that negates diversity, and on a global scale appears to be driving the homogenisation of education. Graham (2006) claims:

> educationalists have become so used to thinking in terms of the 'norm' and categorising educational endeavour according to bell curves and developmental age/stage theory, it can be unsettling to acknowledge that the 'norm' is a fiction. (p. 7)

The statistical absurdity of 'norm' based policies for education based on arbitrary standards, prone to manipulation, perpetuating deficit rationality, and ultimately deflecting the project of schooling itself from interrogation, is inhibitive of efforts towards inclusion according to Graham. She surmises from this perspective:

> it is imperative we move beyond limiting notions of inclusion which seek to incorporate 'recognised' forms of Otherness within a reified mainstream; to instead develop an inclusive ecology that caters to all through the shared understanding that diversity and multiple ways of being are in fact 'the norm'. (p. 21)

Of particular relevance to my inquiry is that the dominant psychological paradigm informing institutionalised learning continues to perpetuate deficit rationality. Children outside of normative developmental ranges are most often understood to be needy of catch-up or compensatory programs (Graham, 2007; Graham & Harwood, 2011; Soresi, Nota, & Wehmeyer, 2011) or to use the recent vernacular shift, "adjustments". However McGregor and Mills (2011) argue the psychology of schooling continues in its attempt to change the 'individual', whether from the outside (behaviourist theories), or inside (cognitivist theories) (McGregor & Mills, 2011). Without a shift in this psychological paradigm that informs the work of teachers, upholding the potential of children in a rapidly changing, and increasingly uncertain world is inconceivable.

2.3 Difference as deficit: The legacy of psychology in mainstream schooling

The psychological theories impacting education were founded upon ideologies of individualism, and a mind-body dualism, consequently negating the active, engaged, relational, and embedded nature of learning (Barab & Plucker, 2002; E. Gibson & Pick, 2000; Heft, 2001; Winter, 1996). The legacy of psychology on mainstream education for the compulsory years is a mix of behaviourist and cognitivist approaches. This is evidenced in the structures of schooling from curriculum to school building design replicated throughout the world today. Policies and practices informing the pedagogy of schooling have included segregating children into age-based groupings for instruction, standardised testing, and consequently the screening and ranking of children according to limited definitions of academic merit, the use of rewards and punishments, a focus on memory and representation, and, the compartmentalisation of knowledge (Luke, 1989). Psychology has provided the foundation for teachers to consider how children learn, reinforcing deficit rationality where problems with learning, are assumed to be problems with the child (Haynes, 2009; Hick, Kershner, & Farrell, 2009; Slee, 2011).

This deficit rationality that permeates schooling is well articulated by Haynes (2009) who contends:

> practice has often tended towards the view of childhood as limited and inadequate, focusing on what the child is unable to do… rather than what children already know and can do and their present lived experience of learning, school, friends, family and community. (p. 28)

The Queensland Government (The Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education (Students with Disabilities) Report, 2004) claims the history of inclusion in Queensland schools to be "a long tradition of compensatory educational approaches premised on a deficit view of the learner" (p. 6). This deficit rationality extends beyond children and is also deployed to distract attention away from the project of schooling itself. According to Smyth (2010) the Australian government's policy rhetoric, in collusion with mainstream media spin, perpetuates deficit discourses that lay blame on teachers, students, families, and communities for educational disadvantage. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) provide the interesting perspective

that even deploying the discourse of ‘additional needs', and 'special needs' assumes that there is a deficit in the ordinary teaching program and that particular specialist knowledge must be sought. Thomson (2007) describes the deficit discourse of schooling as “a stubborn feature of everyday practice” (p. 117) contending the homogeneity of classroom spaces for instruction creates spatial borders that exclude diversity. Likewise, Slee (2011) broaches a concern with inclusivity being a Trojan horse for educational reform where it perpetuates special education values and structures which may include existing psychologies, and their attendant homogenising consequences. The analysis of a spatial intervention that brings pedagogical diversity to a school site, potentially disrupting this homogeneity and offering a provocation to the deficit rationality (albeit within its own constraints) offers potential insights into the perpetuation of any entrenched exclusionary practices, particularly when viewed from an alternative psychological paradigm.

2.4 An ecological psychological stance

Ecological psychology and a fundamentally relational stance to organism-environment transactions, stems back to the propositions of William James, a major contributor to the field of psychology according to Heft (2013a):

> Psychology's initial opportunity to break from an atomistic (individualistic) tradition and to begin to operate conceptually in a more relational - and ultimately ecological - manner was provided by William James. It is ironic that for all of the acclaim accorded James by modern psychologists, his relational perspective is not widely appreciated. (p. 163)

It is following in this relational tradition that I constitute my description of an ecological psychological stance. In this section I consider the impact of ecological psychology on education and detail the work its key protagonists including James Gibson and Roger Barker. Additionally, I introduce the theoretical contributions of James Gibson’s wife, Eleanor, who in many ways was more concerned with learning than her husband as indicated by her tireless research contributions to the psychology of perception - her goal being to contribute a perceptual learning theory.

2.4.1 The impact of ecological psychology on education

A typical action of parents and caregivers is to *attune* infants to affordances in the environment (Zukow-Goldring & Arbib, 2007). From birth it is possible to recognise infants' competencies, to focus, to reach, to explore objects, to greet new experiences, and to manoeuvre around in the world. Infants and young children can be observed as possessing nascent abilities, rather than deficits. For example, we don't necessarily tell young children what to do as much as we point out information for them, to help them make sense of their world. While it has been argued that the hegemonic psychology of learning is a barrier to the achievement of inclusive education, and the importance of any change needing to work both in theory and practice is touted (Slee, 2011), ecological psychology has had little impact on schools to help us understand learning as this active and dynamic exchange more familiar to parents and caregivers. That the practice of schooling endorses pronounced pedagogical shifts from early years learning; however the common characteristics of learning behaviour do not change, seems disputable as Simon (1989) maintained when critiquing the absence of pedagogy in schooling.

Although ecological psychology has had little influence on mainstream education directly, research in various subfields of cognition, are increasingly supporting the so-called "Gibsonian perspective". According to Heft (2012):

> the fact is that very few psychological theories take animacy to be an essential quality of complex organisms, if indeed it is a quality that is considered at all. There are encouraging signs that psychology may be changing in this respect, with the emergence in recent years of accounts of embodied, cognition...with Gibson typically cited as one antecedent of these approaches. (p. 24)

Specific examples of the application of ecological psychology to education are mostly limited to its use in designing technology to enhance learning (see Barab & Plucker, 2002; Barab & Roth, 2006; Jonassen & Land, 2000). Kytta's (2002) research, although not directly related to education, is an exception that exemplifies the application of Gibson's theory of affordances to the analysis of children's environments. Examining the affordances for play across the resource possibilities of rural and urban locations comparatively, Kytta found that the children in rural villages and small towns had access to more affordances for play than their

counterparts in the city. This was largely due to the accessibility of the natural environment. Alternative environments were found to compensate for shortcomings in available affordances of main environments in urban locations however, and independent mobility, or the freedom to move around, was also a significant factor in children's ability to perceive these affordances. My research is specifically concerned with how the Studio as an alternative to the mainstream classroom, might similarly serve a compensative role where the parents' intentions were to overcome shortcomings of the regular classroom by offering children increased freedom to pursue their own intentions (student-initiated action) coupled with increased proximity to adults (parents as pedagogues).

For educators it is possible to confuse ecological psychology with the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner and his conceptualisation of an 'ecological systems model' which has had a more popular influence on the field. While sharing the term 'ecological' borrowed from biology, the approaches fundamentally assume different levels of analysis. For ecological psychology, the unit of analysis is the transaction never the individual or the environment (Kulikowich & Young, 2001). Tufge, Gray, and Hohan (1997) in their comparison of Bronfenbrenner and Gibson found similar intentions across ecological psychology and ecological systems modelling, however Gibson's focus on perception as direct is identified as what sets it apart. Ecological psychology is not be confused with the ecological systems modelling of Bronfenbrenner who, according to Heft (2013b), offers only a linear view of causality that fails to consider the constitutive manner in which person-environment transactions are framed and that these are dynamic processes.

Regardless of the invisibility of ecological psychology and its epistemology for consideration in mainstream schooling, the work of Reed, (1988, 1991;1996a) and Heft (1989, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2013a 2013b; Heft & Chawla, 2006) has made great inroads to extend the application of ecological psychology to discussions of learning as perception in action. Reed particularly made it his work to extend ecological psychology with his theory of action systems which explores more deeply the role of perception in language acquisition. Constructivist epistemology is strongly criticised by Reed (1996a) for negating the role of an organism's constant

activity. He disputes claims that the world is made inside the organism rather than the organism making its way in the world:

> For more than two thousand years, Western epistemology has oscillated between claiming that the mind copies an already existing world and claiming that the mind constructs the world in its entirety. All the arguments have the same logical flaw, arguing about what "must be" the case on the basis of a restricted range of options. Ecological psychology starts from the premise that this whole debate is a mistake. Cognition is neither copying nor constructing the world. Cognition is instead, the process that keeps us active, changing creatures in touch with an eventful, changing world. (p. 13)

With much of the education literature more generally adopting a constructivist stance according to the OECD Report, Education Today 2013, an ecological psychological stance should be considered for its potential to transcend the hegemonic deficit rationality perpetuated by the dominant psychology affecting schooling.

2.4.2 The theory of affordances

James Gibson (1979/1986/2015) is most often credited as the key contributor to ecological psychology with his *theory of affordances* which accounts for the dynamic interrelatedness of human and environment. He proposed that objects in the environment hold latent properties that can be perceived as affordances for action towards a goal. This challenged both behaviourist (outside in) and cognitivist (inside out) assumptions about knowledge and learning, positing perception and action as foremost. The perceptual system guides a search for invariance that informs action according to Gibson. In his biography of Gibson, Reed (1988) claims, “Gibson’s theory was so novel, his concepts so unlike those of the mainstream, that many simply could not comprehend his proposals” (p. 4). Tufge, Gray, and Hohan (1997) provide an explanation contending: “Gibson studied human behaviour and perception at a time when most psychologists were examining learning in rats” (p. 78). Gibson’s approach to psychology was, and remains radical according to Shaw (2002), not least for transcending dichotomistic thinking. An example of this can be garnered from his description of tool use from the affordance perspective:

> When in use, a tool is a sort of extension of the hand, almost an attachment to it or a part of the user’s own body, and thus is no longer a part of the environment of the user…This

> capacity to attach something to the body suggests that the boundary between the animal and the environment is not fixed at the surface of the skin but can shift. More generally it suggests that the absolute duality of "objective" and "subjective" is false. When we consider the affordances of things, we escape the philosophical dichotomy. (p. 41)

Affordances invite behaviour and so ecological psychology in summary is the study of this transaction of person-environment reciprocity.

According to Gibson (1979/1986/2015) the perception of affordances is possible through the direct "pick up" of information by the perceptual system. Heft (1989) explains: "It is a perceivable ecological fact, not a mental construction that is imposed on the sensory input" (p. 3). Possibilities for action are determined by persons in relation to environmental features as they are perceived, thus they are functionally determined. The theory of affordances has been described as an eco-behavioural science (Reed, 1996a) for this broad and deep concern with how animals regulate their behaviour according to the properties of their habitat.

Heft (1989) offers an extension to the definition of affordances that moves beyond one that considers the possibilities for action in the environment specified by the characteristic physical properties of the individual, maintaining: "an affordance is perceived in relation to some intentional act…broadening considerably the possibilities of what can count as an affordance" (p. 13). This intentional perspective is, according to Heft (1989) consistent with Gibson's approach. How we come to perceive affordances is dependent upon an agent's intention and purposes (Heft, 2001). Affordances are latent in the environment until realised through an agent's awareness and consequent action of selectivity.

In summary, affordances are possibilities for action if you like, and effectivities are the means by which we can actualise them (Gibson, 1979/1986/2015). Exploration and discovery are critical to the perception of affordances, and attunement to affordances is part of our socialisation process from birth: "The knowledge that others have about object properties, and the actions they can employ to demonstrate these properties to us, vastly enlarge our knowledge" (Heft, 2001, p. 198). Additionally, Barab and Roth (2006) describe effectivity sets as: "When an individual…is more likely to perceive and interact with the world in

certain ways – even noticing certain shapes or networks that are unavailable to others" (p. 6) and a*ffordances networks* are described as: "functionally bound in terms of the facts, concepts, tools, methods, practices commitments, and even people that can be enlisted toward the satisfaction of a particular goal" (p.4). An ecological psychological analysis of learning, by adopting these concepts, offers the possibility of transcending the individualistic focus of the dominant theoretical paradigm affecting schools. For the purpose of this research this person-environment mutuality holds the promise then of transcending the deficit rationality that seeks only to problematise individuals or groups of individuals, thereby offering the possibility of new insights into the challenge of inclusive education for school based education.

2.4.3 Specificity theory

Whilst it is James Gibson who is recognised as contributing affordance theory to ecological psychology, it was in fact his wife, Eleanor that worked tirelessly towards the production of a perceptual learning theory (Reed, 1988). The search for affordances according to E. Gibson (1991):

> is so much a part of man's (sic) nature, evolved over millions of years, that it is as ingrained, strong, and unconscious as the functions of digestion and breathing and much more elaborately provided for…I think we have been fooled by our own laboratory paradigm into believing that we have to bribe an animal or an infant into learning something with material rewards like food. For human infants this process does not even work very well. It turns out that they learn best if they are allowed to discover an interesting source of information or a predictable contingency or a problem to be solved. (p. 474–475)

In contrast to cognitive representation of external events stored in a 'memory', E. Gibson and Pick (2000) summarise the process of learning as a stream of *specificity*, a process of continual discrimination where perception and action are reciprocal. The most endearing example of what she later called *Specificity Theory* is her own account of developing specificity as she came to perceive the characteristics of goats:

> When I first arrived at Cornell, I was invited to work at the Behaviour Farm where Prof Liddell had a large experimental population of goats - a herd of one hundred or more. I was assigned some goats as subjects and had the daily problem of extracting my subjects from the herd. I had never seen a goat

> up close before, and for a few weeks I spent most of my working day just finding my goat. But with daily exposure and plenty of searching, I eventually learnt to recognise individual goats and to identify new ones almost immediately. I had learned the distinctive features of goats. (1991, p. 358)

This view of learning as perceptual, according to E. Gibson (2003) encompasses exploratory and performatory activity in *cycles of perceiving and acting*. The perceptual system guides a search for invariance that informs action and increases specificity. Through exploratory activity perceptual learning is increasingly refined towards specificity (Reed, 1996).

Although Eleanor outlived James and went on to further their work in ecological psychology, she too was surprised at the lack of attention to the findings of ecological psychology. In the following account she reveals her surprise at the excitement her work was finally generating for futurists:

> A few years ago I gave a seminar at the University of Pennsylvania whose participants included promoters of Artificial Intelligence and roboticists...To my astonishment, they considered it a revelation, exciting and promising. (E. Gibson, 1991, p. 41)

In this example she was referring to the idea of discrimination and the increase of specificity, as central to learning. While these findings have gone on to influence the functionality of robotics and the creation of computer based learning applications, educational psychology has been largely influenced by behaviourism which was followed by the cognitive revolution in psychology and the subsequent domination of information processing models from the 1960s onwards. According to E. Gibson (1991) this influenced the limited take up of principles of ecological psychology and she contends: "the cognitive psychologists to this day have neglected learning" (p. 96). One example of renewed research vigour in the field is the focus upon *extended affordances*, as described by Waters (2012). Extended affordances are most easily distinguished by their distribution in humans through the language system. Waters provides an example of the trematode worm who appropriates the body of a snail in order to borrow its eyes (as it has none of its own) to get to the top of a blade of grass (where a snail is indeed at its most vulnerable), in order to be eaten by a bird who

will then host the worm for its lifetime. Without taking over the body of another, for humans, perception can be directed by the linguistic system, amongst other pedagogical tools or extended affordances, in order to attune attention. It is through the promotion of affordances during shared attention that language is acquired according to Cowley (2011) and all pedagogy has its foundation in this joint or shared attention (Heft, 2013).

The contributions of the Gibsonian perspective and its potential to inform how we perceive learning with this altered relationality have been surmised by Tufge, Gray, and Hohan (1997):

> Studies within the Gibsons' framework of affordances have direct application to the concerns of those working with young children and their families, although translating the findings from these studies into workable applications remains an important task. For now, we know that adopting the Gibsons' ideas about perception and development requires attention not only to the developing capabilities of the individual, but to the relationship between the developing capabilities of the individual and the properties of the environment and the objects and people in it. (p. 85)

It is from this ecological psychological stance that I approach this research and look further to the work of another ecological psychologist (albeit one who worked separately on his own perception of an eco-behavioural science), Roger Barker (1968). The direction of this literature review now turns to exploring Barker's description of "behaviour settings" as a locus for the perception of affordances.

2.4.4 Behaviour settings theory

The legacy of Barker's (1968) work in ecological psychology (although he is often credited with influencing the separate field of environmental psychology) agrees that information is "picked up" from the environment to frame our actions (Heft, 2001). Barker (1968) describes his *theory of behaviour settings*, as the ways the contexts for behaviour constitute coercive forces producing *standing patterns of behaviour* where, "characteristics persist when participants change" (p. 18). These become 'extra-individual' factors for example; the 'passive' classroom design repeated in schools throughout the world is exemplary of designed affordances that are synergistic with instructive pedagogy.

Barker's research (1968) unravelled how it was that people's behaviour was less predictable as a response to social inputs and more to do with the larger context of the behaviour. He discovered that "the extra-individual environment has regularity and structure that constrains behaviour in predictable ways" (Heft, 2001, p. 253) thus challenging the assumption of constructivism that the individual imposes order on a chaotic environment. The arrangement of objects in space implies function and: "in the case of both affordances and behaviour settings, individuals do not have unconstrained choice. Factors outside of their control may limit the range of socially sanctioned choices" (Heft, 2001, p. 290). Illustratively, you can change all the people in a classroom but the people will still behave "classroom". That there are typically children that 'misbehave' in classrooms affirms the possible connection between behavioural disorder and the classroom environment. This has been suggested by Graham (2007) who reminds her audience that the patterns of increasing disorder identified as A-D/HD in children across the world attending schools, in fact reduce after the age of compulsory years schooling.

Scott (2005) reviewed the work of researchers associated with Barker who confirmed the power of the theory of behaviour settings to consistently demonstrate stronger coercive influences than variables of individual differences, and detailed the challenges these researchers faced to continue this particular line of work in the decades since. Scott (2005) describes the socio-historical context of Barker's work, when open-ended research was more acceptable practice:

> by definition, one does not yet know what direction the work may take or how. In some sense, it is a matter of trusting the investigator and taking somewhat on faith the fact that he or she will produce valuable results. (p. 314)

Those who follow in Barker's footsteps have found it increasingly difficult to attract funding for experimental/open-ended research, due to the dominant paradigms of individualism in psychology, and the necessity to "keep a foot in two, or more, camps" (Scott, 2005, p. 322). Paradoxically, despite the power of behaviour settings theory, it has not made inroads into the mainstream.

Regarding Barker's influence over environmental psychology, Reser (2008) suggests the lack of attention given to the field is startling given the shift it inspired

by looking at behaviour beyond laboratory settings. Reser raises the alarm that from 20% coverage in psychology courses in the 1980s and 1990s, environmental psychology subjects have all but disappeared from Australian Universities. Most alarmingly, Reser contends psychologists will be unlikely to "see a connection between their chosen discipline and larger environmental considerations (para 7)" and that psychology will continue to re(produce) the understanding that "behaviour is a function of individuals" (para 7). Working outside the dominant paradigm of psychology may have restricted the initial take-up of Barker's theory similarly to the work of the Gibson's. Scott (2005) and Reser argue that a resurgence of these ideas is necessary in the current context of environmental concerns. The emerging body of work on ecological and environmental psychology presents the challenge to educators to consider simultaneously, the motivations for action that students (and others) bring to the classroom, and the ways in which classrooms themselves support or constrain opportunities for action. These theories, little studied for their practical application to understanding learning in the context of mainstream primary school education, will provide a means for interpreting and analysing the Studio space and its impacts.

Challenging the methodology of examining perception in controlled laboratory environments, "Gibson argued that observers movements should not be restricted, at least where a realistic assessment of human perception or behaviour is a goal" (Reed, 1988, p. 5-6). When this goal is coupled with an understanding of Barker's behaviour settings theory, examining the behaviour of participants in a school setting posits something of a laboratory situation. To some extent the Studio offers, albeit with its own constraints, this freedom of movement Gibson supports, and therefore becomes, according to this ecological assessment, a more suitable place in which to observe children's perceptual learning behaviour. According to Heft (2001) the creation of new behaviour settings is understudied and affordances are deeply embedded in the social processes of coming to know our environment.

2.5 Becoming attuned to inclusivity

I have described the context of inclusion as a movement towards school renewal inhibited by the very theories of learning that inform school-based education by perpetuating deficit rationality. Additionally, I have identified an alternate theoretical

stance. I now turn to refining my perception of what constitutes an inclusive approach. This begins with an examination of parent participation in schooling, what is typical, what is not, and how the framing and enacting of parent participation contributes to the 'educational partnership' of parenting and schooling. This is juxtaposed with a brief review of the home-schooling movement and the potential of positive qualities parents can bring to educating their children that might prove useful in moving outside of the deficit rationality (2.5.1). Some alternative pedagogical approaches that exemplify inclusive practices are briefly examined and from these examples it can be understood that characteristic shifts in relationality influence the perception and production of inclusivity (2.5.2). Additionally, spatiality is also briefly considered for its role in shifting the perception and production of inclusivity (2.5.3). This literature serves to guide my research encounter specifically by focusing on pedagogy and pedagogical organisers as they impact inclusivity.

2.5.1 Parents and schooling

Prior to engaging with the literature perhaps some justification is needed to clarify why I have chosen to begin a section on what constitutes inclusive pedagogy with a discussion of the relationship between parents and schooling. Firstly, it is in keeping with the flow of the narrative of my own experiences as a parent which foregrounds this study. This particular study is interested in the exclusionary forces which might affect the potential of parents to engage pedagogically with schools. Secondly, while it is not necessarily that parent-school relationships are the most pertinent issue for inclusive pedagogy, there is an argument to be made (particularly as will be revealed in the findings chapters) that engaging the resources of the community (including the participation of any parents) has many potential benefits for children (not just the children of the parents involved). Considering it exclusionary to give precedence to parent-school relationships because participation may be correlated with cultural capital, financial resources, or dispositions would be a mistake given that potentially all children might benefit from improved parent participation.

There is increasing recognition of the significance of parental involvement in schooling. A meta-analysis of research conducted by Seginer (2006) evidenced when parents are involved in school "the relation between school-based involvement and educational outcomes is positive across the different definitions of parent

involvement and educational outcomes" (p. 30). Although Fan and Chen (2001) found the amount of empirical studies to be limited, their thorough meta-analysis of the impact of parent participation in schools also found a positive correlation between academic achievement and parent involvement. More specifically, Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, and Weiss (2006) advocate the advantages of parental involvement to the popular political catch cry, 'closing the gap'. They evidence, longitudinally, a correlation between parent participation with improved literacy achievement of children in the primary years from low income backgrounds. The recently released report, 'Education Today 2013: The OECD Perspective' claims, parents who voluntarily contribute to school are increasing the engagement of students. The report makes several recommendations to nations that reflect a need to increase parent participation in school and improve home/community-school relations (see, p.110-112). Combined, this growing body of research and consequent calls for increasing parental involvement in schooling aligns with the claim made by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) that the sustained engagement of parents will contribute to a more inclusive education. What is vague is a deeper insight into exactly what kind of contributions parents make, and what these contributions afford children as students. This case study of the Studio program provides an opportunity to examine more closely the specific qualities that parents and the wider community might bring to the school site.

Although research findings evidence positive correlations between parental involvement and academic achievement, supporting the increasing advocacy for parental involvement in global policy rhetoric, there are typically only limited opportunities for parental participation in schools. Parker (2011) provides a disturbingly limited summary of how parents can support their children's education, affirming the typical ways in which they are encouraged to be involved in their child's school as:

> -accepting invitations from the school to be on committees or to help organise special days
>
> - helping with classroom activities and on excursions
>
> - helping with the school canteen. (p. 192)

None of these ways necessarily acknowledge parents as pedagogues themselves, or invite deeper and more thoughtful involvement in the school community. In fact, Parker perpetuates a deficit view of parents when she claims: "Many schools nowadays…run special parenting classes designed to update and teach parents" (p. 199). Whilst there are many case studies of school innovation or reform driven by school staff (see Hinton, 2012, for an example), parental concerns with schools are given little regard. A focus on teaching parents how to teach children, and limited opportunities for parents and family members to be involved in schooling, particularly in any type of pedagogical role, perpetuates exclusion by extending the deficit rationality to parents. My initial findings suggested parents brought pedagogical intentions to the Studio and subsequently the wider school site. This is a significant shift from the typical roles available for parents in schools. Therefore, how this role for parents, who become engaged in the Studio program over the three year duration of this study, is both enacted in practice, and received at the school, will be of particular interest to those concerned with enacting educational partnerships.

Fullan (2001) argues there is a need for schools to reach out to parents and the community claiming: "nowhere is the two-way street of learning more in disrepair and in need of social reconstruction than with concerning the relationship among parents, communities, and their schools" (p. 198). However, there is some evidence that regardless of parents being motivated to be involved in school life, and of having strong views about education, they often face barriers to their own inclusion (Conteh & Kawishima, 2008). Even during times of transition to school, opportunities are absent for parents to be actively engaged and for schools to get to know parent strengths and family resources (Giallo, Treyvard, Matthews & Kienhuis, 2010). Turning the deficit discourse on teachers, Conteh and Kawashima (2008) contend: "there is a case for saying that teachers themselves need to be informed of the rich and diverse ways children from different backgrounds learn at home and in the community" (p. 114). In a publication from my initial research (see, Finn, 2013) I asked the question; would teachers, with increased involvement in the Studio program be able to detect any affordances in it for their own work as teachers? This

question may be particularly relevant to how parents and their engagement as pedagogues, is received at the school site.

There is agreement amongst researchers that even when schools make space for parental voice or participation, or simply aim for better home-school relationships, how this will happen is often dictated by the school (Grant, 2011; Hughes & Greenhough, 2006; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Muller's (2009) report into parental engagement for the Australian Council of Parents confirms the attitude of 'partnership on our terms' is a barrier to schools endorsing parent engagement. In another example, Grant (2011) claims: "the terms of the home-school relationship are often defined by school, with parent's and children's views given little weight" (p. 293). In Australia, the 'Family - school partnerships framework: a guide for schools and families' (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008) was developed by peak government education authorities and parent bodies to endorse education as a shared responsibility. Whilst this resource is to be celebrated, the evidence of the disconnecting psychology of cognitivism in its discourse is revealing. For example, where the document could have stated in its list of best practices, 'parents are genuine partners', it states, "make it clear you *think* (my emphasis) of parents as genuine partners" (p. 19). The discourse deployed in Emerson, Fear, Fox and Sanders (2012) who compiled a report considering the impacts of this particular framework is similarly revealing. They claim for example: "parental engagement consists of partnerships between families, schools and communities, raising parental awareness of the benefits of engaging in their children's education, *and providing them with the skills to do so* (my emphasis)" (p. 7). Clearly, the fact that the research which informed these reports indicates the barriers for parent involvement lay with schools, rather than parents, has been ignored.

Perhaps one of the biggest reasons for this barrier is evidenced in the research of Hughes and Greenhough (2006). Responding to solicited parent requests to know more about how literacy was taught, video footage of lessons were shown to parents. Parental responses after watching the lessons were not always positive. For example, Hughes and Greenhough (2006) note, for some parents "the video had confirmed their view that the work was not sufficiently challenging for their child and that they appeared to be bored" (p. 477). Throughout the activities specifically developed in

the research project to involve parents, the teacher remained in control, and the parents' inclusion was on the teachers' terms. Hughes and Greenhough conclude: "our analysis suggests that the value of such activities may be limited unless they are accompanied by a more fundamental change in the power relationship between home and school" (p. 485). Including parents as pedagogical partners in the education of children poses many threats and challenges. This literature serves to guide my sensitivity to the vulnerable position teachers may be faced with during my research.

The institutionalisation of education has in many ways taken over the responsibility of education from parents, families, and communities. While schooling is compulsory in Australia, parents do have the option to home-school according to Jackson and Allen (2010), and research is indicating that Australian parents are increasingly opting for home-schooling following trends in other countries (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Options for home-schooling children with ASD are proving more successful for some families than pursuing mainstream education according to case reports by McDonald and Lopes (2014). Some parents believe it is their right and responsibility to educate their young, while others are merely expressing dissatisfaction with the current system (Jackson & Allen, 2010). Kunzman and Gaither's (2013) comprehensive meta-analysis of the home-schooling research evidences the strongest motivation for home-schooling as discontent with the school environment. These findings were corroborated in NSW, Australia, by a parliamentary inquiry into home schooling (Select Committee on Home Schooling, December, 2014) however, the report has been criticised (Gribble, Krogh, Watson, & English, 2014) for omitting evidence from the body of the report that focused on home schooling success and school failure, thus avoiding criticisms of schooling that might inform change. It serves as illustrative that Harding (2011), in his comprehensive study of Australian home-schooling parents, evidenced dynamic qualities that parents bring to home education including organisation for learning that is context driven and personal (tied to interests), which could, he argues, be accessed to a greater extent by school communities. Harding's study claims this deserves further research, and that the qualities parents bring have potential to inform school communities. This literature on home schooling trends and the qualities of home schooling parents, suggests parents may want more of a say in what is meaningful

and valued for learning in an increasingly uncertain world. It seems at the extremes there are parents vying for their children to be included in schooling while some parents are increasingly virulent in evading it. My research will pay attention to the qualities that parents bring to the site and their motivations for engagement.

While family and community participation in schools is a major contribution to inclusion according to Ainscow et al. (2006), the research is limited and little is understood about how parental participation functions to support positive outcomes for children. How parental participation can be achieved, and more specifically, addressing a gap in the research which neglects the antecedents and the mediating processes affecting parental involvement, as well as how it can be sustained, are significant concerns for research (Seginer, 2006). It is evident from the research literature that parents may bring positive qualities to the education of their children. It is also evident that there is a chasm for parents in terms of possibilities for participation in the education of their children within the current model of schooling. Indeed, the inability to contribute to improving the school environment may be influencing more parents to pursue alternatives such as home education. Whilst parents could bring qualities that affirm a challenge to deficit discourse in schools, thus supporting an inclusive approach, it is apparent that they are primarily dealing with their own exclusion. Concerns with schooling and its environment, such as those expressed by parents who ultimately opt to home educate their children have little means of impacting school based or systemic reform. It is for this reason the project chosen for case study in the research offers a unique exception and proffers insight into this problem as a component of inclusive education.

2.5.2 Alternative pedagogies exemplifying an inclusive approach

According to Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) little is understood about what constitutes inclusive pedagogy in classrooms. For this reason their research sought to extrapolate this information by examining school sites where it was most likely to happen. Findings revealed that supporting the achievement of all children presented multiple challenges for teachers as they faced “constraints within education systems and across schools that counter(ed)…efforts to be inclusive in their practice" (p. 820). They did however share two successful examples which prioritise children’s

actions and intentions as learners using play based, child-centred, pedagogy. In the first example called 'Play Zone', a mainstream school teacher adopted play as pedagogy over her previous whole group didactic approach where play had previously been provided only as a 'treat'. Florian and Black-Hawkins explain how this impacted the perception of one student's competence:

> The play zone is a place where student learning is self-directed. By assessing how the student with cerebral palsy used his time in the play zone, the teacher was able to note that the student could talk when he wanted to because there was no pressure to do so. As a result of following the lead set by the student, the teacher is able to see progress that might otherwise have been obscured. (p. 821)

Play-based learning, as an alternative pedagogy, evidenced competencies in children previously unseen via richer language samples, arguably more contextualised that the classroom teacher would have ordinarily witnessed. In their second example named, 'Work Choice', priority is given to children's concerns in order to negotiate learning tasks and procedures. Focus is on supporting the conditions for learning, trusting children to make decisions and working collegially to create the 'right' context for learning. Typifying an inclusive approach, these two examples reject the dominant deficit views of difference, and the bell curve thinking that produces "norms" and perpetuates exclusionary practices, instead, steering practices and processes that support all children to reach their potentials. Florian and Black-Hawkins suggest these pedagogies alter the relationality of all participants in the classrooms. Following these research examples, detailing the characteristics of relationality in the Studio may provide further insight into how inclusive pedagogy is produced.

A play-based approach is nothing new to early childhood education, and Haynes (2009b) argues early childhood pedagogy offers approaches that are "relevant for participation and inclusion across all phases of education" (p.28). One particularly well defined early childhood approach has become something of a world-wide phenomenon particularly since it was hailed as exemplary by Newsweek in 1991, and subsequently endorsed by the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) in its report, 'Starting strong curricula and pedagogies in early childhood education and care' (2004). The Reggio Emilia schools for infants and young children advance a community approach to education (Nimmo, 1994). The

Reggio community advocates an image of children as competent, resourceful, and instinctively curious, challenging the dominant image of children and families as 'needy' based upon deficit rationality, and therefore typifying a more inclusive approach to education. Deploying play and creative arts-based pedagogy which cuts across subject boundaries, learning is reconceptualised as a negotiated endeavour. Creative arts based pedagogy aims to engage children's creativity by assuring what they learn has meaning and value (Jeffrey & Craft, 2003). The open-ended nature of inquiry driven curriculum deployed by creative pedagogy is achievable through the organisation of the environment in order to enrich a dynamic exchange that supports the teaching/learning process: "paradoxically, the greater the organisation in the learning environment, the greater the children's freedom" (Wexler, 2004, p.16). The complexity of organisation in the learning environment stems from the value placed upon it as third teacher in the Reggio Emilia schools (Strong-Wilson & Ellis, 2007). Thus an altered relationality is extended to the relationality of person with environment. As a young teacher I had the opportunity to travel to Italy and experience (albeit within the limits of an organised "Winter Institute") a personal encounter with these schools:

In my eighth year of teaching I had the opportunity to encounter the Reggio Emilia schools first-hand when I attended a Winter Institute, a week long symposium and tour of the schools led by key staff and parents. I was inspired by the lectures and the documentation of children's work that conveyed the image of children as strong and competent that the schools had become famous for. I was impressed by the engaging spaces, from foyers with colour spectrum wheels placed at child height begging to be spun like Buddhist prayer wheels, amenities where transparent pipes demonstrate the flow of water to taps as if to celebrate what is usually hidden from sight, and classrooms rich in artefacts and documentation that reveal the stories of the people, children, their families and teachers and the wider community, coming together to bring out the best in children (they remind us 'to bring out' is the Latin meaning of 'educate'). But what stayed with me most clearly was a brief interaction with a child of Reggio…

As we were ushered through the schools it was difficult to know exactly what to focus on. My colleagues in Australia had great expectations for me to clear up this mystery

of what's makes this place so renowned. With only a notebook permitted, I was afraid if I used up any of the brief time allowed to observe classrooms, in order to write, I would miss some crucial feature that unlocked the key to unravelling its secrets. So, I trusted to meet the experience with as much presence as I could bring to the moment. Almost instantly I became the subject of curiosity to a group of children mutually present in their environment.

One of them rushed over and took my hand, beckoning me to join them on a mat on the floor. Another child grabbed books from a shelf before joining us. They were portfolios of the children containing photos, drawings, maps and stories. The child who had summonsed me there, flicked through the pages occasionally breaking into laughter, either at his happy recollection of the pictures, or at the expense of my minimal Italian language skills. He showed me his friends, his favourite things, what he could do. Then, with a flash of inspiration, he seemed to want more from me, suddenly stopping and looking at me as if asking for my side of the exchange, "Who are you then?" Pointing to my notepaper and pen, which looked rather shabby and uninviting, compared with the children's portfolios, I handed it over, a little self-consciously, feeling his gaze upon my messy scrawl. Turning to a new page he wrote, 'Lorenzo' and then passed the tools of our communication back to me, beckoning once more with his gaze. I wrote, 'Roxanne' as he responded with a self-satisfied smile. For a few minutes we practiced pronunciations before another apparent light bulb moment illuminated Lorenzo's next move. He ran to an open shelf and took down a world globe and after a brief search pointed to Italy. He grabbed the note pad and pen once more and sketched the rough outline of Italy, laughing and pointing as he connected for me, the likeness between the outline of the Italian border with the shape of my boot! Lorenzo well understood the value of the tools of his culture to express and make meaning. He seemed pleased with his efforts to extend these affordances to the naïve stranger in his presence, to demonstrate his competence and express his own curiosity about the observers. I hurriedly pointed to Australia before being whisked away by the chaperones. In that brief interlude, whilst touring his school, Lorenzo made clear what Loris Malaguzzi (the Reggio school's founder) meant in his poem the 100 languages of children. And I was left

with the realisation that I had lost touch with many of them! (Extract from my Reflexive Ethnographic Journal, 13/6/2013)

This personal encounter with the Reggio Emilia approach evidenced how the spatial milieu, and its objects as affordances, can amplify the capacity of children for exploration, wonder, and quite clearly evident in this example, communication. The efforts after meaning and value that children make are reflected back to them in the documentation of their curiosity and creativity that is produced. Teachers do not rush in and provide answers when children wonder. The work of teachers is not just to follow prescriptive outcomes, set curriculum or school mandates. Rather, it is a concern for what potential learning comes from this place of curiosity and wonder (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998; Nimmo, 1994). Connecting children's explorations of the environment, what they encounter in the world, to what they can do with skills and information to impact that world, is not just the pedagogical work of teachers, but of a community. It is not only the image of the child that shifts from deficit rationality to one of competence and strength; it is also the image of family, community and teachers as well, who all become educational partners understood as having capacity and potential for exchange. Most significantly I experienced this shift in relationality as 'inclusive'.

In summary, the Reggio Emilia approach offers a challenge to deficit rationality, and altered relationality amongst people and between people and their environments, as a proposition for a more inclusive approach to education. How this can be understood via a new psychological paradigm will become clearer in the following chapters as I outline the significance of ecological psychology to understanding the teaching/learning dynamic. For now we will turn our attention back to schools in order to consider the significance of spatiality to challenging the deficit obsession in school based education.

2.5.3 Spatiality and inclusion

From an ecological psychological stance appearing knowledgeable or skilful depends upon the functional relationship of persons and their environments. In the narrative I provided above of my encounter with Lorenzo, the rich context for action, and Lorenzo's familiarity with its affordances, in many ways produced not just a talented

individual, but a talented transaction. According to Barab and Plucker (2002) schools, in contrast, are focused on developing talented 'individuals'. This talented transaction in the Reggio Emilia classroom reflected a context endowed with affordances as possibilities for action in a community considered for its capacities rather than deficits (significance of relationality), and an understanding of the pedagogical role of environments as the "third teacher" (significance of spatiality). Barab and Plucker (2002) claim it is: "through participation in learner-owned interactions, students come to participate in, and even create, situations through which they appear talented" (p. 175). In contrast, deferring back to the project of schooling, Graham's (2008) interrogative review of the literature concerning A-D/HD connects "the increase in diagnosis of A-D/HD and practices of schooling" (p. 10). Graham questions who the A-D/HD construct serves and whether it is helpful, suggesting that the medication of these children is applied so the rest can get on with the business of schooling. This argument is made on the basis that medicated children show improved "behaviour" rather than improved "learning" however, Graham notes that "not blurting out answers in class, remaining in one's seat and being still and quiet are cultural expectations brought about by the advent of mass schooling" (p. 23). Diagnosis and medication treating symptoms do not account for how to give these children the experience of "success" in learning according to Graham. Her calls for further attention to these issues are echoed by the viral appeal to audiences of Sir Kenneth Robinson's, "Do schools kill creativity?" (2006), which popularly broached school as a limited and inadequate model for catering to diversity under its current constraints of design for early industrial society.

Issues of spatiality and inclusion have been considered under the banner of a 'critical spatial perspective'. A critical spatial perspective is concerned with how spaces are socially produced and asks how spaces generate inclusiveness (Low, 2008; Soja, 2010). Consideration to how space contributes to the production of (in)justice (Soja, 2010) and how space can be reconfigured to engage more children in learning at school is paramount. According to Soja (2010) the organisation of space conveys pedagogical intentions that can both include and exclude. In this tradition, there is some evidence that altering the environment to unleash the capabilities, rather than the deficits of children, is a means to improve inclusion. For

example, Graham and Harwood (2011) detail examples where physical improvements are made to school environments to create the perception of a 'happy place' and Low's (2008) work pursues 'atmosphere' as an outcome of space, which affects the experience of inclusion/exclusion. This research suggests that the altered space of Studio within the school will have perceivable qualities that will be significant to detecting how the space is experienced and whether it produces inclusion or exclusion and for whom.

The theoretical perspectives of critical spatial theory and ecological psychology share a relational conception of person and environment whereby persons both act upon the environment to constitute space and its meaning, while also being constituted by its conditions. This is not an interactionist approach of separately bounded units of persons and environment affecting each other, but rather a reciprocal relationality. For example, the seminal work on the production of space by Lefebvre (1974) provides a description of a critical spatial perspective which is not epistemologically dissimilar to ecological psychology:

> All productive activity…is inseparable from orientation towards a goal – and thus also from functionality (the end and meaning of the action, the energy utilised for the satisfaction of a 'need') and from the structure set in motion (know-how, skills, gestures and cooperation in work, etc.). The formal relationships which allow separate actions to form a coherent whole cannot be detached from the material preconditions of individual and collective activity; and this holds true whether the aim is to move a rock, to hunt game, or to make a simple or complex object. (p. 71)

Similarly, an ecological psychological stance recognises the symbiotic relationship of persons and environments as an alternative to views which separate persons from environment and prescribe to mind-body dualism (Heft, 2001). Critical spatial theorists share this conceptualisation of the environment as more than mere background, giving consideration to how space is produced and produces effects on people (Lefebvre, 1974). The thread that weaves these stances together is the common conceptualisation that through changed spatial relations, it is possible that people can be seen with new talents, pertinent to the initial finding I have made that in the Studio the perception of competence for some children can be flipped.

Thomson (2007) claims educational research should trouble existing spatial relations to examine possibilities for change. My research moves beyond the ideology of space as neutral and immutable background and will consider how space works to include/exclude (Soja, 2010) via a case study of an alternate space within a regular school. Adopting an ecological psychological stance to the proposed study will reveal how assumptions about learning correlate with the production of learning spaces (Barab & Duffy, 2000). I propose, along with relational characteristics, that spatial characteristics work as pedagogical organisers which affect the perception of affordances of places and impact experiences of inclusion and exclusion. I believe an ecological psychological stance can contribute to critical spatial theory's insights into inclusion and exclusion via an understanding of the affordances of places and the intentions of those who use them.

2.6 Summary

This encounter with the literature has detailed the socio-historical emergence of inclusivity as the basis of a reform movement that arguably reproduces deficit rationality in schools via the influence of dominant psychological theories informing how we understand learning. I have detailed an ecological psychological stance, premised upon organism-environment mutuality that I will attempt to bring to the analysis of this research in order to transcend the deficit rationality of problematising individuals or groups of individuals thereby pursuing new insights into inclusive education.

I have also considered some examples of challenges to the deficit rationality that can be considered as more inclusive approaches in order to attune myself to the perception of inclusive practices and guide this research. The insights I have gained from this examination of the literature across parent-school relationships, psychology, and pedagogy of alternative pedagogical practices exemplifying inclusive education, along with critical spatial theory, point to the significance of relationality and spatiality as pedagogical organisers which impact the perception of inclusion/exclusion. Hick, Kershner, and Farrell (2009) argue that, "the development of inclusive education is a radical challenge to schools and educational systems" (p. 5). Illustratively, whilst setting out with the intention to promote a more inclusive psychology, Hick et al. struggle with moving beyond (re)presenting constructivist

psychology as an innovation in psychological learning theory and do not acknowledge it as a cognitivist movement, perpetuating mind-body, and person-environment dualism. Inclusive education cannot be a catalyst for educational change without the catalysing effects of a new theoretical paradigm from which to produce new patterns of behaviour.

Chapter 3: Approach to the study

Newtonian physics seems up to the task of explaining that an organism will fall when certain conditions hold but not that an organism will jump when certain conditions hold (Petrusz & Turvey, 2010, p. 55).

One of the challenges of employing an ecological psychological approach to research and its analysis is articulated by Turvey (2012) as the tendency of fields such as education to co-opt terminology without full recourse to conceptual definitions. In acknowledging this it must be stated at the outset of this methodology chapter that I approach the study with the insight and limitations of an educator, not a psychologist, or, in terms of the deeper pragmatics of the theory and its principles, a physicist. Although Turvey (2012) claims:

> The metaphysical hypothesis of organism-environment dualism that has tended to dominate psychological theory (implicitly or explicitly) can be, and should be, replaced by the scientific fact of organism-environment mutuality and reciprocity. (p. 133);

he also claims, the "physics is not done yet!" (p. 135). Further, science expressed as a Newtonian-Cartesian world view emanating from Western history and values, has been guilty of committing claims of convenience. As an example, Stroffregen and Bardy (2001) remind their audience that there is no justification for the separation of the senses. This separation of the senses has simply been assumed and treated as taken for granted. There is no sensory exclusivity; rather, we experience 'intersensory relations'. As one of the misconceptions that has prevailed in science, the belief in the separation of the senses exemplifies how knowledge as taken for granted can prevail until it is disconfirmed, bringing much of what we assumed to be true into question. This section develops a picture of how I embodied an ecological stance towards my own encounters with the project and how that informed the development of the research claims I make. While acknowledging Turvey's claims, in line with what have become somewhat ubiquitous calls for cross-disciplinary research in some quarters, I submit the attempt to explain the world as detailed within this thesis is justifiable in the context of wanting to make not just a unique contribution, but a useful one.

This chapter outlines the approach I have taken to the formulation of this thesis. It provides an account of the theoretical position I have taken, and the epistemological shift I personally seek to engage, by deploying an 'ecological psychological stance' in the approach to this research and analysis. The methodological approach and the specific methods adopted to engage with the site, the project, and the subsequent production of data, are described in this chapter, in addition to some examples of my encounters as a participant observer to illustrate further my positionality as researcher. The final section describes the process of analysis deployed to reveal the findings and subsequent conclusions detailed in this research.

3.1 What does an ecological psychological stance afford this research?

Throughout the 1930s Gibson studied propaganda extensively in order to understand the differences between education as an imposer of dogma and education as a vehicle for promoting social community and positive social change. (Reed, 1988, p. 62)

J. Gibson's interest in propaganda and his contention that perception is our basic connection to the environment implies the vulnerability of people to manipulation via what is presented in the environment for them to perceive. Education arises in the context of what we are exposed to; it is the social mediation of perception. This epistemological position is in keeping with the broad definition of pedagogy endorsed by this research at its outset. Reed (1988) contends we search to find "the uses and values of things" (p. 184). The places we encounter are indeed not just pedagogical in that they serve to inform or even educate us, they constitute us by defining our behaviour (Barker, 1968), enabling and constraining our perception of affordances, and in turn, the actions we take on our environments, most notably to reproduce them, as is argued by critical spatial theorists. Thus it is this application of ecological psychology, inclusive of Gibson (1979/1986/2015) and Barker's (1968) work that is embraced by this research, informing both its methodology and analysis.

A critical ethnographic case study of the SLP affords the attunement of the audience of this particular research, to the social mediation of perception within the

school as a place, via the creation of an altered space. The production of spaces in the school, as an econiche for education, contains meanings and values (Barab & Duffy, 2000) particularly relevant to how learning is considered and enacted within each space. The Studio classroom presents the opportunity to examine how an alternative space (that is, one that is constituted differently to the regular classrooms) is perceived by its participants. Its meaning and value can be determined via the research process as an activity of heightened awareness, attunement, and increased specificity that will be further detailed in the following sections.

3.2 Methodology: A critical ethnographic qualitative inquiry

In this new era the qualitative researcher does more than observe history; he or she plays a part in it. New rules from the field will now be written, and they will reflect the researcher's direct and personal engagement with this historical period. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 14)

This critical ethnographic inquiry is, as Denzin and Lincoln so eloquently describe, an encounter with a particular project, at a particular site, in a particular moment that has already been characterised to some extent in the opening chapter. The literature encountered has already painted a picture of the project of schooling which calls into question the necessity for, yet impossibility of, 'inclusivity'. The epistemological stance of organism-environment reciprocity sets a methodological tone for the (re)search for the use and value of the Studio to its participants. The research questions guide this inquiry by anticipating variations, points of comparison, and how the affordances for parents, teachers, and children encountered in this space may be different. For example, children may find affordances for expressing their creativity, ingenuity and craftsmanship, teachers for meeting curriculum requirements, and parents for making pedagogical contributions to their children's school. In fact, these sound like quite logical conclusions and yet enacting this research and making an analysis of its data has been such an entirely complex endeavour. This section of the thesis details specifically how this research was enacted in all its complexity, and, how the findings shape up to be not always so "logical".

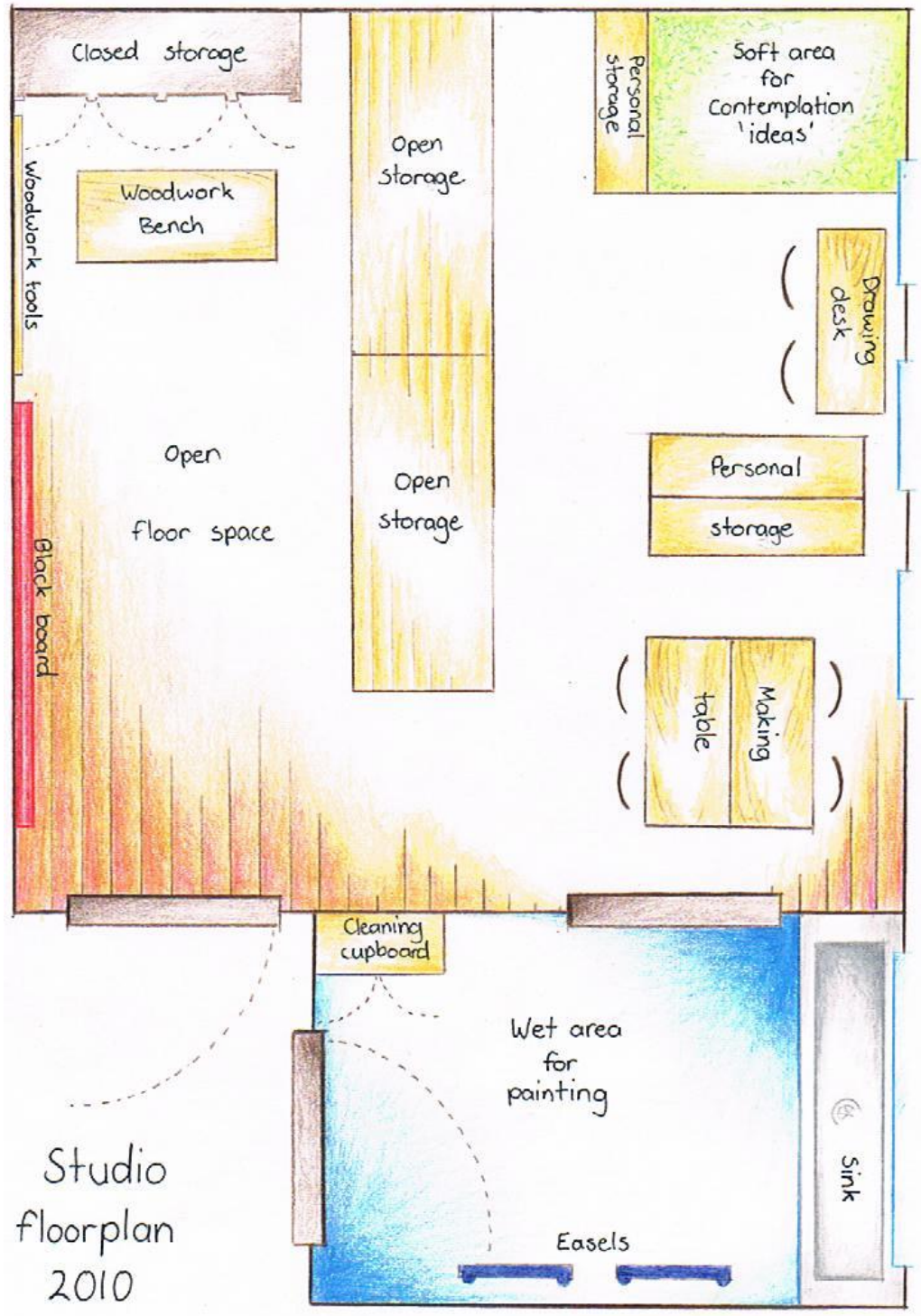

Figure 3.1: The initial Studio floor plan evidenced spatial divisions to afford, student-initiated, adult supported activity

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe a research concern with uncovering the "hopes, needs and goals" (p.3) of experience as the eighth moment of qualitative research. Indeed my role in this 'case' has been enacted with full membership as a 'parent' in this particular school community, bringing particular hopes, needs and

goals for my children's education. As a parent instigator of the SLP I brought concerns for my own children's 'includedness', although here it must be noted - that none of my children has been identified as 'atypical' and thus I did not approach this research from the perspective of a mother of a child with any identified disability or so called 'disorder'. The following vignette details my only experience with a child moving outside the range of so-called 'normative development' as I encountered one school's (not the case site) suggestion my son should be 'assessed' for 'problems' at the end of his kindergarten year. Indeed the teacher and principal concerned were well aware that this, his inaugural year of schooling, was the year in which his father and I had separated:

Towards the end of the year I was called in for a meeting with the teacher and the principal. They were concerned about his quiet demeanour and his academic performance and were suggesting further assessment. In my experience, he had always been bright, but not boisterous like most of his peers. And considering what we had been through that year, my expectations were for him to get settled and enjoy his experience of school. At this moment in his life, I certainly wasn't expecting him to demonstrate his academic prowess! I had to disagree with their assessment of him. It was kindergarten for goodness sake! I wanted him to play and make friends and develop a sense of belonging. Like most parents I suspect, our greatest desire for our children is for them to be happy and well. It felt as if the school was looking after its needs to teach to a 'type' rather than being concerned with the 'particular' needs of my son. (Extract from Reflective Ethnographic Writing, 13/6/2013

Ironically, a parent's choices for enacting dissatisfaction in such circumstances, is to 'change schools' (as finding another location for 'schooling') rather than having any effect on practices. Evidently, in time, my son did find affordances in (another) school, particularly to treat school-work as a game which raised his academic performance. He also found enjoyment in sports. The concerns for my own children that I brought to 'school' as a so-called parent-partner, raised additional concerns about how this partnership was to be enacted, and what the inclusion of children and their parents meant in practice. Congruently, as 'researcher' I also brought to this research various professional concerns grounded in my history as a teacher, concerns for what learning is and how it happens, and particularly, what constitutes inclusive

pedagogy. This is where I come from with regards the conduct of this research; I am simultaneously a parent, educator, and researcher interested in the ways schooling is conducted and how inclusive practices are maintained.

3.2.1 Negotiating the research site for the case study

The ways in which the world is not a stage are not easy to specify (Denzin, 2009, p. 47).

In contrast to what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe as the research act being a "sordid legacy" of colonialism where an "investigative mentality" is adopted, I have sought and acknowledge direct and personal engagement with this project in order to reveal the stories behind experience. W. Gibson and Brown's (2009) claim that the active nature of the researcher is not as "gatherer" of data, but as active constituent of the research act, is confluent with my theoretical stance. Undertaking this research in my own community necessarily required a heightened sense of responsibility for maintaining an ethical stance as I danced between these roles of parent and researcher. Denzin (2009) describes best the position I took as a 'moral inquirer' who "builds collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, mutually accountable relationships with those studied" (p. 49). In the end, whilst articulating my position as researcher and member of the community being studied, my responsibility throughout this research was with the production of reporting's, (namely, a PhD thesis) that, as Fontana and Frey (2005) eloquently describe, formed as an accomplishment of negotiation.

For more than three years I engaged with this school community, and in particular had instigated, with the encouragement of the school principal, the SLP. I became part of a small team of parents who cleaned out filthy cupboards and renovated a dilapidated classroom; volunteered for at least a couple of hours a week to 'hang out' with the kids, acting as their encourager, or sharing skills, and; promoted their work via displays at school and community events and more informally with teachers and parents who inquired at the end of sessions. To the children I was an extended affordance, someone they could ask to help them reach something, find the staples and replace them into the empty staplers, and make suggestions as to how to go about things, or even suggest ideas for activity. Mostly, I was somebody who would listen to their ideas and reflect a little bit of their own

enthusiasm back at them. In the year in which I received confirmation of candidature and ethical clearance for this doctoral work I became a little less helpful, as new people were present to take on this role; a teacher, parents, and a resident artist that a small grant had paid for. During this time I watched a little more quietly and moved a little to the periphery, getting out of the way if you like, to observe more closely. This shift to the wing from the centre, to use a sporting analogy, enabled me to concentrate a little more on inducting the emerging themes from the events that were unfolding around me. Thus the transition from parent-partner to researcher at this site was a relatively easy one in terms of my actions.

In keeping with the university requirements for human ethics clearance, data collection was not commenced until full approvals were granted. This assured the study met these requirements and that any of the committee's recommendations for conducting the research were acted upon. In addition, this research also required compliancy with the NSW, Department of Education and Training's, State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP) (2006). Completing this process formalised the research role that I took in the school community in addition to the role I already played as parent-partner at the research site. It also launched the process of familiarising the key participants, involving the school principal with the research concerns.

As a critical ethnographer compiling a case study of a site where my relationships were already established, it was useful to deploy the stance Angrosino (2005) described as 'ethical ethnographer':

> the contemporary researcher probably does not want to retreat to the objective cold of the classic observer, but neither does he or she want to shirk the responsibility for doing everything possible to avoid hurting or embarrassing people who have been trusting partners in the research endeavour. (p. 736)

Whilst the transition to the field as ethnographer via my actions in the Studio was easily manageable, a heightened sense of responsibility for maintaining an ethical stance was necessary (Fontana & Frey, 2005). This was particularly true for engaging in field-based research where I danced between multi-faceted roles of parent and researcher. To be honest, negotiating the research site and enacting the

role of 'researcher' where I had previously been (just a) parent was fraught with challenges and conflict. It is necessary to include some of this data here in the methodology section as it is pertinent to both how I approached my work, what was encountered and included as data, and finally, as will be detailed in the subsequent chapters, my efforts to make use of all this information.

One of the first actions I took in my role as researcher was to gain permission to enter the regular classrooms to give a brief presentation using PowerPoint slides of my research intentions at a developmentally appropriate level for the children in each class (see Appendix A, for examples). This was also an opportunity to discuss consent of parent/guardian and children's own will to be involved as required for the research (see Appendix B for sample forms). Additionally, this was an opportunity to inform classroom teachers about why I was interested in the project and why I had been supported by the university to undertake this doctorate.

An especially wonderful moment that I treasure looking back upon the production of this research occurred towards the end of my presentation to the older class of children (Year 4/5/6). In the early stages of this research, I had made a 'case within the case' study of a child with ASD, in order to present how this child perceived the Studio and its affordances, and what he made of the opportunities to pursue his own intentions. Kiarnen, who I introduced briefly in chapter one, and whose narrative I will extend upon in the later chapters of this research, began to clap prior to the ending of the presentation. He did this not once but several times, his clap strong, eyes focused on the photos and text presented on the interactive whiteboard, and his smile (which was rare to see as he mostly wore a serious expression) was wide! This was more out of enthusiasm than social niceties or an eagerness to be finished. In actively encouraging my work by expressing his enthusiasm for the Studio program, he seemed to be expressing just how important this space was to him, and how much he appreciated it. Unfortunately, the class teacher was not so enthusiastic about my presentation and via the principal in an email, I received feedback raising concerns that the presentation was *"a little over the students heads"* and *"boardered (sic) on putting down the teachers" (research diary, 5/6/2012)*. The example the teacher was referring to was a description I gave of my own children starting school and how this encounter was experienced. It was

an honest and personal recount aimed at *"approaching the shift in pedagogy from early learning environments to school-based environments"*. Rather than 'put the teacher down' I had intended to emphasise how difficult it is for teachers to give children the opportunities to follow their own interests considering they have so many children to educate, limited resources, and limited time. I countered this "feedback" by reminding the principal to share the fact that*: "I am interested in the broad pedagogical concerns of school based learning, not in putting teachers down in any way."* Needless to say this was just the start of my encounter with a kind of defensiveness that existed on the periphery of the research. It was certainly not the case for all teachers, all of the time. Rather, it was an evident sensitivity that festered away beneath the surface and occasionally bubbled over. To this end it must be stated that as a parent, I would remain an 'outsider'. I was never able to break through this veneer of defensiveness. This did impact the ability of the project to progress, as the 'logical' affordances one person perceived were not necessarily shared amongst all participants and the constraints for sharing of information and collaboration for action were evidently too great at this site. Formal opportunities to meet were extremely infrequent, particularly after the funding was cut and the support role discontinued. However, this result for the Studio did not affect the ability to progress the research inquiry. It merely affirmed what I had encountered in the literature and the impossibility of parent instigated school improvement. The project was, in its nascence, like a baby that no-one else was as interested in as its parents! This was a fitting metaphor for a project born of concerns that parents are a child's first teacher and the contention that the educational parent-partnership was for me the equivalent of a marriage of convenience, it lacked any real substance.

3.2.2 Increasing specificity to the case of the "Studio"

As noted above, the SLP offered a unique opportunity to explore perceptions of an altered space within a school environment. This lent itself to an in-depth case study. Within the broad parameters of a critical ethnography that allowed for the application of specific data collection techniques (including interview, observation, and document analysis) the school itself was considered as a case site. As such a 'case study' approach to considering the site was taken. Ideally, if the project was established at several schools, a multi-site case study would have been preferable for

the reasons that Ainscow (2010) contends from his years of research into inclusivity and schooling primarily; that motivations for developing inclusion tend to be more successful when schools work together in groups. Additionally, the involvement of parents in instigating and maintaining the site with the collaboration of the school principal was cause to specifically detail an alternative to the typical ways in which parents are solicited to be involved in schools. For these reasons, a single site case study provided the method by which data would be collected.

According to Yin (2009) case study research is useful when studying innovation as it goes beyond a simple evaluative study and attempts to explain how and why a proposition can be validated. The case study reveals the complex interplay of narratives and associations presented in the setting (Denzin, 2009). It uncovers the 'particularity and ordinariness' (Stake, 2005, p.445) of the site in order to understand 'what is important about the case within its own world' (Stake 2005, p. 450). Deploying case study certainly afforded a thorough explanation of the Studio program which in the end has provided some critical insights.

It must be noted that in terms of negotiating a more permanent outcome for the Studio, an action research methodology may have been applied as a means to engage teachers in the research process from the outset. Action research involving the teachers themselves may have resulted in a more positive outcome for the project. Without the affordances for teachers to be involved more formally, through requirements of their position, gaining their participation in the research process was challenging. Of course I graciously accepted what they gave which indeed was the minimum (for all but the principal); a half hour interview (during school hours) and later, an opportunity to reflect on their interview transcription. Although more extensive interview material was gathered from other participant groups, and through my own observational data and documentary sources, case study provided a suitable method for combining these multiple data sets and producing a reading of this research.

Problems with generalisability are the most common criticism of the case study method (Aaltio & Heilmann, 2009). Case study research presents the obvious limitation of accounting for the experience at a particular site and therefore not being

easily generalisable to other sites. One means to overcome this is the use of thick description. Denzin (2009) describes this as contextualizing experience, clarifying the intentions which organise experience, and revealing the process that unfolded as experience. This approach is somewhat reinforced by the critical application of theories and the literature with which I have foregrounded this particular research, indicating the school as a site for reproduction, thereby warranting some generalisability from this case. The lessons learned from the Studio will be of use in the broader field of inclusive education, as will be surmised in chapter 6.

The criticism that case-study methodology receives pertaining to a bias towards verification is present in all methodologies according to Flyvbjerg (2006). This case study, as an in-depth production, did indeed prove to be an effective means to challenge general and assumptive claims. As one example, the talented transactions of "challenging" children evidenced in an earlier study (Finn, 2013) and further validated through the current study, challenge claims that particular children are disordered and supports a contention that the transactions in regular classrooms may be where the disorder lies. This parallels suggestions made by Graham (2007; 2008) that children being labelled and medicated to control their "behaviour" are not just disrupting the behaviour setting of the classroom, they are disrupting the myth of mind perpetuated by schooling as a cultural practice that values passivity and subservience, individualism and competition.

3.2.3 It's only a minority of parents: Criticality in ethnography

In conformity with the tenant that reason is the supreme value in the universe, the economic form of rationalism privileges the abstract over the contextual and experiential, imposes the universal formula on the local, and everywhere exhibits the typical rationalist desire for the permanence and purity of abstraction and normalization. (Plumwood, 2002 p. 23)

This research embraced critical ethnography to examine the contextual, experiential, and the local. As a critical ethnographer I describe my encounter with the ordinary and predictable elements of the site and the particular perspectives that contribute to an interpretation of the Studio program and constitute the case study. Madison (2005)

provides a definition of critical ethnography that guided the approach taken to interaction within the field as ethnographer:

> critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice...The critical ethnographer takes us beneath surface appearances...and unsettles both neutrality and taken-for-granted assumptions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control. (p. 5)

In representing the multiple voices of children, teachers, and parents, to 'disappear' the personal and locatedness of this research would have been prescribing to the hegemonic "framework of disengagement" as Plumwood (2002) put it.

Vandenberg and Hall (2011) raise concerns with the prospect that researcher bias remains unaccounted for in the approach to critical ethnography proposed by Carspecken (1996), and that research without opportunities for participants to bring their own concerns to it, risks becoming oppressive. In the first instance the researcher bias, or the values that informed my approach to the research, were detailed through autobiographical writing that contributed to foregrounding the reflexive ethnographic journal that was maintained throughout my involvement with the site as 'researcher'. In this way, as you will by now be familiar, my stance pervades the text as topical inclusions from this writing which detail my positionality; a positionality which brought with it the concerns of parent, teacher, and researcher. In the second instance, and in dealing with the risk of becoming oppressive, the resolutions were more complex and it serves to provide some examples in this methodology section as to how my positionality was negotiated.

The school principal, in our final interview, evidenced the bias towards the project that I brought to the site as she experienced it:

Susan: I do think that at times that you maybe have thought some teachers were not all that enthusiastic about it, and when I've spoken to them they have been but in a different sense. (Susan, Principal, Interview 1/11/13)

I recall feeling unsettled as Susan spoke these words that reflected my "bias". This "different sense" was entirely evident in the interview data however, and in fact it had been the central theme of a conversation I was attempting to have with her about

why parents advocated pedagogy in the Studio that teachers did not, or perhaps, given the constraints on them (that the data was evidencing), could not. My bias was for the more relational pedagogy experienced in out-of-school contexts. In the end, she became defensive and contradictory by asserting that the Studio was only valued by a minority of parents, deflecting the conversation I was attempting to have about teachers' pedagogical understandings:

Susan: I think with parents it's a bit tricky because you're only looking at a very (sic) minority of the parent body, as far as getting feedback from the Studio, and the parents that are giving the feedback are usually the ones that are in there anyway. So how the other parents feel about it I'm not sure, and what they understand about it, I'm not sure. The parents that work in the Studio obviously value it, and they obviously believe that kids learn differently and that they need to have a variety of ways to learn, and they need to have a lot of freedom and choice, and that small minority of parents are showing that. Whether other parents believe that's true [a slight interruption as coffees are delivered to the table] we haven't tapped into. (Susan, Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

These claims were contradictory to a formal evaluation made by a Departmental staff member in 2011 (conducted independently of my research) that reported:

The Studio has become a much loved and highly valued part of (the) School and it presents a great opportunity to strengthen learning partnerships between the school community and the wider community in the future. Initial surveys were conducted to gather information from parents, teachers and students. These surveys demonstrated a few key ideas:

- *The Studio was highly valued by all members of the community (students, parents and teachers)*
- *The Studio gave people an opportunity to learn about others and their learning styles*
- *When in the Studio, students were highly motivated, engaged and self-directed in their learning*

- *The Studio added value to the students' experiences at school and increased engagement*
- *The Studio strengthened partnerships between parents, students and teachers*
- *The Studio provided people with a chance to work with smaller groups and deepen their understanding of individuals*
- *The books/journals used in the Studio were highly valued but there was a general consensus that the recording of learning could be improved to more accurately represent the students' experiences and learning as a result of these experiences*
- *Time in the Studio was limited, and there was a strong feeling that it should be increased*
- *The connections between the learning in the Studio and the learning in the classrooms varied throughout the school, some were stronger than others*
- *There was a general consensus from teachers that they would like to strengthen this connection and build on it in the following year*
- *There was some concern that a small minority of students were not focussed (sic) on task and did not complete them after starting them and that motivating them was difficult at times*.

(An extract from the NSW, DEC, Studio Review Report, 2011)

The Studio Review Report (independent of my own research) captured the potential of the Studio to contribute to education and inclusivity at the school site, and I have included the lengthy extract, not to undermine the principal, but to include this voice representing the Department's commitment at that time. There was no doubt for me that the principal's commitment to the SLP two years later was waning, and as she indicated in the interview, this type of support from the Department was no longer accessible to support the school in this endeavour.

Towards the end of our final interview it became apparent that while the principal and I were on different teams, we were indeed playing the same game. We were both concerned with being undervalued. My concern was undoubtedly the undervaluing of parents as partners in education:

Roxanne: That just reminded me of some of the conversations that I've had with parents in terms of pedagogy, and I think that one of the platforms that parents have for understanding learning is…that early childhood experience that you have with your child where they go to pre-school or day care and in those situations when the children are really young, the teachers in those places have to speak to parents a lot, and they have to watch children really carefully, and they have to be having conversations about how this particular child works or what makes this particular child tick, and when they get tired, and when they get hungry…from that there seems to be a shared understanding of how children learn…I know that when kids get to primary school and it's compulsory and most of the children are old enough to get the bus and there are less conversations between teachers and parents, there isn't time and we lose touch with some of that. (Roxanne, Interview with Principal, 1/11/13)

The principal juxtaposed my position and expressed her own concern that teachers are undervalued:

Susan: They see 'OK now my child's going to school a lot of my responsibility is now the schools. I can pass it on. I don't have to be there every minute. They're going to learn about health and they're going to learn about safety and they're going to learn about whatever. And I think parents have that expectation (R: "that they' do it all")…I'm not saying that in a negative way. I think it's just a fact. It is a fact that once they pass through that gate, the parents then go off and their life is over there and the child's school life is here. And that's why it's wonderful to get parents through that gate and into the schools and helping out…And I don't think there would be many parents who have any idea of what goes on in a classroom, maybe smidgens of reading groups or whatever but a whole day, a whole full day in the classroom. A lot of people's perceptions of teachers are not all that great. They just think you go in and look after kids, they don't realise the amount of work behind it,

and the study, and the planning and evaluation and whatever, along with all the behaviour management and everything else. (Susan, Principal, Interview,1/11/13)

Whether my research had become oppressive will be up to those who encounter it. The epistemological approach I have taken affords an explanation of the oppression as a quality of the transaction of people in their environments. In essence the school principal and I shared the logic to defend our positionality as teacher or parent in a debate that pitted us against each other in the tradition of sophists. However, from a more reasoned stance, both perspectives evidenced the underlying deficit rationale; teachers believing that parents become irresponsible and therefore expect too much of schools, and parents, believing that they are being ignored and that the school is not doing enough to include their children. I concluded our interview along the lines of recommendations given by Fontana and Frey (2005) that: "researchers should not privilege any ways of looking at the world or at a particular technique but should instead continue to question, question, and question" (p. 697):

Roxanne: It's right back to the purpose of school and the shared responsibility of educating children and you're right, I think there is a perception that schools take on the responsibility of teaching children and what children will learn, and then on the other hand parents are the first teachers and they've got them for life, they've got that relationship, so how do we bridge that gap and how do we create opportunities for conversation? (Roxanne, Interview with Principal, 1/11/13)

Critical ethnography is a means to explore regimes of power operating at the level of deeper structures, not apparent on the surface of things (Wagner & Maree, 2007). In line with the theoretical approach to the research, I wanted to look beyond discourses, beyond what was on people's 'minds', their logics. I was exploring how person and environment are mutually constitutive. As a 'parent' I had defined myself a niche in the school, via challenges to complicity with the usual roles afforded parents. My action towards realising this affordance was powerful in the way a child might feel powerful when they competently use a new skill. Georgiou and Carspecken (2002) claim:

> it is because power is understood to play an essential and internal role in formulating epistemological principles that

> normative claims, such as a critique of existing social conditions, may be part of one's research findings without these being simply the assertion of a researcher's values or biases. (p. 691)

Taken-for-granted assumptions and relations of power were examined, evidencing in action what participants held to be true. The 'classroom' behaviour setting, set within the school as the legitimate site for education in contemporary society, operates according to many unchallenged assumptions. Thus the findings were coupled with an examination of the context for action, which often speaks louder than words.

3.2.4 Data collection techniques and sources of data

According to Hickey (2008) ethnographic methods: "situate the experiences of a group of individuals according to shared contextual features" (p. 97). From an ecological psychological stance these contextual features required description that went beyond form. Heft (1999) argues that form based discursive practice fails to recognize the relational nature of person-environment transactions that can be better understood with descriptions of a functional account of environmental affordances. Taking this into account, the Studio provided material resources and space for action such as cutting, joining, measuring, making, crafting, moulding, sewing, painting, drawing, writing, dramatising, discussing, weaving, sculpting, carving, and decorating, for example. Social resources including, parents, artists, and peers were present in half class sizes of no more than fifteen children at a time, usually with at least two adults present. Children initially received one hour per week in the Studio, although, as the findings reveal, this was unexpectedly cut back due to pressures on the timetable in the second year of operation with the children then attending Studio fortnightly. Otherwise, children could access the space with teacher permission at lunch breaks or for set class tasks. The emphasis of temporality translated as the children working at their own pace and revisiting work by providing space for each child to store works in progress.

Further to this functional description of the "shared contextual features" of the Studio classroom, Petrusz and Turvey (2010) contend:

> the physical layout unto itself is not sufficient for individuating affordances, the occasion and the intention of

> the organism are also necessary parts of the story and are not easily understood. (p. 61)

Unearthing the intentions of participants in this study has been central to its narratives. It was the adoption of goals, the overlapping of multiple intentions as person-environment transactions were monitored and recorded in multiple ways that informed what was inferred from my participation in the school culture and the project itself, and constituted the data for this study.

3.2.4.1 Researching with children

There have been approximately 80 children participating in the Studio over the duration of my engagement with the program and more parents and teachers than were represented in this study. However during the period of data collection only 37 children returned both consent forms (see Appendix B) and have been included in this study. According to the principal, a low rate of return for notices sent home is typical at this site. Additionally, the school's teaching principal, two full-time, one part-time and two temporary teachers, six parents who contributed regular volunteer hours, and one member of the wider community engaged as a resident artist over two school terms, all gave their informed legal consent to be involved in the research, and have been included in this study. While consent for children was required to be provided by a parent or legal guardian, their consent was also sought in line with recommendations from the think tank, 'Involving Children and Young People in Research' (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth & NSW Commission for Children and Young people, 2008). This document also provided a reference point for considering whether and how to conduct this research with children, for example, child-sensitive methods.

While children were certainly seen as capable of contributing to the research, there was no pressure placed on them to contribute to group discussions or produce work other than the products of their own intentions as Phillips (2014) recommends. It will become evident as the findings are detailed in chapters 4 and 5, that children perceived the Studio as their space:

The Studio is good. You can do different things in there every day. You can paint, play games, do craft and have lots of fun here and no one is the boss of you and what

you can do! You don't have 'activities'. (Candice, Year 4 student, interview, 24/10/2010)

There was a strong indication of this from the principal also:

When I walk in there I notice how enthusiastic the kids are and when they get in there, they go to straight to their pigeon holes and they get out what they need to do, and they know where everything is. They really have taken ownership of the studio. They believe it's their space…They're very active, they're very involved, and they're very engaged. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 9/10/2010)

My research did not place unnecessary demands on children to participate and the research was focused upon a program where children's rights to act according to their own intentions was respected in line also with Phillips recommendations for research 'with' children. Children's engagement with the program was established prior to this research (see Finn, 2013) and strongly indicated that they recognised the value of the program and that some of them even brought an awareness of the necessity to challenge current practices. This will again be detailed in the findings chapters. It is for these reasons that I deemed that this research with children was necessary as it will ultimately advance both knowledge and welfare of children.

As Harper (2002) suggests, the use of photographs was particularly relevant to capturing the Studio's "distinctive visual character" (p. 20). As such, permission to photograph children's work was always sought and became part of any photo/video recording protocol in the Studio. As the students themselves were highly involved in the photographic documentation that contributed to this study, they were also encouraged to use this protocol and ask for permission before taking a photograph. Additionally, a separate consent form for photographic/video data was sought from key participants that have been represented in this study (see, Appendix C for a sample of this form).

3.2.4.2 Participant observation and autoethnography

It was my active participation in the SLP in the authentic role of 'parent' seeking to be included in the educational partnership of schooling that guided the collection of data. The technique of participant observation afforded an 'insider' status as a

member of the school community, however, as mentioned previously, being an 'insider' included being 'outside' of a role typically engaged by parents, regardless of its endorsement in policy. It was precisely the tension that this element of my participant observation as 'parent' member afforded that was of interest to me and introduced into the study a more personally engaged consideration of in/ex/clusivity. According to Reed-Danahay (1997, p.3), "One of the main characteristics of an auto/ethnographic perspective is that the auto/ethnographer is a boundary-crosser, and the role can be characterised as that of a dual identity." Collecting autoethnographic data within the broader study afforded a means of self-representation within the more culturally determined role of "parent". Selected autobiographical details were captured in reflexive writing and have been dispersed throughout the document providing detailed insight into my own positionality as a researcher and parent within the school community. The inclusion of my own voice as 'parent' seemed to capture a counter narrative worth documenting within the broader critical ethnography, particularly where the voice of parents concerning school as social phenomena are implicitly silenced (not sought). In this way the research achieves some sort of bridge between home and school life where for most parents these distinct behaviour settings almost never coalesce except on school terms. Autoethnography served to capture this 'boundary crossing'.

Data collection that involves making an autoethnographic account is a reciprocal process of making the personal, public and accounting for how the public becomes personal. Including autoethnographic data runs the risk of it not being well received and the limitation of claims to authenticity should one's voice become too dominant (Ellis, 2008). Sapsford and Jupp (2006) discuss the necessity for authenticity through thick description but also through providing dual accounts of the data, as that observed, and that which accounts for the observer's selectivity:

> Generally, the more detailed the description, the more likely it is to be accurate, and the less likely to be subject to distortion. But we should always remember that even detailed accounts are the product of selection and interpretation. It is important, therefore, that the researcher reflects carefully on the degree to which his or her own ideas and perspectives, and, of course, behaviour, have influenced the account produced. Indeed, it is useful if what is referred to as a

> reflexive account, which discusses these influences, runs alongside the researchers field notes. (p. 83)

In the Studio environment there were always multiple activities, high levels of engagement that produced busy background sound, and at times, activity necessitating the use of other available space such as the library next door, or the garden immediately outside. Interactions between participants were exchanged at speeds difficult to capture and for these reasons note taking, and even photo and video capture, was challenging, particularly while acting as participant-observer and having to fulfil requests for assistance. Finally, after some frustrating attempts in the initial sessions, I surrendered to the only means which seemed achievable under the circumstances. I recorded limited notes of actual dialogue to trigger reflection to that event unfolding as well as photo, or video data, when possible. More extensive recollections of events and my responses were recorded in detail within twenty four hours following the sessions. In this way, rather than having two neat columns as Sapsford and Jupp suggest, my observations were coupled with a reflective ethnographic journal. Appendix D provides a sample extract of my field notes and reflexive journal.

Figure 3.2: Receiving a gift of jewellery as participant observer. I expect that, other than being less helpful to the children, my shift in role from parent volunteer to researcher was fairly seamless.

3.2.4.3 Artefacts: The ordinary and the extraordinary

Having been involved in the Studio program from prior to its inception, I have maintained a file of artefacts; notes, reflections, contributions to funding applications, newsletters, blog entries, emails, and records of conversations, in fact anything that came to me from school with the word "Studio" in it went into manila folders as potential data. At some point this 'collection' began to include three dimensional objects contributed by children who had gifted them to me (see figure 3.3). It was inevitable that a 1200mm X 400mm X 400mm lockable cabinet was purchased specifically to contain this archive. Additionally, some of these objects have become valued artefacts within family homes.

Artefacts provided information for affordance detection in ways that both stimulated the activity in the Studio as well as my own activity as researcher documenting the uses and value of things that children found in the Studio. Gibson (1979/1986/2015) contended regarding affordances that: "the richest and most elaborate affordances of the environment are provided by other animals and, for us, other people…Behaviour affords behaviour" (p.135). A description that Bianca, a parent, provided of her perception of children's motivations in the Studio affirms Gibson's claim:

Often the first thing they'll do is they'll come and they'll see something that has been made by another student between the time that they were in the Studio last and they'll say "Who made that?" And often I don't know because they're not in my class so I'll go, "I don't know, but isn't it good" and we'll talk about what it is and then sometimes one or two of them will try and make something similar or build on the ideas, which is pretty impressive. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

Additionally, it was out of necessity, and a shared concern to provide the children with a means of sharing their artefacts, both with each other, and their classroom teachers, that I collaborated with another parent to produce a website for these multiple purposes. This website was also designed to support the connection of the regular classroom with the Studio program following the Departmental evaluation's recommendations:

Figure 3.3: A sample of artefacts that contributed data to this study

The students said that they had limited knowledge of what other students were doing in the Studio and that they all would like to know more about what others were doing and they felt that they would be inspired by what others were doing (Studio Evaluation Report, NSW, DEC, 2011).

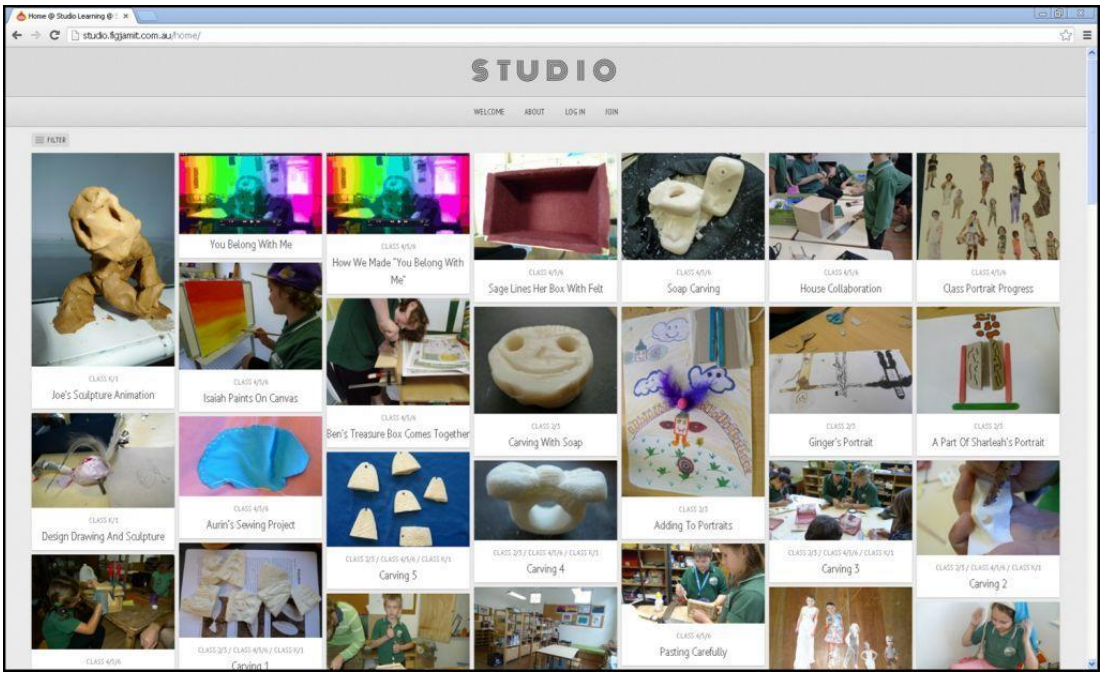

Figure 3.4: A screen grab of the Studio website

The website cannot be accessed externally, due to NSW, DEC restrictions; however, Figure 3.4 is an indicative screen grab from the site. The website provided another point of reflection and extended an opportunity to engage other participants, via the implicit technique of photo elicitation, which according to W. Gibson and Brown (2009) is the capacity of visual images to inspire a reflective stance. Harper (2002) explains: "When two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs they try to figure out something together… (and) an ideal model for research" (p.23) emerges. It was anticipated that teachers would be interested in viewing the website for information about what the children were doing in their Studio sessions, and that the photographs of artefacts would convey the pedagogical assumptions underlying the Studio. Thus the photo elicitation method could contribute, albeit implicitly, to interviews and during meetings/discussions amongst parents and teachers. Additionally they were a point of reflection for discussions regarding children's motivations and activities in the Studio learning environment.

Figure 3.5: One child looked on as another engaged enthusiastically for a whole session constructing a mystery object which turned out to be an oil rig complete with flame boom (following the 'Deep Water Horizon' Gulf of Mexico oil spill)

As an example, the oil rig captured in Figure 3.5 during its construction inspired such questions as: What is implied by the creator and the artefact? Was this young person concerned with the 2010 'Deep Water Horizon' Gulf of Mexico oil spill (an event prominent in the media at that time)? Perhaps in the creative act of producing artefacts children are able to express their curiosity and concerns? Or, is it just a box and some toilet rolls, to be thrown away later as it begins to collect dust on the shelf? Do these artefacts have any importance to inform or shape curriculum? When curriculum is static, how can we bring the lived experiences of children, shaped by the events, and the media's portrayal of them, into the learning environment? And perhaps most significantly: How can we make space within the learning environment for children's concerns and questions as they happen? These questions are particularly significant where critical and creative thinking are highlighted as one of seven general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum (see, ACARA, 2013). Denzin (2009) claims: "we have an obligation to raise the stakes on critical thinking in our

classrooms and in our writings" (p.36). The purpose of the website was to elicit a connection between the regular classroom and children's activity in the Studio. Woolner, McCarter, and Wall (2012) exemplify the deployment of photo elicitation to encourage teacher participation in their research; however, as the potentials for my research to engage teacher participation were limited, the usefulness of this elicitation was more modest in this project. Access to the website was encouraged but not compulsory for teachers. It was simply introduced as a means to extend the affordances of the Studio learning environment to those who could not be present for sessions due to timetabling constraints (class teachers, the principal and parents who were unable to volunteer).

As an archive the website provided information about affordances, affordance networks and the types of effectivities demonstrated by students. Children contributed textual data in the form of 'comments' to the website when time permitted in their regular class schedule. They were also highly involved in photographing their artefacts for the website as well as contributing their own photographic work.

3.2.4.4 Conducting the interviews

In order to understand how the Studio was perceived by children, parents who had participated as volunteers, the community member as resident artist, and by teaching members of the school community, it was necessary to conduct some formalised interviews as a context for discussion. These interviews were particularly crucial as a source of data given that other opportunities, such as regular meetings, were limited and couldn't afford the same level of detail that an interview could in providing insight into participant views. These interviews were intended to be conducted with teachers and parents according to Seidman's (2006) approach in which "the root of interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p.9). Ideally, Seidman's 'three interview series' structure, in which an initial interview provides an opportunity to develop familiarity with a participant, the second an opportunity to explore phenomenological understandings of the site, and the final interview to revisit any outstanding themes and close-off the interview relationship, would have been my preferred option to garner a more personal and involved context for discussions of the Studio. However,

within the time constraints of this research it was impossible to achieve this scheduling of interviews with teachers.

My requests to interview staff were all negotiated through the school principal (as required by the NSW, DEC research protocols). Interviewees were asked to feedback to the principal as to how they would prefer their interviews to take place. In consultation with her teaching staff, the principal communicated it was only possible for the teachers to commit to a half hour interview conducted at the school site. It was also agreed that they would prefer to be interviewed within school hours and the principal arranged to relieve staff for half hour periods. Any additional interviews were, due to concerns about adding to the pressure of teachers, made voluntary. Additional interviews with parents were also limited in order to not over-represent their voice in the research.

The time restriction and context for the interviews with teachers resulted in difficulties achieving any sort of conversational flow as recommended by Foley and Valenzuela (2005), and participants, although happy to be involved, were restricted by a sense of having to return to class, be on duty, or relieve the next participant to ensure a clockwork operation. In contrast, the interviews with parents and the principal were negotiated directly and these participants were most happy to meet in a neutral space such as a home or café. This certainly contributed to a more natural and less pressured context from which to engage the conversational style endorsed by the semi-structured interview method. Interview data was transcribed and assessed for accuracy according to Fontana and Frey's (2005) principles. As suggested by Fontana and Frey re-presentation of the interview data to the interviewees, was undertaken in the hope of further engaging participants.

Discussing the Studio in these 'sanctioned' interviews was complimented by 'opportunistic' discussions as they arose 'in the field' for example during lunch times or as we prepared a cup of tea in the staff room. These unstructured interviews were additionally deployed in the Studio with children in order to better understand their actions and motivations and constituted data for the reflective ethnographic writing. My role as participant observer in the Studio sessions made children extremely accessible for informal interviews, as such it was not deemed necessary to require a

more formal interview from them. Participants were called upon (albeit implicitly via the structure of the interview and nature of the discussion) in the design of these interactions as I used open-ended questioning techniques such as "tell me about what you have made?" or "where did you get that idea?" inviting participants to respond if it suited them, rather than directing a response. This method of deploying conversational techniques is suitable for research with children according to Mayall (2000) as it does not interrupt the flow of their activity.

Interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder with the audio feature of a disused mobile phone providing back up. Recordings were deleted from these devices as soon as copies were made on a password protected computer (within 24 hours). Although familiar with most interviewees, attention was paid to my appearance on these occasions to dress in smart, casual clothing as would be suitable and expected of a teacher in this region. This was done in order to 'fit the context' and provide a sense of familiarity. Transcriptions were completed as soon as practical after the interviews and all transcriptions were delivered to interviewees for checking and signing for accuracy (see Appendix E for an example). On several occasions when the Studio was quiet and several children were working in proximity to each other, I used the recorder to capture dialogue as I prompted these conversational interviews. The occasions for these discussions were with children in years 4/5/6. Additionally, one recording was made of a discussion with students in years K/1 as an attempt to capture a conversation around a stimulus object (banana trunks) that had been previously interrupted by a teacher (this conversation is included in chapter 4), otherwise dialogue was captured in field notes.

Kiarnen became particularly sensitive to my inquiring towards the end of the data collection period. Over the three years I had known him, he had undergone the usual physical changes of a boy from 9-12yrs, his voice had recently deepened, and he now stood taller than me. His usual openness with me (earned after years of assisting him with advice and materials) became more guarded. In this final year of primary school, he became more self-conscious. Kellett (2011) warns, "tensions can arise from dual role of observing and practicing where it is impossible to divorce one from the other" (p. 17). In respect of these changes and possible tensions, although Kiarnen remained enthusiastic to be involved in the research, he became more

involved in selecting and editing his contributions, particularly which photos I could include, and which I couldn't, as well as contributing less in conversation. Congruently, his activity in the Studio shifted from choosing more spontaneous and open-ended creative projects, based on his life-world (his interests had ranged from King's crowns and castles, to T.V sets and towers), to making a commitment to completing a 'treasure box' woodwork project which required he 'apprentice' himself to the woodworking expert. In this way, the Studio afforded him the opportunity to participate in a woodworking 'community of practice' to which I was not a direct member. He had made a commitment to instruction and it was serious work, leaving little time for conversation (this narrative will be further detailed in chapters 4 and 5).

3.2.5 Approaching the methodological limitations of this research: Authenticity and the negotiation of representation

Many of the limitations to the methodological approach taken to the research have already been outlined, however in addition, Brown (2004) contends critical ethnography has been undergoing a "crisis of representation" illustrated by:

> an overabundance of narratives foregrounding the personal experience of the ethnographer: a sort of narratological land rush in which ethnographers jumped aboard this bandwagon of the personal. This in turn has led to the additional, if somewhat contradictory, criticism that ethnography is now narcissistic in its self-reflexivity. (p. 309)

To counter this 'crisis' of becoming either too dominant in the research or not presenting one's position clearly enough, I attempted to constantly identify my own positionality while ensuring the voices of others are also well represented within the narratives of the text. As Brown suggests it can also be argued that all writing is essentially narcissistic. As such, I deployed the advice of Heft (2003) to consistently connect the personal to the public:

> It is essential that we continually move back and forth from, on the one hand, experience as such - that is, to the things as they appear in everyday experience - and on the other hand, conceptual analysis that will account for such experiences. Only by continually checking our present conceptualisations against everyday circumstances as experienced will we

> ensure that the work of ecological psychology can ultimately connect back to a world of human experience. (p. 159)

The functional pragmatics of the critical ethnographic research position I deployed, in a context where my identity as a legitimate member of the community was firstly parent, (a voice seldom associated with agency and typically associated with deficit rationality) cannot be understated. With the power of representation in my hands, ethical considerations were primary and were guided by attention to the outcomes of the research, to provide an essential and unique contribution to the field of education, specifically, inclusive education.

Hodges and Fowler (2010) describe the responsibility that was characteristic of the visceral experience I embodied during the research, knowing that my communications were irreversible:

> Any individual must speak as who he or she is, being careful…to whom he or she is speaking, and to the occasion, with its past and possible futures. To open one's mouth is not something to be done lightly. Turning one's attention to listen is no less daunting a responsibility. (p. 242)

In order to move through the research process and its various phases of seeking approval, data collection, and reporting back to the community, it was also necessary to adopt a position as novice. A perfectionist stance may have been disabling to my ability to continue in what was experienced as a complex web of relationships and responsibilities to the research participants. It was useful to understand the process of doctoral studies as the beginning of an academic career rather than any sort of pinnacle.

3.2.5.1 Member checking and temporality considered

Increasing validity and trustworthiness of the data in qualitative studies has traditionally been achieved by employing the process of member checking; where data transcribed is referred back to participants in order that they can confirm its authenticity (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005). However Hallett (2013) warns researchers to engage in "reflexive consideration of the specific research context (e.g., topic, participants, findings, and relational dynamics) that frames how the participants will experience the member checking process" (p.30). For the most part, providing interview transcripts back to participants was extremely useful to give participants

the opportunity to amend any data that they were not secure and confident in stating, apart from the fact that my typos were also corrected in most instances. These transcriptions were made within the week of the interview and following a de-naturalised format, where emphasis is on content rather than context (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005).

I encountered a dilemma with regard to temporality and the member checking process that is worth recalling as a point of contention and for the fact this phenomena was unreported in the literature I consulted for this research. This occurred when I provided a copy of a draft publication to a key contributor where twelve months had lapsed since the data was collected. I was asked to make an alteration to the data in the light of a concern about the manner in which it may be perceived. At this point I had to consider the data's validity from a temporal perspective. I also did this with an ecological psychological stance which assumes that rather than experiences stored in a memory, humans bring a history of continuous attunement, or sensitivities to moments (Heft, 2010). Tufge, Gray, and Hohan (1997) state: “perception is an activity that occurs across time” (p. 81). In that twelve month period the principal may have become ‘attuned’ to the sensitivities of teachers as participants - thus an analysis from an ecological psychological stance would assume that her perception had changed, rather than her memory failing.

Action research methodology may have overcome some of these ethical dilemmas and achieved a collaboration in the direction of shared stance taking as described by Phillips and Zavros (2013) but, as they state, it is ultimately "the researchers perspective that is publicly told” (p. 57). In this example, extended time in the field may contribute conflict to the research process. While the concerns or perspectives of this participant may have altered over time, at the point of member checking, the data was authenticated. Hallett (2013) acknowledges there are sparse procedures and protocols for member checking; this I certainly experienced at this moment.

Additionally, I suspect procedural reactivity, where participants behave differently as a result of the study (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006), became an issue. In particular, as I reported initial findings to the principal, in an attempt to involve her

more deeply in the research process, she again became concerned that I would misrepresent teachers in the study. This tension could only be eased after the final analysis of all the data and a meeting with the Principal was organized to share a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying audio recording that I had prepared for a Postgraduate Research Conference (held at the University of Queensland, 2013) as a summary of the approach taken to the research and its findings. In this more complete presentation of the data, she was able to acknowledge that my representation of the data was a fair analysis, but also expressed her disagreement, raising primarily two concerns:

1. The principal did not agree with my analysis that the program had been reduced over the duration of the three years. Although she could not dispute the reduction in the allocation of time for the program, she feels that the Studio has had a wider impact on the school that is not reported in the research findings. Specifically, she described the teachers as utilising the space as a resource to complement their teaching program, allowing children to work in there on class assignments. She mentioned that the Studio had also influenced the teachers, one in particular, who was offering more open-ended class tasks and making her classroom more of a fun space. She also felt that what she called the 'enrichment program' had sprung from the SLP. In particular she saw this as another way to bring people from other schools and the wider community into the school, to be involved in sharing skills with the children.

2. In relation to a point about the participants in the study dichotomising the Studio and classroom, she disagreed that the two classrooms were different. She explained that she saw them both as similarly offering children good experiences and promoting learning.

I did not dispute the principal's belief that the Studio may have had a wider impact than the data detailed, and after some discussion, the principal conceded to my explanations that there were clear distinctions between the pedagogy of the enrichment program, where teachers planned creative activities that all children in the assigned groups had to complete, and the intention in the Studio for children to initiate and direct their own activity. In relation to her second point, I explained that

the evidence in the data sets from children, parents, and teachers was conclusive that these spaces had different identities for their inhabitants. Through this process, the principal and I managed to achieve respondent validation through checking our interpretations as a means to ensure the research presented is plausible and credible (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Naturalistic generalisations, as "conclusions arrived at through personal engagement" (Stake, 1995, p. 85), were reported to the principal in this way. Although the principal disagreed that the Studio and classroom were perceived dichotomously, the evidence that I had personally engaged with was conclusive according to my own private sense making (see Stake, 1995).

3.2.5.2 Reflexivity as covert

Reflexivity may be endorsed to clean up some of the messiness of our involvement in the research process and is most commonly performed as a contribution to knowing oneself, knowing one's subjects, authenticating data, or even, as applied to my own previous study (see, Finn, 2013), affording a clarity of transcendence, according to Pillow (2003). However, Pillow (2003) also challenges these conceptualisations asking what we might learn if we were to bring a rigorous self-awareness to our research:

> a reflexivity that pushes towards an unfamiliar, towards the uncomfortable, cannot be a simple story of subjects, subjectivity, and transcendence or self-indulgent tellings. A tracing of the problematics of reflexivity calls for a positioning of reflexivity not as clarity, honesty, or humility, but as practices of confounding disruptions - at times even a failure of our language and practices. (p. 192)

In the process of deploying this approach to reflexivity, I noticed a degree of covertness creeping into my research approach. According to Lugosi (2006), covertness is an inevitable outcome of research to some extent. McKenzie (2009) agrees, suggesting only a frank account, can contribute to the audience discerning whether the ethical integrity of the research has been compromised. The immediacy of a conflict I encountered with a teacher who had been assigned by the principal to work in the Studio as a means of attempting to bridge the Studio and classroom, presented the most ethically challenging moment of the research for me, and serves here to illustrate the 'covert' creeping into my reflexive writing:

June 5, 2013, Research Reflection

As Jana (the resident artist) and I waited together for the children to arrive, the principal entered the Studio and confronted me, saying that she would be doing Studio today as the teacher was too upset by the comments I had made in yesterday's P & C meeting. I was shocked by this unexpected concern! Immediately I asked the principal whether we could discuss this somewhere more appropriate, as the children were waiting anxiously at the door to get started. Jana agreed that she could manage without us, so we took ourselves next door into the library. I sat down, a little nervously, eyeing the tissue box on the teacher's desk across the room. I wish I could have taped the whole thing for posterity (and the research). Had I been an employee, I would have asked for a third person in the meeting. I wondered if that might be a good idea but it was one of those situations where emotions were erupting in the moment, bringing a sense of immediacy to the opportunity that was presenting in the here and now, to go deep into the tensions that presented not subtly in the text of semi-structured interviews, but rather in the lived experience of conflict.

The principal began by pressing the point that the teacher was upset and angry and had told the other teachers who were also upset with the fact that I had mentioned in my report and discussion at the P & C meeting, that parents and teachers (other than those already engaged) had not attended a Studio event on the weekend (this was a community event that the resident artist had invited us to participate in). She shushed me as I attempted to dialogue, pulling her authority as she paved the way to tell me in no uncertain terms that I was a "bad communicator". As she spoke these words I searched my body for signs of uncertainty - points of tension, discomfort, tightness, any indications that my actions were out of alignment with my intentions. I felt calm and confident, noticing that no tension was present in my body, or my thoughts, and, as such, the tension, and in this case "bad communication" was not experienced as something belonging solely to me. Rather, in this moment, I was far more aware of the tensions presenting themselves outside of me, and the opportunity I seemed to be providing to have them vented. I could have reacted. I could have defended myself as a good communicator. To me it seemed the real problem was that I was communicating at all. But in this instance, it would be fruitless. Best to let it flow I thought. One of those opportunities to listen…

The principal's words continued to flow authoritatively, but also at times awkwardly. I hung on a few that seemed to carry the most meaning - well for me at least. I heard the word "strong" used to describe me. The three years or more I had spent on this project had certainly forged a character that was self-assured, clear-headed, and persistent. I had never thought of myself as strong. I would have to sit with that. Refuting her in this situation would be pointless whether it felt true to me or not, I had to accept her version of the truth as well as my own. For whatever reasons, this was how I was being perceived. Combined, this apparently made me a strong, bad communicator. Like a session of psychotherapy, it seemed the principal's goal was to bring me to tears, to crack me, to open me up by whatever means available, and to expose something deeper, something hidden. I wondered if perhaps this perceived hidden threat, this badness, was the voice of the parent rising up, the voice of the parent that could also potentially be quashed by a research methodology that labelled it covert. But it wasn't the things she said about me that caused my emotional upset; it was the weight of her words that I had upset the teacher that pressed upon my chest.

I could have burst open and howled like a baby. I wondered whether this was an opportunity to purge all of the moments that I questioned whether the things we expose our children to in schools are in our children's best interests. I could have howled about the discussion I had to have last week with my eight year old daughter and nine year old son who asked me in confidence about the meaning and purpose of the word c… and its use in a sentence where someone calls someone else a f….. c…! This was not the first time such incidents at school had exposed my children to a world I wished it didn't. Instead of howling, I coughed and gasped awkwardly, not because of any hurt, but because of an injustice. "This was never my intention." I spluttered, as the principal ranted about how the teacher had been working hard to contribute to the Studio, but how she had been receiving emails from another parent demanding meetings, there were problems uploading photos to the Studio website, how angry she was at my comment, and how she had now told all the other teachers who are also angry. I explained that I was aware that the other parent had been trying to organise to meet with the intentions of apologising for any problems and to let her know that we wanted to take all the pressure off any expectations that she may

have been feeling from us. I told the principal I had been aware of the strain on the teacher's face and in her interactions over the last few weeks. She was smiling less. I didn't mention it, but other data was evidencing this tension also.

The principal finally eased off as I continued to reiterate, between blubbers (I had cracked now), that it was never our intention to burden teachers…It felt to me like the principal had been tasked to deal with me in no uncertain terms. Unable to compose myself, she began to soften, and refocus on what to do next. What now? Where do you go from here? My partner, who was due to pick me up within the hour, would be furious if he was to encounter me in this state. To him I was a breastfeeding mum who had put in countless hours as a volunteer over the years! He would have pulled the kids out of the school long ago if it was entirely up to him. Instead, he was my rock, my support, and a voice so often of reason. When I mentioned he would be here soon, Susan responded immediately, suggesting she might be able to relieve the teacher so the two of us could meet to resolve this conflict. Off she went, and I took the time to breathe deeply and slowly, composing myself.

The teacher entered and sat down. She seemed charged with a slightly nervous energy as she too launched her attack. It became evident quite quickly that she had felt my comment in the report as a lack of appreciation for her involvement in the project. The fact that she had taken it on, that she was contributing to the Studio sessions, and to the website had been ignored from her perspective. The crux of her issues was captured in her statement: "I'm not bagging the Studio; I'm trying to keep everyone happy!" Then she was off, speaking to me as if I had no idea what it was like to be a teacher. She mentioned having to attend meetings after work, having to hand in plans for the next term, and most depressingly it seemed, having to write reports! On top of it all the principal had charged her with Studio when it wasn't even "my thing" she exclaimed. She was expected to bridge the Studio and classroom and that was, in this case, the straw that broke the camel's back. My comment was a trigger point, a sore spot, a point of sensitivity…She argued that she was doing student-centred curriculum in her classroom. She gave an example; "We're studying Japan, and I asked the kids what they knew and what they wanted to know." The discussion seemed pointless and necessarily important at the same time. She was calmer now. Her deep blue eyes pierced mine and I appreciated her

concerns, her issues, and the situation she was in. She mentioned accountability. I mentioned my research analysis so far regarding an initial finding that perhaps it is the pressure to teach that is distracting our attention from learning. She became defensive. I eased off. Enough for today, I thought.

When the principal returned I commented, "She's a great communicator" and offered, "Perhaps things are improving, perhaps we don't need a Studio any more, and perhaps it's all too hard? It defeats the purpose of Studio to add to the pressures already on teachers." The principal sounded firm and strong as she recommitted, "Well, I won't be shutting the Studio down!" She was staunch and I appreciated her clarity, it was particularly directed at the teacher. For the teacher's benefit it seemed, she mentioned 'personalised learning' and 'individualised learning plans', as if this issue was not going to go away. At that point the principal took some responsibility, noting that she could have done more to organise meetings and put more in the newsletter. For my part there was some relief at that being acknowledged. There were many times I expected more, would have thought more had been done to communicate what the Studio means to her, why it was important, why it was worth all this effort! (Reflective Journal, 5th June, 2013)

As a result of this conflict, the teacher opted out of her Studio responsibilities. I was not entirely surprised and felt a bit like Sugata Mitra (2010) who provoked his audience by asking, "Is the absence of a teacher a pedagogical tool?" In the absence of a teacher, I knew the SLP would continue to flourish with the support of the principal and volunteers. Whilst in a covert sense this may have been satisfying, it wasn't the outcome I had hoped for. From the outset of the project I had expected the children's activity to inspire and motivate connection. It seemed that the project from its inclusive intentions had become exclusionary of teachers – the project viewed as an appropriation of space had ironically perpetuated the very thing it sought to disturb. More on this is contained in the subsequent chapters. What this moment did reinforce for me however, was the positionality I held, how I was viewed and how I viewed others. Indeed as Herzfeld (1997) suggests this experience forced me to "...confront the inevitable dissonance within ourselves at a particular and recognisable type of moment: when the empathy that we feel toward our hosts overpowers our awareness that their most salient values would cause us acute

distress at home" (p. 169). This dilemma with the teacher regardless of our common genealogy as "teacher" and the empathy for her which this brings, in this moment, also brought a deeper understanding of the paradoxes surfacing to force a growing ideological wedge between our positions. Herzfeld's account of autoethnographic work helped me to understand this moment which revealed my positioning in relation to "the bureaucratic state" and "its unruly citizenry" (p.170). In this moment I was coming to terms with my positioning within the latter group, and perhaps what is experienced as covertness was my growing disdain for the former.

3.3 Analysis

As was stated in the introductory chapter, an ecological psychological stance provided an analytic focus for this study. This was enacted as applying organism-environment mutuality to my analysis of what the data revealed. This section sets out more specifically to overview how the data contributed to an analysis that addressed the overarching research question: *What does ecological psychology contribute to understanding how children learn in the Studio context and how can this inform the development of inclusive practices?* Additionally, it offers an explanation of the processes that contributed to making this 'particular' analysis of the data set via the ecological psychological stance.

For explaining both the activity within the Studio as per the first objective of the research as well as explaining the second objective relating to the Studio's impact on the site for inclusion, the application of organism-environment mutuality to my analysis proved useful for generating explanations. McClamrock (2008) suggests the conceptual tools of ecological psychology, although understudied, prove to be useful, and this was indeed my experience as will be revealed in the following chapters.

Whilst this analysis deployed many of the usual processes typical of qualitative data analysis such as that described by Miles and Huberman (1994) or Seidel (1998) for example, my aim here is to reveal the particular path of the analytical process applied to this research. Reiterating that the unit of analysis is never the individual or the environment alone but the dynamic of person and environment as mutually constituted, what follows is a brief overview of the data sets

and their contribution to the analytical process deployed to inform any inferences made about the transactions of people and environment for this study:

1. Reflexive auto-biographical writing contributed data for analysis that evidenced my particular transactions as a parent-teacher-researcher encountering the school as an econiche for education.

2. Observations recorded as field notes accompanied by a reflexive research journal contributed data for analysis that evidenced the transactions of participants encountering the particular Studio learning environment as a behaviour setting within the school site.

3. Semi-structured and conversational interviews contributed data for analysis that evidenced the particular phenomenological encounters of participants with the "Studio", their perception of it and action taken in or around it.

4. Artefacts were analysed for information that reflected the transactions between participants and the SLP. Artefacts have been included for analysis in data sets in a multitude of disciplines, and according to Norum (2008), there are many ways in which they can be analysed. With regard to this particular study, what the artefacts represented had to be considered from the perspectives of both the contexts from which they emerged and how they were now 'read' as products of the Studio. In other words, what were the perceptions of anyone making judgment about the artefacts, what had the making of the artefacts afforded the maker, how were the artefacts produced, what affordance networks contributed to the making, how were they engaged, and how did the artefacts represent the effectivities of their maker/s.

The process of generating data was itself an analytical process as W. Gibson and Brown (2009) note however, the analytical process was not formalised until the semi-structured interviews were completed. At this point the discourse of respondents in the semi-structured interviews was coded and eight recurring themes were identified (see Appendix F for coded themes and examples). Locating and retrieving information from data was made relatively easy with the use of QSR NVivo 10 where data was stored and accessed as 'sources' and in 'themes'. Word search and word frequency queries could be performed to check the accuracy of the

existing themes and to check for new themes in the data over the duration of the analysis period.

My own perception-action cycles of engagement with the data at this stage were exploratory and the process did indeed resemble a search for invariance as Gibson (1979/1986/2015) describes. Themes accumulated around information that didn't change in the data and this search for invariance produced increased specificity to the concerns of the research. The process of data analysis then turned to both comparisons of data across participant groups and across data sets. For example, the perception of teachers and students at the Uber Creek Public School of the Studio were contrasted and artefacts examined for information to support or contradict participant perceptions. Making comparisons across data sets and participants groups while searching for invariance revealed stronger themes that serendipitously were quite neatly congruent with key concepts of ecological psychology. Narratives developed that captured key stories of the Studio program as Patton (2007) suggests they will.

These narratives contributed firstly to the analysis detailed in chapter 4 revealing how learning in the Studio could be described from an ecological psychological perspective. As an example, the invariant theme of 'freedom' across narratives from interview data was noticed to be congruent with my observations of exploratory behaviour and with an examination of artefacts produced in the Studio and recorded as photographic images. The ecological psychological literature, for example, E Gibson and Pick (2000) and Reed (1988) emphasises the significance of exploratory behaviour to increasing specificity and to determining what is significant for action as motivation for learning. In a similar way narratives developed around how shared attention contributes to attunement (see Zuckow-Goldring and Arbib, 2007), how children engaged affordance networks for learning (see Barab & Plucker, 2002; Barab & Roth, 2006), the significance of volition for instruction (see Barab & Roth, 2006), children seeking to demonstrate effectivities as performatory behaviour (see E. Gibson, 2003), and finally, how these cycles of perception and action constitute learning (see E. Gibson & Pick, 2000; E. Gibson, 2003). What was invariant about these six narratives revealed in chapter 4 is that they are narratives of children learning in the Studio not by a measure of outcomes entirely, but rather, by

their activity within the Studio as a behaviour setting that afforded them certain opportunities stemming from its pedagogical organisation for student-initiated, adult-supported activity. This is not to say that these behaviours were not also enacted in the regular classroom, and I suspect that many of them are, however, in this study I did not seek to describe learning in the regular classroom from this ecological stance.

At this point I re-engaged with the initial themes coded from interview data with the hindsight of what revealed itself in the writing of chapter 4. As an example, I noticed that 'time' was an invariant theme across participant groups and data sets, and had similar meanings ascribed to it pertaining to its scarcity for all participants. For example, for teachers, the time the Studio program was perceived to take away from subject-centred teaching was significant, while for students, time was a factor that upset their focus of attention because there wasn't enough of it to complete Studio projects according to their standards or temporal goals.

For a deeper analysis of organism-environment transactions it was necessary to consider what was worth talking about in conversations, what action was taken both in and with regard to the Studio, what affordances were actualised, and importantly, what was implied by any silences and inaction. Here I found the gristle and the bone of the data, much of which supported the theoretical claim that: "the fundamental ecological task in acting and perceiving is to realise values" (deVilliers & Zukow-Goldring, 2012, p. 598). Both temporality and relationality emerged as key themes across the data indicating their value to participants. Ultimately however, perceptions of the Studio and its affordances (in terms of its use and value) were impacted by role constraints and pressures exerted by the wider behavioural unit of school, and the values typically enshrined in classrooms as behaviour settings were at play.

This was entirely relevant to the second objective of this study to consider if and how the Studio program could inform innovation at the site in pursuit of a more inherently inclusive school campus. In the final analysis, contributing to the writing of chapter 5, I describe how the detection of affordances undertaken by people in their respective roles, is constrained by the environment as mutually constitutive in determining these roles, suggesting the affordances of place are particularly relevant

to considerations of inclusivity. In conclusion, this particular research analysis proffers a broad consideration of the intersection of the Gibsonian perspective with Roger Barker's ecological psychology to formulate and present the findings and discussions of the following chapters.

3.4 Summary

Affordances of place understood through ecological psychology and contextualised through an understanding of politics of place as produced, as the chapters that follow will explicate, raise questions of legitimacy via unchallenged assumptions about 'schooling'. These unchallenged assumptions guided my interrogation of the information I picked up from the site and the project itself. I was indeed searching for invariance as the ecological stance contends. I was actively seeking the information to inform my action as researcher about the things that stayed the same (invariance) and where space for variance was possible. Thus I became more and more 'attuned' through the research process of both reviewing the literature, and the techniques deployed as critical ethnographer, to ways in which the Studio was perceived. It is my attunement to the perceptions of the Studio made by the research participants that is finally revealed as the findings of this research.

The criticality I brought to the site and to the research itself was done with concern for inspiring a more diverse approach to pedagogy - to how children learn, in order that the school progressed towards inclusion that was more inherent in its environment. I assumed the Studio might become a provocation for conversations about how children learn and parents and teachers together can act in an educational partnership to encourage them. When Jana, the resident artist, employed briefly and with little prior knowledge of the Studio commented after her first couple of sessions, *"This isn't just about art is it?"* I knew it was possible.

Chapter 4: Understanding learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance

This chapter provides interpretations and descriptions of learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance. My observations and inquiries as an ethnographer were focused on capturing the activity that manifested in the Studio sessions, the intentions of participants, and the ways in which the Studio learning environment enabled and constrained children's behaviour, with particular attention to the role of children as initiators of action, and the role of adults in supporting student-initiated activity. I was essentially examining the functionality of the Studio as a learning environment to identify how the two strands of ecological psychology intersected to impact learning. From narrative themes across the data came descriptions of *standing patterns of behaviour* that revealed what the Studio *afforded* its participants and from this, an account of learning from this stance is deduced.

From the outset of the Studio program children were informed that this particular classroom was set up for them to pursue their own activity, with the only caveat being to bring focused attention to their work. The provision and organisation of materials including accessible art/craft, pottery, woodworking and recyclables afforded a constant stream of creativity as children busied themselves pursuing ideas they had preconceived, ideas that were observably picked up from noticing the qualities of materials in their environment, or via the frequent inspiration of what others had made or were in the process of making.

Very occasionally someone didn't know what to do, and either engaged in onlooker behaviour, were asked to consider their options in an area of the room where soft furnishings and books provided a space to ponder and inspiration for creative projects, or were offered suggestions by adults and/or children. The space was a busy one and the level of activity constituted a 'noise' that seemed only to bother the kind of visitors who never intended on fully engaging with the space and its activity, but for those occupied, adults and children alike, it was more like the hum of a busy hive:

Noisy! Sometimes, but it's really high-level activity. You can see they're really involved in what they're doing and that they're using a lot of higher level thinking

skills and even with the younger children you can see that things that they bring back when they've been to Studio for their hour, they're things that they've obviously put a lot of thought into and it's the effort that's been put into it that's great. (Paul, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)

Additionally, the Studio program regularly flowed out into the wider spaces of the school, for example, when children decided they wanted to choreograph dance routines to their favourite songs they used the library (which was not in use on those occasions), a box of dress ups, and other found objects for props. Painting, drawing, and constructive endeavours were also regularly practiced in the outdoor space with permission.

This chapter will provide an initial discussion of the role of exploratory behaviour, its significance to learning from an ecological perspective and evidence of exploratory behaviour in the activity of children in the Studio as they engaged with its material and spatial features (5.1). Episodes of joint attention and the ways in which language was engaged in the Studio build on a theme which considers the relational features of the Studio (5.2), culminating with an examination of the data which evidence how networks of affordances functioned to support children's learning (5.3), with specific attention to the data which evidenced the way in which student-initiated activity contributed to volition for instruction (5.4). The impacts of these means of engagement in the Studio on 'performatory behaviour' (5.5), and the significance of considering learning as a perception-action cycle (5.6) are discussed briefly before summarising these findings and an undercurrent of tensions that will be introduced (5.7) which will come to the fore in chapter 5 where the potential impact of the Studio to contribute to innovation for a more inclusive school campus becomes the focus of this inquiry.

4.1 "Where…kids can just freely pursue their own ideas": Exploratory behaviour and motivation for learning

In keeping with ecological psychology's view that perception is direct, exploratory behaviour serves to assist the extraction of increasingly specific information in order to refine activity (Reed, 1996a). In short, exploratory behaviour functions to support

learning. This section examines how I came to understand the significance of exploratory behaviour to learning in the Studio, but first turns to a personal encounter that highlights how exploratory behaviour may be undervalued in the school context as a source of motivation for learning:

At seven years of age, my son, helping to clean up the yard after school, found a block of what appeared to be metal covered in dirt that he carried around excitedly. He found the object fascinating and sought out my opinion of what it was. On closer inspection I suggested it was probably metal and that it was not covered in dirt, but something called rust. "There is a way to clean of the rust but I can't quite remember" I pondered. I mumbled "vinegar" thinking the possibilities out loud and he launched into action, running to fetch vinegar before I had time to explain further, and so the mysterious brown blob was soaked overnight in vinegar. The next morning his interest in the object was still heightened and we applied the magnetic test to confirm the object was in fact metal. Then it was time to go to school. With his curiosity peaking I suggested other children and the teacher might also have ideas about what it is, and be interested in how to remove the rust to reveal more clues. It was an opportunity for curiosity to drive an inquiry, however brief. I sent him off to school with his experiment wondering if the door to learning was open.

A couple of weeks later, as I picked him up from school one afternoon, he handed me the container and unchanged blob. I excitedly asked him how it went. "Nothing", he exclaimed angrily. And after more prying, "Same as always, they say we'll do it tomorrow, but it never happens." How do I explain to him that school, a place of learning, has a packed curriculum, with no room for the organic way in which inquiring minds might blossom? With little recognition for how children learn, how is it possible to connect children to learning journeys where the answers don't matter as much as the exponential nature of a question to multiply rewardingly? (Reflexive Ethnography, 12/5/2011)

The metal blob afforded my son the possibility of connecting to the cultural storehouse of knowledge, in this case the knowledge of matter, defined as metal, and a chemical reaction that alters the state of that matter. As a seven year old excited about a found object he had possibly perceived its potential importance from

information detected in his environment, through stories of pirates treasure, archaeological finds, and paleo-anthropological discoveries that reveal clues to past worlds. Children's exploratory behaviour is both an expression of their past, coupled with prospectivity for possibilities that lay in the future. My son's exploratory behaviour, perhaps a ubiquitous characteristic of children, exemplifies the motivation for learning that manifests as a search for value and meaning in the environment:

> We seek values and meanings, although we do not always succeed at getting what we want. Information and affordances are available in the environment of all animals. This grounds meaning and value in the environment, but it also requires of individual animals that they undertake an effort to come into relationship with meanings and values. The nature and intensity of these efforts to detect information or use affordances will vary with the biological needs and developmental experiences of a given animal. It is this effort after meaning and value that, I claim, is psychologically basic and is the embodiment of motivation. (Reed, 1996a, p. 101)

Figure 4.1: This image captured adult and child in the Studio embodying motivation as they made an 'effort after meaning and value' in the search for creatures in the bark

After this incident, I was not able to re-engage his curiosity about the object, although I had developed my own curiosity about how metal corrodes and as a consequence of this curiosity I discovered how this process is associated with the electrochemical process harnessed to store energy in a battery. I was fascinated

however; my son had lost all interest. I suspect having met resistance to the object containing any value for learning at school, he had 'given up' on it. I pondered the role school might play in curbing motivation to make this "effort to come into relationship with meanings and values" as Reed described. It seemed possible that resistance to supporting children's 'effort after meaning and value' could curb the very motivation that leads to learning.

In order to describe children's learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance I had to consider the efforts children made after meaning and value. Upon entering the Studio children initially came into relationship with spaces divided by furniture; open shelving, woodwork bench, tables and easels for example, as well as room to work on the floor (see figure 3.1). Materials were made accessible on open shelving, and children were encouraged to ask for things they needed if they could not access them. Most of the materials were familiar and occasionally, for example, if a parent or community member had brought something new to demonstrate, previously unseen work of others was on display, or new objects or materials had been dropped off to the Studio as donations, they were novel. In this way, if children did not have a project they had begun working on in a previous session their engagement with the space was typically, exploratory. For example, Figure 4.2 shows Kiarnen exploring what appeared at first to be bags of junk left on the floor. However, for Kiarnen these donated items offered possibilities and potential for creative action.

Figure 4.2: Kiarnen used the open floor space to explore bags of donated materials

Evidence indicated that without the pressure to complete adult-directed tasks, and where student-initiated activity was actively promoted, exploratory behaviour was a common occurrence. In fact, it played a central role in children's detection of affordances and thus, as Barker (1968) described, became a *standing pattern of behaviour* that children employed year after year when given the opportunity to initiate their own activity in the Studio. In this example of Kiarnen, after the initial session fossicking through the materials in bags, he selected and stashed some of his preferred materials in a box. This exploratory behaviour was resumed over the duration of several sessions with Kiarnen's activity also attracting allies:

Kiarnen and a couple of friends grabbed a box of material from the cupboard, spreading its contents across the floor, selecting and wrapping fabric around their torsos while discussing what assassins looked like (Research Diary, 14/2/2013). Again, Kiarnen, along with two of his peers, shared enthusiasm for the topic, ideas for costumes and a search for the most suitable "assassin" fabrics. A collection of materials was honed down to those suitable for costumes as they took turns to channel assassin performances and discuss what exactly an assassin is. (Research Diary, 20/2/2013)

The value of exploratory behaviour for detecting information and perceiving affordances is not typically recognised by teachers under the constraints of the dominant learning theories and the subsequent conditions for learning and teaching, or pedagogical organisers, impacting schools. This was never more obvious to me than when I found a creative arts teacher from another school "fossicking" through the Studio one morning. She was organising an activity for a so called "enrichment program" where she would be working in the Studio space with her particular group of children. After introducing ourselves she made a comment about how lucky we were to have the Studio:

I explained a little about how the Studio came to be and its purpose (rather more a result of 'effort after meaning and value' as Reed (1996a) contended, than a stroke of "luck"). I mentioned how it provided a space for children's self-directed activity, for open-ended creative opportunities. She responded that her group of students

would be making "spiders", adding the qualification that students would be able to decide what their particular spiders would look like. (Research Journal, 14/5/2013)

This activity-based pedagogy that assured all children were undertaking the same activity at the same time is typical of the work often displayed in classrooms (see Figure 1.3), and was reported by parents involved in setting up the Studio, as one of the reasons for being pro-active in supporting teachers at the site to be able to offer an alternative student-initiated, open-ended pedagogy:

I got involved because…it's about, you know, having a good creative space available where the kids can just freely pursue their own ideas…as opposed to being told what to do all the time. And, I think kids just really need that…kids at the school experience that for at least one hour a week. You know it's a start. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

Interestingly, it was the teacher herself as the sole director of the "spider making" activity that was privileged to engage in exploratory activity in the Studio, as "fossicking". These twenty something giant spiders would encroach on the Studio space for the duration of the enrichment program and beyond as 'decoration'. Hanging from the ceiling, children, parents, and our resident artist, would often contort our bodies to avoid banging our heads on them. For me, and possibly other parent instigators of the Studio program, the giant spiders came to symbolise metaphorically some of the frustrations of holding true to the original ideals for the Studio to provide children with their own room (literally and figuratively) to explore creatively by having the opportunity for self-direction and open-ended experiences as an alternative to this activity-based pedagogy of teacher directed tasks.

The research of Ye, Cardwell, and Mark (2009) suggests exploratory activities common to early childhood pedagogy are of importance to the detection of information and consequently the perception of affordances. They claim the ability of children to detect multiple affordances of objects diminishes rapidly after early childhood according with the same point argued famously by Robinson (2006). However, the data I was collecting suggested there was little consideration by teachers of the value of exploratory behaviour as important for children to be able to sort out what they want to do, what is worth acting for, and what is worth doing.

Asked directly about whether time for exploration in the Studio was valuable, one teacher surmised:

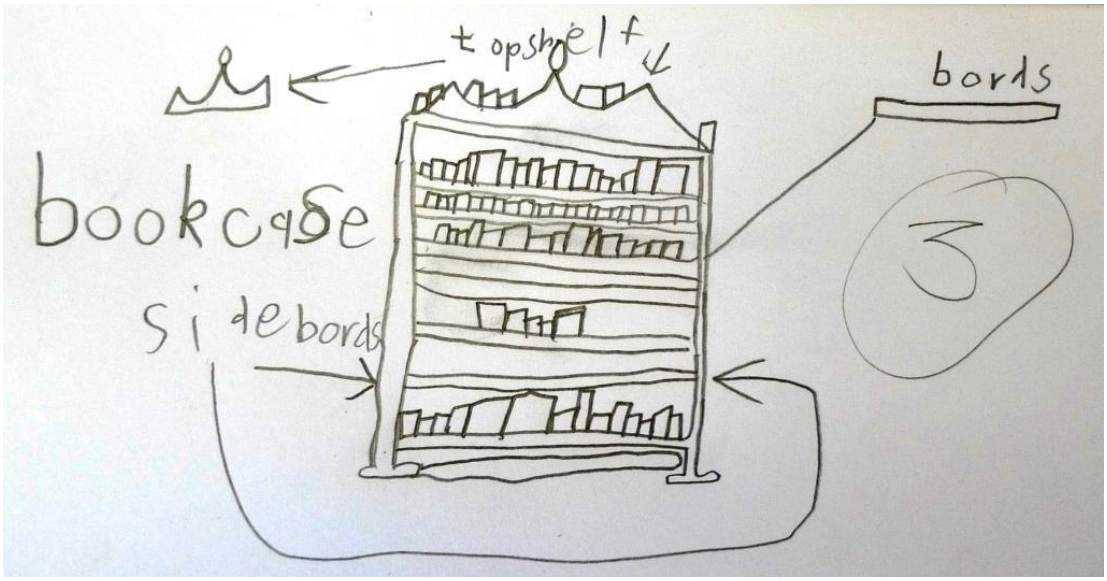

Figure 4.3: An example of the visual representation of children's planning in a Studio journal they were encouraged to keep.

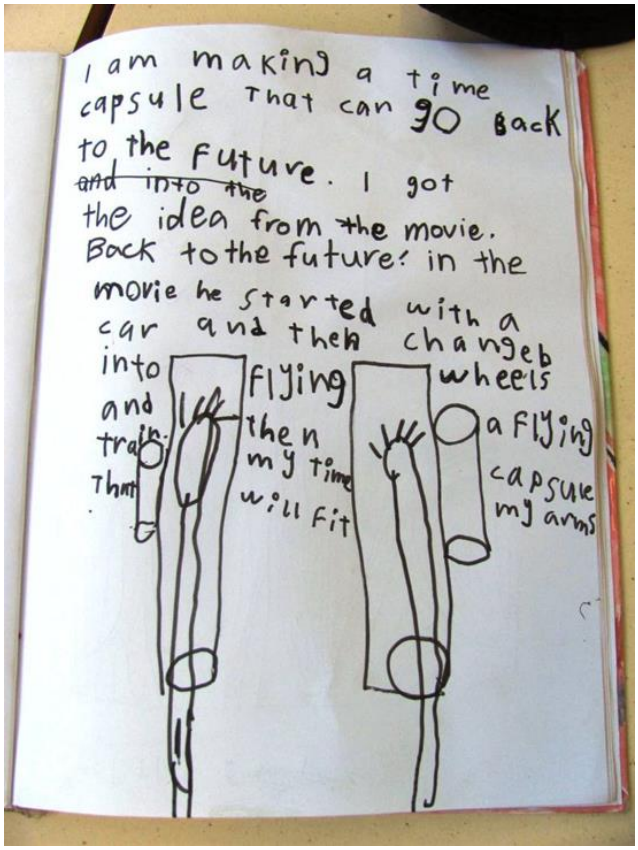

Figure 4.4: Children were encouraged from time to time to make plans of what they wanted to do in their Studio journals. Again this example of planning evidences the connection of intention and life-world experiences.

Some of the kids are natural planners and they'll plan and they'll use that time. It's just that if they can't think of anything to do that it becomes time-wasting. (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

The response is indicative of an instrumentalist logic that if children aren't "natural planners", they could be "time-wasters". It highlights concerns with how teachers often neglect to value exploratory behaviour as a necessary part of the educational experience promoted at school, perhaps pointing to an absence of a theoretical framework to understand it. In contrast, regarding his involvement in sculpting a clay figure for weeks on end (see Figure 4.5), one child explained:

"I failed with Dimentue! But, I'm going to make an awesome scale (model) of it, but, even better this time!" (Gregory, Year 4 Student, Interview, 30/7/13)

Figure 4.5: Gregory understood his clay figures could be improved upon

Gregory articulated a connection between exploration, performance, and learning, as described by Gibson and Pick (2000):

> Exploratory activity yields knowledge about environmental possibilities, affordances, and one's own capabilities. Perception and action are closely intertwined in both exploration and performance and learning is an important outcome of both types of action. (p. 21)

Exploratory behaviour affords motivation for learning and yet opportunities for exploratory behaviour in schools are typically highly constrained by subject-centred learning and the resultant restrictive timetables and consequent instrumentalist logic they perpetuate. These constraints may be as limiting for teachers as they are for children when it comes to motivation for learning. In fact, as a parent in support of the idea that *"kids just really need that*" freedom to explore, I was beginning to wonder if adults, and in this particular case teachers, just really need that too! Data that further detailed this tension concerning the ways in which the Studio as a behaviour setting enabled exploratory behaviour, and the ways in which the Studio itself was constrained by the school as the larger 'unit of behaviour' (Barker,1968) will be further elaborated on in chapter 5.

This section has suggested that exploratory behaviour was part of the set of behaviours that manifested from student-initiated activity in the Studio, where spatio-temporal features were typified by the accessibility of materials and open-ended time to pursue goals (albeit in a very limited amount of time). This discussion of the findings as they relate to explaining learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological perspective will now turn to the features of human relationships that manifested in the Studio.

4.2 "In Indonesia they use it to make the roofs of houses!": Episodes of joint attention and attunement to affordances for learning

Jana, a complete outsider to our school community, came to the Studio in its third year of operation as our inaugural professional artist in residence, thanks to a small grant received from the NSW, Country Arts Support Program. She was engaged for over two terms to support an interest in weaving and fabric work that parents had noticed emerging over the years as children produced friendship bracelets with cotton, stapled and sewed fabric to produce soft toys and dolls and discussed (in conversations as they worked) where fabric comes from.

In the first weeks Jana came bearing baskets of natural materials—native grasses, sticks, bark, and leaves from banana trees. She also brought a few of her own creations for inspiration- 3-D sculptures, cocoon like ornaments, baskets and handmade string. Jana, and her work, was briefly introduced to children at the start of their sessions, but the children were still able to do whatever they wanted in their Studio time. Many were enthralled with Jana's artefacts and became seduced by the affordances she had found in natural materials for weaving and sculpting interesting objects. Some children were struck with a desire to work alongside Jana soaking up the information she had to share (see Figure 4.6). Others had already started projects that they eagerly returned to but would sneak over occasionally or towards the end of their session to take up some of these materials and begin exploration.

Figure 4.6: A child is captivated by Jana's work in this episode of shared attention

Over the weeks Jana's insights were revealed to me through what she didn't do, more than what she did. The first week I sat next to her introducing myself, expressing appreciation of her work and a desire to talk about what she was doing. Jana cut me off instantly and gently asked with a huge smile, "Would you like to have a go?" She picked up two strands of the lomandra grass and exuberantly offered her hands out in front, as if they would speak for her with more clarity than words! My train of thought was stopped in its tracks, stopped long enough to notice

my next breath drawing in. On the out breath, I was with Jana, drawing in everything her hand had to show me.

That afternoon, I took two of my children for a walk to pick lomandra grass from parkland not too far from our home. I split the leaves and put them aside as I had been shown. One week later, I had a couple of metres of rope, the beginnings of a basket, and a blister on my left pointer! Weaving with natural materials felt like coming home. Collecting the lomandra gave purpose to walks with my children and time to connect with each other and the wider environment. On one occasion, as we played with arranging our collected materials from a fallen tree that was an excellent source of curved sticks to use as spokes for baskets, my son (nine years), began to discuss the lashing technique that Jana had taught him: "Lashing is so much fun" he said, as I toyed with the sticks in my fingers. I replied, "I haven't been shown how to lash yet, I've only been weaving." Seemingly enthusiastic about the potential for an exchange, he stated, "I don't know how to do that bit." So I suggested, "Can you show me how to lash, and I can show you the weaving part?" He responded excitedly, "Lashing is awesome mum! It's so strong! Jana said in Indonesia they use it to make the roofs of the houses!" He proceeded to teach me the lashing technique with an air of competence.

Jana's behaviour in the Studio was simply to go about her own activity with purpose, enjoyment, and focus, even when the children busied themselves with other projects. Sharing her skills was a progression of her art practice, she had explained to me. The teacher, who accompanied the younger groups in their Studio sessions, also sat down and received Jana's gentle instruction on several occasions, remarking once, "I am so happy I've learnt a new skill!" Jana's pedagogical approach struck me as entirely suited to the Studio. She never over-instructed, providing just the minimum direction required, specific to the current action. Jana could have told me to increase the twists between spokes as I created a basket, but instead she trusted that I would figure it out myself or perhaps ask if I need clarity. Her approach, allowing for self-learning, perpetuated a certain joy in noticing things for oneself. Perhaps that feeling of joy in learning is what had made the teacher feel so happy when she had learnt a new skill! Jana tells me often that she is, "just exploring." She may have some information to share, as she is a little bit further along than the rest of us in the

stream of specificity concerning weaving, but she considers herself a learner too! Jana embodies the wisdom to explore what is possible, and the heartfelt desire to share it with others. (Reflective Ethnography compiled from research diary entries, Feb-March, 2013)

This lengthy vignette sets the scene for a discussion of the promotion of affordances through joint or shared attention. It provides a rich example of how Jana promotes the affordances of weaving to children and adults alike as she shared both her skills,

Figure 4.7: The lashing technique is shared in another episode of joint attention

for example, the lashing technique, and her knowledge, for example the cultural significance of lashing as roofing material in shelter building. While Jana brought a particular expertise to the Studio learning environment, her pedagogical approach was not dissimilar to that of parents whose approaches to children as learners were derived from multifarious influences including experiences with their children learning at home, in their preschool environments, and their own experiences with learning as apprenticeship, or through their own art practices (Parent Interviews, 2010 and 2012).

For humans, other people are at the centre of efforts to connect with meaning and value in the environment, and attuning children's attention to affordances is typical of caretaking practice. Zukow-Goldring and Arbib's (2007) research is exemplary as it examines how parents and caretakers attune infants to effectivities and affordances in everyday exploration of objects in the environment. Rogoff (1991) summarises how this everyday practice functions to support learning as relational:

> Such joint focus and shared interpretation are likely to be woven into the fabric of interpersonal relations, and seldom to be the focus of explicit attention. In other words, we may skilfully share events with our social partners without having to be aware of these efforts or intending them to be instructional. (p. 69)

In more recent work, Rogoff (2003) contrasts the pedagogical approaches of guided participation with the didactic approach of schooling as she encountered them across cultures that valued children pitching in to adult activities in a community, and those that valued children being schooled:

> One of the most striking regularities of cultural processes involves the ways that children's learning opportunities are structured. In some cultural systems, children have the opportunity to learn by observing and pitching in to mature activities of the community. Children watch on-going events keenly and listen closely to narratives and nearby conversations and contribute as they are ready. Their caregivers and companions offer access and often provide support and pointers in the context of shared community activities. This cultural pattern contrasts with a model in which children are separated from the mature activities of their community and instead do exercises at home and at school to prepare from their later entry into the adult world. Adults thus organise children's learning, using lessons out of context of use of the skills and information taught. To encourage children's involvement, the adults try to motivate the children through such means as praise. They often asked known-answer questions to engage the children and test their understanding of the lessons. (p. 366)

From my observations, the Studio was functioning more like a community than a classroom, according to Rogoff's description. Although messing around with clay and making cardboard dioramas might not seem like it is related to "mature work",

these activities the children undertook in Studio are central to many adult work related activities, such as animation, architecture, and design, as well as involving literacy, numeracy, and scientific concepts. The activities children engaged with could in fact all be associated with "mature work". The idea that children make good choices of activities in which to engage themselves has recently been used to justify the approach of "unschooling" by parents opting out of any "school" based pedagogy at all (Usher, 2014). On this topic, one parent interviewed by Usher, responding to suggestions that unschooling might appear chaotic, claimed adamantly, that when left to their own devices children make good choices of activity. This was also my observation of children's choices of activity in the Studio.

The typically didactic pedagogy of schooling requires students to be well versed in a 'shared focus of attention'. This ensures that they are 'on the same page' with the teacher, for example, the pages in a workbook, examples on a whiteboard, or increasingly, applications on an interactive whiteboard. Teachers also make an effort to "attune" students to affordances in the classroom, such as base ten blocks for working out maths problems, and dictionaries to help with spelling. However, as Rogoff, Goodman Turkanis, and Bartlett (2001) contend, classroom interaction is typified by the fact that "for much of the day, only the teacher is allowed to speak; if children speak, it is one at a time and only to the teacher" (p. 13). In contrast, Tomasello and Farrar (1986) note that "learning seems to be facilitated when children are in control of the objects of joint attention" (p. 147-148). Additionally, the ability to direct attention develops in infancy and is integral to the human communication system (Matthews, Behne, Lieven & Tomasello, 2012) bringing the didactic approach of classrooms into question. The Studio's provision of opportunities for guided participation, allowed for spontaneous activity and conversation, where shared attention and attunement to affordances occurred in a more reciprocal way.

All pedagogy has its foundation in joint or shared attention (Heft, 2013). For example, it is through the promotion of affordances during shared attention that language is acquired according to Cowley (2011). This becomes the relational frame for the human language system in contrast to behaviourist and cognitivist assumptions that focus on sending and receiving messages from a brain, body, or

mind (Cowley, 2011). Recent research by deVilliers and Zukow-Goldring (2012) suggests messages become audio visible through the education of attention. Gesture is used to create word – referent correspondence where: "attention is inherently dynamic and embodied as an individual orients, explores, and investigates the environment, and, thus, is situated" (p. 561). The following scene from a Studio session illustrates this key point:

Enthusiastic children stream into the Studio, some moving immediately to their work with an urgency that conveys its personal importance, while others gather around the banana trunk that Jana is stripping on the floor. Some of the children who gather around the trunk have a personal connection to it. Their parents work on nearby banana farms and they begin an elaborate discussion about where the trunk came from. This seemingly important conversation though is missed, as the teacher's voice, increasing in volume, dominates other voices to bring everyone's attention to what Jana is doing. I expect the 'effort after meaning and value' for the teacher is in the group coming together for a moment of whole group instruction at the expense of this personal motivation for task focus and rich and meaningful conversation.

When the children are at last all seated, their attention disrupted, their thoughts scattered, they hesitate to respond to the teacher's Q and A. The teacher asks leading questions like: "What do you think Jana is doing?" and "What do you think you could make with this?" When no one responds, children are asked individually in turn to contribute an answer to the last question. The answers children provide seem disconnected to the experience unfolding before them -"a duck", "a car"- seemingly random responses. Thankfully, this is not drawn out too much longer and the teacher…lets them get back to their business. (Research Journal, 2/4/2013)

If the teacher had sensitively entered the children's conversation about where the trunk had come from, this might have afforded a much denser literacy experience than the Q and A that transpired. Reed (1991) likens the classroom, as a particular *econiche* whereby questions are most often asked where the answer is already known, to the psychological laboratory. This sentiment was echoed in the seminal review of educational research foregrounding a case for formative assessment contributed by Black and Wiliam (1998). They make reference to the inadequacy of

Figure 4.8: Children excitedly involved in stripping a banana trunk to remove the fibre for drying and eventually weaving in the Studio

student-teacher discourse of the questions and answer style, and go as far as to describe it as an unproductive "ritual". Having the teacher accompany children into the Studio was an undertaking to connect teachers and the regular classrooms to what was happening in the Studio. Ordinarily children entered the Studio and got themselves underway unless they chose to discuss ideas with a friend or parent. In this way, those interested in discussing what was important to them would have had the opportunity, and the children's own curiosity about Jana's activity would connect them to Jana freely throughout the session. Wood (1998) contends from a summary of research on instruction that: "the spontaneous interaction and monitoring by adult tutors contained more useful cognitive cooperation than a script that was tailored to teach a procedure" (p. 144). The following day I attempted to use the interest in the banana trunks to invite a conversation amongst these three children in order to better understand what was missed. It became evident that two of the children had been directly involved in sourcing the trunks:

Tanvir: We got a special knife for chopping down the bananas…

Robert: When we brought these trees, he (Dad) brought the heavy bit and we brought the sticks.

Tanvir: We both dropped them off to school…

Robert: They're very hard to chop down; we have to like do crosses to chop them down.

Tanvir: And somebody has to stand there and cut the (inaudible).

Robert: And then the rope cuts, and the banana comes down and you get a whole patch of them. They fall down like the other way, not our way, and sometimes my Dad like chops it through without doing the cross but it bruises the bananas.

Roxanne: So you have to do the crosses? That's the best technique.

Robert: Yeah and my brothers take the bananas off the trunks.

When asked in what the trunk could be used for in this conversation, the children's answers were more accurate.

Robert: We can use it for big bowls, for cooking. (Year1 Students, Audio Recording, 3/4/2013)

The significance of children's control over the objects of joint or shared attention, in this example, contributed relevance to the flow of conversation that was lost with the teacher dominated interaction. This seemed particularly significant given that these two children were learning English as their second language.

By removing children from opportunities that afford learning (in the community), to a space where learning should afford work in the future (the school), spatio-temporal factors that define school as a 'unit of behaviour' (Barker, 1968) impact agency and relationality (as will be discussed in depth in chapter 5), both of which are highly significant to learning from an ecological psychological perspective. For example, the people children can access for learning in episodes of joint or shared attention, where effectivities and affordances are attuned, shifts from people of multi-age groups of mentors, to one of teacher and many subordinate same-aged peers. My concerns encountered as a parent about my own children finding a sense of place in the school context amidst sudden shifts in spatial organisation, matters of agency, and approaches to pedagogy were now more clearly understood as a concern with their removal from community and placement in the

school. From this perspective, the significance of the Studio could also be understood as an attempt to recreate a space for community within the school. Data suggested the pedagogical organisation of the Studio for student-initiated activity that was adult supported, might significantly improve opportunities for joint attention impacting learning.

The following section will describe data detailing the dynamic character of learning in action, explained by ecological psychology as operationalising effectivities in affordance networks (Barab & Roth, 2006; Barab & Plucker, 2002). This contributed a deeper understanding of how the Studio community functioned not only to support learning, but also to support inclusivity.

4.3 "Wow, how did you do a car?": Engaging affordance networks

This section introduces how the pedagogy of the Studio, as a space for community within the school, had consequent implications for inclusivity. These implications are understood through a description of how networks of affordances were engaged for learning. Descriptions of how parent and student effectivities were operationalised in affordance networks (Barab & Roth, 2006; Barab & Plucker, 2002), contribute deeper understandings of the significance of guided participation not only to children's learning but also to the conceptualisation of inclusivity for all actors within the setting.

As noted so far, children's learning in the Studio was impacted by their encounters with others and with objects in the environment which provide information for the detection of affordances. As Heft (2003) stipulates, "affordances are not neutral; they are not value free" (p. 155). For example, a chair most often affords sitting but it may also be a useful place to hide, something to extend our height, or a trip hazard. Affordances are both promoted directly through joint attention, as Jana promoted the affordances of weaving through demonstration and conversation, or indirectly, as her artefacts or photographs of them might. They are also picked up through exploratory behaviour. The values of those around us are central to our own affordance detection. By way of explanation, allow me to fabricate an example before exploring the data more directly. A child encountering a

spider in the environment may experience a range of information that can be picked-up from a parent according to that parent's perception of what a 'spider' affords. For example, one parent might use the encounter with a spider to promote caution and the potential dangers of spiders. Another might recognise the affordance of a spider in the environment to build a conversation about habitats and ecosystems; providing information for the child to pick up about the spiders ecology. Both parents are expressing the results of their own efforts after meaning in their encounters with the world, and the value they have found in 'spider'. If a child encounters a spider out of the presence of a watchful adult, perhaps they would observe and wonder, or poke at it in an exploratory way.

Whatever resources available to a child, whether physical capabilities or social knowledge recalled from past experiences, these constitute effectivities that connect them to a network of affordances of tools, knowledge's, practices, and people. In the Studio, children's ability to engage affordance networks typically began with a stance of wonder and a statement of appreciation that conveyed shared values:

Phillip was impressed with Rashad's drawing of a car and stated: "Wow, how did you do a car?" His smile, statement and excitement seemed to reveal the promise of knowing what great things he could learn from his friend. (Research Journal, 2/3 Observations, 23/2/2011)

Additionally, student initiated activity afforded opportunities for children to enlist the help of others towards their goals (see Figure 4.9 for example). Effectivities are operationalised through networks of affordances (Barab & Roth, 2006; Barab & Plucker, 2002). For example, the Studio, by expanding the involvement of parents and community, was providing an alternate way to be involved in the school, operationalising the effectivities of parents to work pedagogically with children through sharing skills and knowledge as they went about their work. Parents used the opportunity to work pedagogically by supporting children's developing effectivities:

Bianca recognised that the ideas being discussed by Kiarnen and friends as they explored costume making...stemmed from the children's experience with a computer game character. Towards the end of the session she discussed this with me as well as

Figure 4.9: One child wanted her classmates to autograph her work which became an opportunity for the kindergarten children to practice name writing.

how we could potentially support this interest in costume making. (Research Diary, 14/2/2013)

The tendency for parents in the context of the Studio to bring pedagogical intentions to their interactions with children again mirrored Rogoff's (1991) account of learning as guided participation:

> Both caregivers and children are responsible for determining children's activities and roles, through tacit and pragmatic adjustment to children's skills and interests, as well as more explicit arrangements for children's growing participation in the activities of their culture. (p. 86)

While Bianca may not have had a direct interest in the computer game character that she shared with the children, her shared interest in technology, supported their interest. Her action was to link the children to the skills and knowledge that would support their efforts with costume making. This was a very different role for parents than was accessible prior to the Studio, however for those parents involved, it was

evidently a familiar way of working alongside children. Children engaged networks of affordances to operationalise their effectivities to make and do, very often, by simply asking for help:

When Kiarnen had set himself the task of making, what he had come to understand via their explorations of the past few weeks, as the most significant aspect of the assassin costume - a hood, he asked for my help. (Research Diary, 20/2/2013)

A concern with operationalising effectivities by engaging affordance networks was, as Rogoff claimed, everybody's business.

Enlisting help to achieve tasks or sub tasks, described as engaging affordance networks to operationalise effectivities became a *standing pattern of behaviour* in the Studio. Student initiated activity afforded opportunities for children to enlist the help of others towards their own goals. In the following transcription of a video, Shamala (Year 4) has asked Ben (a parent and expert woodworker) to help her cut a window into a piece of timber she had found. The window was to be for a house her and her friend Matthieu were constructing:

Figure 4.10: A still image taken from video depicting students engaging a network of affordances

Ben: So (grabbing the square tool and a lead pencil), we're going to a do a square? How big do you want the window?

Shamala: (Moves to another area of the room to consult her working partner) How big?

Matthieu: "I don't know miniature".

Shamala: (returning to the woodworking bench with her fingers indicating the size she wants the window to be) About that big. Like a rectangle kind of?

Ben: (Matthieu has now joined in at the woodworking bench.) In the middle, or to the side?

Matthieu: Indicating off to the side, says, "Here."

Ben: About here. Alright, so we'll do a square. Tell me if this is looking alright? (Katie comes closer to watch Ben use the square as he draws on the shape)

Shamala: That looks really good (nodding)

Ben: You just want to cut it out like that?

Shamala: Yes

Ben: I've got a special saw for that (fossicking through the cupboard and returning to the workbench). Because you can't just cut that square out or the rest of it will just fall apart. So, what we'll do is drill a hole with one of these (taking a drill bit from a pack and putting it in the drill).

Shamala: That has to be a good size. I want it to be parallel.

Ben: Do you want to drill it?

Shamala: (with a little bounce of her whole body and a wide smile indicating her enthusiasm) Yes!

Ben: Can you get me a clamp, because you'll have to clamp that one when you drill it, so it doesn't move around. Do you know what a clamp is?

Shamala: (pointing to a clamp) One of them.

Ben: Katie will show you. (Katie who is working on her treasure box brings a spare clamp from the cupboard) That'll do. Clamp that up there. And when you clamp, you don't want your pencil line to be anywhere near the bench, otherwise you'll cut the bench.

Shamala: (having difficulty opening the clamp) How do you do that?

Ben: It just shakes down. (Ben is interrupted momentarily to assist another child)

Ben: (Ben returns to Shamala's piece as Shamala grabs for the drill) Hang on, get your stool? (Shamala drags a stool over and stands on it in front of her work).

Shamala: (smiling as she climbs on stool) Now I can see.

Ben: Now when you put your drill in, you're going to start in the corner (indicating by pointing to the corner).

Shamala: (with the drill now in both hands) Yep.

Ben: (grabbing the top of the drill to move it into position with her) So, put your drill where you want it first.

Shamala: Right here (as she twists her upper body raising her right elbow in the air).

Ben: Now when you pull the trigger, pull it right back. Don't do a half bit, you want full trigger.

Shamala: (begins drilling with her head down but Ben's hand gently guides the top of the drill almost without her knowing)

Ben: Faster, pull it right back. That's it. right Back

(Matthieu and Katie watch smiling in the background)

Ben: (as the drill gets through the wood) There it goes.

Shamala: (Lifting her head with the smile returning after concentration) Whew!

Ben: How did that feel?

Shamala: That felt really fun!

Ben: Alright now to get this in (picking up the saw) you actually have to take the saw blade out.

Shamala: That must be really hard.

Ben: It shouldn't be.

Shamala: Especially when you have been working with wood for a really long time.

Ben: (Threading the saw blade through the hole made with the drill) And you put it in.

Shamala: Ok So you don't have to take it out.

Ben: Yeah. You take it out of this bit here and now you've got to put it back in.

Shamala: That must be a pain in the neck!

Ben: It can be. (Video captured, 4/5/6 studio Session, 18/3/2013)

This footage evidences Shamala enlisting the affordance network for woodworking in order to achieve the goal that she and Matthieu had committed to – the expert woodworker, his 'apprentice' who assisted, tools, bench, the language of the tools, and importantly for Shamala, a stool that afforded her extra height. However, what is most striking from the video footage is the way in which it conveys the importance of the work that children were undertaking, albeit exploratory in this example, as Shamala and Matthiew spent several weeks collaborating on this house that never came together as a finished "product". Ben's role to guide the children's participation in this network of affordances was evident via his gesture and stance as he encouraged them to have a direct relationship with tools. This guidance not only gave children access to working with the kinds of tools usually kept out of reach, it promoted a relationality with tools as extended affordances (J. Gibson, 1979/1986/2015). Ben, as an expert woodworker was well aware of this relationality, and frequently conveyed this in interviews. For example,

I've got kids who hold a drill and pull the trigger and nothing happens, and then I've got other kids that hold the drill and they use the drill. They don't expect the drill to drill a perfect hole. They make the hole happen and you can see they're putting all their energy through the drill and they're making it drill the hole and they're getting a really good straight hole. Whereas you can hand a drill to other kids and they just think you pull the trigger and the drill does everything. The drill does magical things! And when they realise it doesn't they get cranky and they don't like it. Or, when you give someone a square, and you tell them to do a 90 degree straight line across a piece of wood, and then they draw the line and you say, 'well that's not straight' because they didn't hold the square firmly up against the bit of wood, because they just thought if they have a square and a pencil, a 90 degree line would just appear. They don't realise that they're making it square, or they're making the hole straight, or the saw cut straight… Some kids have been in there for two years and they use that saw the same clumsy way that they picked up. They don't have a relationship with that saw. They're not communicating with the saw. Other kids just talk the same language as the tools. You can see that it benefits both those kids. It benefits the kids that are clumsy with it because it gives them an appreciation of how difficult it is and how unusual it is. And it benefits the kids that are good at it because

they feel a nice amount of accomplishment out of realising they're actually good at doing those things. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, 9/11/2012)

As extended affordances, when tools were embraced in the ways that Ben describes, the boundary of the body shifts beyond the surface of the skin. J. Gibson draws out the significance of this shifting boundary for challenging the "absolute duality of "objective" and "subjective"' (p. 41). When learning is understood as engaging tools, facts, methods, and people to achieve a goal (Barab and Roth, 2006), the individualistic focus of the dominant paradigm where learning happens in a 'black box' of inputs and outcomes, is transcended.

While the possibilities and limitations of actualizing effectivities were determined by accessibility to these networks of affordances, interestingly, children didn't just ask for help, or receive it. They very often offered it to others:

Lachlan: "Can I help?"

Giselle: "Yes!"

Lachlan: "So what do we need to do?"

Giselle: "What colour should I use?"

Lachlan: "Lots of colours!" (Lachlan gets interrupted by a teacher asking him to tidy up some paint and then returns)

Lachlan: "Can I help?" (The children communicate through gestures that convey openness, helpfulness, and an eagerness to collaborate)

Lachlan: "Now I'll do the green one." (pipe cleaner)

Giselle: "Two blues. I'll get another glue brush." (responding to Lachlan grabbing the only brush from a pot of glue.) (Research Journal, K/1 Observations, 5/3/2013)

According to the research of Hepach, Vaish, and Tomasello (2012) a concern for the welfare of others is strong motivation for the helpfulness of young children and a concern to see others helped. As this early characteristic of young children is mediated by behaviour settings, producing cultural norms, the significance of

opportunities for helpfulness in inherently cooperative settings beyond the early childhood years seems crucial to sustaining it.

The conditions for learning and teaching in the Studio induced these kinds of opportunities for collaboration and helpfulness, via its pedagogy. Rogoff, Goodman Turkanis, and Bartlett (2001) contend:

> Adding new "techniques" to the classroom does not lead to the development of coherent philosophy. For example, adding the technique of having children work in "co-operative learning" teams is quite different than a system in which collaboration is inherent in the structure. (p. 13)

According to this description, the Studio was evidencing a coherent philosophy, perhaps described best as a context for guided participation. One teacher claimed:

…the students view it as student-centred. It's more about them and they are the focus and I think as a student that's got to be a big appeal because there's no teacher here saying you have to do this. They take the reins and are leading it and the adult helpers are helping the kids to get where they want to go. (George, Teacher, Interview, 1/11/2012)

Figure 4.11: Children engaging in a network of affordances to achieve a goal.

Ecological psychology and the descriptions of affordances, effectivities and affordance networks, proved useful in articulating more exactly, how it functioned.

While exploration was significant to children being able to sort out what they wanted to do, what was valued for action, accessibility to affordance networks was significant to children's (and adults alike) ability to operationalise effectivities. Understanding learning from this ecological psychological stance provided some insight into Slee's (2011) description of inclusive education as a political process where: "we seek to identify the complex ways in which barriers prevent students accessing, authentically participating and succeeding in education" (p.84). For example, for Braydon, a 10 year old boy with Global Learning Delay (GLD), who wanted a "plane", and Katie, a ten year old girl who wanted a "treasure box", the process of engagement with networks of affordances in pursuit of their respective goals was entirely similar. From their own goal intentions, they made commitments to their tasks, used tools with and without help in pursuit of their goals, and produced artefacts to their satisfaction. Any barriers to authentic participation in the Studio could be considered as limitations in the affordance networks, rather than within individuals from the ecological psychological stance. It seemed uncomplicated to claim that the Studio cultivated an inclusive context from this basis.

Figure 4.12: Braydon and Katie working alongside each other in the Studio, both engaging the network of affordances to operationalise their effectivities

Data evidenced that the Studio, like the regular classroom, afforded both success and failure to children via its pedagogy. The earlier example of Gregory and his "Dimentue" sculpture was typical of children being displeased with their efforts and wanting to improve them. However, the example in Figure 4.13, is a case where children did not recognise that their effort to join four boards with glue along narrow edges to make a large draught board was going to be unsuccessful (there simply was not enough surface area for the glue to adhere). Towards the end of the session, when it came to tidying up the space, it was necessary to mention this to the two boys who were collaborating on the project. The boys, aged 10 years, at first pleased with their efforts, were less pleased with having to tidy up something that they had been told would not achieve their desired result. Exploration was not only important to discerning what to act for and what was worth doing, it was also important for illuminating when things could be done better, when effectivities were lacking and affordance networks could be useful. What seemed particularly significant from this example and others like it is that children, (in this case the two brightest in the class) who were very "successful" as students in the regular classroom, also had a context in which they could "fail".

Figure 4.13: A "failed" attempt by two children to join four boards together to make one large board

One parent provided a particularly insightful articulation of this parallax the Studio afforded for success and failure by juxtaposing his experiences first with Braydon, and then, a high achieving child, Harry:

…He doesn't have high expectations. In fact, he doesn't have any expectations at all. I've got kids in there that won't even start something because their expectations are so damn high. I've got kids in there that start and realise they're not that great at it, so they just put it down and won't even pick it up, because they want to be an expert at it! This is where I think that Braydon has a lot to teach us all because I see a lot of people…wasting a lot of energy because they have too high expectations of the end result. And this is a big problem in the visual environment that we live in because kids see things so perfect now. Kids can construct things on video games and computer images, you have photo shop, and people can construct things to look right but when they actually have to make them from scratch with tangible things and work in the tactile world, where a straight line comes because you are practiced and practiced at cutting a straight line, not just because you click a button on a computer and it makes a straight line. It's a different world, and that's where Braydon I think has a lot to offer because his expectations aren't stopping him from getting in and having a go. And he's got in there and he's worked like a steam train…and he's come out of there so wrapped in what he's made, that he's stuck his plane in his bag before the paint's even dry! (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/2012)

Asked to explain further about the children with too high expectations of themselves Ben replied:

…it's really unfortunate with children like Harry because if they can't do something, they don't ask, they try and find the answer themselves and they know they don't have it, so they get angry with themselves. I find that's a real barrier because I'm there and I have the answer and I don't have the answer because I was born with it, I have the answer because someone showed me...People like Harry expect of themselves to have the solution all the time and that they never need to ask anybody. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/2012)

After noting how these two children's abilities would be contrasted in the regular classroom, Ben replies:

Well it's funny because depending on how you create the environment, you can come up with the same result for both. I could put it like this. If I wanted to pass on some knowledge to Braydon and help Braydon…he has no resistance to that, and if I were to say well how is he at that, I would say 'he's excellent'. He excels at being open to new information and new ideas. If I put Harry in that, I'd say he's not very good at it at all. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/2012)

This data evidenced that while some children were successful at engaging the affordance networks of the regular classroom to achieve goals for learning stipulated by the teacher, this competence to engage affordance networks did not necessarily transfer to the Studio learning environment. It seemed if "success" alone is used as the measure of educational attainment, both environments fail to include certain children. The evidence was indicating these were also a different set of children across each classroom. Therefore the schools' inclusivity was only improved by considering the school as a "campus" as Slee highlighted (2011). The Studio provided a parallax, evidencing how it is possible that some children can be seen with new skills, wisdom, and talents, and how it is also possible that some children can be seen with new needs. Inclusion was not only intimately tied to access to affordance networks and the ability to operationalise effectivities, but more fundamentally, to how children are both supported and challenged, able to experience success and failure for learning. Across the school, indeed as Slee suspected, this may bring balance and equalise the experiences of learners.

In many ways the intentionally bound affordance networks that emerged in the Studio resembled the description of "communities of practice" famously revealed by the research of Lave and Wenger (1991) and influencing Rogoff's (2003) refinement of the notion of guided participation. For example, in the Studio's nascence, Kiarnen stated that he wanted to make a "treasure box". When other children became enthusiastic about this idea, and had made some failed attempts to glue materials together to make a "treasure box', a volunteer was sought to bring in expertise. Ben, a parent, along with woodworking tools and a workbench, became a constant presence in the Studio. From term-to-term Ben encountered the enthusiasm of potential woodworkers recognised the affordance network, and expressing their intentionality to join the woodworking community as they asked, "Ben, next year,

can I make a treasure box (or other items which included tables, props for play, and a set of drawers)?" According to Wenger (2006) the three characteristics of a community of practice include: the domain - shared interest; the community - a set of relations that are not necessarily formal, and; the practice - a developing set of narratives that inform a repertoire for action. Ben described:

...you get the impression that they're in there as equals and they feel comfortable and confident enough to take the lead a little bit, and take the teacher role a little bit. They're kinda like, 'hang on, you've taught me all this stuff and I'm getting an idea of how this works, so let me just throw it back to you, and tell you that 'hey, I've thought about it, and this is how I think we should do it!' (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12).

Figure 4.14: The woodworking community in action

Barab and Duffy (2000) rightly claim that: "as researchers, we are still in our infancy with respect to understanding the potential of, and what constitutes, a community" (p. 35). A consideration of the significance of affordance networks has

potential insights for education. When consideration is given, not to distinct moments of "teaching" and "learning" but to the significance of affordance networks for operationalising effectivities, the distinction between learning and teaching is blurred. In another example:

Daisy exclaimed, "This is the best time I've had in my life!" She was referring to her session engaging with the resident artist to learn some weaving skills. I ushered her mother in to see. Her mother stated, "I wanted you to learn how to do it so you can show me!" To which Daisy replied excitedly, "You go over, under, over, under!" (Research Journal, K/1 Observations, 12/5/2013)

This research was suggesting that school as an econiche for education, in order to provide a more inclusive learning context, would benefit from a diversification of pedagogical approaches in order to provide all children not just with opportunities for experiencing success, but also opportunities to fail. Understanding the activity of children in student-centred, adult-supported contexts, as operationalising effectivities in affordance networks, supports the more 'personalised" approach to education called for in policy and indeed, the new Australian Curriculum. In the next section I describe specifically how I encountered instruction in the Studio context, as consequential to children's goals and motivation to operationalise effectivities.

4.4 "You can actually learn better": Volition for instruction

This section considers how the children in the Studio came to instruction voluntarily in order to operationalise their effectivities in affordance networks. When I initially came upon parents providing direct instruction to children in the Studio, it struck me that this was different to the direct instruction often deployed in the regular classroom. In the Studio children had opportunities to participate in instruction towards their goal or could take their attention to other activities. There was an element of volition for instruction. In fact, the data was riddled with examples of children volunteering for instruction. For example, Colin, a student diagnosed with A-D/HD and another of the Studio's most productive makers, picked up some coconut fibre Jana had brought for basket making and recognised the affordance of this material to make fire sticks. Towards the end of the session, working on a more

elaborate handle for the primitive tool he had constructed, he received instruction from Jana, who guided him to learn basket stitch while sharing her knowledge of the uses of basket stitch across cultures (see Figure 4.15). Rather than instructing the whole group on how to make a basket, and having to work to gain children's attention, the children's freedom to pursue their own activity did not disconnect them from affordance networks and incumbent effectivities that could be operationalised. In fact, the freedom to direct their own activity often gave them a reason to learn.

While at first it struck me as unusual that instruction was such a central activity in an environment that promoted self-regulation, when I gave consideration to Barab and Roth's (2006) inclusion of commitment in their description of affordance networks, this volition for instruction seemed more a measure of how committed children were to their intentions. Choice and commitment to learning intermingle as volition for instruction was simply necessary to progress a goal. In the following example, Rose had undertaken to make a treasure box and was a few sessions ahead of her two friends, who inquired of Ben whether they could join in:

Figure 4.15: Colin receives instruction from Jana and information about the significance of basket stitch in some cultures

Rose warned both girls against making a treasure box stating emphatically, "It is hard!" A discussion ensued about what the project entailed to ascertain whether the girls really wanted to commit to making something that might take at least two terms

or as long as a year. The two girls, regardless of their friend's warnings, could not be deterred and after a discussion with Ben, they all got on with creating a reference drawing and cutting list of the materials they would need in their journals. (4/5/6 Class Observation Notes, Research Journal, 20/2/2013)

This kind of photographic and video evidence of volition for instruction indicated that children generally employed a passive stance (as indicative of their ability) when they were open to receiving information in the affordance network. Children, who have explored first, find out what they can't do, and perhaps adopt a passive stance as indicative of their ability to appreciate the instruction of someone who can. Was it possible that the passivity designed into regular classrooms with minimal access to materials and limited affordances for active learning (including desks and chairs, computers and increasingly, iPads) is expected to induce this "ready for instruction" stance? If so, it wasn't working for students who are increasingly being labelled and medicated for their school years (Graham, 2007: Slee, 2011; Robinson, 2006).

Figure 4.16: These girls could not be deterred from making a commitment to the instruction required to make a treasure box regardless of their friend telling them it was "hard" and that it might take all year

Evidence showed time and time again that when children decided they want to make or do something, they typically just get started. This I identified as determined exploratory behaviour to pursue a goal. However, as Gregory recognised with his sculpture, it is possible to go back and create again. Or, as Kiarnen recognised when he asked for my help to sew his costume, it is possible to engage affordance networks to operationalise effectivities. Through the efforts of parents who valued Kiarnen's self-governed activity, someone was found who could provide him with the instruction he needed to use the sewing machine and progress the assassin costume (see Figure 4.17).

Kiarnen, in this photograph (Figure 4.17) and even more prominently in an accompanying video of this moment, adopts the passive "ready for instruction" stance I was becoming familiar with. Kiarnen attended to instruction and picked up the information he needed to use the sewing machine in order to pursue his costume making ambitions. His stance after a few sessions of using the sewing machine and demonstrating his effectivities to make the "hood" of his assassin costume, became

Figure 4.17: Kiarnen receives instruction from another child's Grandmother to use the sewing machine

one of accomplishment as he had operationalised effectivities via his commitment to instruction in the affordance network of peers, parents, tools and of course the bags of donated fabric that was the original means of affordance detection (see Figure 4.3).

This stance of accomplishment was often depicted in the photographs I took of Kiarnen. He was a prolific maker of things, never short of ideas, and never idle in the Studio, as the following description Ben provided in an interview suggests:

Ironically, Kiarnen, (who was the one who came up with the idea to make the treasure box 3 years ago) came into the Studio at the beginning of his last year of primary school and said to me with conviction "I want to finish my treasure box this year." I was amazed that after all these years of him coming into Studio and being highly productive - just coming up with an idea at the beginning of his 1hr slot and then leaving an hour later with a fully built, finished and painted piece, plucked

Figure 4.18: Kiarnen's production of a hood for the assassin costume evidences his engagement in an affordance network

from his imagination - that he would want to commit his highly valuable 1 hour a week where he can do whatever he wanted, to focussing in on just one project, the treasure box. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 21/1/2014)

Figure 4.19: Kiarnen working diligently on his treasure box demonstrates task commitment

Ben and I were surprised that Kiarnen would make this commitment after such a long time between his original idea for a treasure box that had sparked what was to become a woodworking community of practice. He had seen many children now, over the three years, complete a treasure box and fully understood the commitment it required. Ben went on to describe the outcomes of Kiarnen's commitment:

...for the rest of the year, he would come busting into Studio, come straight up to me, look me in the eyes and say "I'm doing my treasure box today." I'd say "great" and off we'd go for the hour and get stuck into it. I'd occasionally have to say, "come on Kiarnen, back over here" but his commitment was non wavering the whole year, and he ended up completing one of the coolest treasure boxes made in Studio to date [see Figure 4.20]. I was amazed at the transformation of Kiarnen over the 3 years I spent sharing the Studio space with him…the Studio was a place for Kiarnen to be himself, and you could always feel a sense of relief and calm come over him while he was in Studio. I believe that Kiarnen found a way to apply his primary school learning in those Studio sessions…and that his wish to complete the treasure box in his final year of primary (school), after all those years of having other things to make instead, was him honouring himself that he is a capable and resourceful person, able to accomplish anything that he personally feels is worthwhile and meaningful, even

when it's not expected or asked of him. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 21/1/2014)

Kiarnen's commitment to the project seemed like a rite of passage in many ways. It was as if he understood his goal was as much about Ben committing to instruct him, as it was about him staying on task. In this way it became a joint goal as both instructor and apprentice would have an obligation to each other. Grafenhain, Behne, Carpenter and Tomasello's (2009) research indicates that children from about the age of three are beginning to demonstrate an understanding of obligations in joint activity. Accordingly, they suggest this understanding is necessary to enable engagement in other cultural practices that require commitments and obligations.

The behaviour milieu of the Studio, constituted by accessibility to networks of affordances, tools, materials and people, was synomporphic with behavioural self-control and instruction from volition. This type of interaction appeared to be a much richer experience when contrasted with the more typical activity based approach deployed by teachers to engage all children in the same activity at the same time, or through round robins of tasks, a tendency born of the spatio-temporal and relational limitations of the school based model of education. It seemed ironic that the school based model and its approach to pedagogy afforded children crazy looking giant spiders, while self-directed activity potentially afforded connection to community and a product of quality workmanship. Of course there were "failures" too but it seemed clear that the opportunities to fail were equally important. Nothing was as simple as all that in the school context though, and the Studio was a "fragile" innovation as Fullan (2001) might put it. The support of the teachers wavered, Studio sessions were cut in half so that most children now only had less than an hour a fortnight, and the support of parents such as Bianca and Ben, after three years of volunteering was exhausting.

I often wondered, if, as Underwood (2008) claims, explicit instruction, student engagement, ample time for instruction, and self-regulation are central to instructional practices for inclusive education, and that "the teaching strategies found to be effective by special education researchers are actually important for regular classroom educators as well" (p. 71), then why was the value of the Studio most

difficult for educators to understand? Although this will be discussed at length in the following chapter, Reed (1991) suggests:

Figure 4.20: It took these children most of a year to produce their treasure boxes now that their Studio sessions had been halved

> Typically, the school teacher pre-sets problems which are not problems for the teacher and not part of some work the teacher is in need of accomplishing...there are few tasks shared between teacher and pupil and, in most cases, few shared tasks among pupils…The very idea that thinking is private, a kind of internalisation of social activities, may well have arisen by taking school-based thinking with its goal of creating wage earners as the norm, instead of as one mode of social existence. (p. 152)

Indeed, this notion of thinking as private described by Reed hints at the dominant theoretical paradigm reflecting values of individualism that teachers have been attuned to and which subsequently shape pedagogy. Reed makes the bold claim that I was beginning to understand more clearly, that the goals of school were not necessarily to promote the best kind of learning.

In fact it was one of the children who set this record straight in a conversation we were having about the Studio. It became evident that she was not recognising "instruction" in the same way across Studio and regular classrooms. Responding to her comments that the Studio is nothing like the regular classroom, I attempted to

infer there were indeed some similarities, by gesturing to Ben instructing woodworkers:

Roxanne: Is Ben telling Sarah what to do?

Belle: No, he's helping…when it's just you and the helper, you get a lot more help, in here you can actually learn better. (Belle, Year 5 Student, Interview, 23/7/13)

Although this research was promulgating many insights for inclusivity, how students and parents for that matter are excluded, was beginning to look like a broader concern; with how school is valued over other cultural practices that support learning. For example, Rogoff (2003) contends:

> The attempts by Western nations to spread this institution to other people distinguish it from many local forms of learning. In many other forms of learning, the learners often must convince the teacher to assist them in learning, rather than the teachers attempting to give away their knowledge. (p. 343-344)

While the Studio afforded this type of interaction where children eagerly asked for instruction, and in their passive stance would eagerly pick up information that connected their goals to a wider world of facts and knowledge as well as the immediate skills being demonstrated, the time restrictions were an incredible constraint, and bridging the pedagogical divide, as will be discussed in the following chapter, was more than challenging. The following vignette is illustrative:

Ben:…they picked a chest of drawers they wanted to make and I said well before we can make a chest of drawers, we've got to know, what's it going to look like? How many drawers is it going to have? How high is it going to be? How wide is it going to be? What type of timber are we going to use? Can we afford the timber we want to use? How much is it going to cost? Let's cost it out?

Roxanne: Did you cost it?

Ben: No in the end we ran out of time but we did do a detailed cutting list…you say to the kids "OK now let's break this drawer down. How many components does it have?" Well heck they just think it's got two drawers and the drawers go in a box.

But the box it goes in has sides, a top, and a back, it has braces in between each drawer, it has slides for the drawers, it has joints…Because one child is wanting to make out of mahogany and I explained well Mahogany is probably one of the rarest timbers you could use these days, and in that case it's rather expensive, if it's available at all! And then that allows me to explain how timber is expensive and why it's expensive…And then I can explain, well why plywood is cheap. And then we went into great detail as to why plywood was so cheap. And as we went in details of this I drew little diagrams (see Figure 4.21 for a student's rendition of this diagram) for every process of the way plywood gets manufactured so that they could visually see how it's happening and then…after we did all those diagrams they had a real good idea of how plywood was manufactured.

I don't know how well it fits into their curriculum and how much it really helps them getting done what they need to get done, meeting their quotas and getting kids through the system, and getting all the boxes ticked. I don't know that it would really serve them in that way because it would be very, it's more of an organic thing. I mean I don't put time frames on the jobs. I know that when we're running out of time, I get them to hurry up, but that's only when they're in Year 6 and they're leaving the school next year and they're not going to be coming back. That's a great motivator to get to get it done. But other than that, if someone gave me a list of things to tick off every week and say did they accomplish them, I would find it pretty difficult to do that because we're not in there to tick boxes. Box ticking isn't the goal. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12)

The goal for Ben and Bianca, and other parents who supported the Studio program was indelibly to support children achieve their intentions, conceptual learning (for example, literacy and numeracy outcomes), as was evident in Ben's description, were consequential (this supported my earlier findings, see Finn 2013). Children's goals inspired commitment to instruction of their own volition, which connected them to affordance networks, operationalising effectivities. In many ways, as a witness to these events, with children constantly eager to share their artefacts, efforts and performances, I found myself often responding in the manner I responded to my children at home, "Wow, look what you can do!" This sense of achievement and

competence they were sharing, inspired by opportunities to operationalise effectivities in networks of affordances, is the subject of the next section.

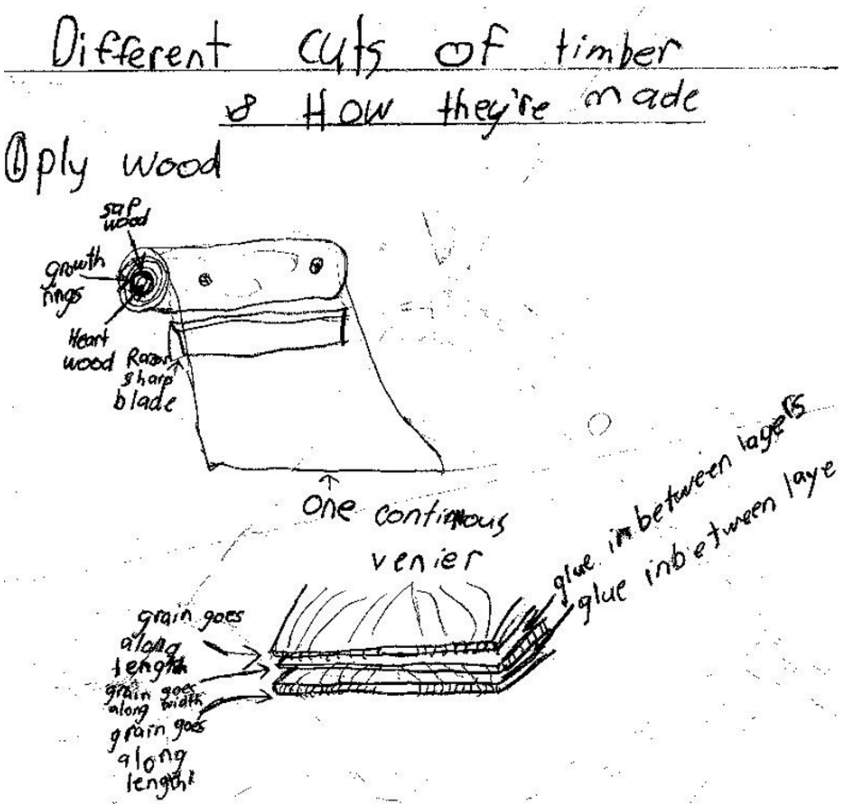

Figure 4.21: One student's rendition of the production of plywood

4.5 "We don't need anyone else's help": Performatory behaviour in the Studio

Performatory behaviour is a demonstration of effectivities, operationalised via affordance networks as action (E.J. Gibson, 2003). In the Studio, given what time and resources were available, the children's actions most frequently produced artefacts. This section briefly discusses the evidence garnered from this research that student-initiated activity promoted in the Studio, induced a relational shift which transcended the teaching/learning binary. The production of artefacts, as performatory behaviour, provided information that children had detected in their wider environment (life-world), and affordances detected in materials in the Studio to create from that information. Additionally, the artefacts provided potential for further connections to learning.

Initially I considered the significance of children's performatory behaviour as evidence of learning. When I asked Bianca whether, in her experience as a parent-partner, she felt the children's action in the Studio and their production of artefacts evidenced learning, she explained by contrasting evidence for learning across regular and Studio classrooms:

Yeah for sure! But different evidence! I don't think the current model has great evidence anyway! What is the evidence? Worksheets that have been filled out, the reading level that you've achieved. I mean I can't think what other evidence there would be. Compared to things you've actually created. Projects you've actually worked on with other kids. It can be photographed, video-recorded, and that'd be great evidence! You could see them doing it! I picture in my mind a video of kids working together in the Studio, creating something as opposed to a video of kids sitting at a computer doing Reading Eggs [a popular computer literacy application in Australian classrooms] or sitting down filling out a worksheet. I think there's a lot more evidence of learning in the video of kids in the Studio. You're going to see them team building, designing, prototyping, solving problems, creating stuff. You learn so many more things (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12).

Bianca's statement revealed a concern with the depth of knowledge that regular assessment provided. Her sentiment that a greater depth of knowing the children could be garnered from the children's work in the Studio is significant for inclusive pedagogy. It echoes the sentiments of Wrigley, Thomson, and Lingard (2012) that suggests effective pedagogy for inclusivity requires connecting with children, their life-worlds and experiences, in order to: "stretch beyond these in educative ways" (p. 196). Artefacts conveyed not only some evidence of what children can do, but they also contained the potential for this kind of educational malleability.

An examination of the photographic data revealed examples such as Colin's oil rig noted above. Colin created this artefact not long after the 'Deep Water Horizon' oil spill of 2010 (see Figure 3.4), and while he had difficulty naming what he had created, the artefact was evidence of information that he was exposed to through the media, as well as potential unanswered questions that this raised. In this way, the artefact spoke directly to the provocation of inclusive pedagogy described.

Artefacts evidenced both what children had made an effort for, as well as prospectivity for increasing specificity via the questions they provoked (E. J. Gibson, 2003). Other examples, such as Stuart's giant fantasy creature he called the "Onga Wonga" which was worked on for several weeks, spoke of Stuart's life-world connection to "story" and "character", and the potential to extend these understandings in educative ways was no less tangible.

Figure 4.22: Stuart (being dramatic) and friend (helping) work on the giant fantasy creature he called an "Onga Wonga"

Children in the Studio often demonstrated unwavering task commitment as elemental to their performatory behaviour. This often would attract the attention of onlookers. Most interestingly, children like Kiarnen and Colin, who typically achieve notoriety in the regular classroom for "misbehaviour" were those whose performatory behaviour attracted such attention. In the photographic records of both children I noticed not only what prolific and independent makers they were, but how much attention their task commitment attracted from their peers in this "free ranging" environment. Their life-world connections inspired activity, and access to affordance networks inspired a means to operationalise their effectivities. In fact, this data suggested that when learning is understood from an ecological psychological stance the "mis" could be indicative of a something "missing" from their regular classroom environment. Allowing students to initiate their activity within a

community of pedagogues wider than the classroom and its solitary teacher, brought opportunities for a breadth and depth to learning that would certainly be difficult to achieve under the constraints of a regular classroom. It is entirely possible from the evidence garnered for this study that what is missing for these children from their regular classroom environments is something relational. This will be further detailed in the discussion which follows in chapter 5.

The routine presence of children and youth at sites of adult work and leisure traditionally is vastly different to the organisation of separate schooling in industrial society according to Reed (1991). This separation of children troubles Thomson, Lingard, and Wrigley (2012) who claim it induces:

> a teaching/learning binary that assumes that children and young people cannot teach but must only learn, and that the adults who work with them are not themselves also learners. (p. 9)

I have argued in the previous section that data from this study suggested when consideration is given, not to distinct moments of "teaching" and "learning" but to the significance of affordance networks for operationalising effectivities, the distinction between learning and teaching is blurred. One child indicated the significance of this altered relationality within the typical school environment:

Inside the Studio you actually learn that there is times in school that you can be yourself and create…If Marko and I make a house again, we will know how to do it so we don't need anyone else's help! (Shamala, Year 4 student, Interview, 30/7/13)

Was Shamala's appreciation for a space in school where you could actually "be yourself" an indication that escaping from the constant role of "student" as "learner" and its incumbent identity of incompetence was important for children? In a final sweep of photos to include in this thesis I noticed these included in Figure 4.23 and Figure 4.24. The images spoke of this shift in relationality that Shamala described as "you can be yourself". Outside of the teacher/student binary, the relationality, even of expert and novice, was a more equal one.

Figure 4.23: In a discussion about making a bookshelf, the expert and novice woodworker adopt mirroring body language

Figure 4.24: Discussing art and life, the expert and novice painters similarly adopt a mirroring posture

Jana, the resident artist, firmly believed that children's activity in the Studio was of such benefit, they should have access to it every day. The comment that followed her claim was insightful: *"Kids don't want you to do it for them!"* (Research Journal, 26/3/2013). In my conversations with the children, Jana's sentiments were echoed both in the sense that they were very clear about wanting more time for Studio, and that the Studio afforded them the opportunity to display their competence beyond the expectations of the regular classroom, to perform for

the teacher, a grade or so-called, positive reinforcement. As one insightful student put it:

No-one judges you, there's no teachers telling you what to do. In here you don't have to copy it or write it down…you just know it! (Belle, Year 5 Student, Interview, 23/7/13).

This statement aligned with what Gibson and Gibson's study found: "perception can improve without either reinforcement or explicit teaching" (cited in Reed, 1996, p. 105). Belle reflected what Gibson and Walk (1957) in their unpublished study (also cited in Reed, 1996, p. 105) claim when they made a case for exploration and questioned the value of typical, disruptive, pedagogical intervention. As Rogoff (2003) contends, typical classroom activity such as rehearsal, may help list learning as remembering, but impede relational learning involving context and patterns.

An ecological view of learning as perceptual, as it was described by E. Gibson (2003) was evidenced in the Studio as encompassing exploratory and performatory activity in cycles of perceiving and acting, increasing specificity, whether children had made commitments to instruction or not. What seemed most significant to those participating in the Studio program was the relational shift which transcended the teaching/learning binary. Performatory behaviour in the Studio was, as Ben put it:

…self-rewarding really. You get out, what you put in. It's as simple as that (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12).

The following section will provide an overview of the data presented to outline how learning in the Studio context was understood from an ecological psychological stance for the purpose of this research.

4.6 "He needs a house!": Learning as a perception-action cycle

Michael (Kindergarten) expressed his intention at the start of the session to create a person. This began to take shape as he explored materials, discussed sizes, and confidently said "yes" or "no" to ideas and suggestions provided by others. He

started by cutting a pair of shorts, with the teacher pointing out how to hold the scissors and a parent demonstrating how to put weight on the stapler. Following this instruction he did both independently. The accompanying conversations were rich and complementary to the dynamics of his activity as he created a person with body parts and clothing. Seemingly satisfied with the person, he exclaimed, "He needs a house!" And, when he found a piece of cardboard with a fold suitable to represent the apex of a roof, he beamed, "Ha ha!" (K/1 Observations, Research Journal, 26/2/2013)

Not only does Michael's "Ha ha!' capture the satisfaction that affordance detection can bring, his satisfaction that one goal had been completed, led naturally to the next goal, revealing the reciprocity of perception-action cycles. A fortnight later, Michael, seemingly pressured by the formality of the teacher's routine to encourage the children to sit around the table and choose what they were going to do today (before they had done it), chose "clay" forgetting about the house and the person he had begun in the previous Studio session. Consequently, on remembering at the end of the session (now only 45 minutes per fortnight), his "person" and "house", he was a little devastated to say the least:

His face reddened, his eyes glossed over with the sparkle of forthcoming tears, and his bottom lip began to quiver… Unfortunately, it would be 14 days before Michael could return, and from the look on his face, this seemed like an eternity to a five-year-old full of passion to do something. Seeing his sadness, I suggested he could come in at lunch-time, after he had eaten, if it was OK with his teachers; it was all I could offer. I was occupied in a meeting at lunch-time but my thoughts wondered to Michael. When I returned to the Studio I noticed his house had been moved from where I left it and there were changes--the addition of a colourful window, and on closer inspection, the shape of a door had been cut in to the back of the cardboard box. "Did Michael get to work on his house?" I called out to those present. "Yes, Page (a Year 6 student) helped him with it" someone replied. I turned to Page appreciatively and she smiled warmly indicating the value she too had found in the experience shared with Michael during her lunch hour. (Research Journal, 12/3/13)

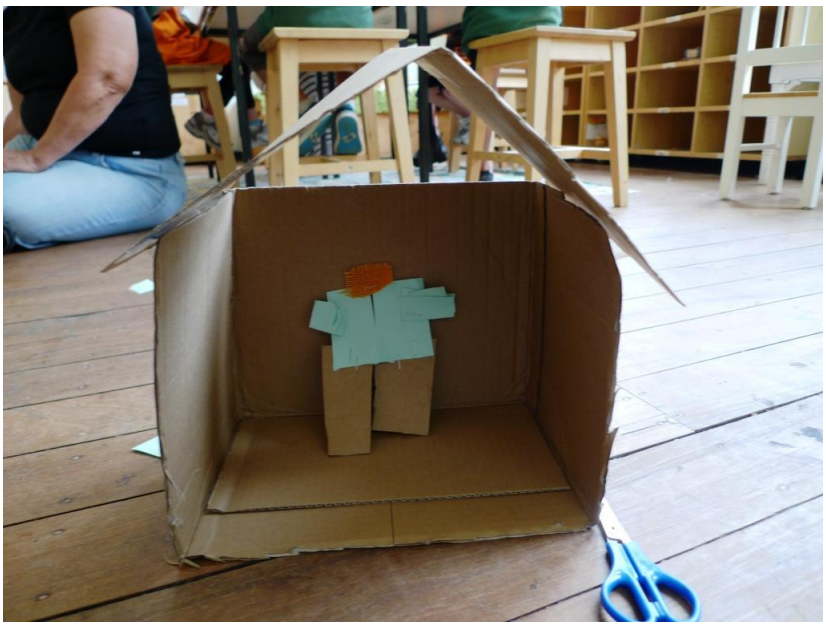

Figure 4.25: Michael's person and house created in one Studio session

According to Gibson and Pick (2000) behaviour occurs not in isolated moments but in a continuous flow, where tasks:

> are initiated to serve some function and are terminated when an appropriate endpoint or goal is attained. In older children and adults, it is easy to mark task organisation within the behaviour flow, as goals become more specific and tasks are readily identified as intentional or perhaps required by external social pressures. (p. 43)

From an ecological psychological perspective learning can be understood as a developing stream of specificity, a process of continual discrimination where perception and action are reciprocal. Exploratory and performatory behaviour are important when learning is understood as this perception-action cycle (E. Gibson, 2003). Performatory actions are towards results but often spur exploration (E. Gibson & Pick, 2000) whereby the perceptual system guides a search for invariance that informs action towards this increasing specificity (Reed, 1996). J. Gibson (1979/1986/2015) explained perception as a process that occurs over time and is improved with attunement as the following example indicates:

The Year 3 girls (had) never approached me to do woodwork but now they've seen the boys, that they've made quite a spectacular bookcase, and now the young girls, a couple of them have approached me and said "I want to make one of them next

year". Or they say, I'm going to make one of those but not now, I'm going to do it next year (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12).

As the girls had become attuned to the affordances of woodworking, through the exposure to other children's accomplishments, they made a prospective commitment to undertake a project in the future.

Children's activity in the Studio included; exploring, designing, instructing, collaborating, copying, attending, and helping. Sometimes children could tell you what they were doing, sometimes not, sometimes they were being instructed – but this was different, it was because they wanted the instruction, they had made a commitment. Sometimes they even warned each other not to make commitments. Sometimes they came up with ideas but didn't carry them through. Sometimes ideas were taken up by friends. Sometimes an idea took three years to generate enough commitment to undertake (as in Kiarnen's case). And, very rarely, someone just felt like watching or not doing anything at all! In this context, it seemed true that no-one really stood out. In fact children with teaching aides did not require the shadowing that was necessitated in other parts of the school.

The spatio-temporal and relational characteristics of the Studio and its pedagogy, most closely resembling guided participation as it was described by Rogoff (1991, 2003), suggest the SLP introduced "community" as a relational closeness not constrained by a teaching/learning binary that separates children's authentic participation in the activity of their culture. This is not to say that the activity in the regular classroom is not valuable, but rather, in order for all children to experience success and failure, or in other words, to have both opportunities to achieve and be challenged, pedagogical diversity may be essential. Heft (2001) claims:

> Instead of being viewed as inhabiting separate, insulated, subjective domains, individuals are viewed…as encountering a common, shared world but perhaps differing with respect to some of the facets of that world each individual is aware. (p. 266)

It was becoming apparent that a more balanced approach to the education of young people could be undertaken through shifts in policy and practice which considered what this ecological psychological stance revealed.

Planning for whole of class activity has long been the norm in school-based education and it has been understandably difficult for teachers to achieve anything else (Ainscow, 1997). The standing patterns of behaviour the Studio induced, such as, exploration, joint attention, affordance networking, and volition for instruction, may all be found in regular classroom settings. However, what differed fundamentally in the Studio space was that unlike the typical classroom where intentionality for action is driven by the teacher and syllabus of the state/nation, and increasingly by global and corporate agendas (Hogan, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Wrigley et al, 2012), the Studio classroom was driven by the intentionality of the children themselves, allowing their life-worlds and the life-worlds of adults in the local community to cross pollinate. As Heft (2007) details:

> selectivity in perceiving and acting emerges for each individual out of a social matrix of designed environmental features, artefacts, tools, joint attentions, and guided attunement and development. (p. 95)

A consideration of learning as a perception-action cycle (the action we take towards a goal when affordances have been perceived) that is both exploratory and performatory, and the pedagogical organisation of the environment to support it, I claim, produced a more inherently inclusive environment.

From this data I have outlined how evidence from the Studio contributed to transcending a deficit rationality of difference through a more complex but conceptually holistic treatment of learning understood according to perception action cycles (E. Gibson & Pick, 2002). Perception action cycles are mediated by the features of socially produced space – their spatio-temporal and relational features. From this understanding it may be possible to reconfigure the school as an "inclusive campus" as suggested by Slee (2011) by deploying approaches to pedagogy that value guided participation. This is what the presence of the Studio has suggested in the case-school reported on in this thesis.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a summary of an inquiry into how learning in the Studio context could be understood from an ecological psychological stance. Specifically, this part of the inquiry sought to describe the role of children as initiators of action, and the role of adults in supporting child-initiated activity. How the Studio functioned as a learning environment has been examined by identifying its standing patterns of behaviour (Barker, 1968), or what activity manifested in the Studio over the duration of the Study (3 years) given its distinctive spatio-temporal characteristics of accessibility of materials and open-endedness, and relational characteristics of increased access to parents and community as pedagogues.

Children, as initiators of action, made choices to create artefacts in the Studio which resembled elements of adult work (as sculptors, designers, town planners, builders, and story tellers, to name a few). Their efforts to "detect information and use affordances" (Reed, 1996, p. 101) in their Studio sessions, either connected them to networks of affordances or evidenced the potential to do so. Episodes of joint attention provided a means for attunement to information and affordance detection via the proximity of adults supporting rich exchanges necessary for learning (Cowley, 2011; deVilliers and Zukow-Goldring, 2012). Some evidence that children's control of the objects of attention, enabled by self-directed activity, enhanced language exchanges (Tomasello & Farrar, 1986) emerged. Moreover, this control over the objects of attention also supported children's volition for instruction evidenced as a stance of passivity or "readiness" and an understanding of the obligations of joint commitments.

Student-initiated activity had the potential to, or in the case of woodworking which was available over the duration of three years did connect them to a community of practice (Lace & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2006). Data evidenced children operationalising effectivities in affordance networks. Parents, along with Jana, a local community artist, acted to support the efforts children were making to detect information and affordances. This 'effort after meaning and value' embodies motivation for learning, according to Reed (1996a), and in supporting it, the pedagogical intentions of adults in the Studio, were found to resemble Rogoff's

(1991, 2003) notion of guided participation as a cultural practice typically found outside of schools, where children have greater access to adult activity.

Figure 4.26: An example of the stance of passivity children in the Studio embodied as they were instructed

This study evidenced that some qualities of the Studio were perceivably different to the rest of the school, and that the "helpfulness" of community transcended the teaching/learning binary children experienced in the regular classroom. This raises the concern that children as "students" experience oppression as Friere (1970) famously argued and that the relational affordances of student initiated, adult supported activity, may be significant to children's engagement. Furthermore, this study over its three year duration continued to affirm previous findings that children who were more challenging to teach in the regular classroom were particularly adept in the Studio classroom. This evidence indicates that control over the objects of attention and accessibility to the support of a helpful "community" may be significant to an inclusive school campus. Paradoxically, for children unchallenged by the regular classroom, opportunities for self-directed learning and engaging a wider community may present new challenges that are equally significant both for their learning and for a more inclusive educational environment.

In summary, evidence discussed suggests the Studio functioned to support learning via the pedagogy of guided participation. And an analysis of learning from an ecological psychological stance suggest this has implications for inclusivity. Specifically, the Studio functioned to recreate a space for community within the school. However, the data also evidenced a tension concerning the ways in which the Studio, as a behaviour setting, enabled the exploratory behaviour of children, and the ways in which the Studio itself was constrained by the school as the larger 'unit of behaviour' (Barker, 1968). This will be the focus of discussion of findings in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Affordances of place: The impact of the Studio on the school

The previous chapter evidenced some of the impacts that the Studio had on diversity at the school site by introducing a role for parents as pedagogues and promoting student-initiated activity, both of which contributed to a pedagogy of "guided participation" as it has been described by Rogoff (1991, 2003). This chapter investigates the second objective of the study; to discern the impact of the Studio on the school site and its potential as an innovation towards a more inherently inclusive school campus. By deploying an analysis that identifies the affordances of place (Heft, 2007, 2010) consideration is given to how participants perceived the affordances of the Studio as a place for learning within the formal school context. Further, and more specifically to questions of inclusivity and exclusivity, how the Studio program values difference and from this, what opportunities it presents to develop innovative curriculum and pedagogy, are considered in light of Slee's (2011) provocation for inclusive school campuses.

The particular school where the Studio is situated, among other small schools, has recently been under increasing pressure; this has included the threat of downgrading the status of future positions from principal to leading teacher, and alignment with larger schools in the district under a hub and spokes model (see, Coote, 2013). The Studio, initially set up in July 2010 with funding from the Priority Schools Program (NSW, Department of Education and Communities) in line with state policy objectives to improve student engagement in schools who met a quota of students 'at risk', had no support from external staff other than the conduct of a program review completed in 2011. In answering my enquiry as to why recommendations for follow up meetings (specified in this review) had not been completed with this external staff member, the principal explained:

...there's been a big restructure of the department, and all of those positions have now been dissolved, so there isn't really a position as such. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013).

It is noteworthy that this direction may have significantly influenced the outcomes of the current study. Whilst the Studio operated within the bounds of the school and its

mandates, children were permitted to do what they wanted in an environment set up for accessibility to materials, tools, and relationships to support their creativity. In other words, they were supported as much as possible within these constraints to actualise their intentions. What impact this pedagogical shift had on participants as students, parents and community, and teachers, albeit within these constraints, will be the central theme of discussion in this chapter.

It was evident that the Studio supported children to detect affordances, deploy effectivities, and engage networks of affordances to achieve their goals. When learning is understood as a perception-action cycle, the self-initiated activity of children in the Studio (and the activity of parents and community in supporting it), resembled a pedagogy of guided participation (Rogoff, 1991, 2003). Furthermore, the Studio could be recognised as making a contribution to children's education in significant and, as some evidence indicated, profound ways. This chapter also provides an examination of school and parent pedagogies co-mingling in ways not typically enabled due to divisions of classroom and home/community behaviour settings. Winkel, Saegert, and Evans (2009) claim: "establishing communities in classrooms where individuals participate in authentic activities...is a difficult undertaking" (p. 190). It was for this reason that I anticipated that the Regional Director of schools would appreciate the SLP when she visited in its nascence. Along with the principal, I accompanied the Regional Director to observe Bianca (the rostered parent volunteer) and a group of younger students in the Studio first-hand:

When we entered the room it was noisier than a regular classroom…but it was the kind of buzzing sound that undertaking important work makes. As we entered the Studio space children were flitting about from one end of the room to the other gathering materials and chatting busily. To young children in such a space where they have the ability to talk freely while undertaking activity, language is a great affordance which enables them to share ideas, make connections to potential partners for collaborative effort, detail the reasons for their actions, and share their life-world experiences. For example, deciding to make a gift for Dad's birthday is important work for a young child. It provides the motivation for discussion about what makes Dad special. Allowing children the freedom to make commitments to their own activity connects their schooling to their life beyond it. This generates a

particular "sound" that indicates opportunities are manifesting for the kind of learning that children don't know they are doing. Unfortunately, the Regional Director of Schools did not experience her encounter with the space as I did. She stepped no further than a few metres inside the room, made no attempt to engage with the children or Bianca and stayed for no more than a few minutes before making her abrupt and decisive comment: 'I couldn't teach in this sort of classroom', and she was gone. (Extract from Reflexive Ethnographic Writing, 28/5/2013)

The day that the Regional Director of Schools paid a visit – a rare occurrence for a small, rural school and made the point that she could not 'teach' in the Studio learning environment, I couldn't help but wonder that if perhaps she had entered the room at age 7, would she have perceived its value for creativity and learning?

The Regional Director's comment while seemingly negative could also be interpreted as prophetic. It pre-empted the research findings reported in the previous chapter, that the Studio's pedagogy of guided participation transcended the teaching/learning binary. This was not the sort of learning environment that just any teacher could step into. However, there was also the cautionary intent in her comment that could be read as affirming the warning given by Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006): "One person's view of an improving institution may be another's vision of educational hell" (p. 11). I wondered whether the Regional Director felt excluded like the students in Ryan's (2009) research, who claimed noise levels and lack of structure as significant factors contributing to feelings of exclusion: "One pupil with Asperger's syndrome who was involved in the project reported that she 'felt very excluded at unstructured times… as the noise levels tend to be much higher" (p. 80). As I considered this event I also wondered about other contrasting perceptions of the Studio in the data, as well as other research where teacher and student perceptions of space are contrasted. For example, Woolner, McCarter, and Wall (2012) found teachers understood "mat time" as a positive time to engage children in a constructivist pedagogical approach, while "learners experienced it more passively as a time for 'listening' and being physically uncomfortable" (p. 53). The Regional Director, attempting to identify with the space as a teacher, seemingly perceived no affordance in the Studio environment for teaching. I note this vignette

at the outset of this chapter in order to highlight the connection between the perceived affordances of place and intentions; intentions we bring to a behaviour setting, and that frame selectivity of inclusion and exclusion according to the affordances of place that perceptions allow. This chapter, in setting out to examine how the Studio impacts inclusivity at the school site, outlines how the Studio was perceived as a place of specific affordances. As the narratives of the protagonists in this research unfold, the potential for a deeper and more nuanced sensitivity to synergisms of the affordances of place, identity and selectivity, in our experiences of inclusion and exclusion, are made visible.

This chapter begins with a discussion of time as the most prominent theme of the data, revealing how the perceptions of the Studio's affordances were impacted by dispositions to temporality (5.1). This is followed by a consideration of dispositions to relationality that impacted the perceived affordances of the Studio (5.2). Describing the ways in which the Studio was perceived by the study's participants as a distinguishable place within the school and the consequent challenges of reconciling learning across Studio and regular classroom are discussed (5.3). The concluding section considers the perception of the affordances of place and in/ ex/clusion (5.4) followed by a chapter summary (5.5).

5.1 "Time was what you'd call a little bit wasted" : Dispositions to temporality and the perception of affordances

In her support of the Studio initiative, the school principal acknowledged pedagogical diversity would afford synergisms of persons and environments unattainable via standard classroom approaches due to temporal constraints:

"…classrooms work under such structured timetables that it only works for some kids and it doesn't work for all kids all of the time." (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 9/10/2010)

This shift in pedagogical approach promoted standing patterns of behaviour (Barker, 1968) in the Studio, such as exploration and volition for instruction. When learning is understood as a perception-action cycle, for some children this provided a parallax

for viewing their profile of competencies as learners. For example, the school principal claimed:

…students that have special learning needs and even students with autism and kids that just tend to sit back in class and you're not sure whether they're motivated or not, they've come in here and become highly motivated and they've displayed some fantastic organisational skills. They've come in and just started things rolling whereas other kids that tend to be at a higher level academically can sometimes come into the Studio and feel a bit lost, because they want structure and they want someone to tell them what to do, and it's taken some students longer to be self-motivated than others, but it's usually the one's that struggle in class that have been more self-motivated, which is interesting, so it works very well for the students with special needs, students with autism, students with A-D/HD, it works really well for those kids. And the others that need the structure well, you know there are people there to help them with the structure but they've got to take some initiative to get their projects underway, and that's what it's all about, letting them take the initiative. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 9/10/2010)

In this early interview with the principal, the potential for the Studio program, as a means of valuing diversity to innovate curriculum and pedagogy at the site seemed unlimited. However, as this section of the chapter will explore, the values underlying the efforts to establish and enshrine the Studio program, were, at times, in conflict with an instrumentalist logic of teachers under the competing pressures of systemic priorities described variously in the data as: 'ticking boxes', 'meeting outcomes', 'forward planning', 'teacher evaluation', 'subject-divided time-tables', 'report writing' and 'an overload of extra programs and events'. The pressure produced by role requirements of teachers was an obstacle which impinged on the capacity of the program to promote diversity and impact innovation in curriculum and pedagogy more broadly at the site. For example, one teacher speaking about the Studio claimed:

…it's OK if it's kept in a small amount of time because in one way I felt a lot of pressure when you're supposed to be meeting these results for NAPLAN and for

school assessment and for your annual teacher review. (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)

The focus of this section is to better understand "time" as a prominent theme in the data. As this exploration unfolds the significance of time to participants in this research can be understood not simply as a conflict of what is valued for action, what constitutes learning, and therefore what is worthy of children's time in school, but more specifically, as contrasting dispositions to temporality across home/community and school which played out across Studio and classroom behaviour settings.

Children, teachers, and parents alike shared many positive perceptions of what the Studio afforded for language, socialisation and learning. For example, one parent summarised:

…it helps children develop in so many ways. In (the) Studio they are learning so many skills…and they have fun…It's something they can talk to their teacher about…I think it gives teachers another perspective. At times it might even shed light on what makes a particular kids tick...They also help out fellow students and I think that might help teachers see a different social aspect of students that they may not always see in a normal class teaching time…I would hate to see that the open part of the Studio…disappear. I would find that very disappointing. (Trenna, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 1/11/12)

This parent's caution that the open-ended component of Studio might at some point in time be under threat, was indicative of an effort made by parents to value opportunities for the type of inclusive pedagogy I described in the introductory chapter, where getting to know children in order to extend them in various ways educationally, is understood to be significant for learning and teaching (see Wrigley, Thomson & Lingard, 2012). However within these positive perceptions was a multi-pronged tension around the amount of time provided for the Studio - time that was already significantly limited at one hour per week and extra access with permission at other times (for example lunch breaks). The tension was multi-pronged in that parents and children wanted more time allocated to the Studio:

"I love studio. I wish I could be in here all the time!" (Research Journal, K/1 Observation, 28/5/2013)

They get to pick what they're…working on and they just learn so much about so many things…They cram it all into their hour. My vision would be that they just do a lot more of it. Like, if they could be in there every day that would be amazing! (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/2012)

If I had the time I'd go through it in more depth because a lot of the times we do calculations, we just use a calculator, but if you had more time you'd take the kids through the equations and do it on paper. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12)

While everyone detected affordances in the Studio, including increased community involvement in the school, and easy access to materials for creativity, there were obvious differences between children and parents on the one hand, and teachers on the other, concerning the value of the activity in the Studio for learning. This impacted their perception of whether the program deserved more or less time in the time-table with subsequent repercussions for the program's function to support learning. This will be unravelled in more detail in the following section.

5.1.1 How teacher's perception of learning was constrained

Although teachers were not always present for the Studio session (if they were working with the other half class group), children's recollections, their artefacts, Studio journals, opportunities to talk with parent volunteers, and indeed the virtual Studio, all presented opportunities for the teachers to connect children's activity with their expectations for 'learning'. However, for teachers, their discourse most often conveyed an instrumentalist logic, as they described the pressure they were under to meet their role requirements amid temporal constraints which negatively impacted their support of the Studio:

Because of time, and time will always be a factor for a teacher, I don't really know if that stuff is getting done. So, how can I observe that they have done these things? I feel like the children are missing out on their maths in that time (referring to the Studio session). (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

This instrumentalist logic, a remnant of behavioural psychology whereby our effort in teaching is to 'change' the individual, worked to constrain any perceived affordances of the Studio for teachers, and thus limit its impact on pedagogy more broadly at the site. For example, the teacher in the following interview excerpt was adamant that the Studio should stay limited to its schedule and operation as an 'add on' program even though he acknowledged its significance for engaging children:

...there's no way we can do more time in the Studio. I know that they (the students) really look forward to it (the weekly Studio session) and providing more time for it, I don't think it would spoil it. I don't think they would get 'over it', if they had more time. (Paul, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

In this example children's engagement (as motivation for learning or 'effort after meaning and value') is not considered significant within the teacher's current understanding of 'learning' and the operational constraints he is working under. Without an explanatory theory that accounts for learning as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour (E. Gibson & Pick, 2000), it was possible that teachers were unable to identify how the Studio functioned to support learning and contributed to inclusivity at the site. One parent perceived this challenge for teachers and described this in terms of a paradigm shift:

And the Studio because it's not in their current pedagogy or their current model, it's in a different paradigm. And I think because it's not on their paradigm they think 'well I've got stay in this paradigm. I'm doing all this ticking and flicking and worksheets and I can show you all the evidence of everything that I've done. It meets everything that I've got to do' in that paradigm so they don't get the other paradigm where you don't have to do all that stuff. Kids actually learn all that stuff without doing all the little things they don't actually want to do and you might get a better result for the kids... It's too hard for them to work out, 'how am I going to fit this all in?' because they're trying to do both, rather than thinking this is a way to do all this – easier, which is a shame. But that's what happens when you're in the old paradigm, they fight change. Anyone who's in the old paradigm can't see the new paradigm. It's like that story of Kodak. When someone approached them about printing on paper – photocopying, Kodak said, 'Why would you do that?' and sent

them away, but that idea became Xerox. That's what's happening here, the teachers are in the NAPLAN [National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy – Australia's National testing regime for Years, 3, 5, 7, and 9] paradigm or the school curriculum paradigm (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12).

In this example, the parent was perhaps identifying the deficit obsession that predicates an 'outcome' focus in school based planning which may be working to constrain teachers, who within their role requirements may be too pressured to perceive learning in children's everyday activities; something parents, and children themselves, may be more attuned to.

While the parents who were involved were confident that the Studio was a legitimate, if not a fertile place for learning, teachers rarely detected an affordance in the Studio to meet their intentions for children's learning, or for that matter, contributing to an inclusive school campus. One teacher provided an exception when asked about the Studio's potential:

I could probably use it more in my science and technology for designing and making. I was just talking to the 5/6 teacher and I feel that class hasn't done a lot of designing and making just because of topics we've had to cover, the Olympics, and I've probably neglected that a little bit so this term I'm doing a lot more of those types of activities and there's nothing stopping me from coming over here and using it that way. So for me, I could utilise the space more to support what I'm teaching. (George, Teacher, Interview, 1/11/2102)

While seemingly enthusiastic, this teacher qualified that it was the space that afforded possibilities rather than the pedagogical approach the Studio sessions enabled. This account also provided another indication of pressure to teach particular subjects in pre-planned units of work. The Studio, while well received in many respects, also presented a challenge at the school site because teachers understood it as eroding the time they had to cover the subject-based teaching program among other systemic requirements.

5.1.2 How the Studio challenged the reproduction of exclusion at the site

The Studio program's ability to function more broadly as a site for inclusivity seemed hampered by the teacher's attunement to an instrumentalist logic which subsequently may have constrained their perception of affordances. Evidence to this effect emerged in the discourse of a formal meeting scheduled for parents and teachers to come together to discuss the Studio. The focus of discussion abruptly turned from what the Studio was achieving for children with "special needs" to concerns with some children who had experienced the challenge of finding motivation for activity in the Studio learning environment:

Susan (School Principal): Some of the teething problems were, and the teachers will fill in a bit more…some of the teething problems were that it worked really well for some kids and it worked extremely well for kids with special needs. There were never any behaviour issues with kids like Kiarnen for example. There were never any behavioural issues in there because they were able to do what they wanted to do. So some kids, most kids it worked really well for but there were still some kids that needed direction. Would you say that's right Vera, some of the kids still needed a bit of direction?

Vera (teacher): Especially the group last year, I think [One of the instances Vera described as time wasting concerned a child who was asked to hammer up the dry clay for recycling when he had trouble initiating his own activity. In an interview she recalled: "some of the boys were having trouble coming up with a project, they were just heading outside and hitting the clay and things like that" (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)]

Susan: Some of them got a little bit lost in there. They were still doing things and they were still doing worthwhile things but some of the ***time was what you'd call a little bit wasted***. [This moment Vera referred to had been an attempt I had made to initiate clay recycling in the Studio as a meaningful activity for children to undertake if they hadn't come up with a goal of their own. The activity for me had value on a number of levels for the children's education, from the physics of changing matter, to reducing consumption. It was possibly also an energy release for children who

seemed to enjoy it enormously – see figure 5.1 and note this was also the afternoon of a rainy day!] *(Studio Meeting, 17/6/13, 8.15am-9.15am)*

Given that these children were in the Studio for such a limited time, overlooking the achievements of those students who were challenging to teach in the regular classroom, while focusing on children who were challenged by self-initiated activity in the Studio for only one hour a week as a "teething problem" seemed disproportionate. Goodfellow (2012) describes a social and academic hierarchy that defines the capacities of children with learning disabilities, suggesting schools are:

Figure 5.1: One child who couldn't come up with anything to do in the session was asked to hammer up the dry clay so that it could be reconstituted for use in the Studio

"places of power relations that work to materially and discursively position SLD (students with learning disability) within a social/academic hierarchy relative to their 'non-disabled' peers" (p. 68). This moment, captured in the data of the meeting, evidenced this hierarchy at play. Alternatively, the situation could have been discussed as an example of positive discrimination, casting children ordinarily problematised as behaviourally competent, while providing new challenges for

"different" children. However, during the meeting there was some resistance to this deficit discourse from the resident artist and one of the parents as they attempted to bring pedagogy into the discussion, highlighting what children might be learning in this situation:

Jana (Resident Artist): The way I practice my art, I learn a lot about myself and I'm sure the children do as well. You know through art you are learning about yourself and through that you are learning lots of other things as well but you've got to know yourself first or as well…I can just see how, in the short time I've been here, how they can learn so much more than just the weaving and the twine making, biology, history.

Bianca (Parent Volunteer): Yeah, that's such a good point. I guess something I'd like to see would be focusing on all of the achievements in there because I don't think it's just about making things.

Jana (Resident Artist): No, not at all.

Bianca (Parent Volunteer): The kids are learning about agency, and even if they don't produce something, it probably takes a long time for them to learn that. So they might not make anything…but it doesn't mean they haven't learnt anything. (Studio Meeting, 17/6/13, 8.15am-9.15am)

Jana draws attention to the significance of self-learning, and the potential of the children's activity to connect them to wider bodies of knowledge. Atkinson (2006) who writes to illuminate the ways in which school-based art, unlike contemporary art practices, reproduce, rather than problematise attitudes and understandings, supports such a claim contending: "art is a social performance…through art, students can explore and learn about themselves and their world" (p. 114). Bianca made an even more direct attempt to refocus on achievements and opportunities for learning. This did seem to turn the discussion. For example, one teacher who had been more directly involved as the appointed 'Studio teacher' identified how she was applying a skill she had learnt in the Studio:

Christa (Teacher): I think what you do(referring to Jana) is so versatile and for example, tomorrow I'm having a Japanese dress up day and we're going to make

paper fans and we're going to make twine out of your thing to wrap around the fans to make a handle. It's been good because I've been in there with you that I've learnt a skill and I can bring that into the class. (Studio Meeting, 17/6/13, 8.15am-9.15am)

Towards the end of the meeting, Ben who had been rather quiet, spoke up:

Ben (Parent Volunteer): Shouldn't we too have more of this? Since the Studio's been up (and running), as you say for three years, I only recall one other meeting where we all got together and discussed the Studio and I think, the Studio doesn't need to be formalised but the school's responsibility to the Studio needs to be a little bit more formal. (Studio Meeting, 17/6/13, 8.15am-9.15am)

Ben's poignant comment reminded me of his answer, in an earlier interview, where I had asked what he perceived the significance of the Studio might be for teachers and how they sought information about children's progress from him:

I don't speak to the teachers at all about the Studio, other than when I pass them, I say "hello" and "goodbye". I don't communicate with any of the teachers on anything…Occasionally when they come in to give someone a newsletter, they walk past and they might comment to the children and say, "oh that looks good"…They do acknowledge the work that they're doing…I think they get feedback from the students as to how much level of joy they're getting in there or how much success they're having in there…and I think they use it as a bit of a reward system. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/2012)

This data recorded discursive practices in a meeting within a school staff room, where parents are not often privileged to participate in bringing pedagogical intentions to conversations. Not only were the achievements of so-called learning for disabled children seemingly devalued in a conversation that attempted to give more weight to the disengagement of a few of their non-disabled peers, affirming a hierarchy as Goodfellow (2012) contends, the silence of teachers towards the pedagogical work of parents (as in Ben's example above) may also have contributed to what was constraining the potential of the Studio to impact curriculum and pedagogy in the school more broadly.

The Studio was an appropriated space, a classroom reclaimed to produce a kind of learning environment that some believed was more functional for its inhabitants. Parents and children had gained "the right to the school" albeit within the spatial and temporal bounds of the Studio's scope. This quite possibly presented a direct threat to the hegemonic order ordinarily reproduced by classroom spaces and its inherent exclusivity. Inhabitants, both children and parents, had gained the right to a more direct role in participation, or so they thought. To them, the value of space was a primary consideration. Yet for teachers interviewed for this project, the value of the Studio, or at least their ability to perceive it, seemed limited. This not only indicated an inability to perceive affordances for learning and inclusivity, it also indicated that it may have been a challenge for teachers to work with parents in pedagogical ways.

5.1.3 The challenge of parent-school partnerships

Data outlined in the previous section captured a tension which underpinned this study from the outset regarding the challenge of enacting the parent-teacher or home-school partnership. Underwood's (2008) research similarly revealed that parents are not valued as sources of information within the school, finding that regardless of the policy rhetoric of valuing parent partnerships in educational provision "there is very limited use of parent perspectives in the instructional practice of teachers" (p. 101). Applying Reed's (1996a) conceptualisation of 'effort after meaning and value' as detailed in chapter 4, it can be concluded that not valuing parents as contributors to the educative process simply makes it too difficult for teachers to detect any affordances of community caring for children collectively. What is more disturbing is that Underwood (2008) contends this contributes to parents who take up an advocacy role being construed as 'troublemakers' within the school:

> while interviewing teachers and parents I spent time in the staffroom of most schools. In these cases the teachers would ask which parents I was interviewing that day. In all cases, if the parent had taken up the advocacy role the teachers would warn me that these parents could be "trouble". This was not always said maliciously, but it was clear that this role for parents was not embraced by teachers. (p.106)

This description certainly rang true for my own experience in this project as was detailed in chapter 3 where I drew out the methodological significance of being an

'outsider' due to my status as 'parent'. This was confluent with Underwood's description of a hierarchy of authority and expertise within the school, whereby parents' knowledge is typically less valued than that of teachers. In fact, the excerpts from my research journal included in Chapter 3 reveal that an almost disciplinary tone was evident in these interactions.

However, this data also evidences that the challenge of enacting the so-called partnership is one for both parents and for teachers working within the constraints of mainstream schooling. It is not simply a matter drawing upon deficit discourse to problematise the role of teachers. Rogoff, Goodman, & Bartlett (2001) similarly evidence these challenges as "power struggles" and of the need for a teacher in role to be "in control" (p.186) rather than sharing responsibility for the provision of education. In the case of the Studio project I contend, as Rogoff et al. also noted in their research, that teachers were ill-equipped for the challenge of parents and the broader community bringing pedagogical intentions to the school site. This would indicate that such opportunities to meet which provide an avenue for parent and community to bring pedagogical intentions to school sites may have specific application to the professional development of teachers and potentially student teachers.

Issues of temporality, which restricted the meeting of parents and teachers to discuss the Studio program constrained the opportunity for learning in the broader community, thus limiting the potential of the Studio to impact innovation for inclusivity in the wider school. These findings affirm Fullan's (2001) claim made from the wider body of literature on school change, that time is a major constraint to innovation. There is still the potential for this to happen at the site in the future, although it will require the continued commitment of principal, teachers, parents, and the New South Wales, Department of Education and Communities.

The Studio program afforded an opportunity for genuine engagement of parents as pedagogues. However, there was no requirement for the school to be "*responsible to the Studio*" as Ben suggested; there was no mandate to hold Studio meetings and they did prove challenging for the principal to organise. Such meetings (even beyond the Studio classroom as an appropriated space) invited parents into

another behaviour setting of "meeting" in school spaces ordinarily inhabited by teachers. Perhaps this enabled parental access to a pedagogical "nexus of privilege" as Hickey (2012, p. 167) describes. Although it was a minority of parents who did engage this nexus of privilege, these parents, as evidenced in the previous chapter, brought distinct qualities resembling those Harding (2011) identified, such as organisation for learning and personalisation of learning, qualities that would have much to contribute to schooling in general.

While opportunities for parents to engage pedagogically in schooling are rare, and, as this data evidences, fraught with challenges, they also afforded opportunities for learning in the broader school community. A report into the future of Australian primary schools, which surveyed principals and teachers concluded, "there is no firm agreement among stakeholders about the core purpose of primary schools" (Angus, Olney, & Ainkey, 2007, p. 7). However, by not including parents in the survey as stakeholders, their views on the purpose of schools were silenced. This silencing raises concerns about the legitimacy of parent voices in education at all levels. Questions of legitimacy are central to critical work which attempts to understand social arrangements that reify oppression, according to Cannella and Lincoln (2012). Without opportunities for localised participation, which includes parents in schools as members of the pedagogical community, a kind of pedagogical stagnation festered under the conditions of instrumentalism and the purpose of programs like the Studio and similarly the school's purpose more generally, remained unclear.

5.1.4 The significance of altered dispositions to temporality on innovation for inclusivity

The impact of temporality as a holder of spaces which constitute behaviour settings cannot be understated (Barker, 1968). According to Wrigley et al (2012):

> Standard patterns of learning alienate from learners a sense of ownership over classroom activities; the teacher or the timetable decides on each activity and when it must be finished and the product be handed over. (p. 199)

This instrumental disposition to temporality holds students, teachers, and schools, in "place" in a space-time where behaviour is highly coerced. Protagonists in the SLP attempted to bring qualities of home/community learning to the school including

what Kraftl (2013) describes as an altered disposition to temporality. The significance of this adjustment to qualities of time, where children, in their (albeit time constrained) Studio session could work for as long or as little on their creative projects afforded either an uninterrupted flow (slowness), or the opportunity for pauses to pursue other activity of interest (spontaneity). Kraftl describes these qualities of slowness and spontaneity as distinguishers of child-led pedagogy he found to be characteristic of home-schooling families, and suggested this "sense of slowness…altered the quality of learning and the relationship between parents and children" (p. 443). For Kiarnen, spontaneity was foremost over his first two years, where he often moved between several projects at once. Spontaneity seemed key to the immediacy of affordance detection via cycles of perception and action. In his third year of Studio, slowness was the key to a good product and consequent commitments to instruction he was prepared to make of his own volition. While Barker (1968) claims temporality holds us in a space such as a classroom, innovation in space/time is necessary to reimagining education according to Thomson, Lingard, and Wrigley (2012).

As I came to understand these contrasting dispositions to temporality across the settings of Studio and classroom, it became apparent that the Studio moved to a different beat. As Kraftl (2013) found in his research of home-schooling families, “the opposition between home and school…was space-and time specific” (p. 445). This was a dualism similarly found across the behaviour settings of Studio and regular classroom. Heft (2003) notes that "orderly change and open-endedness are essential qualities of the natural world, as is the possibility of novelty” (p. 167) and implies that this “beat” of slowness and spontaneity is a more ‘natural’ one. These research findings provide an account of the impact of dispositions to temporality on perceptions of affordances. Additionally, they support the claim that dispositions to temporality afforded by the instrumentalist ideology of the school as an institution, and the deficit obsession reproduced by the hegemony of the dominant psychological paradigm that informs it; also afford what Soja (2010) describes as "the production of injustices". Altered dispositions to temporality underlying the Studio and its pedagogy, as child-led and adult supported, did challenge teachers in terms of their role requirements, including not ordinarily having to work with parents in

pedagogical ways, yet this had far more to do with the influence of instrumentalism on their dispositions to temporality than any personal deficits. The following section will explore further this notion of altered dispositions produced by the Studio with a shift in focus from temporality to relationality.

5.2 "I wish my Nan was here": Dispositions to relationality and the perception of affordances

As the research progressed it became apparent that the pressure on teachers I have previously described as constraining the Studio innovation, not only framed dispositions to temporality, but also dispositions to relationality. This section of the thesis will detail how I came to discern and describe how the affordances of the Studio were perceived according to dispositions of relationality. The contrast between teacher perceptions of the Studio and its pedagogy, and that of parents and children, afforded my ability to articulate these dispositions. I have characterised the dispositions to relationality that I encountered in the Studio as more personal and reciprocal, contributing to a perceived "helpfulness" as described in the previous chapter. Data evidenced that teachers valued how the Studio afforded this "helpfulness" and that they also acknowledged it as transcending the teaching/learning binary. For example:

There's a lot of parents and community that have something to share and that sense of community working together, everyone learning from each other. (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)

There's no teacher here saying you have to do this. They take the reins and are leading it and the adult helpers are helping the kids to get where they want to go. (George, Teacher, Interview, 1/11/2012)

However, while teachers valued this helpfulness, they distinctly separated their "teaching" role from it, as the following interview excerpts indicate:

For me, I would have loved to offer more than just supervision but I wasn't really in that capacity to be able to do it [why this was so will be elaborated throughout this chapter]. *(Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)*

I think the role of parents is very supportive and encouraging and I guess because they're not coming from a teaching background, it's really student-centred, and "what do you want to get out of this?" and "How can I help you?" that's how I perceive it. (George, Teacher, Interview, 1/11/2012)

While teachers valued the altered disposition to relationality afforded by the Studio, they did not identify with it in terms of their role requirements to 'teach'. The following section gives further consideration to the impacts of role identity on teacher's embodiment of relationality and is followed by a discussion of the implications this might have for inclusive education.

5.2.1 Teacher identity and relationality

I began to consider how teachers differentiated themselves from a relationality that embraced the personal and reciprocal following a particular conversation I initiated in the field. Grace, a young teacher who showed an appreciation for the arts, is someone I became familiar with in her role as a casual teacher before the Studio program was initiated. Occasionally she would work with my children, and at the end of these days she would always manage to greet me, not just with the kind of big, warm smile you knew your child would be better for knowing, but with a personalised comment that indicated she was looking a little more closely than most, at the people in her care. When she returned to the school after a long absence fulfilling a temporary teaching position elsewhere, she not only seemed a little more seasoned, her vitality and enthusiasm had taken a dramatic turn. I was eager to share some achievements of the SLP, expecting she might understand its pedagogical intentions better than most. However, my enthusiasm was not reciprocated as anticipated. As I listened to her recollections of life as a teacher, something about who she had become alarmed me. I wrote in my research journal following this conversation:

Unfortunately, if one young teacher's perceptions are accurate, the pressure on teachers to get results is itself inhibiting the very relational stance that best supports learning: Grace explained the personal challenge she had experienced between wanting to build relationships with children as a beginning teacher, and then

learning that she had to be more disciplined and structured in order to meet her role requirements. (Research Journal, 28/2/2011)

According to Grace it was not possible to maintain the type of relationships she had set out to achieve, that I believe I witnessed from her as a new graduate. It was not possible to be a friend to children. Trying not to appear too devastated and more curious about this drastic shift in her approach to her work, I grappled for more information. She explained how working closely with a school principal had made her see the error of her ways, that she would never get everything done if she tried to maintain her relational standards. Without lamenting too long, I ended the conversation and returned to the sanctuary of the Studio.

As I reflected further on this conversation with Grace, I also considered Lave and Wenger's (1991) work that turned away from schools to examine exemplary occasions of education. Instead they examined apprenticeship in various forms and cultures, to come to their conclusions about learning as a social practice of 'situatedness' and participation, concluding:

> The central rounds on which forms of education that differ from schooling are condemned are that changing the person is not the central motive of the enterprise in which the learning takes place…engaging in practice, rather than being its object, may well be a condition for the effectiveness of learning. (p.93)

These situations for learning have not been impacted by the dominant psychology that perpetuates deficit rationality in the ways that schools and teachers within them have. Where schooling assumes that it is a requirement of the teacher's role to ultimately achieve the outcome of "changing" children, Lave and Wenger ascribe learning in these situations of apprenticeship as a characteristic of social practice, even when learners are on the periphery. The perception of parents, who were not pressured to teach, was more akin to Lave and Wenger's findings about learning outside of schools. For example, one parent described:

I've seen kids that have just sat there and watched on the perimeter and the curiosity comes because they see an opportunity to do what the other child is doing and (it) lessens their fear of failing. (Rayma, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 1/11/12)

Parents seemed to understand that just by being present children are learning, even by passively engaging in social practice as an observer. They also had an appreciation that the Studio pedagogy afforded a connection to children's life-worlds:

Teachers (if they were involved) can get to know them on a personal level, rather than an academic one. (Rayma, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 1/11/12)

The descriptions of helpfulness I heard in dialogue with the Studio participants, and recorded in photo and video data, neatly equated with descriptions of relationality in the Reggio Emilia schools I described in the literature review for this study. According to Wexler (2004): "Reggio educators bring a family environment into the school because they believe it is an appropriate one in which to learn" (p. 16). The Studio as a space in the formal context of schooling where peers, parents, and community members play more active roles in learning relationships, afforded an altered disposition to relationality which, even though teachers appreciated it, under the role constraints they faced via their 'teacher' identity, they did not ascribe to. However, the significance to children of this altered disposition to relationality that the Studio afforded became increasingly clear as the study progressed.

5.2.2 The significance of altered relationality for inclusivity

Petrusz and Turvey (2010) contend that an organism, only after it has explored its environment to develop familiarity, becomes, "both meaning-determiner and meaning detector and thus participates in its own perceptions" (p. 64). Late in the analysis I transcribed a video which I had thought depicted Kiarnen's attention to instruction, his ability to "drop in" in order to pick up the information he needed to use a tool (in this case a sewing machine) in order to pursue his ambitions (in this case costume making). I had to listen to the audio repeatedly in order to confirm what I thought I was hearing, which was not in this instance acknowledged by more than a "yep" from a participant Grandmother (not his) who was busily focused on providing the instruction he required. Kiarnen's stance was passive and receptive as he knelt down beside the sewing machine to focus in closely. He was assuming the "ready" stance I had become familiar with, but as he did, he unexpectedly made a comment to his instructor, "I wish my Nan was here." I wondered what this quiet

note to self from a child who did not often speak much at all when he was busy making, especially of relationships told me about Kiarnen and the space in which he was being instructed.

Hodges and Fowler (2010) provide a description of language understood from an ecological psychological perspective. Quoting them at length embeds the significance of Kiarnen's brief statement to my research:

> The act of conversing is marked by context sensitivity, interdependency, impredicativity, irreversibility, and responsibility, among other things. Language entails real work: it involves real movements in physical, social, and moral orders that are distributed across a wide array of spatial-temporal scales (e.g. evolutionary, historical); yet there is a dimension of play "at work" as well. These workings of language are embedded and embodied in distributed ways that reveal the fundamentally social, public nature of the activity. It is a form of co-activity that is dialogical and dynamic in ways that may point to deeper understandings of what it means for perception to be direct and for action to be specific. Language locates us. (p. 239)

I had picked up on the tendency evidenced in the data for teachers to bring a didactic Q and A style of spoken language to the Studio space, and for other participants to bring a richer, conversational style. From these observations, I understood that the language typically shared in the Studio over the course of my three-year involvement was characteristically more personal. It was language that afforded the sharing of life-worlds, of the prospectivity and retrospectivity that connects action to the affordances nested in objects, people, events, and places across space and time. If language locates us, Kiarnen's statement indicated that he perceived the relational qualities of the space by making a connection to a significant relationship in his life-world. Beyond a search for 'outcomes', in this moment (reflecting as a teacher), I wondered how Kiarnen's comment, which seemed to acknowledge his familiarity with this activity of joint attention, connecting with his Grandmother, could inform his inclusion in the regular classroom.

Data that evidenced the qualities of relationships across the Studio and classroom were perceivably different as indicated in the previous chapter. Kiarnen's behavioural synergism with Studio suggested that the underlying values that produce

these altered dispositions may be significant to relationally sensitive children. Bowers (2006) contends that community projects afford an alternative means of participation to the industrial culture that reduces the human purpose to consumerism and that:

> what both adults and children learn via ongoing intergenerational exchange stands in sharp contrast to the values and ways of thinking fostered by participation in the industrial culture, which includes the pursuit of individual self-interest, competition, indifference to the social value of what is being produced. (p. 53)

Kiarnen's respectful behaviour in the Studio, his task commitment and this statement about his "Nan" were indicative of his perception of the affordances of the Studio as a place for intergenerational exchange. Keddie's (2014) explanation of a relational epistemology for indigenous communities as an alternative to "mainstream" classroom interaction also has resonance here. Interviewing a group of Aboriginal elders involved with an alternative school in Queensland, who all acknowledged the importance of education to break poverty cycles, Keddie also explains that there was agreement amongst elders that "mainstream schooling environments were inadequate in supporting the children's needs" (p. 63). One participant in Keddie's research put it like this:

> 'Something is happening with our system and its not only for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids but also the white kids in schools, it's just the institutions and what they're doing in the institutions is not suiting them'. (p. 63)

The inability of schools to deal with the diversity of children's needs was described in Keddie's research as a lack of capacity. The role of elders was significant in increasing the capacity of an alternative site where, "the Elders associated student dis-engagement and hardship with… lost connections – the fracture of their kinship and social networks" (p. 65). This is consistent with Bowers (2006) contention that mentoring relationships where reciprocity is highly valued are common to indigenous cultures, which have been, and continue to be devalued:

> While the importance of mentoring is generally overlooked within the industrial culture because it does not contribute to the gross domestic product that can be measured and taxed,

> its significance…must be judged on other grounds. What is genuinely important is that mentoring is governed by the same ethos found in an indigenous culture where the code of reciprocity dictates that work be returned rather than paid. In the case of mentoring, the relationship may be passed along. (p. 54)

I wondered whether it was possible that Kiarnen reciprocated the instruction as "helpfulness" he was receiving in the Studio, with helpful behaviour detected as respect and courtesy, meeting the obligations of shared activity. Ben who had worked closely with Kiarnen in the Studio recalled in an interview:

I was approached by Vera [Kiarnen's teacher] *prior to the class (Studio session) today to give me some warning that Kiarnen had had a few wobblies [temper tantrums and behaviour issues] during the day and that if I needed any help, just give out a yell. And I said to Vera that in my experience with Kiarnen in the Studio, and I've been in there two or three years now, I've never had any problem with him in the Studio whatsoever. I've never seen any signs of him being stressed or being aggravated in the Studio. (Ben, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 20/10/12)*

Given the efforts to 'include' Kiarnen in the regular classroom, his behaviour in the Studio suggested he would rather be somewhere that aligned with his intentions, and in this context he certainly seemed not to require such an effort for 'inclusivity'.

The altered disposition to relationality the Studio afforded was valued by the teachers, even to the extent of identifying the significance of the opportunities for self-discipline:

I think that some students like that the teacher's not there because they're trusted in there and there's independence and self-regulation where they have to be able to manage their time wisely and they choose their direction without teachers being in there. (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

Yet as noted in the previous section the children who seemed to respond better to this opportunity for self-discipline were paradoxically, the very children who often warranted special disciplinary actions in the regular classroom. Most significantly, this observation revealed that it may be the role constraints on teachers that ensured they were unable to fully endorse these qualities of altered temporal or relational

dispositions, regardless of their perception that they were beneficial. In other words, while teachers perceived that adults in the Studio were helping children to get where they wanted to go, as well as children helping themselves, teachers did not equate the direction of children's activity with the direction of their role requirements to "teach".

The disposition to relationality in the Studio was significant to engaging children who were considered difficult to teach, such as Kiarnen. This evidence suggests that personal and reciprocal interactions that constitute a helpful disposition to relationality may be essential for affording more children success in school. Similarly, the research of McGregor and Mills (2011) evidenced several aspects of the environment common to five 'flexi-schools' (schools for children who have not engaged in mainstream schooling) that sought to re-engage marginalised students. Strong features of the environment identified in their research were, non-competition, a different feel to the regular classroom, individualised attention, respect and collegial relationships, compassion and sensitivity. Kiarnen's behaviour, and that of other children who were as challenging to teach in the regular classroom, was complicit with the promoted affordances of the Studio. This finding suggests that the educational challenge for inclusivity may not be how to construct a common set of learnings that respectfully accommodates the myriad of cultural experiences for most student populations today (Thomson, et al., 2012, p. 2), but rather, how to accommodate pedagogically (with consideration to the significance of altered dispositions to temporality and relationality), the common characteristics of learners. In the following section the influence of the Studio on the school more broadly is specifically considered.

5.3 "It's not a classroom, it's a Studio!": Contrasting perceptions of behaviours that constitute learning

This chapter has so far outlined how the affordances of the Studio were perceived according to dispositions to temporality and to relationality. The behaviour of participants in the Studio was synergistic to the characteristics of slowness and spontaneity as temporal qualities, and more personal and reciprocal interactions constituting a 'helpfulness' which characterised relationships. Perhaps, constrained by their role requirements, particularly the pressure of an instrumentalist logic, that

permeates contemporary education practice, teachers did not perceive the significance of these temporal characteristics, and while valuing the relational characteristics, they largely did not subscribe to them as part of their teaching role. The data contributing to this analysis suggests altered dispositions to temporality and relationality contributed to the perception of the Studio as a distinguishable place within the school. According to Barker (1968) the patterns of behaviour described in the previous chapter would suggest the Studio had an internal unity and would therefore be considered a distinct behaviour setting within the school. This distinction was stated most obviously during a Studio session when an adult referring to Studio as a classroom, was immediately corrected by Annabella (Year 4) asserting, *"It's not a classroom, it's a Studio!" (Data from a recollection discussed with Paul, Teacher, Interview 23/10/2012)*.

In this section of the chapter some of the attempts to connect the activity in the Studio with the regular classroom will be explored. In conjunction the potential for learning in the Studio and regular classrooms to be reconciled, will also be considered. What becomes evident is that the distinct behaviour settings of classroom and Studio came to represent pedagogical approaches most often dichotomised as *children having freedom* versus *adult having control*. Within the broader behavioural unit of school, freedom was constrained and adult control was endorsed as more valuable for learning. However, without an ecological psychological stance for considerations of what constitutes learning behaviour, as Reed (1996a) contends, incomplete epistemologies inform both child-centred and adult-directed pedagogy.

5.3.1 Bridging student initiated and teacher directed pedagogy

In a review of the Studio program by the NSW, DEC, questions were raised as to whether and how these two behaviour settings could be better connected. Data evidenced a mixed reaction, confusion, and even contention among participants as to whether, and how, this should happen. As an ethnographer I too wondered, *is it possible to bridge a pedagogical divide of cultural significance where altered dispositions to temporality and relationality are in operation? Was the notion of a Studio classroom simply oxymoronic?* Or, as Slee (2011) contends with the idea of a multi-programmed school campus, could the school be conceived as a musical

ensemble where different beats can contribute to a successful production? Pressure on the school community to better connect the Studio to the regular classrooms came in several ways, not least via the vision held by the principal:

My vision was for this to grow from child centred learning in the Studio, and hopefully meld it with what was happening in the classroom so that teachers, students and parents were all actively involved in the children's learning, and, actually providing them with the opportunities to be able to create a lot of their own learning experiences. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

The principal's vision for the Studio to contribute to school based innovation was exactly what I believe to be Slee's (2011) provocation for an inclusive school campus, where programs that value diversity contribute to innovation in curriculum and pedagogy for inclusivity.

The review of the Australian curriculum Donnelly & Wiltshire (2014) whilst claiming more needs to be done about including students, especially those with a disability, suggests the arts should be pushed back to Year 3 in order for a stronger emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The empirical evidence I had gathered however suggested that in some ways children's fundamental capacity for learning via exploratory behaviour, was highly constrained in the school based learning environment, thus hampering school based efforts for inclusivity as they were formulated two decades ago in UNESCO's (1994) Salamanca Statement; as an entitlement to child-centred pedagogy. This reflects a wider educational debate centring on who should be in control of learning, and the pedagogy perpetuated by which side of the debate taken. For example, according to Miller and Almon (2009) exploratory behaviour, typically honoured in early childhood approaches to pedagogy is currently at risk in kindergartens, where they claim the "push to perform" that more often predominates in schooling with a didactic or teacher-directed approach to pedagogy, is paramount. The 'unschooling' movement mentioned previously is another popular example of how this debate is playing out. The Studio program as a grassroots movement in an otherwise typical school introduced, albeit more implicitly, a similar contention into the school community.

However, the Studio provided a bridge between a radically student-centred approach and that of a more "mainstream" approach to formalised schooling.

During the course of this study I came to understand the significance of this debate over self-initiated versus directed activity, as being a limiting if not debilitating force in terms of educational change. In fact the debate reflects what Reed (1996a) contends are incomplete epistemologies. Examining the activity in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, afforded me a more complete account of learning as both exploratory and performatory behaviour, the result of perception-action cycles of affordance detection and participation in networks of affordances to operationalise effectivities. Without this understanding of the significance of exploratory and performatory behaviour, it might be difficult for educators to value the kinds of opportunities for learning that the Studio, and perhaps child-led approaches more generally, afford. For example, a statement from the newest teacher to the school was elicited after sharing photographs of Studio activity at the outset of an interview. This photo elicitation incited her conjecture, *"I didn't know they did focused activity, I thought they did whatever they wanted!" (Katherine, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)*. What fascinated me about the statement was the idea that no focused attention could come from children's own intentions or action. This was an indication of the naïve assumptions about learning, not of this particular teacher, but of the information available to her in support of her work. The assumption that children, left to their own devices, were seemingly incapable of focused activity confounded me, particularly after the years I had now spent observing the productivity of children in the Studio. While still spatially segregated from the wider community in the Studio, children's intentions frequently resembled the work of adults and aligned with the description Rogoff (1991, 2003) articulates of guided participation. This pedagogical insolence, produced, not by the teacher, but by the institutions of learning – school, university, and media – seemed ignorant of the biological capacity that children bring to their encounters with the world (Simon, 1981; Reed, 1996b).

5.3.2 Constraints on freedom: The challenge of innovating curriculum and pedagogy for inclusion

For fair reason, a dominant theme in the data for teachers was to meet outcomes, or 'tick boxes' as per their role requirements:

I'm unsure where it fits in the curriculum and what outcomes that it meets. (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

Finding the time, fitting it into the curriculum. Yes it's good for them but pressure on you is to check the boxes. For some children, if they're time-wasting, it's very difficult to say that. (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/13)

Any efforts to reconcile the Studio program with their regular teaching requirements simply added an additional pressure to already packed role requirements. Vera grappled with this challenge at length in her interview:

It depends whether the Studio is to be treated that way or not because it's two totally different things. If we're going to set it up to match the curriculum that we do in the classroom then in a way it takes away from the concept of what the Studio is. I feel like it has to be one or the other…Initially I thought it needs to be linked to the curriculum but then when I saw how free it is and providing these children are motivated and interested, I think it's OK as long as it's not every single day because you couldn't allocate that time. If they only have one hour a fortnight, I don't think it needs to be completely matching up. It was only when it was becoming, can they have a couple of days a week, and things like this, I thought it's getting a bit too much. That's where I try to link for example, at the moment we're doing 'careers' , so this week's task is we're looking at art as a career and they get access to the Studio to create an artwork based on a career that they would like to explore. It's open-ended but it links with what I'm doing in class. (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)

The dilemma that the Studio presented for Vera is captured here in the interview, where a sense of two incomplete epistemologies impacting a teacher's phenomenology can be garnered. The distinctiveness of the Studio, and its particular

approach to pedagogy which values “freedom” in providing an opportunity for self-initiated action, was too big to bridge. Gruenewald (2008) claims:

> In place of actual experience with the phenomenal world, educators are handed, and largely accept, the mandates of standardised, "placeless" curriculum and settle for the abstractions and simulations of classroom learning. (p. 317)

Ultimately, it may have been easier for Vera to contain the Studio program by limiting children’s access to its pedagogy while utilising the ‘space’ and attempting to provide children with more “open-ended” experiences in her planned program. Contrasted with the ways in which children’s work in the Studio often resembled the work of adults and their “careers’, this particular example of the impact of the Studio on the school more broadly, illustrates well the impossibility of reconciling two incomplete epistemologies as Reed (1996a) contends, unveiling a greater challenge for school based change. Specifically, this contention highlights that it is difficult to articulate the pedagogical role of teacher in child-led approaches without an understanding of learning from an ecological psychological stance.

As a parent, Rogoff (2001) describes her encounter with a child-centred approach and the concern she brought to the parent cooperative school regarding whether her own child's academic learning would progress in an open environment:

> Aren't they wasting too much time playing games and making their own choices about how to spend their time? The co-opers' activities seemed at times to be too heavily weighted toward arts and crafts - what about "academic" learning? (p. 146)

Whilst initially sharing the same sort of dilemma Vera was faced with, Rogoff came to draw implicitly on ecological psychology as it has influenced her own research, placing emphasis on a “community of learners” as distinct from the "extremes of the pendulum swing between adult control and child freedom" (p. 152). From my own perspective as a parent, this ability to direct-oneself was something I had evidenced my children become less familiar with after the onset of schooling. Over time, children seemed to become more dependent on someone telling them what to do and to lose some of the self-efficacy they had experienced in their early childhood home

and pre-school contexts. I noticed in the data that other parents shared similar concerns:

I just see with Tilda, she gets so annoyed when I tell her what to do and I just imagine in school, even though I know she's very polite about it, I'm sure she gets bored or annoyed with always being told, you gotta do this, regimented. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

Wexler (2004) describes how the intention of students in regular classrooms can be to give teachers what they want, claiming: "intellectual dependency is testimony to the negative effects of a mono directional curriculum" (p.13). Indeed this may be why parents valued creating a space to promote self-initiated activity and understood it to be important for learning:

Just letting the mind wander, being able to dream about what they want to do and then implement it as best they can. (Trenna, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 1/11/12)

The school site for my research was a mainstream public school, not a parent cooperative school, and the intention of producing a "community of learners" while touted in policy, was not a formalised commitment.

In the Studio, with time for exploration to pursue their own intentions, children were permitted to discover multiple affordance possibilities of familiar, and in some cases, novel objects – the boxes, and grasses noted in the previous chapter, for example. Heft (1989) contends "One of the delightful experiences of childhood is probably the discovery of new uses for familiar objects, or put in other words, the discovery of a new affordance in a familiar object" (p. 21). However, as time available for exploratory behaviour in the Studio sessions was decreased this became a key example of how limited understandings of the significance of exploratory behaviour to learning, constrained the impact of the Studio program to inspire innovation in curriculum and pedagogy in the school more broadly. Session times were halved and replaced by a principal and teacher endorsed "enrichment program". This program offered pre-planned activities in contrast to those elicited by the children's own intentions. While the principal believed this to constitute an extension of the Studio learning program, as another way to bring people from other schools

and the wider community into the school to be involved in sharing skills with the children (Principal Research Feedback, 7/10/13), for children, there was a perceivable difference between the Studio and enrichment program. This was made particularly evident in a conversation with my own children that took me by surprise one morning as we readied ourselves for the day:

When I called out, 'What time is Studio today?' My two eldest responded, 'We don't have Studio!' to which I responded, 'Yes, you've got the session where you get to choose what project you are going to do' (the 'enrichment program'). 'No mum' my eldest said emphatically, 'we have to do what the adults tell us'. My second son was even less enthusiastic; I won't repeat what he said. I left it at that, realising the kids had not recognised this to be a Studio session at all. (Reflexive Ethnography, 22/2/2012)

Whilst outside experts, along with teachers, were organised to provide children instruction, including the example of giant spiders I have previously discussed in chapter 4, it seemed children did perceive this activity as different to the activity the Studio afforded. Even though the constraints of being given a range of pre-organised activities to select from was not entirely dissimilar to the constraints that ordinarily impinged on their choices of activity in Studio sessions, based on access to people and resources, this seemed more evidence of the children's ability to perceive more subtle variations in dispositions to temporality and relationality, particularly when it impinged on their freedom. Perhaps to the children these prearranged adult selected activities offered only the illusion of choice that distorts freedom. Perhaps the children perceived that these activities did not necessarily afford them opportunities to detect information and affordances; perhaps they detected that they weren't free to adopt both exploratory and performatory behaviour in cycles of perceiving and acting. What surrounds and supports children in their activity is highly significant, as Nonaka and Sasaki (2009) in their ecological psychological study of toddlers, claim: "considering the fact that animal behaviour is bound to and constrained by the properties of the environment at the outset, flexibility of behaviour has its origin in the multiplicity of the ecological resources that provide a range of opportunities for action" (p. 179). As I conceded in the interview with Paul (a teacher) in response to

the statement one child made differentiating the Studio and classroom; *"Maybe we're trying to connect it, and they're (children) trying to differentiate it?"*

Evidence had been amassing since the inception of the Studio of other impingements on the affordance for children to self-select their activity, for example, when a teacher asked for parents to undertake activities with the children occasionally that linked to themed units for learning. One parent pointed out:

When the teacher wanted us to do the elephants and the bracelets, I found they were almost turned off because we were trying to tell them what to do. They were like…, hang on we're not supposed to do that here! I really picked up on it. They didn't like it! You know they were learning about India and the elephants did look really cute and a couple of girls did have a go but, they were miffed that was encroaching on their little bit of freedom. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 7/10/2010)

Whilst my research was interested in the impact of the Studio program on the school more broadly, it was more apparent that the regular classroom pedagogy and curriculum impinged on the Studio sessions, and particularly on the children's self-selection of activity that afforded them to follow their own motivations. In this one instance, following feedback from the parents, one teacher did rethink this encroachment and re-determined how the Studio could meet other outcomes for learning:

I think knowing that a lot of what they're planning involves literacy skills and numeracy skills; I think that's a really good outcome. I try to do fairly integrated units for HSIE [Human Society and It's Environment – one curriculum subject] for example, but I know that when students go over to Studio they don't want to then be, "Oh, do I have to make another England thing?" But I find it really rewarding when they come back Friday afternoon and they say, "I just want to show you this…" And they verbalise so much of it. That's a great thing in itself because the whole talking and listening thing is such an important part of teaching younger children. (Paul, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/2012)

In another example, an attempt to harness an interest in shelter building resulted in children having to give up their freedom to self-select activity in their Studio session

and build a shelter during their Studio session. Regardless of many children having made shelters spontaneously over the years out of clay, sticks, and cardboard boxes, children were not entirely enthused, with one child claiming:

We have to do it in our Studio time, and we're not allowed to do anything else! (Research Journal, 22/9/2012)

The data clearly produced evidence that the value of student-initiated activity for learning was misunderstood. The teacher's notion that children were learning when their behaviour was directed, meant, in most cases, that anything that had enough structure to look like a 'lesson' e.g. the woodwork, where the outcome was defined as a treasure box, or the sewing, when the outcome was defined as an apron, where the product was tangible and predefined, was acceptable and constituted learning behaviour. For example, one teacher claimed:

that's when I knew it was meeting the curriculum and I wouldn't have time to do things like that, or the ability to do that sort of lesson with them (Vera, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12).

However, exploratory behaviour which produced volition for instruction in the very activities which teachers most appreciated (where instruction was involved), went unrecognised and hence undervalued as a contributing factor.

An ecological psychological stance acknowledges exploratory activity as where learning takes place: "perceiving and acting literally rolled into one - a perceptual search, embodied in information seeking action" (E. Gibson, 1991, p. 600). The opportunity for acting in accordance with ecological psychology's description of ordinary human behaviour was evidenced in the Studio learning environment as described in the previous chapter but can be summarised in E Gibson's claim: "Spontaneous self-initiated actions have consequences, and observation of these is supremely educational" (p. 602). Yet exploratory behaviour was a most contentious behaviour within the school. In the Studio, exploration was promoted as freedom to pursue open-ended activity, which was highly constrained within the school as a wider unit of behaviour (Barker, 1968). Reed (1996a) explains: "The activity of seeking information - exploratory activity - is the basis of all

awareness; the awareness resulting from information pick-up is integral to all action" (p. 184). And further, in contrast to popular learning theory impacting teacher's work: "the process of picking up information becomes one of detection, not construction" (p. 65). We don't so much construct information as we find it. Perceiving begins with exploration.

An example of the ways in which exploratory behaviour as providing children with opportunities for detecting information and affordances was misunderstood, also presented itself on the periphery of my research. It occurred as I was negotiating to publish an article about the Studio and its connections to the Reggio Emilia approach when I came up against what may be another example of the challenge that the exploratory quality of student-initiated activity presents to educators. During correspondence with educators who were providing feedback on my article, I was asked to remove the word 'emergent' from the text, having used it as an adjective to support my description of one of the qualities of the approach as I had come to perceive it (through the literature and attendance at a Winter Institute in Reggio Emilia in 1998 - a conference attended by 40 Australian, and many other international educators interested in the approach). This was justified by a fair claim that representatives of Reggio Emilia did not want the approach to be perceived as 'emergent'. Owing to the considered nature of the evocativeness of this particular word, I guessed this was a previously encountered contention for them. For me, the experience felt like I was being corrected for misinterpreting the approach; what I thought was a circle it turns out is an oval. However, as no suitable explanation was provided my developing specificity for describing the approach waned and I wondered instead about the word as an affordance. Specifically, whether the word 'emergent' tipped the balance of the teacher/student dichotomy a little too far in the direction of student, in the same way that student- initiated activity in the Studio was provocative. I had borrowed the term from Jones and Nimmo (1994) who offer 'emergent curriculum' as terminology to describe a tentative plan of possibilities that is negotiated with children as they pursue their interests and intentions, similar to ideas espoused by Boomer (1992) and termed 'negotiating curriculum'. Bowers (2012) describes the contention of words that contain temporal analogues that position their affordances historically, arguing these words do not always afford the

required metaphors for the present. Emergent conveys a presence and immediacy to children's encounters with the world and their detection of affordances that demands responsiveness. I wondered whether censoring it served to reify the role of teacher as professional orchestrator of learning. I found a comment by Jan Milikan (2009), the Australian representative for the Reggio Children – *International Centre Network Group*, illuminating:

> Unfortunately the phrase 'Rights of the Child' as used by the Reggio Emilia educators has been misinterpreted by some Australian educators as children having complete freedom to do exactly as they wish, and consequently rejecting anything to do with the Reggio Emilia education project. (p. 39)

My suspicions were confirmed. Even for an education movement as far-reaching as this, and with efforts to re-image children as capable and resourceful, freedom, the very thing which children in the Studio valued the most, may have been threatening.

In the introduction to this thesis I quoted Simon (1981) who claims that teachers "find it difficult to do more than ensure that each child is in fact engaged in the series of tasks which the teacher sets up for the child" (p.18). Similarly critical, Thomas (2009) contends this is the consequence of a lag in educational psychology and that the teaching approach to breaking down learning into behavioural objectives is not built on strong epistemology, and does not account in any way for intentionality. Additionally, Bartlett (2001) describes it as a challenge to see learning when it appears in a different context to the dominant image of classroom learning portrayed in the media and familiar to our own experience of schooling:

> For most of us, the idea of a classroom invokes images of children sitting quietly at desk, working from textbooks, or listening to a teacher...When this image is shattered...it can be difficult for a newcomer to identify the learning taking place, let alone the structure that makes it possible. (p. 50)

The Studio was perceived as a distinguishable place within the school, according to qualities perceivable via spatio-temporal and spatio-relational organisers of behaviour. Significantly for understanding inclusive education, some children that were more challenging to teach in the regular classroom appeared to have more synergy with the Studio behaviour setting. Discipline and structure was in the

commitment of adults to turn up and work in mentoring ways, and it was in the organisation of the environment for action (albeit limited by its own constraints such as availability of parents and community to make these commitments to helping and the availability of resources accessible via affordance networks). Indeed, as the previous chapter surmised, learning did happen but it was more difficult for teachers to perceive it. The constraints of their role requirements to keep children occupied, assess learning outcomes, and attempt to make sense of a space characterised by alternate dispositions to temporality and relationality that was managed by parents, was inhibitive to the program having any impact on the curriculum and pedagogy at the site more broadly. On this point the principal did claim towards the end of my data collection:

I believe that they are [referring to teachers] gradually starting to realise that the Studio is not just an art room and it's not just a space for the kids to just go and play. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

A dichotomisation of child-centred versus adult-directed pedagogical approaches presented a distraction from inclusive pedagogy. It worked by diverting attention from what was happening in the Studio, to arguments about what should be. It created doubt about whether children were learning, and under what conditions, and clouded the reaslisation that all children were learning under all conditions. "Doing nothing" was problematised, when in fact it was an important part of the exploratory processes that contributed to affordance detection. Or, as Jana affirmed, it was an important part of the artistic process contributing to self-awareness as artist and educator (an idea affirmed by Gude, 2009). Self-awareness is the springboard of activity, knowing what to do, or what you want to do is extremely significant to our identity and experience of effectivities.

One of the more successful attempts to connect the Studio and classroom was to institute a Studio journal writing practice that would better document children's efforts at planning, researching, making, doing, and communicating their work. One teacher realised the value of this connection:

And these connections to teaching are not being made. One of the things that I really believe is that you have to make those connections to learning. So, when you make

something in the Studio, and that's the whole idea of the journals I guess, it's that you can make those connections in class. So now at the end of doing journals in class I can see that someone's using 3D shape and someone's doing this, and I can make those connections to their learning and I'm voicing it for them so that they can see it. A lot of the time they will just make something and not think, I'm actually learning (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

Maintaining the journals was still challenging for reasons of temporality (as all attempts to better connect the two behaviour settings were). Ultimately, children didn't want to do this kind of work once their Studio sessions were reduced, and teachers found it challenging to always elicit what the children were doing without a higher level of involvement themselves in the Studio sessions that were managed by parents. One parent expressed the challenges of connecting the Studio and classroom in an interview:

I see if teachers were more involved in the Studio they would see what are the students interested in…If the teachers could see that and pick it up, kids would respond to that. So, there are learning opportunities that are just going amiss. (Bianca, Parent Volunteer, Interview, 9/11/12)

The previous chapter indicated that exploratory behaviour creates a level playing ground for adults and children alike to relate in a collaborative or "helpful" way. The teacher/student dichotomy is transcended, increasing the opportunities for discussion and the sharing of ideas and information through affordance networks. The significance of this little bit of freedom in the Studio to work alongside adults, may have permitted students to explore what Reed (1996a) refers to as "the human toolkit":

> human beings have been pounding, chopping, cutting, tying, moulding, dying, shaping, heating, poking, etching, smearing, and roasting for tens of thousands of years. Human infants and children have grown up in environments where some adults to only some of these things and other adults to other things. These developing children have played games based on these activities and also been helped to learn the activities. (p. 122)

The significance of the opportunity the Studio program provided for parents and children alike to enact guided participation, to operationalise effectivities in affordance networks, engaging tools and resources, matched Reed's description of the application of this human toolkit: "It is what one thing to know that an object is sharp and affords poking a whole; it is quite another thing altogether to know how to use it to do anything" (p. 123). This pedagogy of guided participation was perceived by teachers as providing students with different ways to learn:

(It's) giving students different kinds of learning because in the class it's just focused…Having this type of program…helps students learn in different ways. (Katherine, Interview, 23/10/12)

The parents that work in the Studio obviously value it, and they obviously believe that kids learn differently and that they need to have a variety of ways to learn, and they need to have a lot of freedom and choice. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

However, the ontology and epistemology of an ecological psychological stance brings a concern with the common characteristics of learners rather than their differences. The Studio did not support a different type of learning but a different type of pedagogy, a different kind of approach to supporting learning, due to the perceivably different spatio-temporal and spatio-relational qualities it afforded, namely slowness, spontaneity and helpfulness. This study suggests that increased pedagogical diversity accounted for increased diversity of outcomes for students at the site. However, as an innovation for inclusion, its impact on the site more broadly to promote student-initiated, adult supported activity, were constrained by the school as the wider unit of behaviour, particularly via the role constraints on teachers.

5.4 "We're ignoring him": Inclusivity, intentions and affordances of place

In this final section of the discussion of the findings of this research I undertake to summarise the significance of the detection of affordances of place to in/ex/clusivity. Specifically, the control that behaviour settings exert over the roles taken up as we enter them, and the ways in which the perception of affordances of place impact the experience of in/ex/clusion are discussed.

The project that has been the subject of this case study was in many ways inspired by my own feelings of being excluded as a parent from school as a component of my children's lives. I felt a sense of exclusion, not as result of any particular person or action but from the separation and contrast that I experienced between the ways we learned together at home and the practice of schooling. I sought, and valued a shared pedagogy that was, and remains elusive. I now understand the policy promise of partnership to be a spatio-temporal one – we'll do *this* on our time with your children, and you should do *this* on your time. I feel no more connected to the ways in which my children are educated at school regardless of the efforts I have made. I am more aware of my complicity in using school, and perhaps inadvertently I have detailed some of the underlying reasons that parents choose alternatives to schooling. I acknowledge that not all parents want this shared pedagogy or can be involved in this way, and as the production of this thesis took prominence in my life, I was less and less able to make contributions to my children's schooling myself. With less involvement I was still relieved to know that my children had access to some Studio time. As seemingly insignificant as the amount of time dedicated to the program had become, the pedagogical intentions of giving children, as students, the opportunity to initiate their activity, and parents and community an opportunity to take up a pedagogical role in the school, still seems important.

In undertaking to also research this particular project and my experiences with it, I was at first inspired by my attunement to the ways my own children navigated the behaviour settings of home and classroom. As I spent more time contemplating the focus of this research, I became more attuned to particular students who were sometimes segregated via altered pedagogical approaches such as having a teacher's aide or increased access to computers for learning in the name of 'inclusion'.

As I encountered not just what I, but other parents, undertook to support not just our own, but other people's children in the Studio, it became apparent that Studio was similar to the classroom in many ways, particularly its intention to educate. However, under the conditions of half class sizes, with no pressure to teach a particular curriculum, and with access to materials and resources for creativity

which harnessed the children's own intentions, parents were able to respond to children in personal ways. They shared their interests and experiences, their life-worlds, contributing reciprocity to relationships that indeed transcended the teacher/student dichotomy regardless of instruction being central to their contributions and promised a means to personalise learning as the new Australian curriculum requires. Understanding the exchanges that unfolded in the Studio required a certain amount of unlearning (see, Finn, 2013) and an encounter with ecological psychology and its proponents.

As I crept towards the culmination of this thesis and contemplated the contribution that examining learning in the Studio from an ecological psychological stance makes to developing inclusive practices, I realised that this work has been more about the ways in which exclusion is produced, about the place based politics of school, and the subsequent production of injustice (Soja, 2010). My work has been an examination of the school as a colonising space where the Studio represented to its inhabitants what Soja describes as "a space of resistance and enablement" (p. 42). Ironically, it seems the way in which the Studio came to exclude teachers that proved most insightful. It brought home to me the idea that we are not only excluded but that we also exclude ourselves according to our perception of the affordances of place.

In spaces like the Studio, where people set themselves challenges and work at their own pace, no-one really stands out from anyone else and this is perhaps the most obvious way in which the space appeared to be inclusive. However, when teachers entered the space, they did stand out. Their voices and their schedules took precedence and the stress of being teacher seemed all too obvious. There was some evidence, that the Studio itself threatened the functional integrity of the regular classroom. Heft (2012) explains:

> When the functional integrity of the setting is threatened, perturbations should be perceivable in the dynamics of the setting. Participants who threaten the setting's operations are then prodded or cajoled into line by other setting participants. (p. 32)

This was particularly evident to me when I became embroiled in the conflict detailed in chapter 3. Understanding this encounter from an ecological psychological stance

afforded the insight that the Studio was indeed excluding teachers. This explained the defensiveness that I had encountered on occasions. Additionally, the way in which the principal sometimes acted, as if to protect teachers, also made more sense. For example, the principal reflecting upon when the Studio was instigated explained that:

The school policies on learning needed to be re-assessed and looked at to make sure the teachers were not feeling threatened by it. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

This process of re-examining school policies may have allayed fears teachers brought to the idea of children doing what they wanted and parents being highly involved, in a way using policy to provide a justification for the Studio, however it did nothing to encourage a deeper engagement with its pedagogy.

When opportunities arose to discuss pedagogy, teachers rarely moved outside of discussion about their role requirements. Sellar (2009) explains a similar encounter in his own research that attempted more specifically to garner pedagogical inquiry of teachers:

> I asked teachers to discuss the ethical dimension of their pedagogy. On both occasions teachers' responses eluded invitations to describe and theorise their pedagogical practice…they struggled to expand on these discussions in theoretical terms. (p. 21- 22)

In order to overcome teachers exclusion and increase their engagement in the Studio program, I suspected either the Studio had to meet some of their role requirements, (such as help them 'tick off' some boxes of outcomes that it had met, or neatly cover one area of the curriculum) or, that they simply did not have access to theory that attuned them well to matters of how children learn.

Konza (2008) explains a kind of resistance teachers bring to inclusivity as arising from inadequacy, lack of expertise, and vulnerability:

> Teacher's perceptions of their own professional competence are eroded by the failure of some students to learn, and by continual challenging behaviours in the classroom. (p. 45)

The particular ways, in which the affordances of the Studio, for diversifying the ways in which success (and challenge) could be experienced at the site, were silenced, resembled this resistance. The performance of teachers in this research exemplifies the ways in which people are both constituted by, and constitute their environments according to an ecological psychological stance. Teachers, in a school context, have access to power according to their roles and certainly seem to act in powerful ways, yet this assumed power did not afford them a greater range of action. In fact, it afforded them increased constraints on their behaviour, as behaviour settings maintain stability by limiting the freedom of actions (Heft, 2001).

Data confirmed there was agreement among teachers and parents that something of a parallax occurred for some students as they participated in the Studio program. For Kiarnen, shifting the background for his behaviour displaced his definition as 'troubling', providing a line of sight to his creative capacity. Reed (1996a) contends: "It often happens that behaviours that had been of marginal value in one habitat proved to be of much greater significance in a new context" (p. 85). Although there was consensus that this change in behaviour was observable, the context in which Kiarnen's behaviour was ordered (the Studio behaviour setting) was not entirely valued as a legitimate educational space. Significantly, these findings suggest this was not because learning wasn't happening, but rather, because the value of altered dispositions to temporality and relationality were not entirely perceivable and actionable to all participants. Specifically teachers, working under role constraints, that may include information garnered from incomplete epistemologies, were challenged to perceive affordances for education in the behaviour produced by the Studio behaviour setting. While any scepticism about the program and the availability of parents and other members of the wider community to contribute in voluntary ways may be valid, this should not detract from the search for the best ways to reach all children in ways that are educational, that provide children with a sense of who they are, what they can do, and how they can contribute to community, local and global. The Studio program at this school site certainly instigated opportunities for such pedagogical discussions however, the temporal and relational constraints on teachers, parents, and students in the wider school environment prevented this from happening.

A final juxtaposition of the ways in which spaces produce affordances of place in the school context can be garnered from my final moment of data collection:

It was the last day of data collection, and my final observations of Kiarnen…during the first two sessions of Studio…I observed him wandering around the playground during class time as I glanced out the large Studio windows. When some of his peers came into work in the Studio through lunchtime, I inquired, "What was Kiarnen doing wandering around the playground? To which they responded in unison, "We're ignoring him!" In this moment I perceived the amalgam of behaviour settings theory and affordance theory as describing the way in which we perceive the affordances of place. His exclusion was a transaction between him and his environment. While the classroom, its constitution, and constituents, were excluding him, he was also excluding himself. Or perhaps he was including himself in the outdoor environment as it was better supporting his intentions.

Apparently Kiarnen had experienced what the school community referred to as a "meltdown". I often wondered about nuclear catastrophe as a metaphor to describe a child's behaviour when beyond not conforming, it had the potential for harm. It indicated a point of no return that could not be reversed. It also suggested his behaviour was the result of someone else's action. But like the person pushing the detonating button, the teacher is subject to a much wider set of circumstances that compel the antagonistic action from them.

Moments later…Kiarnen came into Studio quietly, greeted Ben, and got out his woodwork project. He had been told by Ben he only had a few weeks to get it finished, and by all intents and purposes he was applying himself with 100% presence to the task. He worked diligently as he had throughout the year, following complicated instructions to get his box made, and showing interest and engagement in discussions with Ben about tools and jigs and materials, along the way. (Reflexive Ethnography, 13/8/2013)

Behaviour settings are coercive. They work to exclude those who do not conform to conventions, and as Barker (1968) claims: "When an individual's behaviour deviates from the pattern of the setting, it is usually symptomatic of mental or physical illness" (p. 164). There is increasing concern, as more and more school-age children

are pathologised and consequently prescribed medication for behaviour that is seen to impact learning (Graham, 2007; Gutkin, 2012; Slee, 2011; Robinson, 2006; Williams and Greenleaf, 2012). An ecological psychological stance presents an opportunity for a paradigm shift necessary to address the problem of educational pandemics that have arisen from a medical model focused on individuals, and the systemic failure of education, along with mental health services to address this pandemic (Gutkin, 2012). Without an understanding of person-environment reciprocity the current approach "fails to recognise the essential role that environments often play in creating and maintaining psychological and psychoeducational dysfunction" (Gutkin, 2012, p. 8). Williams and Greenleaf (2012) agree that students are pathologised as a result of the limitations of the myopic medical lens and that person-environment transactions are ignored as a result. Their contention is that the current system of:

> …intra-psychic discourse stabilises the social order through the neutralisation of its gravest threat: civil disobedience and concerted social action by oppressed individuals, groups, and their allies to create a more equitable and just society. (p. 147)

Ecological psychology has described the problem and is itself offered up as the solution. However, Barker's (1968) theory of behaviour settings explains anomalies of behaviour as if persons are 'out of mind' where, if equal consideration is given to J. Gibson's (1979/1986/2015) affordance theory, lack of synergy could be explained as the result of not detecting affordances of place. Taken together, this ecological psychological stance suggests behaving to remove oneself or responding to pressure from within the behaviour setting, is perhaps more indicative of being 'out of place'.

Affordances of places may be a more important consideration than previously thought when it comes to understanding what contributes to in/ex/clusion. Barker (1968) goes some way towards describing the affordances of places according to an agent's intentions:

> …some aspects of the behaviour of different persons within the same behaviour setting differ widely: one person may enter a drugstore to buy medicine for a friend, another may enter to buy poison for an enemy…One patient in a doctor's office may have his anxieties allied, another may have his

> worst fears confirmed; one pupil in a class may experience great success, another profound failure. Yet all of these people will conform to the standing patterns characteristic of behaviour in the setting. In other words, the content and structure of a person's own psychological world, his life-space, are by no means determined by the behaviour setting. (p. 29)

Affordances of place are only determinable in relation to agents and their intentions. For example, the principal's office in Ryan's (2009) research afforded rewards for some children and punishment for others. Accordingly, the former felt included in this space, while for the latter, the principal's office was experienced as excluding.

The evidence I have provided indicates that the Studio behaviour setting promotes affordances via its pedagogical organisers which convey meaning and value aligning with particular dispositions to temporality and relationality. Heft (2013) provides an entirely appropriate summation for this section that has considered the mutuality of person and environment and the impact on notions of in/ex/clusion:

> Because the concept of affordance prompts us to consider the functional character of the environment in relation to prospective users, it should spur ongoing efforts to design environments that are suitable for diverse populations. (p. 27-28)

The Studio was an appropriated space, a classroom repurposed to support children's goals. Understood as a radical intention this appropriated space within the school might be considered an act of what Lefebvre (1974) termed *detournement*, like the example Lefebvre provides of the Halles Centrales, Paris, converted from a space for work to a space for play. The evidence introduced in chapter 3, that the Studio added to the pressure placed on teachers, contributed to this detournement becoming ironical, where teachers themselves became spatially alienated. In order to support teachers to understand the value of this 'play', this research suggests understanding how children learn from an ecological psychological stance may be useful. It could support policy makers, teachers, parents, children, and all educational stakeholders to consider children's learning outside of the incomplete epistemologies that frame learning in the classroom, to enlist affordance networks that open up opportunities for mentoring relationships that harnesses the potential of local knowledge and

expertise in support of children's learning. Considering the challenges this research has highlighted, further questions such as whether children like Kiarnen are bearing the responsibility of the radical dissent to schooling that this kind of change necessitates, and whether children are resisting oppression as "students" by refusing to identify with standing patterns of behaviour incumbent upon their subordination to a "teacher", could be asked. Whilst the Studio brought altered dispositions to the site as a 'school', it seems pertinent to remember that schooling (as a relatively new phenomenon) brought altered dispositions to a previous way of life; disrupting the practice and values such as, intergenerational learning and self-sufficiency.

5.5 Summary

The Studio stands as unique as a grass roots appropriation of a space within an otherwise mainstream school in regional Australia. It produced a space within the school which afforded parents a means to contribute pedagogically, and afforded children the sort of experiential learning peculiar to out-of-school contexts. In summarising what ecological psychology contributed to understanding how children learn in the Studio context, and how this can inform the development of inclusive practices, this research proffers that ecological psychological theories can support an approach to education that encompasses increased diversity of pedagogical approaches that may in fact be more culturally sensitive and appropriate to the needs of children, parents, and communities. In particular, ecological psychological view of learning behaviour transcends the teacher/student dichotomy that impacts arguments over the validity of teacher-directed versus child-led pedagogies. It suggests the detection of information for affordances, and the operationalising of effectivities in affordance networks may be significant beyond behavioural objectives that define potential for learning outcomes according to curriculum.

This research revealed that fundamental to questions of in/ex/clusivity in schools, are concerns with dispositions to spatio-temporal and spatio-relational organisers of behaviour or, in other words, how and when learning happens, and whom and what a teacher is. That pedagogy is fundamentally relational is not, according to Sellar (2009), easily graspable for teachers. Ultimately, to challenge children we need to know them. The pedagogical concerns this research raises with whom and what a teacher is, how and when learning happens, and what is considered

legitimate activity for learning, suggest the school based model of education and its monomorphic structure may be predisposed to limitations which greatly impact inclusivity, not least by separating children from work and community.

The SLP is exemplary of the ways in which the diversification of space and the consequent affordances of place can contribute to inclusion, but it is certainly not a model, nor should it be. Likewise, this research has not intended to answer a specific problem with a particular solution but rather to feel out where there is potential for action towards valuing diversity. It is poignant to remember that if we subscribe to schooling alone as education, its architecture and its pedagogy, has intentionally constrained diversity:

> Colonial and government efforts to "civilise" native people were characterised by an attitude that there is One Best Way - which, of course, is the way of the dominant group. In scholarly debates and in many intervention projects aiming to improve other people's lives, the assumption that there is One Best Way continues. (Rogoff, 2003, p. 347)

Ultimately, the project of schooling itself cannot be assumed to be neutral. The complexities of an increasingly corporatized global economy influencing government decision making, coupled with an increased understanding of the environmental consequences of continuing down a growth-based model of anthropocentric domination of the Earth's resources, are pressing. We desperately need new theoretical perspectives that lift us out of (re)producing our failed models and more radical solutions to local and global concerns to which elements of school based education contribute. The following chapter will detail the implications and conclusions of this study.

Chapter 6: Time to relate: Invigorating community capacity for pedagogy

This study has developed around my research interests spanning the parent-school partnership, pedagogy as how we understand and support learning, and the entanglement of space and place with how we include and exclude ourselves and others. In contrast to the dominant psychological theories that perpetuate deficit rationality, where problems are attributed to individuals, an ecological psychological stance assumes persons and environments are mutually constitutive. My research has involved taking an ecological psychological stance in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of inclusion and exclusion that accounts for person-environment synergism. Learning in the Studio was examined from the ecological psychological stance as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour. This theoretical stance ultimately revealed insights into the ways in which intentions and the affordances of place coalesce to produce experiences of inclusion and exclusion in line with the central organising question of this inquiry: *What does ecological psychology contribute to understanding how children learn in the Studio context and how can this inform the development of inclusive practices?*

The most significant implication of my research, in agreement with Smyth's (2010) contention that policy rhetoric and media spin perpetuate deficit discourses, and the blaming and shaming of teachers, students, families, or even whole communities, situates the broader system of education as 'schooling' as uninterrogatable. This suggests that it is the monomorphic reproduction of classroom spaces, and the pedagogical organisers that produce the activity within them, that needs to be most thoroughly interrogated. This is particularly apparent when consideration is given to notions of inclusivity and the goal of all children achieving success. As a summary of this research and providing some direction for future inquiry, this final chapter will detail how this interrogation might take shape. It will do this by firstly discussing the significance of increasing children's proximity to a community of adults as mentors, guides and instructors (6.1). I will provide some reasons for supporting student-initiated activity and its further research (6.2) as well as some operational implications that might better support schools to achieve the relational pedagogy I propose is significant to more children achieving success in

learning and for schools to become more inherently inclusive (6.3). This leads to some conclusions about the challenges of school based change and the theoretical shift that might better support it (6.4) followed by a final summary of this research endeavour (6.5).

6.1 Increasing children's proximity to mentors, guides, and instructors

Because information is in the environment it can be shared, and we often learn best and have the richest experience when we have a guide. Our guide does not transmit ideas to us, nor does she impose certain ways of thinking upon us. A good mentor helps us to learn things for ourselves, to learn to attend to the available information (Reed, 1996b, p. 113).

This research affirms questions about the assumed innocuity of schooling that spatially separates children from the home and community for their education, that have been previously raised (see Rogoff, 2003). Building on these previous criticisms, my research offers some specific indication that the intentions of 'family and community' to support learning may be endowed with altered dispositions to temporality (embodied as slowness and spontaneity), and relationality (embodied as more personal, and helpful interactions). Furthermore, this research suggests these dispositions, when brought to the school site, may support synergisms for some children that allow them to experience success and challenge in ways that may not ordinarily be available in the mainstream school environment.

The spatio-temporal and relational qualities of the Studio produced a pedagogy of guided participation; a pedagogy that is more familiar to learning in contexts outside of schools. This research suggests such pedagogy may be highly significant to notions of inclusivity concerned with sustained engagement of students, their families, and communities in education. Finding novel ways to increase the proximity of adults to children via genuine pedagogical roles for parents and community should be a priority for inclusive education. This research has demonstrated that ecological psychological theories can proffer a better understanding of the affordances for learning that the engagement of family and community in the pedagogical exchange can bring. It also highlights that suitable

training for teachers to work with parents in pedagogical ways is critical to supporting the development of school sites to become more inherently inclusive.

Schooling requires students to be well versed in a 'shared focus of attention' and in many ways the classroom and its constraints (such as, limited furnishings and equipment designed for passivity and high teacher-student ratios, usually involving a single teacher with many students), expect this. These constraints perpetuate 'busy' classrooms where children are busy doing what they are told. But is this the same as joint attention? McDermott and Taylor (2009) claim: "When students reach out to their communities, learning becomes engaging and meaningful" (p. 33). An ecological psychological stance reveals how increasing the proximity of adults as mentors, guides and instructors serves to connect children to networks of affordances from which they can operationalise their effectivities.

Winter (1996) reminds us, "All of us ask and pay for behavioural engineering when we send our children to school…we revere teaching and learning, and expect others to derive methods for changing our behaviour. To do so, we must temporarily acknowledge that we want others to "control us" (p. 185). If we want more children to experience success in schools then we must remove obstacles to failure. In schools, these obstacles which constrain the ability of all children to succeed are often intangible to our direct perception as affordances are nested in histories of action in time and space. They may, as evidenced by Kiarnen's reference to his Grandmother, be viscerally significant. Exemplified by Kiarnen's respectful behaviour with volunteers in the Studio where he felt a connection to his own significant relationships. Affordances of place understood through ecological psychology as I have outlined in this study, and contextualised through an understanding of the politics of place as produced, afford a means to re-work localised approaches to education that are place-based. As O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004) suggest: "In an ecological perspective, there is no sense of the person without the sense of community" (p. 13). Improving education may require parents, community, and school, working harmoniously together to multiply the resources available for a range of action possibilities for all children, extending ourselves beyond the individualism perpetuated by the dominant psychological paradigm.

6.2 Supporting student-initiated activity

Selective action (agency) is a defining psychological quality of animate beings (Heft, 2013b, p.163).

Children's self-initiated activity evidenced their 'effort after meaning and value' (Reed, 1991) and in many ways, resembled the work of adults. As they explored, collaborated and constructed (with their hands, not in their heads), their activity resembled the work of architects, town planners, storytellers, sculptors, teachers, artists, manufacturers, and merchants. The adults working alongside them shared skills and exchanged life-world experiences. In fact, my analysis concluded this activity in the Studio most resembled what Barbara Rogoff (1991, 2003) described as guided participation, where children are educated in community, alongside adults, rather than separated for their education in schools. This analysis suggests that work to 'include' children in 'school' must also consider ways to include them in the wider community given the ways that schooling, as a monomorphic model for education, reproduces exclusion. While this is not a new insight the case study does provide a more nuanced understanding of the perception of the affordances of place and experiences of inclusivity and exclusivity. Sometimes it was difficult to tell whether inclusion or exclusion was self-imposed or coerced. As J. Gibson (1979/1986/2015) described, "One perceives the environment and co-perceives oneself" (p. 126) and so the affordances of place impact selectivity in complying with the constraints of the behaviour setting. This was exemplified throughout the research by the ways in which some teachers excluded themselves from the Studio program, the way I too had excluded myself from volunteering in the usual ways parents are welcomed in schools, and, as I observed Kiarnen across the whole school context, how, when 'opting out' of the regular classroom wasn't an option, 'acting out' was a means of exclusion (arguably self-imposed).

Ecological psychology provides a useful theoretical stance from which to understand and support learning in a context where student initiated activity is resourced and supported. In particular, when learning is understood as a perception-action cycle of both exploratory and performatory behaviour, the value of exploratory or open-ended experiences can be better understood as a function for learning. This has implications for reconciling debates over child-centred versus

adult-led approaches. Even in the early childhood field, where child-centred, play-based approaches to curriculum and pedagogy are more prominent, Ridgeway and Quinnones (2012) have recently described them as "widely misunderstood". My research reveals such approaches can be better understood as instructive, and children's free-roaming behaviour within them, is not to be feared as unproductive. Rather, a consideration of affordance detection and the operationalising of effectivities in affordance networks can inform interpretations of learning behaviour and how best to support learning as this dynamic process. What I suspect is most pertinent may be that learning is best facilitated "when children are in control of the objects of joint attention" (Tomasello and Farrar,1986, p. 148). Significantly, my research indicates that control over the objects of attention may induce a passive "ready" stance which supports shared attention and volition for instruction. This seems worthy of further research and investigation in the production of educative spaces. Ecological psychology can potentially help teachers, families, and communities, to understand how learning occurs in the types of pedagogical alternatives described by Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) as approaching inclusive pedagogy, or more commonly referred to as student-centred or play-based curriculum and pedagogy. An inability to understand how learning occurs in these approaches, prior to implementing them, may be inhibitive to embracing more inherently inclusive pedagogy.

6.3 Operational implications

Because the concept of affordance prompts us to consider the functional character of the environment in relation to prospective users, it should spur ongoing efforts to design environments that are suitable for diverse populations. (Heft, 2012, p. 27 – 28)

Ultimately, as Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) describe, this undertaking to make a pedagogical contribution to my children's schooling became an exploration of, "a tension between the attempts to put values and principles into action, and the complexities of schools and education systems" (p. 4), however, the ecological psychological stance taken afforded a deeper and more nuanced understanding of these tensions. Affordances of place understood through ecological psychology as I have outlined in this study, and contextualised through an understanding of the

politics of place as produced, afford a means to re-work localised approaches to education that are place-based. The transformation from an instrumental to an ecological consciousness will require collaboration as O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004) suggest: "In an ecological perspective, there is no sense of the person without the sense of community" (p. 13). When affordances are understood as being nested in 'places' (such as schools) over space and time (politically harnessed to colonisation, philosophically harnessed to industrial capitalism and practically harnessed to a system of behaviour settings), they may become obscured to participants. In fact, by participating in behaviour settings we are necessarily complicit with them. That is, we ourselves enact the obfuscatory practices condoned by the institutions we perform our role in. This research provides some evidence of how this is manifesting to distract teachers from their work to support all students to experience success in school by exploring pedagogical diversity as a means of reaching more students.

The findings I have reported suggest altered dispositions to temporality and relationality introduced pedagogical diversity into the site, and was significant to providing a parallax from which to observe children's profile of competencies as learners, as well as creating a role for parents and community to bring pedagogical intentions to the school site, both significant outcomes towards inclusivity. However, the program clashed in many ways with the intentions of teachers to meet their role requirements under a rigid timetable of subject-centred learning, national testing regimes, and other performance accountabilities, including the reporting of children's learning outcomes. Teachers were highly constrained by an audit culture that ensures their intentions are tied to teaching and their attention is attuned to performatory behaviour at the expense of not only children's exploratory behaviour, but of their own learning processes.

Diversifying pedagogy as a means of reaching more students or 'differentiation' as it has become known was recently examined as a component of school based audits in Queensland (Australia) by Mills, Monk, Keddie, Renshaw, Christie, Geelan and Gowlett (2014). They found a lack of understanding and agreement around what constitutes 'differentiation', suggesting the concept needed "more theoretical work and practical definition and teachers need more support to explore this in their work" (p. 342). Congruent with my findings they claim, the

tensions and uncertainty encountered suggests: "this lack of pedagogical differentiation was not due to any deficit in teachers, but in the failure of the system to create the appropriate environment for them to enact and trial the forms of pedagogy that align with differentiation" (p. 345). This thesis has reported evidence that the constraints on teachers of an audit culture of 'ticking boxes', 'meeting outcomes', 'forward planning', 'teacher evaluation', 'subject-divided time-tables', 'report writing' and 'an overload of extra programs and events' is producing a distraction from learning, and from what is significant for producing inclusive practices including pedagogical diversity in school. This has implications for better supporting teachers via systemic operational shifts inviting a new relationality of collaboration where responsibility for resourcing students for learning can be shared. Additionally, my research produced evidence of how deficit rationality perpetuates existing exclusionary practices. A particular example being the reduction of time for this program, and a lack of understanding of the parallax it did produce and its significance for inclusivity.

Challenging the ways in which the 'classroom' has been conceived to focus on instruction via passive classroom design, and one teacher to many same age peers seems worthy of further interrogation. Shared attention, as the basis of all pedagogy (Heft, 2013) will remain a challenge for schools under these constraints without attention to operational dynamics which value learning as relational. Furthermore, if schools are to remain relevant in the future, the priority for education systems should be to account for this new (or age old) understanding. Raising the competence of all children as learners (pertinent to narrowing the gap between so called 'bottom' and 'top' achievers) will require this.

6.4 Why school based change is so challenging?

The finding that teachers were unable to perceive the potential of the Studio to impact the school as an inclusive campus reveals the obvious limitation of this research. As mentioned previously, action research methodology could have potentially brought the teachers on board. This would formalise a requirement for active exchange between children, parents, teachers, and researchers and enable the further consideration of the ways that the Studio came to be considered and used by the teachers. The ecological psychological theoretical stance could build consensus

around how learning behaviour can be identified and supported thus attuning this group of teachers to its potential affordances.

Another limitation of this research is that I did not include a survey of the entire parent population to ascertain a greater range of parent perceptions of the Studio's affordances. To some extent I did rely on other data to contribute this information indirectly (for example, the NSW, DEC evaluation quoted at length in chapter 3). Additionally, the principal explained:

I do have an idea that generally the parents value it. They hear their kids talk about it and they know that the kids love to go in there and that's why we've been able to get a few other parents in on occasions. (Susan, School Principal, Interview, 1/11/2013)

It is quite possible that parental perceptions of the Studio program varied similar to what I encountered with the teachers over the three year duration of the study. For example:

Grace, a teacher believes the Studio is not what most parents want, Harry, a new graduate, believes the Studio learning environment is interesting, but not everything, and Joe, an older and more experienced teacher, loves it and believes it is just what schools need. (Research Journal, 23/3/2011)

The biggest issue with the Studio at the moment is that I don't really feel like it's valued by every teacher and every person in the school. (Christa, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

I feel that the Studio is definitely worthwhile. There are not many schools that do anything like this…I think it's fantastic that this school has a program running that gives kids so much more opportunity. I know there are students at this particular school because of the Studio. (Katherine, Teacher, Interview, 23/10/12)

Consistent with this range of perceptions, the data indicated that most of the teachers preferred minimal engagement with the Studio as an add-on program rather than as a program that might contribute to the curriculum and pedagogy of the school more broadly pertinent to inclusivity as Slee (2011) proposes.

Dispositions to temporality and relationality impact perceptions of place, and what we act on align with what we value (indicated by the identities we bring to the setting). As Heft (2007) claims places offer affordances as functional possibilities which "stem from social relationships and socially sanctioned actions" (p. 97). Perceptions of behaviour which constitute "learning" were impacted by a dichotomisation of exploratory and performatory behaviour, where ultimately exploration, in the school context, was not valued as contributing to learning. Regardless of the value perceived by children and the parents involved, the role constraints impacting teacher's work ensured shifts in values at the site more broadly, over the three-year duration of the study, were near impossible. Subsequently, this may have worked to distract attention from learning behaviour as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour (by creating a debate about what constitutes learning behaviour) when learning behaviour from the ecological psychological stance is ubiquitous.

Most significantly these findings suggest that the challenges I was faced with as a parent wanting to engage in an educational partnership and perceiving the limited opportunities to enact this partnership were indeed effective in reproducing schooling as we know it. That is, schooling that reproduces an instrumentalism that limits the type of engagement for partnership that parents can enact and the ways in which students can enact success. It did seem that regardless of the efforts after meaning and value made by parents, children, the principal and others, this grass roots attempt to engage with the school in pedagogical ways may have indeed only affirmed the suspicion that schools are set up to keep parents out and were failing to recognise the potential pedagogical contributions of children's first teachers. Heft (2007) explains:

> …constraints and possibilities emerge from the collective actions of its participants. Thus, one way of understanding why individuals tend to comply with the practices of a place - which they do, as a rule - is that their participation in the collective process, in effect, "holds" their individual actions "in place" and within bounds. (p. 98)

Significantly however, the altered dispositions to temporality and relationality that the Studio afforded, serve to raise questions that remain undiscussed at the site, and

perhaps more broadly in education. Making space for these questions of when, where, and how, children learn, in order to move outside the vernacular of incomplete epistemologies may call for further efforts to appropriate space.

Via altered dispositions to temporality and relationality afforded by the Studio space and its pedagogical organisation for student-initiated, adult-supported activity, the teaching/learning binary, "that assumes that children and young people cannot teach but must only learn, and that the adults who work with them are not themselves also learners" (Thomson et al., 2012, p. 9), was transcended. If we value learning behaviour then the contexts for action we propose are educational should account for standing patterns of behaviour that include exploration, understanding that opportunities for joint/shared attention, and the engagement of affordance networks, induce volition for instruction which supports performatory behaviour; we need contexts for action that recognise learning as a perception-action cycle. This would account for the absence of primary experience in primary schools, described by Reed (1996b):

> Daily life in our schools and workplaces is increasingly dominated by second-hand experience, and many of the rules in such institutions are specifically designed to limit independent exploration of our environment and independent interaction with others - or both. (p. 4)

Inclusion was not only intimately tied to access to affordance networks and the ability to operationalise effectivities, but more fundamentally, to how children are both supported and challenged, able to experience success and failure for learning. How students and parents for that matter are excluded, was ultimately experienced as a broader concern with how school is valued over other cultural practices that support learning. This study suggested when consideration is given not to distinct moments of "teaching" and "learning" but to the significance of affordance networks for operationalising effectivities, the distinction between learning and teaching is blurred.

When the Melbourne Declaration (2008) claimed all Australian children should experience success at school, my immediate response was that for this to be possible, schools would have to look like entirely different places, the kind of places

perhaps that Slee (2011) was visualising when he called for inclusive school campuses. My effort as a parent at the grassroots was to impact the school my children attended via an innovation that moved in this direction, increasing pedagogical diversity at the formal site of their education by opening up opportunities for parents and the broader community to be included in pedagogically significant ways supporting student-initiated activity. Ironically, the SLP converted an old classroom made available as a result of a major initiative of the Australian federal government to promote educational and economic objectives promising to revolutionise Australian education through the provision of new buildings for all schools (Commonwealth of Australia, Audit Report No. 33, 2010). Kraftl and Horton (2012) explore a promise of transformation in policy discourse related to this trend in school building improvements across Britain, the United States, South East Asia and Australia, claiming the new school buildings were, "positioned as the starting point for substantial educational and societal transformation" (p. 117). Expectations of change including increased student participation and community engagement from these initiatives, according to Kraftl and Horton's research, resulted in disappointment. Any consequences of the building programs were in practice more modest than in policy, they claim. As I mentioned at the outset of my research, the focus of this program in Australia, was more aligned with averting the impacts of the GFC (See, Commonwealth of Australia, Audit Report No. 33, 2010). Given the temporal demands on its response as a fiscal policy measure, it is difficult to conceive an educational revolution would in fact result. The Studio was an example of a manifestation of these policy discourses by way of an old classroom being abandoned and the resources of the community being coherent enough to stake a claim on it for a particular purpose, beyond its touted usefulness as a storage space for teacher resources, or meeting room for the P & C. The research I have contributed confers with Kraftl and Horton's findings that the policy trend may have produced less change through *big* promises and more through the smaller impacts made at a local level. My research exemplifies how operational factors perpetuate the affordances of which schooling, as an ideological function of a civil society is incumbent, thus limiting the potential for such a "revolution". Fullan (2001) notes schools end up being a lot better at maintaining a status quo than transforming: "Innovations - even promising-looking ones - turn out to be burdens in disguise" (p.

24). Understanding that classrooms as behaviour settings coerce and control the availability of affordances, the possibilities for action, and the access to resources for affordance networking, as well as legitimating what is valued (through assessment and evaluation), is necessary in order to gain traction on why educational change remains a good intention that is historically ineffectual. Critical concerns about school and learning most often ignore the ontological sense of place that schools privilege and as such these efforts become epistemologically impossible. Moving beyond the legacy of exclusion inherent to the monomorphic model of schooling turns out to be a whole lot more complicated than, as this example suggests, exemplifying what inclusive pedagogy might look like. Inclusion defined by the so called "political struggle to affirm the rights of all to access, participation and success in education" (Slee, 2011, p. 151) can, as Slee hints, become a Trojan horse for school reform, deflecting the very essence of diversity by endorsing a ubiquitous, monomorphic model of education.

Recent research in perception-action is a minefield of potentiality and possibilities for improving our understanding of organism-environment reciprocity. Understanding that we perceive ourselves according to the affordances of place suggests that knowing children, where they do well and who they do well with, is significant to determining how success can be provided to a greater diversity of children as students.

6.5 Final Summary

This research while understandably limited as a single case demonstrates how increased diversity of pedagogical approaches that capture extended notions of who is a teacher, and how learning can happen, have significant implications for education more broadly. These include, but are not limited to, curriculum that considers the intentions of children and their capacity to commit to instruction, how assessment might take into consideration the capacity of children to operationalise effectivities in affordance networks, pedagogy that considers the role of mentoring and the significance of intergenerational relationships transcending the teaching/learning binary, and of course, the conceptualisation of spaces for learning which move beyond the monomorphic model of classroom behaviour setting, particularly in the ways that temporality and relationality are produced.

Pedagogical organisers such as accessibility to materials and resources, including the proximity of adults, worked to support student-initiated activity in the Studio. The Studio became a distinguishable place within the wider school via perceivable qualities including altered dispositions to temporality, characterised by slowness and spontaneity. Slowness and spontaneity were evidenced in the artefacts – children could get on with things that took their attention or could make commitments to long-term projects where resources permitted. Additionally Studio afforded an altered disposition to relationality perceived as helpfulness which transcended the student/teacher binary. The value of altered dispositions to temporality were not entirely perceivable and actionable to teachers under the constraints of their role requirements. And while more personal and 'helpful' qualities were valued by everyone at the site, teachers did not subscribe to these qualities in their role as "teacher". For example, in the Studio, teachers would behave "teacher" deploying rituals such as Q and A interactions which detracted from the more relaxed and conversational style more common to the space. Teachers brought an instrumental disposition that seemed to blind them to any affordances to meet their own role requirements for teaching. As such, although many efforts were made to better connect the Studio and regular classroom, this proved to be challenging. Regardless of attempts to connect the two spaces of Studio and classroom the two contexts were dichotomised in the way that child-centred versus adult-directed pedagogy most often is. The legitimacy of the Studio as an educational space was in question via a dichotomisation of children's activity in the Studio (perhaps regarded as play) versus the real 'work' of activity in the regular classroom; a dichotomisation that could stem from the incomplete epistemologies described by Reed (1996a). Without an explanatory theory that accounts for learning as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour (E. Gibson & Pick, 2000), it was possible that teachers were unable to identify how the Studio functioned to support learning and contribute to inclusivity at the site.

This research proffers that pedagogical organisers, or the conditions for learning and teaching, such as relational and spatio-temporal characteristics, are an important and necessary consideration for action on inclusion in schools. It makes an additional contribution to the body of evidence that child-centred, play-based

educational environments are inherently more inclusive. However, it does so by demonstrating how an ecological psychological theoretical stance includes pedagogies of instruction. This research suggests the dichotomisation of child-centred, active learning, and teacher-centred, passive learning is hindering the progress to more inclusive schools. Both instruction mostly associated with teacher-centred pedagogy, and play (as exploratory behaviour) mostly associated with child-centred pedagogy, are significant for learning. What is being missed is how these are significant and consequently how best to support them via an understanding of learning as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour. However, by problematising existing conceptualisations of students (learners), teachers (educators) and schools (as sites of learning and teaching) this research also raises contentions between inclusivity, and the monomorphic model of 'school'. These concerns with schooling as perpetuating the disconnect of children from their families and communities is relevant to this research which has detailed my own experience of working in 'educational partnership' with the school and my attempt to create a space for authentic participation in activity which bridges this school – community disconnect.

The irony of the Studio as a detourned space to become exclusionary of teachers, thus perpetuating the very thing it sought to disturb, proffers an example of the person-environment mutuality that has guided this research inquiry. It highlights how inclusion and exclusion can be experienced and enacted according to synergisms between the behaviour setting and intentionality. 'School' as a socio-temporal-spatial unit of behaviour, and classrooms as behaviour settings within them, exert coercive forces impacting any 'effort after meaning and value'. The perception of affordances is incumbent upon the pedagogical organisers which define the possibilities for action working to constrain and enable behaviour. This research proffers that relational and spatio-temporal characteristics, as pedagogical organisers, may be an important and necessary consideration for action on inclusion in schools. It is possible that the absence of characteristics such as perceived helpfulness or spontaneity for example, could be significant factors in the discontent with the school 'environment' that Kunzman and Gaither (2013) identified as motivating the choice

of a growing number of parents to home-school. This indicates another tangent for further research.

Making an analysis of learning from an ecological psychological stance in order to understand what the Studio, as an alternate space for learning, contributed in terms of inclusivity to the broader context of the mainstream K-6 public school, has afforded many insights into the entanglement of space and place with how we include and exclude ourselves and others. I have provided an example of how ecological psychology provides a means for understanding learning as a perception-action cycle of exploratory and performatory behaviour (E. Gibson & Pick, 2000) where children operationalise effectivities in affordance networks (Barab & Roth, 2006; Barab & Plucker, 2002). I believe the broad implications of this epistemological shift for education have been neglected. Unveiling some of the dynamics of learning behaviour from this stance, my research serves to inform a more inherently inclusive consideration of education which overcomes the deficit discourse that permeate schooling and approaches to difference, that do not account for organism-environment mutuality.

On one of the final days of my research scholarship, the front page of 'The Australian' newspaper ran a headline story on the federal government's review of the national curriculum (Ferrari, 2014). As I progressed through the article what stood out the most (apart from my initial reaction of "here we go again!") was the unrelenting distraction from pedagogy as 'how children learn' with the argument over how we should teach:

> A lack of independence about different teaching methods was also identified, with the report noting a preference in many subjects for a "constructivist" approach. Such an approach casts the teacher as "a guide on the side", helping students discover and construct their own learning, rather than the "sage on the stage" at the front of the classroom leading student learning. (p. 4)

From the ecological psychological stance I have detailed in this research it is possible to transcend this particular dichotomisation of teaching approaches that has seemingly captured the attention of educators, politicians and the public. My inquiry, I now understand, has been concerned with this neglect of pedagogy; a neglect of the

common capacity for learning that children bring to classrooms and the collaborative capacity of community to support it. Unfortunately, regardless of the impact that the Studio had on the lives of those involved, the forces of an educational system that is outcomes obsessed presents a major distraction from the original objectives of the Studio which so closely resembled a movement towards a more inclusive school. Often the program is justified by the products that children make and increasingly I suspect students may perceive this pressure to produce, eroding that little bit of freedom, that to my eyes, afforded them so much.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children

Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children

What is Roxanne's research about?

- ***What happens when students goals are valued (important)?***
- ***The studio is a good place to find out…***

Treasure Boxes, Dolls houses, Gifts, Giant Onga Wongas, Furniture, Clay vases, Clothes, Jewellery, Illustrations, Painting, Chess-boards, Sculptures, Space-ships…

3

How did we get the studio?

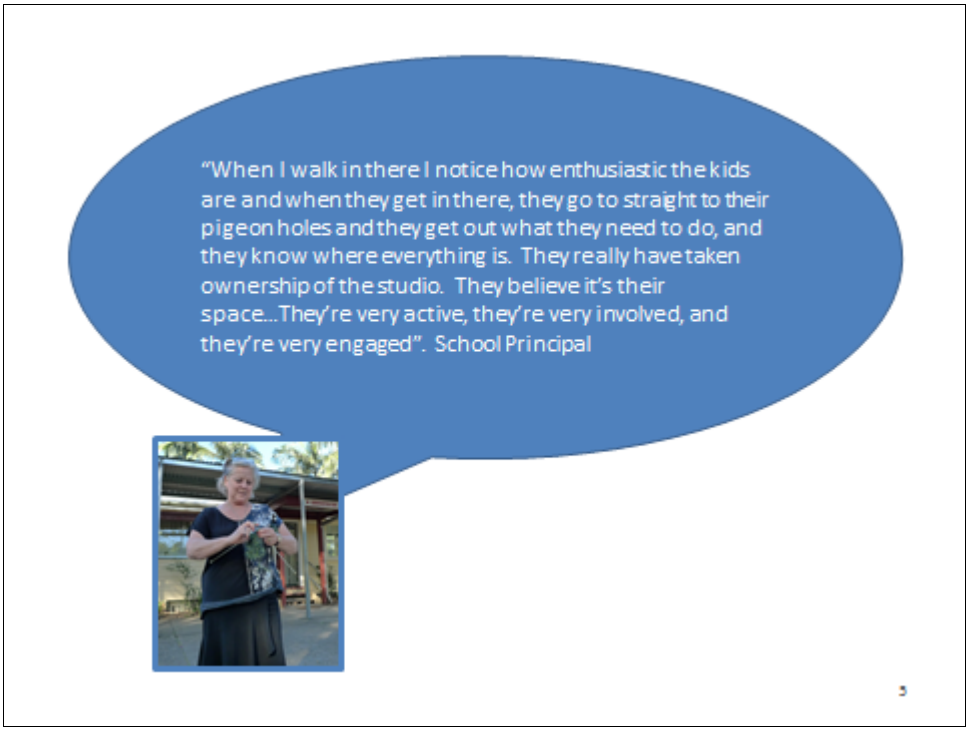
Parent 1 "A space where children are being resourceful, children learning from the community, learning from each other,…a different looking classroom".

Parent 2 "…the reason I got involved was that I think that it does support the way children learn. They just have this built in desire to just do things and create things and they obviously learn by doing that."

Parent 3 "They get lots of writing, reading and … things but they don't get much of an opportunity to create objects …"

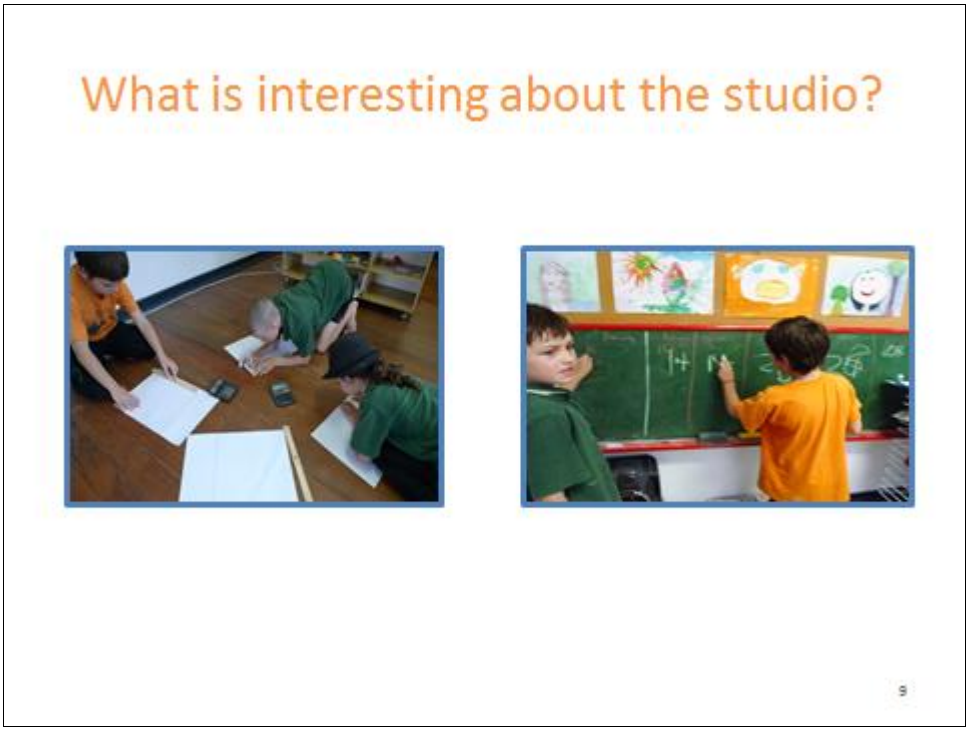
4

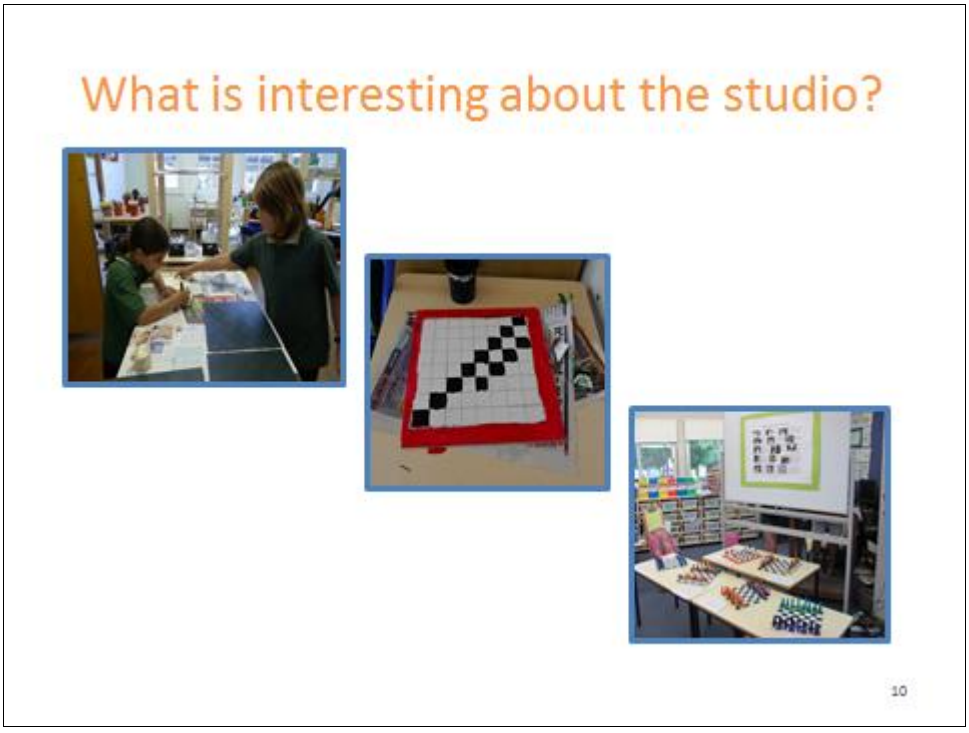
Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children



Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children

Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children





Appendix A: Slides used in a presentation to discuss my research with the children

What is interesting about the studio?

That's why I want to research the studio and this is what I will need...

- Collect photos, conversations, video, work samples, copies of journal work.
- Ask questions or interview you about your work.
- Make presentations like this one about your work.
- I will need your permission and your main carers permission.

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

Full Project Title: ***A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education.***

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

Statement of Child Consent (younger children):

I would like to invite you to be involved in talking to me about the activities you are involved in during studio time and sharing photographs of you and your work, journal entries, work samples, and possibly video recordings. The things you share will be used to find out more about how children learn in the studio.

Your parent or guardian will have to agree that it is okay for you to be involved in the research project and they may like to talk with you about it first. It is okay to change your mind about being part of this case study at any time.

Make sure you let Roxanne, your parent or guardian, or your teacher/principal, know how you feel about participating in the study at any time.

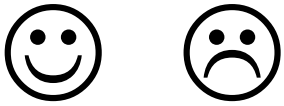
Let me know if you want to participate in this project by circling a face below that reflects your feelings. A happy face will tell me that you are happy to participate in the project. A sad face will tell me that you do not want to participate in the project.

Thanks for considering being involved,

Roxanne

Name:

_____



Date: ____/_____/_____

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

Full Project Title: ***A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education.***

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

Statement of Child Consent (older children):

I would like to invite you to be involved in talking to me about the activities you are involved in during studio time and sharing photographs of you and your work, journal entries, work samples, and possibly video recordings. The things you share will be used to find out more about how children learn in the studio.

Your parent or guardian will have to agree that it is okay for you to be involved in the research project and they may like to talk with you about it first. It is okay to change your mind about being part of this case study at any time.

Make sure you let Roxanne, your parent or guardian, or your teacher/principal, know how you feel about participating in the study at any time. Whether you decide to participate or not will not affect your school report or your progress in school in any way.

Let me know if you want to participate in this project by writing a statement that reflects your feelings.

Thanks for considering being involved,

Roxanne

Name:

_____

Date: ____/_____/_____

How do you feel about participating in the Studio Research?

_____

_____

Tick the box to box that suits you:

I am willing to participate in this research ☐

I am not willing to participate in this research ☐

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information Sheet

HREC Approval Number: H12REA148

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Your child is invited to take part in a study being conducted by **Roxanne Finn.**

It is part of a Doctorate of Philosophy being supervised by Dr Andrew Hickey. We are asking you if it is okay for your child to take part in this project. We are trying to find out how the Studio Learning Project assists teachers to gain a deeper understanding of children as learners, and how it increases the involvement of parents and the community in the school. The information from the study will be used to contribute to a research report, and other publications concerned with these topics in education. The research will require Roxanne discussing with your child their activities undertaken in the studio, and to contribute photographs, work samples or journal entries from time to time. This will take place during their ordinary studio sessions from (15/8/2012) to (15/8/2013).

Participation is voluntary and your child will only take part if both you and your child agree. If you do decide not to take part, it will not affect your child's results or progress at school in any way. If you or your child changes your mind about taking part, even after the study has started, just let Roxanne know and any information already collected about your child will be destroyed.

Only the researchers will have access to this information, except when students are identified as being at risk of harm from themselves or others. In this case, the names of these students will be given to the school principal. Any photographs or video recordings that identify your child will only be used once you and your child have seen and agreed to include them in the final research report or any subsequent publication. The researcher will select a pseudonym (false name) so that people and the school will be de-identified in the study. All records collected for the purpose of the study will be accessible only by the researcher, stored in a locked filing cabinet or a password protected computer, and destroyed at a five year period from commencement of the study.

When you have read this information Roxanne will be available to answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:

Roxanne Finn: 0431161332, roxannefinn@y7mailo.com

Dr Andrew Hickey: 07 46312337, andrew.hickey@usq.edu.au

USQ Ethics Officer: 07 4631 2690, email ethics@usq.edu.au

This information sheet is for you to keep. Your child has also been given information about this project. Thank-you for considering the project.

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

HREC Approval Number: H12REA148

TO: Parents/Guardians

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

- ☐ **I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to both me and my child. I understand and agree for my child to take part.**
- ☐ **I understand the purpose of the research project and my child's involvement in it.**
- ☐ **I understand that my child's participation in the project is voluntary; a decision not to participate will in no way affect their academic standing ort relationship with the school and they are free to withdraw their involvement at any time.**
- ☐ **I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, my child will be given a pseudonym (made up name) that will protect their confidentiality.**
- ☐ **I understand that photos/video recordings featuring my child will be shown to us for additional approval and I have included my contact details for this purpose.**

Name of participant/s……..

Name of parent/Guardian…….

Contact details (ph. or email).....

Signed……**Date**…….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information Sheet

HREC Approval Number: H12REA148

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project.

1. Procedures

This research seeks to identify how the Studio Learning Project (SLP) assists teachers to gain a deeper understanding of children as learners, and how it increases the involvement of parents and the community in the school.

Your views will be sought via interviews (at least one 40 minute interview in Term 4, 2012 & potentially another in Term 2, 2013) and observations of interactions during the ordinary studio sessions or studio meetings. In addition photographs or video-recordings may be made of your participation in the SLP. Additional permission will be sought by the researcher for any photographic or video-recordings prior to the inclusion in the final report or any consequent publications.

The research will be used to compile a research report in the form of a case study of the SLP and publications related to the way the SLP contributes to the school's capacity to cater to a diversity of learners. You will have an opportunity to contribute your voice to the research findings which will make a contribution to improving mainstream schooling.

2. Voluntary Participation

Participation is entirely voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Any information already obtained from you will be destroyed upon your request.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Southern Queensland or Stokers Siding Public School. ***Please notify the researcher if you decide to withdraw from this project.***

Should you have any queries regarding the progress or conduct of this research, you can contact the principal researcher:

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Appendix B: Sample of consent forms

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Consent Form

HREC Approval Number: **H12REA148**

TO: ***Parents, Teachers, Administrative Officers, and Community Volunteers***

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

- ☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- ☐ I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- ☐ I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal details will remain confidential unless additional consent is given by me to include photographic or video-recordings.
- ☐ I understand that I will be audio taped during the interview sessions and that this recording will be transcribed, provided to me for checking of accuracy, de-identified using a self-selected pseudonym and the original recording destroyed.

Name of participant…….....

Contact details for further consents……

Signed……**Date**…….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: +61 7 4631 2690
Email: ***ethics@usq.edu.au***

Appendix C: Additional photo/video consent form

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Use of photographic and video recording consent

HREC Approval Number: **H12REA148**

TO: ***Parents, Teachers, Administrative Officers, and Community Volunteers***

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

As part of this study specific photographic or video-recordings may be identified for use in research reports and publications. This form requests permission to make use of this material only after the researcher has shown you the detail of recorded images and explained the intended use in any publications.

☐ **I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it and agree to participate.**

☐ **I understand that photos/video recordings shown to me are to be used in research reports and associated publications detailed by the researcher.**

Name of participant/s……..

Signed……**Date**…….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

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Appendix C: Additional photo/video consent form

University of Southern Queensland

The University of Southern Queensland

Use of photographic and video recording consent

HREC Approval Number: **H12REA148**

TO: Parents/Guardians

Full Project Title: A case study of the Studio Learning Project: Exploring the implications of an eco-behavioural approach for inclusive education

Principal Researcher: Roxanne Finn

As part of this study specific photographic or video-recordings may be identified for use in research reports and publications. This form requests permission to make use of this material only after the researcher has shown you the detail of recorded images and explained the intended use in any publications.

☐ **I understand the purpose of the research project and my child's involvement in it and agree to their participation.**

☐ **I understand that photos/video recordings shown to me are to be used in research reports and associated publications detailed by the researcher.**

Name of participant/s……..

Name of parent/Guardian…….

Signed……**Date**…….

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
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Appendix D: Field note and reflexive journal samples

Some Sample Field Notes

February 26, 2013

K/1-Michael's person and house began to take shape as he chose materials, discussed sizes, and confidently said yes or no to ideas and suggestions provided by others. He started by cutting a pair of shorts, with the teacher pointing out how to hold the scissors and a parent demonstrating how to put weight on the stapler. Following this instruction he did both independently. The accompanying conversations were rich to complement the dynamics of Michael's activity as he created a person with shirt, shorts, head, legs, and then David exclaimed "He needs a house!" and "Ha ha!" when he found a piece of cardboard with a fold suitable to represent the apex of a roof.

4/5/6-during the session a parent from outside of the school community came to speak about the artist in residence program and her interest in the studio space as a potential location for workshops. As a result, this group of students just came in after lunch and got on with their planning, ideas and work. This visiting parent watched the activity as we sat in the corner and talked. Ben acquired a new participant in the treasure box project, Jack. Rose and Jill spent the session painting. Shamala got ceramic tiles and a board and began making a chequerboard pattern, which I discovered later was to be the floor of a house. This gave two other children the idea to make a chequerboard, but their attempt to join four bits of wood together with glue was not going to be successful. I explained that either the four pieces of wood would need to be clued themselves to some sort of base or that they would need to cut pieces of wood to size. This became the subject of a blog entry.

March 5, 2013

K/1-an interaction between two children that I observed was chosen as illustrative of the type of collaboration induced by the studio and its pedagogy.

Appendix D: Field note and reflexive journal samples

Some Sample Field Notes (Cont'd)

Lachlan: "Can I help?"

Giselle: "Yes!"

Lachlan: "So what do we need to do?"

Giselle: "What colour should I use?"

Lachlan: "Lots of colours!" (Lachlan gets called off by a teacher to tidy up and then returns)

Lachlan: "Can I help?" (There are unspoken communications of body language and gesture that suggest an openness, helpfulness, and an eagerness to collaborate)

Lachlan: "Now I'll do the green one." (pipe cleaner)

Giselle: "Two blues. I'll get another glue brush." (When Lachlan grabbed the only brush from a couple of glue.)

Teacher-the teacher exclaimed to the resident artist today "I am so happy, I've learnt a new skill!"

Appendix D: Field note and reflexive journal samples

Reflexive Journal Sample

January 11, 2013 reflection on interview with principal

The interview took around 45 minutes and was possibly the most challenging thus far. The principle seemed somewhat defensive at the start of the interview, which will probably be most evident when she seems to argue that the studio is pertinent to a minority of parents. Here it seems strange to think that if this were the case, why she would bother with it at all. On the other hand, it would be good, after three years of running the program and with this perception, that she undertook to clarify how the broader parent body felt about the program. Thus the conversation had a somewhat awkward beginning. My perception would be that the broader parent community do appreciate the program and that the principal to hold his understanding as in other instances of communication she has expressed that she uses the studio programme as a selling point for the school.

Perhaps another factor making the interview awkward was that our original interview was cut short after the principal received a phone call to return to school to quell a situation where a child's temper had overrode him and he was now presenting a danger to himself and others in the school. Many weeks have passed before we could arrange to complete the interview in which time I had completed some initial analysis of the teacher and parent interviews. I had noticed initial differences to mark a further exploration including: parents holding more of a vision for the studios part in the school, contrasting with teachers holding a view of the studio is a separate program; permanent teachers holding less of a view that the studio had potential to impact the curriculum and pedagogy of the school as compared to non-permanent teachers; and issues of communication which might reflect the principles changeable commitment and perhaps confidence in the program.

Appendix E: Semi-structured interview transcript sample

Interview Transcription #1

De-identified: "Christa"

1. What is, or has been, your involvement in the studio?

   C: My involvement in the studio has been very limited. I have taught 2/3/4/ for a term and half, and when the children are rostered on studio, I send them off. I haven't really thought about it apart from, I have half the class for that session.

   I: Is that helpful or challenging to have the half class?

   C: I feel like the children are missing out on their maths in that time and I have thought about re-scheduling maths to after lunch but it's hard to get their concentration span after lunch. It is a positive that we send them in there in their reading groups, that I can work with the different ability groups.

   I: Have you spent any time in the studio at all?

   C: Mainly when I did my fourth year practicum with 5/6 and for the enrichment program, and when the school camp was on and I was left behind with the kids who didn't go, I used the facilities.

2. What role do you believe you (or if you are not directly involved, those that are) play in the studio?

C: I am unsure of the role I play and to me there seems to be a lack of communication.

3. How would you describe the activity that takes place in the studio?

C: Basically because I try to place things in the curriculum at school, I just see it as creative arts. It's visual art and science and technology mainly in that they're creating although I do realise that other things may take place in there like maths and like journal writing. But, the main thing is visual arts where they're creating, appreciating and making, and science and technology where they're constructing. When they go in there, it's just "I'm gonna do this" for that lesson and there's no follow on.

I: Did you get to see any of the exhibitions of work?

C: Some, generally photographs.

4. Could you describe any positives and/or negatives for children involved in the studio?

C: The positives I see in there are it gives students time to manipulate items, that real kinaesthetic learning, that they can get their hands on things and make it. All children learn differently and for children that really find it hard, and this is why it gets hard with journal writing, to get them to visualise it. They can make it and they've got it all in their head, but they struggle with

producing it on paper. Sometimes students can make it and with some help they can transcribe what they've done. But mainly, it's not teacher directed, it's student centred and they've got guidance so that they can be scaffolded. And sometimes they know exactly what they need to do and they're really independent. The idea is, they're following a process. There's a process happening of how things get made.

And the negative would be that I don't actually know if the use their time wisely because I'm not in there. So that could be an assumption.

5. Could you describe any positives and/or negatives for parents involved in the studio?

Positives for parents are that real integrated approach where parents take responsibility for children's learning as well. Not necessarily just their own children but other children, and that parent can show their skills. There's a lot of parents and community that have something to share and that sense of community working together, everyone learning from each other.

Negatives. Once again this is an assumption but I thought some students may not display appropriate behaviour in there, and that could discourage people who might not want to come back and help. Managing behaviour is something that, as a teacher, you are taught and you keep improving on as

you get to know certain kids. Particularly here, they have behaviour plans because they might display real challenging behaviour and the parents might not feel right in that situation.

I: Would some training perhaps help those that want to be involved?

C: I definitely think there needs to be an awareness of what goes on and what particular students need in there. I've noticed that there are rules in that studio and if they're not followed, they need to leave, so if they don't follow the rules, there are consequences. It would be helpful to have consistent people in there that do it each week so it's not such a big thing for the school to tell each person each week.

6. <u>What are the positives and/or negatives for teachers in having this program?</u>

The positives for teachers are having skilled workers involved. I find myself that skills being used in there like woodworking and sewing are things my Mum or Nan might have taught me when I was young but if a student came to me and said, " I want to knit or sew", I wouldn't be able to show them that. I don't consider myself a very artistic person and it's not particularly my interest. When you have people that want to be in there and are enthusiastic, the kids are going to benefit more from those people. Otherwise, because it's not in the syllabus, kids would miss out on those

opportunities. Negatives. I'm unsure where it fits in the curriculum and what outcomes that it meets. Our teacher program is due next week for the principal and I've always thought that in the hour the creative arts KLA (Knowledge Learning Area) gets done in that time. But at the same time, I don't know what outcomes they're actually meeting when I have to tick off the outcomes and say this is done, this is done, this is done. Because of time, and time will always be a factor for a teacher, I don't really know if that stuff is getting done. So, how can I observe that they have done these things?

I: Would evidence based learning and portfolio documentation might be helpful there to encourage the children to maintain their records (with teacher guidance) to demonstrate to you which outcomes they are meeting?

C: Yes, that's important, that journals get done and so students know what they're up to each week and can show teachers because we can't be there. Yet studio is important and it's taking the load off me to teach those things and it would be good to use it as a reporting base.

7. <u>In your opinion, is there anything that helps or hinders children's participation or their choice of activity in the studio?</u>

C: Who they work with and what they're into. Personalities can collide and challenging behaviours can be a factor. You can make pairings or groups that work well together and they might be more proactive with a certain person.

8. Is there anything that helps or hinders teachers' participation in the studio?

C: Times going to be a challenge and the fact that I am unsure of my role and I don't feel that if I did it each week and someone else was teaching math, I would feel like I need to be in both places at once. But as far as interests go, I love going in and seeing what their interests are and what they're producing. But I don't feel that I can offer the kids what the parents can.

I: So you see it as a capstone program?

C: I think that some students like that the teachers not there because they're trusted in there and there's independence and self-regulation where they have to be able to manage their time wisely and they choose their direction without teachers being in there. They think, 'I'm out of my classroom and the teachers not there and I'm with my friends and so and so's Mum. I still think I have a good rapport with the students and they like to come and say, "Look what I've made" and things like that but it's their time out from the classroom and away from everything they see as part of the regular classroom, including myself.

I: The space was set up to tick the Visual Arts boxes as you say. They're planning, designing and making, they're exposed to lots of different art media, and developing art appreciation (mostly of each other's work!) but the local artists too. As a teacher do you have a vision as to how it could improve in terms of broadening that out? For example, use of resources and wastage has been a problem that comes up again and again. It seems important for the children to understand where the resources come from so that they can develop an appreciation for managing them better. Is there any opportunity for that to filter back into the classroom so that children become better managers of resources?

C: The biggest issue with the studio at the moment is that I don't really feel like it's valued by every teacher and every person in the school. And these connections to teaching are not being made. One of the things that I really believe is that you have to make those connections to learning. So, when you make something in the studio, and that's the whole idea of the journals I guess, it's that you can make those connections in class. So now at the end of doing journals in class I can see that someone's using 3D shape and someone's doing this, and I can make those conne4ctions to their learning and I'm voicing it for them so that they can see it. A lot of the time they will just make something and not think, I'm actually learning. For example, with your example of resources and waste, I know that they've done things before with that regarding the curriculum. Do they make that connection that we learn about this and we recycle our rubbish and can they transform

that knowledge into the studio and make that connection to the wider environment? That's great you recycle your paper but what about realising the value in our resources. And that comes into making meaning. Why am I teaching you how to act and where are you going to use it in your life? Learning and making in the studio can be connected.

I: Do you have any ideas about how parents and teachers could work better to achieve this connection?

C: It might be a unit of work but a 10 minute talk where you're making the connections and furthering their knowledge. It should be more like when everyone forgets to use capitals at the start of their sentences. I can just spend 10 minutes on that.

I: So it doesn't have to be that hard or involve a lot of planning just perhaps a better system of communication and documentation?

C: Yes. And then students know I can help them. For example, I can help them think about any challenges they are having and do some research in class or if I wasn't sure I could get an explanation from a parent.

9. Is there anything you would like to mention in conclusion to the interview?

C: Just that I want to do the journals in class as a talking and listening activity because even though we do lots of general talking and listening, news, well, there's a lot of people who hate getting up in front of the group and talking in class. So, I wanted to make it something they have to get up and talk about to improve those skills and be able to talk about something on topic.

It will give them something to talk about, something they'll be enthusiastic about.

I: And the journal or artefact can be a prompt?

C: Yes

This is a true and accurate transcription of the interview which took place on 23/10/2012

Signed:

Date:

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding:

1. Initial inductive analysis of Round #1 interviews– identified 8 themes.
2. Further inductive analysis summarised the content of the themes into threads for comparison to other data i.e., photo/video, documents, reflective ethnography. These included:-

2.1 **Behaviour**

For example, teachers perceived that behaviour management would be a problem for parents in the studio space.

A negative would be parents not being able to manage the students. If they're not really able to manage them well or direct them to what they should be doing (Katherine, Interview, 23/10/12).

It's just that if they can't think of anything to do that it becomes time-wasting. And when I say time-wasting, I'm not talking about somebody who just decides to paint for that session; I'm talking about the child that wanders around doing nothing, or pestering people (Vera, Interview, 23/10/12).

The evidence provided by parents and the principal strongly suggested it wasn't.

…even our kids that aren't that well behaved seem to manage a lot better in the studio. They don't have any reason to misbehave or to challenge authority because there's nobody there telling them what to do (Susan, Interview, 11/11/12).

This is great; the kids are loving (sic) this. They're not fighting. I don't have to discipline them. They're just learning and having a great time doing it (Bianca, Interview, 9/11/12).

2.2 **Communication**

This theme relates closely to the theme of value and time. Efforts to communicate a clear vision were thwarted by both lack of time and possibly by the project not being valued by everyone. For example:

The biggest improvement would come from clearer objectives from management about; what is the place of the studio? How important is it? How can it be adopted more thoroughly by management and by the teachers? (Bianca, Interview, 9/11/12).

Is the following statement evidence of a kind of protectionism?

It kind of evolved because at first it was just an idea we shared but everyone involved needed to understand it a bit so they were willing to give it a go and so that it wasn't

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

forced on anybody. The school policies on learning needed to be re-assessed and looked at to make sure the teachers were not feeling threatened by it (Susan, Interview1/11/12).

In the interview with the principal she commented that I was only getting the views of "a minority of parents" that would be for the studio because they are the ones involved. Contradictory evidence was presented in the school's annual report of 2011 which summarised a departmental evaluation stating that "the studio was highly valued by all members of the community"

2.3 **Curriculum**

Given that the parents involved in the project are unanimously for the space, and, believe it affords educational outcomes, even if a child is just banging something with a hammer, or perhaps if a child has stilled themself enough to watch with engagement what another child is doing. Teachers have had to find their own way to reconcile this new and dynamic space within the total school learning environment. It has, I believe challenged them, and at this point in time, there is no consistent view amongst teachers (or perhaps parents who have not been involved) as to what it achieves, how it achieves it, and most importantly, why? Is it a place for a bit of fun, separate from the rest of the educational endeavour? Is it an innovative environment that gives parents and the broader community more opportunities to adopt a pedagogical role within the school? Is it an opportunity to tick off some of the boxes required of the Visual Arts Curriculum? Or, can it challenge all of us to think about the links between the things children (and usually adults as well!) are interested in doing, and how these activities can connect us to a world of people, and places, and histories, and possible futures? Whether the possibilities for emergent curriculum in the studio can, or even should be reconciled with the pre-planned 'curriculum' of the regular class remains to be seen at this site.

2.4 **Difference/Diversity**

Clearly evident that the studio operates in a way that learning can be personalised and therefore cater better to a diversity of students.

A positive is giving students different kinds of learning because in the class it's just focused. It's more a directed style of learning. Having this type of program helps teachers, and helps students learn in different ways. It definitely boosts student's confidence if they're good at something in the studio and they're not good at things in class. (Katherine, Interview, 23/10/12).

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

2.5 **Evidence of Learning**

For all the talk of outcomes and pressure to teach in the curriculum and pedagogy sections, only parents saw opportunities for the studio to evidence learning. For example:

> *I don't think the current model has great evidence anyway! What is the evidence? Worksheets that have been filled out, the reading level that you've achieved. I mean I can't think what other evidence there would be. Compared to things you've actually created. Projects you've actually worked on with other kids. It can be photographed, video-recorded, and that'd be great evidence! You could see them doing it! I picture in my mind a video of kids working together in the studio, creating something as opposed to a video of kids sitting at a computer doing Reading Eggs or sitting down filling out a worksheet. I think there's a lot more evidence of learning in the video of kids in the studio. You're going to see them team building, designing, prototyping, solving problems, creating stuff. You learn so many more things (Bianca, Interview, 9/11/12).*

> *We're not really there to grade the kids. I don't give them a mark. I don't say you've failed or you've passed. I give them their job and I go, 'well, how do you feel about it?' I don't even say that but if they have a job and it's unfinished, well they're going to feel the sense of it being unfinished. But if one of the kids who really puts in a good effort gets his job finished, and it's done really well, he gets the satisfaction of what he did. So it's self-rewarding really. You get out, what you put in. It's as simple as that (Ben, Interview, 9/11/12).*

2.6 **Pedagogy**

Key elements of pedagogy themed data are the importance of process, parent contributions to learning, learning being invisible to the children, self-directed learning where children choose to be instructed (children finding an affordance in instruction – strongly evident in photos/video). Teachers appreciate studio as a contrast but perhaps don't see any affordance in it for them as teachers. For example:

> *I believe that they're gradually starting to realise that the studio is not just an art room and it's not just a space for the kids to just go and play, that there is a lot of learning and a lot of teaching styles that can be drawn from the way kids learn (Susan, Interview, 11/11/12).*

Ultimately one parent believes these are two paradigms and her comments raise the question whether the paradigms should be reconciled. Or, alternatively can the two

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

functions coexist as different spaces within the same place. Is this enough to increase the variety of spaces and pedagogies that children are exposed to?

And the studio because it's not in their current pedagogy or their current model, it's in a different paradigm. And I think because it's not on their paradigm they think 'well I've got stay in this paradigm. I'm doing all this ticking and flicking and worksheets and I can show you all the evidence of everything that I've done. It meets everything that I've got to do in that paradigm so they don't get the other paradigm where you don't have to do all that stuff. Kids actually learn all that stuff without doing all the little things they don't actually want to do and you might get a better result for the kids (Bianca, Interview, 9/11/12).

… I do think the negative for the teachers is because they're in that different paradigm. It's too hard for them to work out, how am I going to fit this all in because they're trying to do both rather than thinking this is a way to do all this – easier, which is a shame. But that's what happens when you're in the old paradigm, they fight change. Anyone who's in the old paradigm can't see the new paradigm. It's like that story of Kodak. When someone approached them about printing on paper – photocopying, Kodak said, 'Why would you do that?' and sent them away, but that idea became Xerox. That's what's happening here, the teachers are in the NAPLAN paradigm or the school curriculum paradigm (Bianca, Interview, 9/11/12).

2.7 **Time**

Fifty instances of time recorded in the data–the most common constraint on the studio and its adoption as an educational project is the time it consumes of the subject-based timetable.

…it uses a lot of classroom time and teachers don't have a lot of time to get everything that they need done (Katherine, Interview, 23/10/12).

Regardless of positive outcomes found by the researcher and a departmental evaluation of the program the time students were allocated to studio was reduced from one hour per week at the outset of the program to only 45 minutes a fortnight after three years of operation. And this:

…there's no way we can do more time in the studio. I know that they really look forward to it and providing more time for it, I don't think it would spoil it. I don't think they'd get over it if they had extra time (Paul, Interview, 23/10/12).

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

In this instance it is evident that the studio is both valued for its ability to engage children and yet not valued enough to be supported with more time allocated to it. This clearly evidences the divide encountered between children's autonomous, exploratory activity where learning was consequential to the pursuit of their own goals, and the regular subject driven activity that required students to prescribe to the activity as directed by the teacher. In contrast, the parents saw the lack of time as a constraint to opportunities for deeper learning:

> *If I had the time I'd go through it in more depth because a lot of the times we do calculations, we just use a calculator, but if you had more time you'd take the kids through the equations and do it on paper (Ben, Interview, 9/11/12).*

Video Ben and Katie

2.8 **Value**

All of the teachers expressed that the studio makes a valuable contribution to the school with varying levels of value expressed, from providing a centralised location for the creative resources (a basic spatial organiser) to providing a tangible and real means for parents to be involved in the school (parents having opportunities to make a pedagogical contribution). The principal expressed that teachers a 'gradually' coming around to valuing it and also suggests that I have perceived in the past that perhaps teachers have not valued it.

> *The biggest issue with the studio at the moment is that I don't really feel like it's valued by every teacher and every person in the school (Christa, Interview, 23/10/12).*

This has been my experience as teachers have not seemed to take it up as a part of the total education program but more of a time-consuming add-on. This was affirmed by corroborative evidence under the theme of time as well as by two other parents' comments under this theme. The principal also seems inconsistent as to whether this is something valued by a minority of parents or whether, as in another comment, that it is valued in general by the parent community.

Observation Data/Research Summaries

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

Exploratory Behaviour not valued in school based education. Student behaviour in the studio space evidenced in photographs and video recordings suggests it may be highly significant to learning when it is considered through an eco-behavioural lens. Time and again I witnessed students recognise affordances for creativity in the studio through exploratory behaviour. Exploratory behaviour looked to me like children watching others, observing and asking questions about materials or the activity of others. It was mostly quiet. The noise began when an affordance had been recognised and a burst of creativity called for materials to be taken off shelves and tools to be gathered with the talk of ideas being shared and negotiated. Affordances seemed to be linked to the provision of materials in the studio, through examples provided by peers or others, or where an outside interest affecting the child's life-world was a motivating factor. Life-world motivators included events such as Birthdays, movies viewed, or video games. Once an affordance was recognised, effectivities were employed. At this point students worked independently, asked for and accepted advice from peers or parent/teacher, and may have worked for one week or a whole term on their product. Products were often, "not that great" in the words of one parent. Mostly children were happy with them and occasionally they weren't. For example Gregory worked on his "Dimentue" clay figurine sculpture for a couple of weeks. It was an original character he had invented that was like a Picachoo character. On the third week he announced Dimentue was a failure! Networks of affordances could be engaged in the immediate session or, at a later date when available. Often interests were persistent enough to return to. Some children could work week in week out on a project; others could have a long term project going but would take some sessions off to explore new interests that were more immediate. When these more immediate interests subsided they would return to a more persistent project. Sometimes younger children, excited by an immediately recognised affordance at the beginning of a session forgot that they had another project they were working on and became upset when they remembered at the end of the session but had run out of time (Michael's house).

Affordance networks led to new effectivities being demonstrated, practiced and employed. This occurred in two ways, spontaneously in the immediate session or, through parents linking children up with an 'expert' for instruction.

Appendix F: My code schedules as developed from the interview data

Analysis procedure and initial coding (cont'd):

For example, an artist in residence brought lots of natural materials into the studio for weaving. A couple of children recognised an affordance in the fibre she had brought to "make firesticks". They hunted for sticks in the playground, wrapped the fibre around the tip of the sticks and began to use string to bind it. Talk of lighting the fibre got them thinking about how long the firesticks might burn for. One child (see video) began to interact with Jana (the resident artist – ask Jana what happened from her perspective) and Jana instructed the student how to use blanket stitch. She also shared stories about the Navaho Indians using the stitch. Jana was flexible in her approach to working with the children. The children in this instance and many others, received instruction form her but on their terms, according to their goals. They had a reason to learn it.

The space was inherently inclusive, as children worked at their own levels and in their own time. For example, Braydon who had a severe learning difficulty, enjoyed painting, and making aeroplanes but could easily be enticed by a sensitive adult to attempt new activities such as threading to make a necklace. Unlike a regular classroom where all the children might be undertaking maths problems at the interactive whiteboard, in this space, he was not excluded based on his ability.