

ADULT LEARNING IN SCHOOL-AGE CARE:
CHILD CARE WORKERS AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

by
STEPHEN PHILIP MUSSON

B.A., University of British Columbia, 1983

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
March, 1994

© Steve Musson, 1994

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

(Signature)

Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 24, 1994.

Abstract

This is a study of adult learning in school-age care (SAC). Data from observations and interviews with ten school-age care workers (SACWs) form the core of this research. The writer was once a SACW himself, and now is an instructor of SAC-related courses at two community colleges.

The initial research question was “how do SACWs learn to become more effective in their work with children?”. The focus on adult learning naturally led to an examination of the learners’ thoughts and their thinking processes. Thus the focus of this research evolved to include the reflective elements of quality SAC practice. As the data from the observations and the interviews was collected it became apparent that quality SAC work involves reflective practice.

During the interviews it was noticed that several SACWs initially experienced some difficulty describing the thought processes that accompanied their skillful action. This could be due to the tacit nature of their skills and knowledge, or it could be because thoughtful action is difficult to describe in a society that, on the whole, devalues the work that adults do in child care. Despite some initial reluctance to talk about their work as “skilled” and “thoughtful”, the data from the field work clearly shows that SACWs do reflect upon their action, and

that sometimes they reflect in their action. The study documents six specific examples of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983, 1990).

The study concludes by pointing out three key implications of the reflective practice concept as it applies to adult education in SAC. SACWs should be given plenty of formal and informal opportunities to reflect upon, and to talk about, their practice. On-site supervisors and college educators should emphasize the complexity and richness of the thought and skill involved in quality practice. A distinction should be made between training (which focuses on the acquisition of demonstrable skills) and education (which focuses on ways of thinking about children and child care). Implications for further research are also discussed.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Foreword	vii
Chapter One: Introduction & Background	1
School-Age Care (SAC) Defined and Described	4
The Connection Between Training & Quality SAC	8
The Research Question: A Preliminary Discussion	11
“More Effective” in SAC	12
Chapter Two: Research Methods	18
The Ethnographic Tradition	22
The Informants (SACWs)	23
The Observations	26
The Interviews	28
Data Collection & Analysis	29
The Reflexive Journal	33
Chapter Three:	
Research Question & Theoretical Framework	36
The Original Research Question	36
Learning as First-Order and Second-Order Change	39
A Developmental Perspective on Adult Learning in SAC	49

Chapter Four: Emergent Themes	55
Initial Denial	56
Tacit skills & knowledge	66
Invisible Skills	67
SACWs Thinking about Their Work	70
Reflections on Content - Golden Rule	80
Reflections on Content - Sane communication	83
 Chapter Five: Reflective Performances	 93
Reflective Performance #1: Frank and the Snack Table	93
Reflective Performance #2: Heather and the Mural	96
Reflective Performance #3: Cindy and the Day Pack	98
Reflective Performance #4: Danielle Signing Children In	99
Reflective Performance #5: Betty and the Foozeball Table	105
Reflective Performance #6: Steve at the "Fishing Hole"	106
Schon's Concept of "Reflection-in-Action"	110
 Chapter Six: Conclusions & Implications	 115
Summary of Findings	115
Conclusions	118
Reflection as learning	212
Implications	122
Opportunities to reflect on and Dialogue about Practice	123
Emphasize Skill & Thought in SAC Practice	126
Making a Distinction between Training & Education	129
Implications for Further Research	132
Final summary	133
 References	 135

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by acknowledging the ten school-age care workers who generously consented to be participants in this study. Their actions and words are at the core of this research.

I would like to thank Dr. Allison Tom, my research supervisor. Her advice, support and encouragement have been vital throughout the entire research and writing process. With her help I have come to see many things in a different light. I believe that being able to “see things in a different light” is one of the main characteristics of a good graduate school experience.

I would like to thank Dr. Dan Pratt for his insights into adult learning. I would also like to thank Dr. Hillel Goelman for his contributions regarding Early Childhood Education as a field of study.

Gyda Chud had supervised and supported my work as an instructor at Vancouver Community College (Langara). My work at Langara has provided the background for much of the learning represented in this thesis. The students in my courses at Langara College and Douglas College have shared with me their genuine questions about learning and numerous the real-life examples of their own learning.

I am grateful to Colleen Spring for her support and patience during the research and writing of this thesis.

Foreword

It should be noted that part of the section entitled “More Effective in SAC” (in Chapter One) has been adapted from my book School-Age Care: Theory and Practice, published by Addison-Wesley, 1994.

Chapter One: Introduction & Background

Working in school-age care (SAC) is both an intellectual and a practical endeavour. It requires thinking and doing. Quality SAC involves an integration of thought and action. As with other forms of child care, SAC suffers from an image problem. There is a prevalent myth that “anyone can work with children” and that it is not an occupation that requires much thoughtful action. Kelly (1990) points out that “the reality is that most people now view child care as something anyone can do” (pg. 172). Because of this widespread myth, many school-age child care workers (SACWs) often do not recognize their own skills and talents. Until this issue is addressed it will create problems for training and education in the field.

In this thesis I will demonstrate that working with children is skilled work and that SACWs do think about and reflect upon their work. Further, I will show that SACWs can learn to become more effective in their work with children by becoming more reflective - by becoming more conscious of their purposes, options, choices and behaviours - and by developing their ability to reflect in the midst of their action. I will show that as SACWs become more aware of what it is they want to accomplish and how their actions can contribute to

their goals, they can become more intentional and more able to control or harness their actions in the service of high quality SAC. To paraphrase Ayers (1989, p. 5), the more self-conscious they become, the more they will be able to author their own care-giving scripts.

I began working with children in 1978. Almost from the beginning I was fascinated with how adults work with children. This fascination led to an interest in how adults learn to work effectively with children. Over the years as a “front-line” child care worker and as an administrator, I have observed hundreds of adults work with children. Over the past seven years as a college instructor teaching school-age care courses I have had the privilege of seeing many adults learn how to become more effective with children. Throughout my child care and my teaching career I have tried to focus on the question of adult learning in school-age care. I have often wondered “How do adults learn to become more effective in their work with children ?” This thesis represents one specific attempt to answer that question.

This research has helped to change the way I teach in the college classroom. I am now focussing more on the way that the adult students are learning and less on the way that I am teaching. Through this process I believe that my teaching has improved, and, more importantly, the students’ learning has improved. On a regular basis I ask them to reflect upon their work and learning in their centres and in

the college classroom. This reflective process helps all of us become more effective in our work with children.

In Chapter One I create a context and background for the research and define key elements of the research question. In Chapter Two I outline and discuss the research methods. In Chapter Three I detail the evolution of the research question and construct a theoretical framework for the thesis. Chapter Four begins with an examination of a phenomenon in which SACWs fail to recognize, or to adequately describe, the thought involved in the execution of skillful performances. I then demonstrate that SACWs do think about and reflect upon their work, and I discuss two content-oriented concepts that serve as foundations for much of that reflection: the Golden Rule and “sane communication”. In Chapter Five I focus on five vignettes of reflective performances in SAC. In each reflective performance we can see the integration of thought and action. The phrase “working in SAC is both an intellectual and a practical endeavour” comes to life in each performance. I also include one vignette that I personally experienced during the research period. Each vignette serves to support and illustrate the idea that quality work in SAC involves “reflection-in-action” (Schon, 1983). In Chapter Six I will examine the conclusions that can be drawn from the research, and I will outline some of the implications of this research for current and future adult education

efforts in the field of SAC.

School-Age Care Defined and Described

McDonell (1993) defines school-age child care as “care provided in family day care and centre care facilities (both licensed and licence-not required) and programs designed for recreational purposes for children of school-age” (p. ix). Using a fuller definition, Musson (1994) defines school-age care as:

an interrelated collection of adult-sponsored care structures and program activities that are set up on a regular basis for school-aged children (usually between the ages of 5 to 13 years) for the periods of time when school is not in session and parents are not at home. When the parent leaves the child, the SACW assumes responsibility for the child’s whereabouts and well-being until the parent returns to pick the child up. The SACW provides age-appropriate activities and environments, nourishment and nurturing, supervision, guidance, and possibly transportation (p. 3).

RMC Research (1993) points out that the term “school-age child care” can also encompass “summer camps, drop-in centres, and other programs that offer supervised care and enrichment opportunities for the nation’s school children during their out-of-school hours and vacation periods” (p. 6).

A school-age care worker (SACW) is an adult who works with children in a SAC program. These adults may be paid or volunteers, they may be group leaders, assistants or specialists, they may be full-

time or part-time, and they may be trained or untrained. All the SACWs in this research worked in SAC programs that were licensed and regulated by government agencies.

Several authors have asserted that the number of SAC programs has grown over the last ten years, and is continuing to grow. Speaking about the years 1982 to 1992, Seligson and Allenson (1993) state that “after ten years, there had been a phenomenal growth in the number of programs” (pg. xi). Doney (1990) has stated that “in the last few years school age child care has emerged as the fastest growing [child care] service across Canada” (p. 22). In a recent comparative study of school-aged child care programs, Park (1992) noted that “in Ontario, the number of school-aged children in licensed child care programs has grown dramatically over the past few years” (p. 1). McDonell (1993) notes the “increasing number of school-age care programs” in the past few years in British Columbia (p. 2).

There are several reasons for this increase in the number of SAC programs and for the increase in demand for these programs. While the reasons listed for this growth by RMC Research (1993) are from a national study of SAC programs in the United States, these reasons apply to Canada as well.

Over the past two decades, several trends in American society have influenced the need and demand for non-familial care arrangements for children ages 5 to 13. These include:

- dramatic increases in the numbers of family members working outside the home who are unavailable to supervise children when school is not in session;
- rising fears about the health and safety risks unsupervised children may experience; and
- the growing interest in supplementing formal K-12 education with a variety of informal social and educational activities that enhance children's development.

Increased demand for child care reflects four demographic shifts:

- the growth in number of young children as the baby boom cohort has begun to reproduce;
- the sharp increase since 1970 in the employment of mothers with young children;
- the increase in the proportion of single-parent families; and
- fewer family members available to care for school-age children during non-school hours (p. 3).

According to a recent report on a national child care study, (Goelman et al, 1993), "the majority (57%) of Canadian children under the age of 13 participate in at least one non-parental child care arrangement in a given week. The children spend an average of 18.3 hours per week in non-parental care" (p. 13). In terms of school-age children, this study revealed that "the 6 to 9 year-old age group has reportable numbers of children in [SAC] programs. Of 6 to 9 year olds, 4.2% (60,400) were in these programs for an average of 10.8 hours during the reference week" (p. 61). Of 10 to 12 year-olds, 1.1% (11,100) were in SAC programs for an average of 7.8 hours per week (p. 73). This means, of course, that there are an estimated 71,500 children enrolled in SAC programs in Canada.

The report also points out that Canadian families chose their child care arrangements for a variety of reasons. These reasons included:

1. To stimulate children's physical, intellectual and emotional development; to promote their personal competence; and to help them develop social skills through interaction with other children and adults.
2. To provide children with care when their parents are working or looking for work.
3. To provide children with care when parents are in school or in job training.
4. To provide special needs children with specially designed stimulation and remediation in a setting allowing social interaction with other children and adults.
5. To support families with special needs such as families in which parents have serious health problems, families in distress, families with a background or risk of child abuse or families with handicapped or chronically ill children.
6. To support families in specific times of peak need such as parental illness, family emergency, seasonal employment, or breakdowns in existing child care arrangements.
7. To provide children with care when parents are engaged in volunteer, community, religious or other activities (p. 19).

The Connection between Training & Quality in SAC

The rapid growth in SAC has served to focus attention on the subject of training and education in the field.

Over the past few years, data from a variety of provincial, national and international research projects have shown a significant relationship between the education and training of care-providers and the quality of care environments, in both centre care and family day care . . . This body of research, focusing primarily on preschool aged children, has revealed a strong correlation between training and quality of care. It makes intuitive sense, therefore, to assume that training is also an important variable influencing the quality of care for school-aged children (6-12 years). As a result, care-providers and child care advocates in British Columbia have been increasing calls for the establishment of training opportunities for school-age care-providers working in both family day care and school-age centre care arrangements (McDonell, 1993, p. 1).

In the same vein, Alexander (1986) asserts that “the proper training of after-school program employees is the most critical element in any successful operation for elementary age children” (p. 7).

There has also been an increased demand for SAC training and education in the past few years.

A combination of a requirement for training as well as an increasing number of school-age child care programs has resulted in an increased number of individuals wishing to access school-age training . . . Many post-secondary institutions and other agencies across the provinces have, therefore, turned their attention to the development and availability of school-age training (McDonell, 1993, p. 2).

After conducting a province-wide training needs analysis project, McDonell has asserted that “the school-age community in British Columbia has been increasingly vocal about the need for training” (1993, p. 3). She has also pointed out that while there is a growing demand for school-age training, criteria for such training has not yet been developed by the government (McDonell, p. 4).

In Canada, training for SACWs is typically not required by provincial government child care regulations. SACWs in Ontario and Manitoba are required to have the same training as those working in programs for preschool aged children. In Alberta:

school-age programs are not licensed through their provincial day care act, however, some municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, regulate school-age care and require trained care-providers in their school-age programs (McDonell, p. 2).

In British Columbia specific training for SACWs is not yet required by government regulation. According to the Province of British Columbia’s Child Care Regulation (1989) a person working in SAC needs to be “a responsible adult”. A responsible adult is a person who: 1) is of good character; 2) is 19 years of age or older; 3) is able to provide care and mature guidance to children; and 4) has completed either a course on the care of young children or has relevant work experience (Province of British Columbia, 1989, p. 6). There is no indication as to what that

course might be for SACWs.

Despite the lack of government regulations regarding training for SACWs, a college certificate program has been set up at Vancouver Community College (VCC) offered at the Langara campus. In 1993/94 the same program is also being offered at Douglas College, using the same curriculum and the same instructors. The "Working with School-Age Children" certificate program is made up of six core courses and a number of electives. The core courses include: Introduction to SAC (18 instructional hours); Working with 5 Year Olds (24 instructional hours); Working with 6-9 Year Olds (24 instructional hours); Working with 9-12 Year Olds (24 instructional hours); Working with Children with Special Needs (24 instructional hours); and Leadership and Organizational Skills (24 instructional hours). With relevant electives the entire certificate program totals 150 instructional hours. The majority of students enrolled in these courses are already working in the SAC field, but there is usually also a significant minority of students who are not employed in SAC. Members of this latter group include supervision aides for schools, professional nannies, and students who simply want to find out more about a career working with children.

While there is a marked increase in the attention given to training in SAC (McDonell, 1993; Exploring Environments, Dec. 1991;

School-Age Notes, Oct. 1993; Albrecht, 1991; Doherty, 1991), there has been little written about adult learning in SAC. A focus on training and education issues for adults in SAC is important for the professional evolution of the field. At the same time, attention to adult learning in SAC also deserves some serious attention. Examining how SACWs think and learn can help adult education providers design and deliver relevant educational experiences for them.

The Research Question: A Preliminary Discussion

The initial research question was: “How do SACWs learn to become more effective in their work with children ?”. This question has remained at the forefront of the research process. At the same time, the question has also evolved. The focus on learning led to an examination of the learners’ thoughts and their thinking processes. The research question has evolved to include a focus on the reflective elements of quality SAC practice and the implications of this for adult teaching and learning in the field. What do SACWs think about when they are involved in skillful practice ? Do SACWs learn to think differently as they become more competent ? A more complete discussion of the evolution of the research question can be found in Chapter Three.

SAC is a relatively new phenomenon for academic study. After an extensive search I could find nothing published that dealt specifically

with the subject of adult learning in SAC. As such, there is no separate literature review in this thesis. It is integrated throughout the paper. Literature dealing with child care in general, adult learning, and professional practice is cited throughout.

“More effective” in SAC

This research report will use three complementary notions to define the concept of what it means to become “more effective” in work with SAC children. The first notion is based upon existing licensing regulations for the field. The second notion is based upon the current field-based literature on quality care and appropriate practice in SAC. The third notion is based upon each individual SACW’s goals and principles as these relate to her’ work in SAC .

The main purpose of licensing regulations is to ensure that minimum standards are adhered to by all licensed centres. These regulations also serve to prohibit unacceptable practice in SAC. Here are three examples of regulations from the Province of British Columbia’s Community Care Facility Act (1989):

The licensee shall . . . establish emergency procedures . . . and ensure that all staff are thoroughly trained in the procedures . . . (Part 2, 24, a).

The licensee shall . . . provide the staff . . . and parents with

¹ Because the majority of adults working in SAC are women I will use the pronoun “she” throughout this paper unless I am specifically referring to a male SACW.

a written statement of the facility's policy on discipline (Part 2, 27, A).

The licensee shall . . . ensure that no child enrolled in a facility is . . . subjected to harsh, belittling or degrading treatment, whether verbal, emotional, or physical, that would humiliate the child or undermine the child's self-respect (Part 2, 27, B, ii).

Part of the process by which a SACW becomes more effective in her work is based upon the extent to which she moves closer to consistently making these, and other licensing requirements, a reality in her day-to-day practice.

In the last few years several documents have been published which describe quality care and developmentally appropriate practice in SAC. Various authors have, for the most part, agreed on what can be considered "quality criteria" for SAC. This literature includes Albrecht (1991) which outlines a wide variety of quality criteria for the field. Albrecht & Plantz (1991) uses specific examples of practice to articulate what is meant by quality care in SAC. O'Connor (1991) describes a detailed assessment process for centres. Doherty (1991) uses research in other forms of child care to discuss quality in SAC.

These writings have helped to create a picture of what is commonly agreed upon in the field as "quality practice". Here are four examples of quality criteria or developmentally appropriate practice

from this body of literature:

Staff actively seek meaningful conversations with children and youth, commenting on work, talking about events of importance, etc. (Albrecht, 1991, p. 1).

Staff . . . involve children and youth in establishing clear limits and rules that are tailored to fit school-agers' emerging skills. They explain reasons and rationales for rules as well as expectations for behaviour so that children and youth can use this information in making choices about their actions (Albrecht & Plantz, 1991, p. 8).

As a team, staff should act as good role models for the children:

- Staff share their skills, interests and ideas with children.
 - Staff share their enthusiasm with the children.
 - Staff share their thoughtfulness with the children.
 - Staff share their sense of humor with the children
- (O'Connor, 1991, Program Observation, p. 4).

Staff [should provide] increasingly more frequent opportunities for the children to select, plan and implement activity as the children mature . . . (Doherty, 1991, p. 95).

A SACW can become more effective in her work by making these, and other literature-based quality criteria, a reality in her day-to-day practice.

Not all quality care can be described by licensing regulations and field-based literature. There is an essential individual, personal element involved in the production of quality in SAC. When describing professional competencies in early childhood education, Beckett &

Hookwith (1991) include the concept of "self-understanding". They state that:

One's relationship to oneself - for example, one's self-esteem, one's knowledge and understanding of one's own prejudices, attitudes and behaviours are the bases for one's reactions to people and problems, that determine the effectiveness of any relationship with others. It is crucially important that teachers be aware of these factors - that is, be self-aware, self-understanding - in order that the special relationship between teacher and child be an appropriately nurturing one for both teacher and child (p. 27).

The SACW's own personal/professional goals and principles play an important role in defining the notion of effectiveness. Each SACW must decide what she wants to accomplish (her goals) in her practice, and what she believes to be important (her principles) in terms of children and child care. Most SACWs' goals and principles include the quality criteria expressed in the field-based literature but may also go beyond these quality criteria. Listed below are four examples of goals and/or principles that informants in this study expressed regarding their own work with children in SAC.

During the interview, Frank² said:

I think it's very important for kids that age to be given some freedom. For them to know, "Hey, he's treating me with trust, he's trusting me so in turn I'm going to show responsibility because I really enjoy that trust".

² Pseudonyms are used throughout this paper

Expressing what she wanted to accomplish in her work with children,

Erica said:

Responsibility, respect, and achievement basically. . . And autonomy too. I want them to do things on their own. Independence too.

Wayne said that for him:

Cooperation is big . . . because we have to share a space, a structure, whether it be a physical space or the way we have to do things . . . We have limited resources to acquire and to maintain [supplies and equipment] . . . so we have to cooperate, because we have to be here whether we want to or not, for whatever reason, right ?

At several points in Betty's interview she made comments that reflected the purposes that underlie her work and the work of her staff team.

I really see our role as 'social educators', and of course teaching the children to be responsible for their behaviour.

This is our work, we want the best for these children, we want to treat each child fairly and equally . . .

. . . that's been one of our goals - teaching children responsibility for their own behaviour.

A key part of the process by which a SACW becomes more effective in her work is based upon the extent to which she moves closer to consistently making her own personal/professional goals and principles a reality in her day-to-day practice.

Taken together, these three complementary notions define what is meant by the phrase “more effective” in SAC. In summary then, a SACW becomes more effective to the extent that she:

- 1) moves closer to abiding by the minimum standards set out by the applicable, enlightened licensing regulations, and
- 2) moves closer to actualizing the ideas regarding quality care and developmentally appropriate practice in SAC as outlined in the current literature, and
- 3) moves closer to actualizing her own personal/professional goals and principles as she works with children, staff and parents at the centre.

Chapter Two: Research Methods

In this chapter I will outline the reasons why I chose to use qualitative methods to answer the research question. I will briefly discuss the ethnographic tradition in qualitative research and point out that although this study was not “fully ethnographic”, it does fit into the ethnographic tradition. In the latter part of the chapter I describe the key components of the research design.

There were four main reasons why I chose a qualitative approach for this study. A qualitative approach is appropriate for research that has a “discovery orientation” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989), it is helpful in the study of tacit dimensions of behaviour and thought (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), it allows the participants’ perspectives to be portrayed and valued (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), and it has proved successful in the study of women’s work and the work of other non-dominant social groups, such as child care workers generally (Miller, Mauksch & Statham, 1988). I shall now examine each of these reasons in more detail.

McMillan & Schumacher (1989) state that “traditionally . . . a qualitative method is chosen because the researcher is in a discovery orientation” (p. 179). There is no published research to date that deals specifically with adult learning in SAC. This study required an

approach that would allow me to gather a variety of information and allow patterns and themes to emerge.

A qualitative approach is also helpful in uncovering tacit dimensions of behaviour and thought. In exploratory research the researcher needs a certain amount of interaction with the informants in order to negotiate the meaning of questions, comments, events and behaviours. Comparing quantitative and qualitative methods, Marshall & Rossman (1989) assert:

The research techniques themselves, in experimental research, have affected the findings. The lab, the questionnaire, and so on, have become artifacts. Subjects are either suspicious and wary, or they are aware of what the researchers want and try to please them. Additionally, subjects do not know their feelings, interactions and behaviours, so they cannot articulate them to respond to a questionnaire. One cannot understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings, and actions (p. 48).

Marshall & Rossman (1989) point out that sometimes research subjects are not aware of many of their thoughts, or actions. In order to understand what a research subject really means by a certain comment or the complex series of thoughts that accompany a skillful set of actions, the researcher and the subject may have to participate in “the joint construction of meaning” (Mishler, 1986), negotiating what each party means through an interactive dialogue. Only then can an

understanding of the tacit dimensions of behaviour and thought be approached with confidence.

Qualitative methods are also appropriate when value is placed on the perspectives and perceptions of the people being studied. From the beginning I felt that the words and actions of the people who were actually involved in the work should be valued and respected as essential sources of information. This study relies heavily on the words that the SACWs themselves use to describe what they did and what they thought. It also relies on descriptions of these SACWs in action. Marshall & Rossman (1989) point out that, as a process of inquiry and as a set of methods, the qualitative approach is appropriate for research that:

values participants' perspectives on their worlds and seeks to discover those perspectives, that views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, and that is primarily descriptive and relies on people's words as the primary data (p. 11).

Miller, Mauksch & Statham (1988) point out that "qualitative methodologies bring into central focus the points of view of those being studied and their active participation in constructing worlds" (p. 311). One of the main purposes of this research was to hear the voices of ten SACWs as they talked about their learning and the meaning that they give to their work. Speaking about a qualitative study of six

preschool teachers, Ayers (1989) maintains that “[preschool] teachers are dignified when they are assumed to be a rich and powerful source of knowledge about teaching, when they are looked upon as people who are essential in making some sense out of the intricate and complex phenomena that they know best” (p. 2). The same can be said of the SACWs in this study.

Qualitative approaches to research have also proven successful in the study of women’s work and that of other non-dominant social groups (such as child care workers). It is worth noting here that most child care workers are women. Miller, Mauksch & Statham (1988) hold that “the active role of women in the social construction of a work reality that is uniquely theirs would have remained beyond the grasp of those adhering to a deductive, positivistic perspective” (p. 310). Qualitative methods allow the researcher to negotiate a level of trust with the informants and stimulate meaningful dialogue that values the informants’ own ways of knowing and previous experience.

In this study I did not set out to “prove” anything - although as the research progressed I felt that it was important to demonstrate that SACWs do indeed reflect upon their practice. As Ayers (1989) has said of his study involving preschool teachers “we do not, of course, end up with the truth, but perhaps more modestly with a burgeoning sense of meaning and knowing grounded in real people and concrete

practices” (p. 4). The same can be said of this study.

The Ethnographic Tradition

As a qualitative approach, ethnography focuses on (among other things) “the importance of understanding the perspectives of the people under study, and of observing their activities in everyday life” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). McMillan & Schumacher (1989) describe ethnography in the following way:

Ethnography is interactive research which requires extensive time in the field to observe, interview, and record processes as they occur naturally in a selected site. . . . Although there is no specific set of research procedures, as in statistical analysis, there are common methodological strategies which distinguish it from other types of inquiry: participant observation, ethnographic interviews, and archival collection. Most ethnographic studies are exploratory or discovery-oriented research to understand people’s views of their world and to develop new theories. Ethnographies frequently identify areas of inquiry which prior research had not considered important or even recognized (p. 383, emphasis in original).

Ayers (1989), borrowing from other authors, describes ethnography in the following way:

“Doing ethnography” consists of “gathering fieldnotes in the context of fieldwork” (Wolcott, n.d.). Clifford Geertz (1973) offers a textbook definition of “doing ethnography” as “establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on” (pg. 6). Producing an ethnography, on the other hand, is the result of rigorous analysis and paying riveted attention to field notes. “Being there” (Geertz, 1988) and

then portraying a different life in the context of a specific culture - conveying the insider's sense-making view - is the essence of ethnography (p. 11).

This study utilized a combination of ethnographic techniques. It consisted of ten observations and ten in-depth interviews. I also kept a reflexive journal to keep track of my changing perceptions and thoughts throughout the research process.

The approach to the research cannot be called “fully ethnographic” because it did not involve a prolonged study (i.e. over 12 months) and the primary focus was not on culture and the “webs of significance” (Geertz, 1973) of a group of people who interact with each other and share meanings with each other on a consistent basis. However, the research was firmly grounded within the realm of ethnographic tradition. The intent of the research was to observe specific behaviours and to listen attentively as SACWs told their stories. This research represents a serious attempt to accurately reflect the perspectives of the SACWs and to understand the sense that they were making out of their actions, their learning, and their work with children.

The Informants (SACWs)

The ten SACWs who participated in this study were chosen because they met the following selection criteria:

- 1) they were willing to participate in the study,

- 2) they each had over one year of work experience in SAC,
- 3) they were identified by their supervisor as someone who wanted to learn more about working with children,
- 4) they identified themselves as persons who were interested in learning more about working with children.

All SACWs were recommended to me by child care agency supervisors. Five child care agencies in Vancouver consented to involve SACWs in the project. Eight child care centres were involved. These centres were located in various parts of the city. Four centres were located in neighbourhoods that could be characterized as being middle to high in terms of socio-economic status, and four were located in neighbourhoods that could be characterized as middle to low socio-economic status. All the centres were licensed by the Province (through the City's Health Department), and thus all met the minimum requirements in the field.

I cannot claim that the informants in this study are representative of all SACWs. This research must be seen as a set of particular cases in particular settings, not as a report on a representative group (see Gaskell, 1987). While the research is not representative nor is it generalizable, it may be "transferable" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings in Context A may be transferable

to Context B if Context A and Context B are sufficiently similar.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the concepts of transferability and fittingness:

How can one tell whether a working hypothesis developed in Context A might be applicable in Context B ? We suggest that the answer to that question must be empirical: the degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts, what we shall call "fittingness". Fittingness is defined as the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts. If Context A and Context B are "sufficiently" congruent, then working hypotheses from the sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context (p. 124, emphasis in original).

The SACWs involved in the study were between the ages of 22 and 37 years. Two of the informants had just over 1 year of experience working in SAC. Two more had just over 2 years of experience, three informants had approximately 3 years of experience, one had almost 4 years of experience and the other two informants had 8 and 10 years of SAC experience. Four of the SACWs were full-time employees (40 hours per week) at their respective centres. The other 6 SACWs were part-time employees averaging between 21 and 35 hours of paid work per week. Two informants indicated that they did not plan to stay in the SAC field in the next year. One informant was planning a career working with children with special needs and was leaving the SAC centre to pursue an education in that field. One informant was planning

to take maternity leave and then hoped to open her own family day care once her child was born. The other 6 informants indicated that they would like to work in SAC for at least the next year, if not longer.

Two of the informants had Diplomas in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and three other informants had university degrees (one had a degree in Recreation Management, one in Physical Education, and one in Chemistry). The rest had high school graduation as a minimum. All of the SACWs had received some form of work related in-service training from their agency. Four out of the ten had also taken one or more college-level courses directly related to SAC.

Eight of the ten SACWs were women, two were men. Women make up the vast majority of child care workers (see for example Nelson, 1990; Ayers, 1989; Tom, 1993). But it is also important to recognize that men also work in the field. In this study I wanted to reflect the voices of both male and female SACWs. I also felt that it was important to present more than one male voice. While the use of two male informants may constitute a form of "oversampling", I believe that it is justified in order to hear voices from both sexes.

The Observations

This study included ten observations of SACWs in action. All the observations took place at SAC centres and were done in the afternoons. I arrived approximately one half hour before the children

arrived so that I could do a detailed description of the centre. They lasted until the end of the program session at six p.m. Each observation was three and a half hours in length.

In each observation I focussed on one individual SACW and her interactions with children. I took detailed notes almost every time the SACW interacted with children - what was said, what was done, and the immediate outcome of each interaction. After the observation the field notes were typed out and reviewed. Certain incidents and episodes were then highlighted for possible further discussion during the interviews. Most of the episodes discussed in the interview involved what I judged to be skilled performances by the SACWs. In this way a major part of the interviews revolved around real events and the practices of each individual SACW.

During the observations I took on the role of a participant observer. As well as observing and taking notes I interacted with children and helped out in little ways where ever I could. I adopted this role for two reasons. First, it is a more natural role than an adult distancing himself from the action and taking notes. Children are used to seeing adults helping out in a child care setting. It allowed a more natural flow of activity and conversation to take place. Second, it allowed me to get a feel for the demands of the SACWs' work (although I was a SACW myself for 3 years). Most SAC afternoons have a rough

temporal flow to them - there is an initial excitement and energy when the children first arrive, then things settle down for a bit, and then, late in the afternoon, there is a “tired” phase when children and adults are likely to run out of energy. My participant-observer role allowed me to experience this flow in much the same way as the informants were experiencing it which helped me to put many of the SACWs’ actions and comments into an appropriate context.

The Interviews

The research project also included ten interviews. Each interview was done after the observation so that data from the observation could be discussed in the interview. Each interview took place within one week of the observation. Interviews were done in various locations: four were done at the centres when children were not present, three at administrative/head offices, one was done in the stands of an aquatic centre, and one was done in a coffee shop. Each informant was interviewed once. All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. The interviews lasted between one and a half and two and a half hours, with the average lasting about two hours.

The interviews could be characterized as “in-depth” rather than structured interviews with standardized questions. Because I was particularly interested in allowing the description of learning in SAC to emerge from the point of view of the learners themselves, the

questions asked in the interview were open-ended. Mishler (1986) maintains that “the discourse of the interview is jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent”(pg. 52). The informants were given the power to negotiate the meaning of questions and answers, and to tell their stories in their own words and in their own time. As Marshall & Rossman (1989) point out “the participant’s perspective on the social phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it”(p. 82). The direction and flow of each interview was dictated, in large part, by the Informants.

While the interviews were open-ended, they were also focussed. Each interview could be characterized as a “conversation with a purpose” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 82). The interviews focussed upon the SACWs’ work histories in child care, their beliefs and goals regarding their work with children, and their conceptions of learning, including what they learn and how. The interviews also focussed on various incidents and episodes that took place during the observation and the thoughts and thought processes of the SACWs as they were involved in these incidents and episodes.

Data Collection & Analysis

Data was collected from the observations and the interviews. During the observations I took extensive field notes. Care was taken to minimize any interruptions to the natural flow of the SAC programs

and, at the same time, to maximize the accuracy of the details of actions and speech within the settings. These hand-written “scratch notes” were then expanded into type-written text very soon after the observation (usually that evening).

Each interview was tape-recorded and transcriptions were made. The transcripts were then checked against the tape-recordings. Each informant was given a copy of the transcript of their particular interview and asked to make any changes that they thought would help the transcript to more accurately reflect what they were trying to express during each interview. Events noted in the observation transcripts and subsequently discussed during the interviews were marked so they could easily be connected to one another. This was done so that I could easily refer to both the informant’s words and her actions.

Marshall & Rossman (1989) characterize the data analysis phase of qualitative research in the following way:

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (p. 112).

The data analysis proceeded in a series of “rounds”. As I read

through the observation notes and the interview transcripts for the first round, I began to attach labels (titles) to issues, patterns and themes as they emerged. If an Informant stressed a point or spent a considerable amount of time discussing an issue it was given a label. Labels were also given to themes that came up repeatedly in one interview or came up independently in several interviews. These labels then represented the initial concepts that were then refined, and in some cases transformed, as the research progressed. There was a constant interplay between the concepts that emerged from the data and concepts that I found in the literature that helped me to better understand some of the patterns that I found in the data.

As the successive rounds of analysis progressed and as the concepts emerged from the data (for example the tool box, the Golden Rule, “sane communication”, reflection-in-action, etc.) the transcripts were analyzed several times for positive and negative instances. The direct quotations from the observations and the interviews were checked to ensure that the informant’s words were consistent both with the specific context of those words and with the informant’s entire interview and observation transcripts taken as a coherent whole.

I used my reflexive journal to keep track of the initial labels and the evolution of those labels over time. One example of such an evolution involved three initial concepts that I first labelled as “own

childhood" (informants talking about various aspects of their own childhood), "communication" (informants discussing how and why they communicate in certain ways with children), and "respect" (Informants discussing the concept of respecting oneself and/or respecting others). Much of what was included in these initial concepts was refined about a month later into a broader concept that I labelled "purpose" because it was primarily through these three initial concepts that the informants stated the purposes that they ascribed to their work. The concept of purpose was refined once more into the concept labelled "reflection about purpose" because this latter concept more accurately reflected the thought processes that accompanied the SACWs' comments about the purposes of their work with children. The label "reflection about purpose" was finally incorporated into either the concept labelled "reflection-on-action" or the one labelled "reflection-in-action" (Schon 1983, 1990), depending on whether the SACW was simply making a comment about her purpose or actually describing how that purpose shaped her response in the midst of action.

In terms of the evolution of the analytical concepts, then, I initially perceived the informants' talk about their childhood as simply that - talk about childhood. But as the research progressed it became clear that many of the Informants were using talk about their own childhoods in order to express what they thought the purpose of their

work with children was. As the research progressed even further it became clear that not only were the Informants talking about the purpose of their work, they were also describing an important avenue through which they constructed the purpose of that work. And finally I began to understand that the SACWs' thoughts about purpose fell naturally into two categories which had implications for adult education in the field (this will be discussed in the final chapter). A theoretical framework emerged through this interactive dialogue between the data and the emerging themes and patterns.

The Reflexive Journal

During the study I kept a personal journal containing subjective thoughts, emerging ideas, initial patterns, and reflections on the research process itself. Prell (1989) defines reflexivity as "the capacity to arouse consciousness of ourselves as we see the actions of ourselves and others" (p. 251). Anderson (1989) defines it as the "self-reflective processes that keep [the researcher's] critical framework from becoming the container into which the data are poured" (p. 254). The researcher must constantly be aware of himself as a research instrument. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) urge qualitative researchers "to recognize the reflexive character of social research; that is, to recognize that we are part of the social world we study" (p. 14).

The reflexive journal was used to record unedited thoughts about the people involved in the research, my feelings about the settings and events that were observed, my concerns and frustrations regarding the research process (both in the field and at the University), and thoughts about how I was personally affected throughout the study. The journal also contained the “decision path” of the research - it described the trail of logistical and analytic decisions that were made during the study. In the journal I often asked myself; “what decisions am I making about this research ?” and “how am I making those decisions ?”

As mentioned, the journal reveals some marked (and some subtle) changes in the categories that were used to analyze the transcript data. It also reveals changes in my perceptions of the phenomena under study. Here is an example of this type of reflexivity.

Journal entry for February 7, 1993:

The whole idea of reflection-in-practice is becoming clearer for me. Effective, “professional” SACWs constantly reflect upon their practice - perceiving options, linking values, trying out new ideas. . . Gaining more and more ability to think about your action in common and not-so-common child care situations. “Read and react”, but select - know where you want to help the child(ren) get to, but figuring out what is going to be the most likely strategy-choice and (if that strategy doesn’t work), the next strategy-choice, etc.

The journal also contains an example of myself as the researcher engaged in reflection-in-action, a major concept to emerge from the

data (and from the writings of Donald Schon). This example is described in detail in Chapter Five. The heightened experience of reflection-in-action marked a turning point in the research process. After experiencing reflection-in-action, I had a much greater appreciation for many of the stories that the SACWs told within the interview data. The reflexive journal echoes the words of Wax (1980) when he states that “in many cases, the finest insights of the fieldworker are developed from interaction within the self” (p. 277).

Chapter Three: The Research Question & Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will begin by stating the original research question and will then trace the evolution of that question into a set of more specific and more refined questions. In the latter part of this chapter I will describe the emergence of the theoretical framework which informs this study. The theoretical framework is made up of two components, and each will be discussed in detail.

The Original Research Question

I shall use the phrase “the original research question” to refer to the question that formed the foundation of the study. I shall also refer to the original question in the present tense because it serves as a guiding light and a directional beacon throughout the entire research process. The original research question is: “How do SACWs learn to become more effective in their work with children ?” As the fieldwork progressed the research question evolved. A series of more specific questions began to assume a more prominent position in the research process. My focus on adult learning led naturally to an interest in the thoughts and thought processes of the SACWs who participated in the study. The evolution of the question began when I “struggled” with the

fact that several of the SACWs initially denied that they thought about anything when they were involved in the execution of specific skillful performances (this initial denial is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four). This forced me to ask a very basic question: “Do SACWs think about and reflect upon their work ?” This question will be addressed in Chapter Four.

I analyzed the data and found many positive instances of SACWs thinking about their work. A question arose about the content of these thinking instances. “Are there any patterns or principles that underlie the thinking that accompanies effective practice ?”. This question will also be addressed in Chapter Four. The instances of SACWs thinking about their work fell naturally into two categories: 1) reflection-on-action and; 2) reflection-in-action (see Schon, 1983, 1990). A question then arose about the implications of these categories for adult education in the SAC field. This question is addressed in Chapter Five.

Throughout the research process the original question has served to focus the fieldwork and the data analysis. Although the question has evolved and has become informed by the issues that emerged from the data, the focus has always been on adult learning in SAC.

Before I move on to discuss the theoretical framework for this study there is one issue that I must deal with regarding the original

research question. There is a conceptual tension inherent in the phrasing of the original question. This tension revolves around the difference between how SACWs learn (process) and what they learn (content). The tension also involves the difference between describing the acquisition of effective strategies, and describing SACWs engaged in effective practice. Both types of descriptions are useful in understanding adult learning in SAC. The research question can be addressed by identifying both the processes of change (for example by claiming that SACWs learn by reflecting more consciously), and by identifying the contents of change (for example by listing skills and concepts that SACWs describe when they talk about their own learning). Process and content are interconnected. Reflection on action involves thinking about content, which in turn can lead to a greater awareness of how one operates and on discrepancies between how one operates and how one intends to operate. Describing the content of one's learning can lead to reflection on action which in turn can lead to awareness of patterns and transformational events.

The process of learning in SAC is closely connected to the content of that learning. Hounsell (1984), writing about content and process in adult education has stated that "we turn from content to process, from the 'what' to the 'how' of learning. This is a shift of emphasis rather than a substantive change. Content and process are

complementary and interrelated aspects of the experience of learning and teaching” (p. 197). Content and process are interwoven. What SACWs learn, and how they learn it, are different elements of the same phenomenon. This is why I have included content topics (such as the Golden Rule and sane communication) and process topics (such as reflection on action and reflective performances) in the answer to the research question.

The evolution of the research question stimulated the construction of a theoretical framework for this study. The theoretical framework is made up of two key concepts: 1) learning as first-order and second-order change; and, 2) a developmental perspective on the growth of SACWs. I shall now discuss each of these concepts in more detail.

Learning as First-order and Second-order Change

The phenomenon of learning can have many definitions. Coolie Verner, a pioneer in Canadian adult education, defined learning as:

a change in behaviour that is more or less permanent. This change in behaviour may be the acquisition of information; a new capability such as a manipulative skill, an intellectual skill, or a cognitive strategy; or it may include attitudes, appreciations, or values. It is more or less permanent to the degree that the new entity is integrated into the cognitive structure and becomes a usable element in the memory system (1975, p. 179).

Another adult education writer, David Little (1980) has outlined two different ways to define learning:

Psychologists define learning in a number of ways. Berelson and Steiner (1964) define it as a change in behavior that results from previous behavior in similar situations, as opposed to changes due to physiological variations such as growth, deterioration, hunger, fatigue, alcohol or sleep, while Briggs (1976) proposes that learning is the process of gaining or changing insights, outlooks, expectations or thought patterns (p. 6).

The above quotation highlights the fact that learning can be viewed as a change in behaviour and it can also be viewed as a process of gaining insight or changing thought patterns.

This latter view of learning is consistent with Marton et al's (1984) qualitative conception of learning. Dahlgren (1984) has asserted that "to learn is to strive for meaning, and to have learned something is to have grasped its meaning" (pp. 23-24). Dahlgren further maintains that "we can . . . define learning itself as a change in conception. In other words, when learning has occurred, there is a shift from one conception to another which is qualitatively distinct" (p. 31). In the same vein, Hounsell (1984) states that:

when something has been genuinely understood . . . it is perceived as helping [the learners] to make sense of the world around them. In its fullest sense, therefore, learning involves a change in the [learners'] conception of some aspect of reality. It is activity through which the environment - or man [sic] himself- appears with a higher

degree of meaningfulness than before (pg. 192).

During the interviews conducted for this study, SACWs described both types of learning - learning as the acquisition of discrete pieces of information, and "learning as a change in the learner's understanding" (Entwistle & Marton, 1984, p. 227). The work of Maier (1986) helped me to reconcile these two views of learning. Maier (1986) writes about "first-order and second-order change" in the context of learning in the child care field. According to Maier, "first-order change relies upon step-by-step incremental learning, expansively building upon previous capabilities while simultaneously modifying what has been learned before" (1986, p. 37). He contrasts this with what he calls "second-order change" which involves a more qualitative change, a transformation from one level of perceiving to another, higher level.

First-order change is incremental, linear, and progressive. It involves a quantitative progression of change from "less" to "more" and/or from "fewer in number" to "greater in number". Maier states that "first-order change is important for learning when the goal is the achievement of incremental gains in the learner's acquisition of knowledge which is basically quantitative" (p. 39).

In the data there were several examples of first-order change. A

new SACW can experience a great deal of first-order change during her orientation (most centres have some sort of orientation process for new staff: see Sisson, 1990 and Arns, 1988). Betty is the Director of her centre and is in charge of orienting new staff. During the interview she said:

I've got a whole staff orientation package that I take [the new staff] through when they start. We go through their job descriptions and their daily routines, and the most important things I tell them when they first start is "Get to know the daily routines, and get to know the children" . . . I try to have everything as organized for the new staff as possible . . . up on this bulletin board are the daily routines; Monday housekeeping, end of day closing, so that it's all there in print for them.

In Betty's orientation process a new staff person would learn about the daily routines of the centre and her duties therein. She would also learn about the program and would get to know the children (their names, interests, potential behaviours, etc.). Once the new SACW learns one of the routines, the rest of the routines are simply added on. The same could be said about learning her duties and about getting to know the children (on a surface level at least).

Often first-order change involves very small, concrete additions to the child care worker's skill or idea repertoire. This can be seen in the following excerpt from Cindy's interview:

Anything I can learn from anybody - things to do, what to use, you know. I've got a friend and I go to him all the time

to ask for little boy stuff, and he comes up with these obscure crafts that I would never have thought of in a million years, and I couldn't wait, I came in and shared it with everybody at [the child care agency]. Now everybody's going to do it at their centre with their little boys.

When Cindy learns a new craft, she is adding to her existing stock-pile of craft ideas.

Additions to one's skill or activity idea repertoire can also come in the form of methods to get children's attention. In one observation I witnessed Andrea getting the children's attention by clapping her hands loudly to the beat of the rock n' roll song "We will rock you". She explains:

I learned it at [another Centre] when I was there . . . when I lift my hands [and clap to the beat] it's just the pattern or the beat and they hear it and they do it right away and everybody responds . . . everyone quiets down and its really good because I'm not yelling, and it's really - what's the word I'm looking for - instantaneous, when I want them to be quiet they all join in for a while, then I stop and then they stop, and then everything is quiet.

Here Andrea focuses on the usefulness of the technique that she has learned. This technique does not, in and of itself, help her to perceive getting children's attention in a different light. It simply helps her do it in a more efficient way.

Many experienced, skilled SACWs have a large repertoire of skills and activity ideas. They collect (i.e. learn) these ideas as they go about

their work. This “collector’s attitude” is evident in this next excerpt.

Danielle is talking about formal child care courses that she has taken.

I took a . . . course at Continuing Education . . . and they did games and things for kids . . . I think there’s always things like that that I can learn, like maybe different ideas that I might not have thought of before. . . So I’m always looking for new ideas, yeah. And I like people telling me about other ideas, you know.

Other examples of first-order change in SAC can be drawn from the literature. When writing about staff development, Seligson and Allenson (1993) use the following example:

. . . as a result of a one-to-one supervisory session, perhaps a PD [Program Director] and caregiver agree that the caregiver’s activity planning for nine- to twelve- year olds lacks creativity. Shortly thereafter, a local R & R [child care resource and referral agency] queries the PD about possible workshop topics for an up-coming day care conference. In this case the PD might suggest “Can’t-Miss Games for Older Kids” and encourage the caregiver to attend (p. 169).

This example clearly shows that learning to become more effective can take the form of adding ideas and skills to an already existing stockpile. After attending the workshop, the caregiver should have more ideas and a greater number of games that are appropriate for older children.

In one sense, then, SACWs can learn to become more effective in their work with children by acquiring and accumulating an ever-

growing repertoire of discrete skills and activity ideas. Musson and Gibbons (1988) have referred to the acquisition of these skills and activity ideas as “the tool-box approach” (pp. 47-48). . For the most part the tool-box approach involves first-order change and incremental learning. Many activity ideas, discipline strategies and communication skills can be thought of as tools - concrete methods that can be instrumentally applied to the situation at hand. Many SACWs consider the acquisition of tools for the tool-box as an important way of becoming more effective in their work with school-aged children.

Second-order change involves fundamental shifts in the learner’s thinking, “a reframing of previous learning which serves as a springboard for a transformation to new levels of comprehension” (Maier, 1986, p. 37). It denotes a transformation from one level to another. It is a process that reorganizes the learning at the previous level while simultaneously creating a new and higher level of understanding. Maier states that “a second-order change is identifiable because a transformation to a new state occurs. It is a non-linear process with previous operations being altered to new and different linear configurations” (1986, p. 38). When a person is involved in second-order change she begins to perceive the phenomenon under study in a new light, that is, in a qualitatively different way than before.

Some examples of second-order change from the fieldwork are listed below. Each example is followed by a brief analysis that focuses on the main point(s) of the excerpt. In the examples the SACWs are talking about learning something that has changed the way they perceive their work and has fundamentally shifted how they work with children.

During the interview I asked Andrea to compare the skills and knowledge that she has now with those she had when she first started working with children. She said:

I used to yell at kids a lot more. I really used to yell a lot . . . and then I came to realize, okay, I was yelling too much and that wasn't the best way to deal with them.

The realization that yelling at children is not the best way to deal with them is an important one for any SACW. It is difficult, if not impossible, to become more effective with children and constantly yell at them. It is generally accepted that listening to children and negotiating meaning with them is far more effective than trying to dominate, intimidate or manipulate them (Faber & Mazlish, 1982; Gordon, 1989; Albrecht, 1991, Wasserman, 1990). Second-order change for SACWs can come about when they begin to question the myth that "children should be seen and not heard", and the myth that children are somehow second-class citizens because they are not adults. When a

SACW questions these myths, she can experience a breakthrough in her efforts to become more effective. When the SACW examines some of the assumptions that underlie common ideas that adults have about children and child care she can begin to perceive her work in a new way.

As we can see in this next excerpt, a second-order change can come about when the SACW questions the assumption that “adults have all the answers”. During the interview Cindy said:

I realized early [in my career] that I don't have all the answers, and if I think I do, then I'm really stumped . . . Now I make a conscious effort not to give all the answers, because I can't . . . Now I say to the children “Yeah, we are going solve this”. I like that “we” rather than me come up with all the solutions.

She realized that she must work with the children to solve many of the problems that arise in the course of day-to-day SAC. The influence of this realization was evident in her responses to children during the observation. Rather than answer most of the children's questions for them, Cindy made obvious efforts to help the children work things out for themselves. Here is an excerpt from the observation data.

Cindy introduces me to two children who have arrived at the centre early - from a private school. She introduces me as her “instructor” (she took a course from me a few weeks ago at Langara). One of the children asks “What's an instructor ?” Cindy replies by asking both of the children “What is the smaller word in ‘instructor’?” One of the children replies “instruct”. Cindy then asks them “What

does instruct mean ?” One of the children replies “Instruct means to teach”. Then Cindy prompts “So an instructor is . . .?” One of the children replies excitedly “Its a teacher”. Cindy then cheerfully says “See, you guys could figure it out.” The two children seem comfortable with this type of interaction with Cindy. They respond as if this is a regular type of interaction - the questions and the counter-questions.

I note later in the observation that Cindy asks the children many questions in order to help them solve problems or discover information collaboratively.

In Frank’s interview I asked him to compare the skills and knowledge that he has now to those that he had when he first began working with children. He stated:

the biggest difference . . . [is] . . . my ability to be able to understand children, I guess. There’s a few things, but I guess probably the main thing is my ability to communicate with children and to understand their feelings. It’s a lot easier now to say “You seem upset” or “You look like you are angry”, and be able to reflect back their feelings. Whereas when I first started [working with children] I was probably totally oblivious to those things.

When Frank compares his new skills and knowledge to his old ones it is obvious that he has learned to perceive things differently now. When he first started, he was “totally oblivious” to the ways in which adults can effectively communicate with children. While his new way of communicating involves the learning of some concrete skills, it also

involves a change in perspective. It challenges the common myths that adults are somehow superior to children and that children should simply be told what to do. Frank has learned that trying to understand children and trying to reflect their feelings back to them are ways of treating children as equals and with respect. This way of communicating respectfully with children was very obvious during my observation of Frank as he worked with the children. He consistently spoke to the children in this manner throughout the observation.

In summary, learning in SAC can take the form of additive, incremental learning, or a change in understanding. First-order change is often easier to identify because it is discrete and tangible. Second-order change is sometimes less visible, but definitely impacts the day-to-day practice of the SACW. The concept of learning as first- and second-order change helped me to better understand that adult learning in SAC can be viewed from a developmental perspective.

A Developmental Perspective on Adult Learning in SAC

Several authors have written about the stages of a child care worker's professional development (Katz, 1977; Vander Ven, 1988; Hills, 1989; Pence and Griffin, 1991). Writing about preschool teachers, Katz states that they:

can generally be counted on to talk about developmental needs and stages when they discuss children. It may be equally meaningful to think of teachers themselves as

having developmental sequences in their professional growth patterns (1977, p. 7).

While different authors have different labels for the developmental stages of a child care worker, the overall idea that they do develop through stages is common to the authors cited above.

There are four developmental stages in Katz's progression. Stage one is the "Survival" stage. During this stage "the teacher's main concern is whether or not she can survive" (p. 7, emphasis in original). At this point in her development the teacher needs "instruction in specific skills" (p. 8). In other words she needs to engage primarily in first-order change - the acquisition of tools for her tool-box. Hills (1989) outlines a "developmental process of skill acquisition" (p.17) for child care workers.

Beginning child and youth care workers rely on structured guidelines and context-free rules. At this point in their learning process they lack the relevant experiences necessary to guide them in applying their newly acquired knowledge and skills so they apply rules as if they were appropriate in all circumstances (p. 20).

Using a slightly different developmental framework, Pence and Griffin, following the work of Vander Ven (1988), posit that there are two "beginner" stages in a CCW's development into a competent practitioner - Stage 1 (Novice), and Stage 2 (Initial).

stage one or novice practitioners are described as pre-professionals. The level of practice is mainly determined

by personal experiences, values and beliefs rather than a theoretical understanding of the developmental, behavioural, and individual needs of the children in their care. Initial or stage two practitioners have made a commitment to the field by participating in some form of educational preparation. Their behaviour at this second stage, although 'conceptually unsophisticated' . . . is based on developmental theory which they apply in linear ways and which is still very much influenced by their personal value systems (1991, p. 25).

According to Vander Ven, these stage two or initial practitioners "may show a 'flavor' of professionalism [in their work], but they may not be able to explain the reasons for what they do" (1988, p. 144, emphasis added).

While every SACW needs to continually strive to enhance the number of tools in her tool-box, first-order change seems to be most cogent for SACWs who are at the beginning stages of their professional development. Inexperienced SACWs who are in the beginning stages of their growth into consistently competent practitioners need straightforward skills training and activity ideas. As Jones (1993) has pointed out, these learners need concrete suggestions which clarify the expectations for their work and give them practical recipes for getting started.

It should be noted that some SACWs who have been working with children for many years may still fit into the beginner stages if

they do not reflect upon their experience. As Vander Ven has forcefully pointed out:

The most salient characteristic of novices is that they function as nonprofessionals, whether they are brand-new to the field or have been working for a number of years. This characterization is based on the fundamental premise that experience alone is not sufficient to provide professional competence (1988, p. 141).

Katz calls the second stage in a preschool teacher's development the "Consolidation" stage, wherein the preschool teacher "is now ready to consolidate the overall gains made during the first stage and to differentiate specific tasks and skills to be mastered next" (p. 8). The learner is developing the wherewithal to begin to take control over many of her learning tasks and begin to author her own care-giving script.

Katz's third stage is the "Renewal" stage. During this stage: the teacher begins to tire of doing the same old things. She starts to ask more questions about new developments in the field: "Who is doing what ? Where ? What are some of the new materials, techniques, approaches, and ideas ?" . . . and . . . her need for renewal and refreshment should be taken seriously (p. 10).

Reflecting on her practice with the intention of creating deeper learning, and dialoguing with other learning-oriented colleagues can prove to be quite productive at this stage.

Katz's fourth stage is the "Maturity" stage.

The teacher at this stage has come to terms with herself as a teacher. She now has enough perspective to begin to ask deeper and more abstract questions, such as: "What are my historical and philosophical roots ? What is the nature of growth and learning ? How are educational decisions made ? Can schools change society ? Is teaching a profession ?" Perhaps she has asked these questions before. But with the experience she has now gained, the questions represent a more meaningful search for insight, perspective, and realism (p. 11).

The mature practitioner is aware of her goals, options, choices, and behaviours. She is self-reflective and intentional. Similarly, Pence and Griffin (1991) claim that early childhood practitioners who are in the more evolved stages of their development "have developed the ability to integrate their knowledge and experience into a personal frame of reference which expands their thinking and competence [and] helps them address more advanced problems" (p. 25). For Vander Ven (1988), advanced practitioners "have an intimate and grounded grasp of the multifaceted aspects of the field" (p. 154).

Writing about the overall developmental stages of preschool teachers, Jones (1993) asserts that:

Inexperienced, untrained teachers still in the survival stage (Katz, 1977) need straightforward training - social knowledge - that clarifies the expectations for their work and gives them recipes for getting started. Once teachers have developed a repertoire of group-management skills and activities that keep children interested, they are ready to construct their own knowledge through reflecting on practice, being challenged to grow, and making some

choices about their rate and direction of growth (p. xvi, emphasis added).

While the writings about these developmental stages has referred almost exclusively to preschool teachers, adult teaching and learning in SAC can also be viewed from a developmental perspective. At times first-order change is developmentally appropriate, and at other times second-order change is appropriate. When answering the question “how does a SACW learn to become more effective ?” the answer will depend, to a large extent, on what developmental stage the SACW is in, and on how well the SACW’s developmental level matches up with the present learning demands of her work.

Chapter Four: Emergent Themes

The data reported in this chapter represent four themes that emerged during the fieldwork. These themes involve: the tendency of some SACWs to initially deny or downplay the role that their thought processes play in their skillful action; a description of SACWs thinking about their work; and a description of SACWs' reflections on content - either pertaining to the Golden Rule or to "sane communication".

I begin with the theme entitled "Initial denial" because during the fieldwork almost all the SACWs initially seemed predisposed to deny that they thought much about the responses that they gave when they worked with children. I move through this theme (because all the SACWs eventually recognized and described their thought process), and demonstrate that SACWs do indeed think about their goals, options, choices and behaviours. I have entitled the second theme "SACWs thinking about their work". The thoughts described in this second theme fit into what Schon (1983, 1990) has called "reflection-on-action". The third and fourth themes both deal with "reflections on content". One is entitled "the Golden Rule" and the other "sane communication". They both describe important thought-content areas which characterize skillful performances in SAC. They also describe

key avenues through which adult learning in SAC can take place.

Initial Denial

One of the most obvious patterns that struck me during the research was the amount of denial that I encountered regarding the attribution of thought processes to specific skillful performances by the SACWs themselves. By the term “denial” I mean that the SACWs either flatly dismissed any suggestion that they thought before acting, or they simply did not recognize that they thought, and chose to claim that they did not. I use the phrase “initial denial” to indicate that this active denial usually occurred as a first response to the suggestion that a specific skillful action might have been preceded by complex thought. Through negotiation this initial denial invariably gave way to a more realistic description of the antecedents to skillful action - a description that included a strong connection between thought and skillful action. While it will be demonstrated throughout this paper that SACWs do indeed reflect on their practice, the phenomenon of initial denial must be examined because it appears, on the surface at least, to contradict the notion of reflection in SAC work.

In almost every interview there were times when the SACWs denied that they thought about what they were doing. Two things made me question these statements. First, the SACWs were denying that they were engaged in thought when, in fact, I observed them engaged in

skillful performances. It can be said that their skill was in their action, and the outcome of the incident was consistent with what the SACW had intended. Second, through a process of negotiation in the interviews, the denials softened and the SACWs began to admit (or recognize) and then clearly describe the complex thought processes involved in their skillful action.

In this section I will present three examples of this phenomenon of denial-negotiation-description. For each example I will present data from the observation to help describe the incident as I saw it, then present an excerpt from the interview to describe the situation from the SACW's point of view. Each example will then be followed by a brief analysis.

In the first example Frank (the SACW) is involved in a discussion with three children. During the observation I noted:

Frank calls out to three children who are playing outside near the door "Hey, Greg, Laurie and Trish". The three children move closer to Frank and Frank also moves closer to them. He continues "Do you remember what I asked you guys to do before ?". One of the children replies "Yes", then Frank asks "What did I ask, could you please repeat it back to me ?". Another one of the children replies "Go see Rene at the park to sign in". Frank nods his head and the three children leave to do what they were asked.

During the interview I asked Frank what went through his mind just before he called the children over or just before he spoke to them

or responded to what they said. He answered “It’s not like anything runs through my head, it just happens”. Later in the interview I asked Frank about the differences in how he works with children now as compared to when he first started.³

F: Just my ability to think a lot quicker on my feet. To be able to go up and to pull experiences out from the past that, well this happened before with him or her. If I try it this way will it work ? Because I try it that way it didn’t work, so boom, I’m able to slip into a different way of thinking.

S: Now my question, and I’m not trying to trap you or anything, was there any kind of thought process going on when you called those three children over and while you were sort of figuring out what you could say that would work ?

F: Yes.

Frank initially says “It’s not like anything runs through my head, it just happens”. But later in the interview he states that he is now able to think a lot quicker on his feet. He states that he thinks to himself “If I try it this way will it work ?” and implies that his specific response to a situation now involves a calculation of the trust that he has established with the children involved, how familiar they are with his boundaries and what his history is with each child

³ For all the interview transcripts in this paper I will use the first letter of the informant’s pseudonym (for example “F” for Frank), and the letter “S” for my name .

involved. He also states that if he tries a particular strategy and it does not work he slips into “a different way of thinking”. At the end of the excerpt he readily admits that when he called the three children over in this situation he did calculate what he would say and how he thought they might respond.

In the next example Heather interacts with 2 children - one girl who has forgotten her math book in her classroom and, later, a boy who is sitting on a dish trolley. The incident with the girl is described below and the description of the incident with the boy unfolds in the interview itself.

The young girl comes into the Centre and quietly asks if she can talk to Heather. Bending down, Heather listens to what the child has to say and then responds in a cheerful, enthusiastic voice “Sure you can !”. I wrote in my observation notes “Heather’s response was so cheerful that I felt good, and I wasn’t even being spoken to - many of the children and staff in the room probably felt the same way”. It was apparent that Heather’s response put the girl at ease, and it also seemed to add more cheer to an already cheery centre.

I asked Heather about this incident during the interview.

H: Yes, I think in that case I think she forgot something that was important, either her math book or text, something that was important. I was happy that she remembered to get it. I always try to make it enthusiastic and let them see that I’m happy as well.

So she knows "Hey, I did a good thing. I remembered something that I should have".

S: . . . do you have to sort of think about that before you respond to make sure it comes off the way you want it to ?

H: No, not at all.

And later in the interview, talking about the same incident:

H: I think with kids when you're talking to them and trying to explain something to them if you get down to their eye level and they can see you at their level they are not as intimidated. I think looking up all the time doesn't make them feel good.

S: Certainly I wouldn't feel too good, especially if that somebody was twice my size.

H: Yeah, I think so, that's why I go down to their level.

S: I think there's a message there. It's like you are saying "I am making an effort to listen to you". The child knows that somebody is really listening to her. Okay, during the observation there's a boy sitting on a dish trolley near where I am sitting. You move over and you say "Its kind of dangerous there" and you put your hand on his shoulder blade and softly said "Come on down". So I made the note that it was all one smooth, continuous motion the whole moving over, the talking, helping him move down off the trolley. Both you and he seemed to remain happy, and again I felt happy and I wasn't even involved. It seemed like a really skilled way and by that I mean that I can think of ten other ways that it could have been done less skillfully, like "Get the hell off . . ." or something.

H: Demanding that he get down, exactly. Yeah but if I did that they would feel bad, they would walk away and I wouldn't feel good about that because, at least the way I did it he wasn't upset or mad at all.

When asked if she thought about how she was going to respond to make sure it came off the way she wanted it to, Heather said "No, not at all." Yet when I asked her if she thought she would get a different response if she yelled at the child instead, she admitted that she would. Then she said "I think with kids when you're talking to them and trying to explain something to them, if you get down to their eye level and they can see you at their level, they are not as intimidated. I think looking up all the time doesn't make them feel good" (emphasis added). She offers a rationale for bending down and making contact with the child on the child's eye level.

When Heather discusses her response to the boy sitting on the dish trolley she admits that there are ways that she could have responded that would have created a situation that she would not want (i.e. the child would feel bad). She also admits that the way she responded did, in fact, produce the situation that she had intended to produce (i.e. "he wasn't upset or mad at all"). There is ample evidence in Heather's description of both the incidents with the girl who forgot her book and the boy on the the trolley that she had thoughts about the situations that she wanted to create, and then she tailored her actions

accordingly. In other words, she thought before she acted.

In the third example Erica (the SACW) was at the art table leading a session wherein she and the children were all making valentines. Erica looked up from her own valentine and viewed what the children were doing. She saw Julia (a child) making a cardboard arrow to stick through her valentine. Erica said enthusiastically “Julia ! That’s cool, that’s what I’m going to do too”. Erica’s exclamation served to validate Julia’s creativity and self-direction (the arrow idea was not part of Erica’s original description of the valentine project), and also served to encourage the other children involved. Erica’s comment also had the potential to send a message to the children - that everyone in the group could be a teacher or a role-model, and that everyone could be a joyful learner (including Erica).

In the interview I asked Erica about this incident.

S: Do you have a process of thinking like “What am I going to say here that would be effective” ?

E: Not really. I’ve just been around kids . . . I’ve just been around kids a lot, even when I was getting older in our family there were nephews and they were there all these little kids, I don’t know.

S: Okay, let’s suppose that you were upset or something and you almost say “shut up” or something. Do you ever sort of have a filter and put what you’re going to say through it and choose between a couple of things to say?

E: Yeah, like if it's something I'll go, I'll start to say "Hey, cut it out" or whatever, and then I realize that I shouldn't yell so instead I say "Can you come here please ?" My mind is going "Erica, you just can't yell". But with something like what I said to Julia, I just thought it was pretty cool.

S: So it was spontaneous ?

E: Yeah, with the good things. If I am going to discipline or going to start to yell I'll notice that sometimes, hey they look at me and I'll see their faces and I'll go "I shouldn't be yelling". So I'll say "Can you come here please ?".

S: When you say "Can you come here please" do you think "How am I going to say this ?"

E: Yes I do. And then it's either I'm going to try to explain this to the children, what they did wrong, ask them what they did wrong, give them a choice, whatever. Depending on the kid. Yeah I do think about it while they are coming over and sometimes I will even, say if I'm talking to someone else, I'll say to the child "Can you sit there for a minute and wait for me" because I'm thinking "What am I doing with this kid ?".

S: Okay, so you might have a couple of strategies. When you say it depends on the kid, what do you mean ?

E: Depending on what they say. You have some of the really independent boys who, if I give them a choice that will be better for them because they are not going to do anything you tell them to do. If I say for example, "I'm going to take this Lego stuff away" like a threat, then they'll go do exactly what they were doing. I've got to say "You guys make the choice". But whereas other children, the ones who are shy, they don't want to

get a talk from me period. They don't like talking to adults, so it's easier for me to say "Please stay out of that area and do something else" and they will probably respond better because they don't want to get into trouble again.

When I initially asked Erica if she thought about her response, she replied "Not really. I've just been around kids . . ." When I changed the scenario to one where she is upset and wants to say "shut up" for example, Erica readily admitted that she might think to herself "Erica, you just can't yell". She also admitted that when she calls a child over she does think about what she is going to say and how she is going to say it. Like Frank, she states that when she communicates with children (at least in discipline situations) how she responds will depend heavily on which child she is talking to. The implication here is that she must mentally process her "history" with this child - she must calculate the nature of the relationship that she has developed with this particular child.

The incongruency here, at least as I see it, is between Erica's recognition of a complex thought process that is involved in disciplinary situations and her denial of any thought process involved in a particular example of skillful performance. It is not my intention to deny Erica's perception that she did not think before she made the comment to Julia. But given the positive effect that the comment had

on Julia and on the group as a whole, and given the fact that it would be difficult to think of a different comment that would have been more effective in that situation, I find it difficult to take her initial denial at face value.

Erica's response "Not really. I've just been around kids . . ." seems to fit into Schon's idea that "Often we cannot say what it is that we know. When we try to describe it we find ourselves at a loss, or we produce descriptions that are obviously inappropriate" (1983, p. 49, emphasis added). The same can be said of Frank's comment "It's not like anything runs through my head, it just happens", and Heather's response "No, not at all" when I asked her if she thought about anything before she acted in the situation-at-hand.

During the field work and the data analysis stages of the research I found this phenomenon of denial confusing and somewhat contradictory. I found the denials contradictory in the sense that, after the outright denial, each SACW could eventually articulate a complex set of factors that went into their skillful performance. Two different, but related concepts helped me to make sense out of this apparent contradiction. The first is the concept of tacit skills and knowledge (Polanyi, 1967, 1969 and Schon 1983, 1990), and the second is that of invisible skills (Morley, 1993 and Gaskell, 1987, 1992).

Tacit Skills and Knowledge

Schon (1983), following the work of Polanyi (1967, 1969) holds the assumption that “competent practitioners usually know more than they can say. They exhibit a kind of knowing-in-practice, most of which is tacit” (p. viii). The requisite knowledge is embedded in the observable practice and facilitates a positive outcome to the situation at hand. The “skill” is in the knowledge (knowing what to do and how to do it), and the knowledge is in the actual practice (performance). Often, because of this embeddedness, the practitioner cannot adequately describe the antecedents (including her thought processes) to her skillful performances. Schon (1990) uses the term “knowing-in-action” to describe this phenomenon. He states:

I shall use knowing-in-action to refer to the sorts of know-how we reveal in our intelligent action - publicly observable, physical performances like riding a bicycle and private operations like instant analysis of a balance sheet. In both cases, the knowing is in the action. We reveal it by our spontaneous, skillful execution of the performance; and we are characteristically unable to make it verbally explicit (p. 25).

Schon continues:

Nevertheless, it is sometimes possible, by observing and reflecting on our actions, to make a description of the tacit knowing implicit in them (p. 25).

This statement helped me make sense of the apparent contradiction in

the denial-negotiation-description phenomenon. When SACWs are given the opportunity to observe and reflect upon their own actions (as they were given in the interviews), they can begin to perceive the richness and complexity of their tacit knowing and the “hidden” skills that they rely upon to perform skillfully. They have difficulty articulating the skills and thought processes that they use until they have a chance to step back and reflect upon them.

I suggest that once this knowing-in-action becomes explicit, SACWs are in a better position to use it in the service of their own professional development. The once-tacit skills and knowledge become self-observable, available for reflection and public sharing, and accessible to self-analysis. This is what happened in the interviews cited above. As Heather states near the end of her interview:

with you going over all this with me, it's really helped me to be aware of some of my good qualities. Sometimes I don't think about them at all. Having you tell me them is going to make me more aware and I think I'm going to try to improve from there and do it more than I have been doing.

Invisible Skills

There is another concept that helped me to make sense out of the phenomenon of initial denial. Morley (1993) writes about women in the workplace and the fact that many of their skills are invisible to them and to their employers. She makes the point that the “ordinariness” of

these skills allows people to take them for granted. This ordinariness also “hides the expertise from its practitioners and the public” (p. 39). What may be a “skill” may not be defined as a skill and therefore would lack credibility if it were talked about as a skill.

Gaskell (1986, 1992) has pointed out that the notion of skill is a socially constructed one. She claims that:

the question of how we attribute a level of skill to a job is complex. How do tasks in the labour market come to be valued, to be seen by employers and employees as ‘skilled’? How can we compare the value of verbal skills and physical skills, the value of social skills and technical skills? . . . Our notions of labour market skills are socially constructed and the social processes producing our designations need to be carefully examined (1992, p. 114).

Jackson (1987) also points out that there are “unexamined assumptions about the character of knowledge, skills and learning related to working life” and that “these assumptions have been particularly damaging to our understanding of women’s work and skills” (p. 351).

It is widely recognized that child care in general is considered to be within the domain of “women’s work” (Finkelstein, 1988). It is also widely recognized that child care is devalued by certain elements of adult society - it is not given high status, nor is it recognized as a highly skilled, knowledge-oriented occupation. Tom (1993) cites the example of an American occupational skill-rating guide which ranks

the skills of child care workers below those of parking lot attendants, and the Canadian example of the comparison between the average pay of child care workers and the average pay of government employees caring for animals. Modigliani (1986) states that “most people do not believe that caring for children requires skill” (p. 52). Powell (1990) suggests that there is a widespread notion that “instinctual abilities” and a “love of children” are all that one needs in order to work with children. Pettygrove et al (1984) have pointed out that, “child caregivers face conditions similar to those in other female-dominated fields - low pay, low status, and little job security” (p. 14).

It could very well be that SACWs (and child care workers in general) are predisposed to initially deny that their work with children involves skills and knowledge that are worth reflecting on and talking about. They could be predisposed to deny the thought processes that precede skillful action because they do not feel that they have social permission to do so. It may be that, consciously or unconsciously, many SACWs are conditioned to attribute less skill and thought to their work than an outside assessment would allow.

Several scholars have noted that women’s oral narratives and autobiographies often are characterized by frequent understatements, avoidance of first-person point of view, rare mention of personal accomplishment, and disguised statements of personal power (Etter-Lewis, 1991, p. 48).

I found this disposition to deny or downplay the skills and thought processes involved in effective work with children in the SACWs that I interviewed, regardless of gender.

It is only through a process of negotiation that involves an empathetic understanding of what is involved in working with children that child care workers may begin to feel that what they do can be legitimately considered as “skilled”. Once their work is accepted as skilled, then SACWs feel more comfortable describing the thought processes that accompany their knowing-in-action. The educational implications of this will be discussed in the final chapter.

SACWs Thinking about Their Work

The phenomenon of initial denial notwithstanding, it is obvious from the observations and the interviews that SACWs do think about what they are doing, and they do reflect on various aspects of their job. In this section I provide a number of examples of SACWs thinking about various aspects of their work. My intention is first to demonstrate that work in SAC can be reflective practice, and second to highlight a variety of thoughts that SACWs have regarding their work.

In this first example I ask Kate about learning and what she thinks she still has to learn in order to become more effective with children.

K: Something that I have to learn ? See I’m really good at

learning from watching people, so I don't know . . .do you mean at school or just to learn ?

S: Just anything you have to learn now.

K: I guess maybe knowing how to . . . like, I know what I have to do and I know why, but to get the two to meet.

Two comments are worth noting in this excerpt. First, Kate states that she learns from watching other people. Observational learning and role models can be an important source of learning for SACWs. Second, she admits that while she knows what to do and why it should be done, she still needs to learn how to put it all together - to merge purpose and action. Kate thinks about the connection between the what and the why of effective practice.

The second example also involves Kate. At one point during the observation she was busy talking to several children in one corner of the room. A boy sitting at a table in the middle of the room began to yell loudly at another child and then knocked a Monopoly game off of the table sending game pieces and play money scattering all over the floor. Kate then moved toward the boy. During the interview I asked Kate about her thoughts as she responded to the incident. She said:

I remember thinking what tone of voice should I use now ? Should I yell or should I . . . <pause> . . . and depending on the situation.

Later in the interview, describing the same incident:

I was sitting beside him as it was all happening. And I sat beside him and I just thought what was he going to do if I just told him to stop, because he's going to have a lot of anger and he might take it out on me, so I just let him roll with it.

In this excerpt Kate is making on-the-spot decisions about the tone of voice that she will use and the volume of that voice. She is thinking about the image that she wants to portray during her intervention, especially the critical first few seconds. She also describes how she was calculating the possible consequences of different intervention strategies. Her thought process took the form of an "if...then" proposition; if she just told him to stop, then he might take his anger out on her, but if she just let him roll with it, then he might calm down and be more open to discussing the problem at hand.

In this next example Wayne talks about his thought processes and the importance of thinking on the job (there are three separate excerpts - each one is separated by a short dashed line).

I'm completely open to tinker with, try something new, you know, ditch something, take it apart, turn it upside down . . . as long as it works effectively for a group within the mandate of the structure that I have to function in.

[In this job] you have to be fast on your feet, fast with your mind and you have to be flexible enough to come up with a plan on your own . . . You have to come up with ways of speaking and doing things that are productive to the situation. In any situation it's a constant matter of definition, and the variables might change depending on group size, you know.

S: How does somebody become effective working with children ? How does somebody get to that level ?

W: Well, experience. . .<pause>. . .dealing with it <pause>. . . thinking about it.

In the first excerpt Wayne talks about tinkering with ideas and strategies. He describes how he develops an idea and then takes it apart and turns it upside down, looking for the strategy that is best suited for the group and the situation at hand. In the second excerpt he emphasizes the importance of thinking on the job. In the third excerpt he stresses the connection between experience and thinking about experience. A parallel can be made with Aldous Huxley's famous quotation "Experience is not what happens to you, but what you do with what happens to you." A distinction can be made here between action and reflection-on-action. It is often easier to act than to think about that action. According to Wayne "thinking about it" is an important medium through which SACWs can learn to become more effective working with children.

In this next example Cindy reflects on her own childhood as a source of learning, on what she wants to accomplish in her work (giving children choices), and on her conscious evaluation of the effectiveness of her strategies (there are two excerpts here - separated by a short dashed line).

- C: My parents tried to put me into a mould. . . and I realized later that when I worked with kids, the mistakes my parents made were ones I didn't want to repeat.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: And some of that was allowing kids to make their own decisions. Because when I was allowed to make my own decisions, I was the kind of kid that . . .<pause>. . . I didn't have to stay out all night. I had no curfew, I didn't have a problem with that.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: All my friends were rebelling against their parents, and when I saw that and compared them to me, I decided that my own kids, I would like them to grow up with their own lives, not just jumping to my orders. And then I thought "Well, isn't that true for all children?" And when I started listening to the kids they reinforced this for me. Because they're not carbon copies of their parents, they're individuals from the time they're really small.
- S: Mm-hmm. So would you say that you had a philosophy of child care ?
- C: I probably did and didn't know it.
- S: Mm-hmm.
- C: Like I would never have thought of it as a philosophy.
- S: But do you have one now ?
- C: Yeah.

S: Do you consciously think about it now when you're working with kids ?

C: Yeah, yeah.

S: Okay.

C: I'm conscious that I'm not trying to give only my opinion. I try to give the children options and allow them to make their own choices.

S: One last question: are there any moments or events that you can think of in your child care career where you went in and then the event happened and you came out with real insight, a real new understanding ?

C: I would say almost everyday. Because it can be the negative, perhaps I handled this wrong, so I think "What could have worked better ?" Or to the opposite spectrum, which is, "Wow ! What an incredible experience !"

In this next example Heather also talks about the conscious evaluation of the effectiveness of her strategies.

S: Can you think of any of those practical experiences where you went into it and then came out of it knowing more, understanding more ?

H: Oh, I think so. I can give you an example here. I think I've gone into situations where I've done things maybe, where I could have done things better...<pause>...maybe I've done them incorrectly and I've come out thinking, well you know "I could have done that a bit better", and that happens all the time. I'm constantly improving in that way and the staff is as well. We always talk about stuff, we get together all the time and discuss how we handle situations and discuss how we can

improve them for next time.

Heather thinks about continually improving the way that she responds to children. She also wants to share that kind of thinking process with the rest of her staff team.

In this next example Betty talks about formal training, the goals of children and staff, and thinking about the play environment (there are 2 excerpts separated by a dashed line).

S: Can you think of any workshops, conferences, or courses that your staff have taken where maybe you've seen a change or an accelerated development ?

B: Mm-hmm. We presented to the staff about a year and a half ago, the step parenting program through the Adlerian Society. We had an instructor come in for a ten-week period, and that, I believe, is the most intensive workshop we've done as a group over a committed period of time. It was over a ten-week period, and I think that was one of the most dynamic processes that has assisted us in our development as a staff.

S: So what happened that made it so remarkable ?

B: Being able to, as a group, take a really good look at the goals of children's behaviour.

S: Mm-hmm.

B: How to be able to. . .well. . .to see the goals of behaviour, how to handle behaviour, how to teach the children responsibility for their own behaviour. But to be able to do it as a group so that we're all. . .we're sharing our ideas but we're also focussing in on what

our common goals should be.

- B: And we change [the play environments in the rooms] all the time too. I mean, my staff always kid me, "Oh, there goes Betty again, she's changing things around." But that's part of working with children, too, is making their environment dynamic, changing it with them, for them, whatever. We're forever changing it around and I encourage my staff to do so too. I ask them "What new ideas can you come up with ?"

In the first excerpt Betty talks about a formal training course that has helped the staff to work more effectively with children. She credits not only the course content for the intensity of the learning, but also the process by which the staff shared in the learning and in a discussion of their common goals. In the second excerpt Betty stresses the importance of reflecting on the issue of play environments for children. SACWs must think about these play environments and ask how they can be changed to improve the experiences for the children in SAC.

In this next example Erica is responding to a question about what she is trying to accomplish in her work with children. She claims that she is trying to help children learn about "responsibility, respect, and achievement basically. And autonomy too. I want them to do things on their own. Independence too." Erica knows what she thinks is important in SAC and she is keenly aware of the purpose of her actions within the context of her work with children.

In this last example Frank talks about thinking in terms of what is important for children.

I think it's very important for kids that age to be given some freedom. For them to know, "Hey, he's treating me with trust, he's trusting me so in turn I'm going to show responsibility because I really enjoy that trust."

Frank talks about freedom, trust and responsibility. These are values that he tries to actualize in his work. During the observation these values were evident in his actions and in the children's responses to his actions (for example, see Vignette #1, Chapter Five).

It is important here to make a distinction between "just thinking" - experiencing "any old thought" that might occur to a person - and reflection. Mezirow (1990) defines reflection as the "examination of the justification of one's beliefs, primarily to guide action and to reassess the efficacy of the strategies and procedure used in problem solving" (p. xvi). He also points out that "reflection is generally used as a synonym for higher-order mental processes" (p. 5). I would like to use the term "reflection" in a similar vein. By the term "reflection" I do not simply mean "thinking" of any sort. Reflection involves a constructive questioning - an active inner dialogue - regarding the connection between one's overall purposes and the problems and opportunities that one finds in one's practice.

It may be possible for a SACW to think to herself "These children

are not behaving properly, what should I yell at them ?” But if she reflects, she would have to ask herself “Is yelling at these children consistent with my overall purposes in child care ?” She would also have to ask herself questions like “Is there a better way to communicate with these children ?”, and “What other options do I have in this situation ?” This example helps to point out that there is a critical element in the concept of reflection. This critical element may not be present when a SACW is “just thinking”. Reflection is more than thinking. It involves an awareness of one’s own thinking and a critical questioning of that thinking. When a SACW reflects, she critically assesses the link between her guiding principles and her immediate or imminent action.

In Chapter One I pointed out that working in SAC involves a certain richness and complexity. In this section my intention was to show some of that complexity and richness in the thought processes of the SACWs. In order to be effective with children over the long term, SACWs must think about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They must reflect on action and reflect on purpose. They must also think about the connection between what they do and why they do it, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of their responses to children. To become more effective working with children, SACWs can learn how to become more conscious thinkers. They can make their

actions the subject of their thoughts and they can think about their thinking in ways that allow them to increase the match between their actions and the purpose of their work. SACWs can also productively reflect upon things like their own upbringing, role models that have influenced their work, and the moments that make their work worthwhile to them.

Reflections on Content - The Golden Rule

To this point I have endeavoured to demonstrate that SACWs do think about their work. I will now focus on one of the most prominent patterns within the content of that reflection. An articulation of some form of the “Golden Rule” (“Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”) was a major theme that recurred throughout the data. Many SACWs articulated the Golden Rule, and traced the roots of their skillful performances back to this guiding principle. In this section I will provide three examples of SACWs discussing the Golden Rule and how it affects their thinking and their work.

In this first excerpt I ask Betty where she learned her “soft, friendly, open way of approaching kids”. She replies:

Where did I learn that ? I think I learned that at the very beginning, in how to relate to children. Learning how to . . . if I expect their, if I want their respect, for me, then I have to respect them also. We’re their number one role models here. We’re the only adults in this building. So they are looking to us. We have to teach them and show them what we mean by “appropriate behaviour.” What I do is really

sincere, I believe, because it comes with honesty and sincerity. I want to show the kids genuine respect because that's the behaviour that I expect back from them to me.

Betty makes two specific references to some form of the Golden Rule. She comments that "if I want their respect, for me, then I have to respect them also" and later she says "I want to show the kids genuine respect because that's the behaviour that I expect back from them to me."

Cindy articulated her own form of the Golden Rule in the following excerpt when she talks about how adults learn to work well with children:

S: How does somebody learn that ? First of all, how does somebody learn that, and second, if somebody didn't know how to do that, how could we teach them ?

C: That's a tough one. I use how I'd like to be talked to.

S: Mm-hmm.

C: I don't like to be ordered around and I don't want children ordering me around, so why should I order them around ? Unless it's an emergency situation or something, then we have no choice.

Frank also articulates his version of the Golden Rule and comments how it influences the way he communicates with children. He says:

I think the first thing that goes through my mind, because you were wondering when we were talking

about what goes through my mind, my thought process, I think one of the main things that I do better now than when I started working with children - I think and I listen better now. I think "How would I want someone to talk to me ?" and I think "Well how would I feel about it if they did it this way if I was the kid ?" And then I would go with that. If I felt that I would probably feel pretty bad about it, then I would have to come to the same conclusion that if I responded that way to the kids they would feel bad too.

Frank points out that one of the first things that goes through his head in a SAC situation involving children is the question "How would I want someone to talk to me ?". This question guides his response to many situations with children.

Betty's, Cindy's and Frank's words closely match the idea expressed by Cherry (1983):

In discussing punitive discipline, I am not concerned with the person who has an occasional bad day and makes an occasional slip. I'm concerned with the common adult belief that it is all right to yell at kids, that it is all right to physically harass them, and that it is all right to hurt their feelings. Such methods are not all right; they are inhumane. They make children feel humiliated, overwhelmed, and powerless. Such methods instill fear, they make children feel like failures, and they fail my test of mutuality, or the Golden Rule of Awareness, which I define as:

"What I want for myself, I must also want for you; what I want from you I must also be willing to give" (pp. 8-9).

The Golden Rule is a belief and perception that underlies effective practice with children. Many productive responses that

SACWs have for children are created using it as a guiding principle. The application of the Golden Rule is itself a reflective practice. In many cases the extent to which SACWs can learn to see child care situations as opportunities to apply the Golden Rule is the extent to which they will learn to work more effectively with children.

Reflections on Content - "Sane Communication"

Another of the reoccurring themes to emerge from the data revolved around the way that the SACWs communicated with the children and the thought required to do this effectively. The importance of staff-child communication has been noted by several authors in several different aspects of work involving children. In terms of schooling, Ginott (1972) has asserted that "how a teacher communicates is of decisive importance. It affects a child's life for good or for bad. . . What counts most in adult-child communication is the quality of the process" (p. 69, emphasis in original). When discussing school teachers and the "repertoire" of responses that they can draw from when communicating with children, Wasserman states that:

Whichever response teachers choose from their full repertoire, that response has power for the children. Because it comes from a person in authority, a respected teacher, the response has power to hurt or to help. It has the power to be additive or subtractive; to empower or to disempower; to enhance or diminish thinking. Teachers' responses can be inviting, appreciative, and respectful, and

they can be rejecting, cruel, and punishing. They can foster autonomy, and they can cultivate dependency. Perhaps you think this is overstating the case, assigning too much weight to the statements people make to each other in human interactions. . . . Yet, any of us who have been at the butt end of sustained hurtful statements dished out by thoughtless and insensitive adults (or children) will know, from personal experience, the power of such statements to diminish us (p. 184).

Cherry (1983), speaking about preschool, states that:

what we say and how we say it are critical in dealing with children. The ways we communicate with children, both verbally and nonverbally, are, generally speaking, under our control and thus can be used as tools for guidance in the classroom (p. 99).

Albrecht (1991) and O'Connor (1991) have both emphasized out how important staff-child interactions are in SAC.

Given the importance of staff-child communication in SAC it was relatively easy to discern two very basic categories of staff-child communication. Using Ginott's (1972) terms these two categories can be labelled as "sane communication" and "insane communication".

According to Ginott a message is "sane" to the extent that it accurately reflects the situation at hand and the feelings of the people involved. Sane messages are firmly rooted in the reality of the present situation and help the child to trust his or her inner reality. Ginott maintains that:

A child is entitled to sane messages from an adult. How

parents and teachers talk tells a child how they feel about him. Their statements affect his self-esteem and self-worth. To a large extent, their language determines his destiny . . . teachers need to eradicate the insanities so insidiously hidden in their everyday speech, the messages that tell a child to distrust his perception, disown his feelings, and doubt his worth. The prevalent, so-called "normal" talk drives children crazy - the blaming and shaming, preaching and moralizing, ordering and bossing, admonishing and accusing, ridiculing and belittling, threatening and bribing, diagnosing and prognosing. These techniques brutalize, vulgarize, and dehumanize children. Sanity depends on trusting one's inner reality. Such trust is engendered by processes that can be identified and applied (pp. 69-70).

Charles (1985) provides us with an example of the difference between a sane and an insane message in a school situation.

Two children are talking during a quiet time, violating class rules. The teacher says "This is quiet time. It needs to be absolutely silent". An insane message, according to Ginott, would be, "You two are being very rude. You have no consideration for others" (p. 50).

The cardinal rule of sane communication is that the adult should always address the situation and not make disparaging remarks about the child's character or personality. Insane communication disrespects the child. It takes many forms including: sarcasm, ridicule, demanding (when inviting cooperation would be more appropriate), and disregarding or denying children's feelings.

In the data from the present study there were several examples

of both sane and insane communication. Joan (a SACW) sent an insane message when she greeted a child and then said "Get your jacket on - we're going outside to play." This message could be considered insane because it is an obvious power-demand statement. There was no reason why she could not have informed the child that they were going outside to play and then, if the child did not go to get his jacket, suggest that he do so. Her demand "Get your jacket on -we're going outside to play" implies that the child does not have the intelligence to figure out for himself that he will need to put his jacket on. Later that same afternoon when a child got his hands wet playing in a puddle on the playground Joan moved over to him, wiped his hands off and said to the boy "That's not very smart." This remark was simply uncalled for. It represented a unilateral disparaging judgment of the child's character or personality.

Another example of an insane message involved a SACW and a group of children doing a paper mache art project. Andrea (the SACW) was cutting up magazines so that the children could use the cuttings to make the paper mache. One young girl complained about the "sexy girl stuff" in the photos in one magazine that was being cut up. She was referring to provocative lingerie ads in a fashion magazine. Two boys rushed over from the other side of the art table to leer at the ad. Andrea said to the girl "These magazines were donated . . . <pause> . . .

Anyway, its no big deal, its just like a swim suit.” This message can be considered insane because it denied the girl’s feelings. The SACW said “It’s no big deal. . .” but obviously it was a big enough deal that the girl brought it to her attention (with genuine disgust) in the first place.

When working with children, no one is expected to be perfect in their communication all the time. The examples of insane communication cited above are not meant to suggest that Joan and Andrea are poor SACWs. The examples are simply used to demonstrate what insane communication can sound like in SAC. Joan was engaged in sane communication when, after Sarah (a child) was unhappy with a picture that she had just drawn, Joan said “Well, if you don’t want it, I’ll have it. I’ll take it home.” By using an “I-message” Joan avoided telling Sarah how to feel about the picture, and at the same time stated how she (Joan) felt. After Joan’s comment Sarah decided that the picture was not that bad after all and kept the picture for herself. Although the observation of Andrea did not provide a clear example of sane communication it is important to note that she did make eye contact with several children, she appeared to listen to what children had to say (with the exception of the example cited above), showed genuine concern for a child in distress, and skillfully read a story that delighted two other children.

Although I did not ask either Joan or Andrea about their communications cited above, I would speculate that instances of insane communication do not involve reflection. While a SACW can “think” and then engage in some form of insane communication, it is unlikely that she could critically reflect upon her guiding principles and upon the overall purposes of her work with children and then choose to send an insane message. Reflection on one’s values as a SACW would help one to focus on principled action, which, in turn, would predispose the SACW to send sane messages when she was communicating with children. Reflection on one’s values would act as a screen that would attempt to filter out the sending of insane messages.

Throughout the observations there were many examples of sane communication. One example involved Kate (the SACW) and three boys who were sliding wooden play-blocks across the cement floor to crash noisily against the wall. Instead of giving an insane, angry, blaming message, Kate chose to move toward the boys and say in a matter-of-fact (but softly assertive) tone of voice “I don’t think that’s a great way to use the blocks - it’s pretty loud.” She then suggested to the boys that they build something big with the wooden blocks, or choose to play with the cardboard blocks because they make less noise. I asked Kate about this during the interview. She said:

I let them do it [play noisily with the wooden blocks] for a

while thinking that okay, maybe they'll stop. Maybe it's just like a passing thing. But then I started to realize that it wasn't - they were just trying to kill the blocks. . . . I mean, we have to keep the noise down. I'd love to let them make as much noise as they want, but really it's impossible to work for everybody's good with that kind of a noise in that space. In the end it worked out good because I said to them "If you really want to do that why don't you take the other blocks and you can build them up and they don't destroy anything - they're just made out of cardboard." In the end the boys just found something else to do.

This can be considered as an example of sane communication - both from what she chose to say and from what she chose not to say. She did not try to blame, shame, accuse, order the boys around, etc. She chose to use an I-message ("I don't think that's a great way to use the blocks"), to describe the present situation ("...it's pretty loud"), and to point out some of the other activity options open to the boys.

Kate offers us another example of sane communication during that same observation. Nicholas (9 years old) got quite upset during a game of Monopoly and threw the entire game onto the floor. She describes the incident and her thought process in the following excerpt from the interview.

K: . . . he just totally cleared the entire table of everything and threw it on the floor and had a tantrum. But I liked the way I handled it.

S: How did you handle it ?

K: . . . I let him do it and after he did it I tried to stop him

with my left side by putting my arm around him, not forcing him to sit or whatever but just to sort of let him know that what he's doing isn't right and to let him know that somebody is there. And after, I sort of let him go and then after I said sincerely "Did that make you feel better ? Did you get a lot of anger out that way ?" And he said "Yeah" and I just asked him "Well, what was the problem ?".

And later in the interview, discussing the same incident:

S: You asked the question "Did you get a lot of anger out ?" or something like that. How did you know to ask that question ?

K: No, I said, oh I said "You must be really angry to chuck everything like that" and he said "Yeah". And then I said "That must have made you feel good to let it out somehow" and then after he calmed down a bit more I just said "Well maybe we can find another way of letting your anger out rather than destroying the area and everything around you".

S: And what did he say ?

K: He said "Yeah" and then we just talked about what happened and why.

Danielle also provides us with an excellent example of sane communication. This example involves a request to a child to put her jacket on (and so it can be contrasted to the message delivered by Joan noted previously). Danielle was outside supervising the playground on a sunny but cold November afternoon. A child came running out into the playground area without her jacket on. Debbie noticed her right away

and said “Kelly, I’d really like you to get your jacket on.” As Danielle was saying this she was moving over to Kelly and nodding her head. Talking about her own thinking during this incident, Danielle said during the interview “I think if I said ‘You go get your jacket on’ kids would probably just run away.” She intuitively knew that children resent being ordered about - especially when the use of softer, more sane communication will convey what is needed in the situation just as effectively. Danielle’s use of the I-message (“I’d really like you to get your jacket on”) places the ownership of the “problem” with Danielle, not the child. That is to say, Danielle perceives Kelly not having a jacket on as a problem and takes ownership for that perception, she does not assume that going jacketless is necessarily a “problem” from Kelly’s perspective.

During the observations I noted that the children seemed to respond more positively to the SACWs who used sane communication and more negatively to the SACWs who used insane communication (although no SACW in this study used insane communication exclusively, there were three SACWs who used sane communication almost exclusively). It became apparent during the interviews that using sane communication requires some kind of thought process - a censoring or self-discipline on the part of the SACW. Cindy describes part of this thought process when she says “If I say to you ‘Hey you,

move over' it won't work. But if I say, 'Hey Steve, could you move over?' you're more likely to cooperate and not be offended by it". She also points out the censoring function that can exist in a SACW's thought process:

So you've got to be, I think you've got to censor yourself. You've got to be careful what you're saying, make sure it's said in a positive way rather than in a negative way. Something that enhances growth rather than puts them down.

Cindy's idea about "censoring" herself and being careful about what she is saying parallels Wasserman's (1990) notion that adults who work with children must cultivate the ability "to hear what you are saying as you are saying it" (p. 181, emphasis in original). This ability requires more than thinking about action, it requires reflection-in-action; thinking in the midst of practice. Reflection-in-action is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Reflective Performances

In this chapter I will demonstrate that SACWs can be viewed as reflective practitioners. During the fieldwork I observed many examples of skilled performances by SACWs. In the following pages I will examine six examples of effective practice. These skillful performances will be presented as vignettes, with a description of the situation from the observation data, followed by each SACW's description of their own thought processes during the incident. I will close each vignette with a brief analysis of key points.

It is worth noting here that the "skills" that were involved in these performances were made up of a combination of thought and action. In their own way each SACW describes how their thoughts informed their actions and how their actions (and the children's reactions) informed their subsequent thoughts. In each vignette the SACWs clearly describe what they were thinking in the midst of their action. For this reason I refer to these vignettes as "reflective performances".

Reflective Performance #1: Frank and the Snack Table

This first vignette involves a series of communications that take place as Frank is trying to engage several children's cooperation to

clean off a table before snack time. He informs the group that it is time for snack and that things must be put away so that snack can be served. He approaches one table where three boys are constructing Lego figures. He says matter-of-factly "It's snack time, it's time to put the Lego away guys". The boys ignore him and keep playing. Frank moves closer and says in a more assertive voice "Gentlemen, snack is about to be served, we need that table cleared so that you and others may sit there for snack". Two of the children stop, but one boy keeps playing - none of them move to clear the table. Frank then says "Lance, Jerry, and Ross, please tell me what I just asked of you". The boys repeat what he has asked and then they begin to clear the table. Once the table is cleared Frank says "You guys can come up for snack now that the Lego has been put away and the table has been cleared".

During the interview Frank talked about his thought process during this transaction:

I think that what I do is maybe in my thought process somehow or some way consciously or unconsciously think to myself "Now if I said to them 'You guys are a bunch of slobs, clean up or you won't get any snack !', what reaction would that get me ?". I might get a reaction like "Well we have to clean up now", yet the kids would walk away with a very negative feeling about it. . . . I saw one of our staff bringing the snack down [from the kitchen]. So at that point I said "Okay, it's time to clean up. Wash your hands and once you are sitting at a table the snack will be brought to you or you can come and get snack". Well I just kind of saw [the three boys] not really being into it and they were

having a great time . . . they probably might be thinking “Snack is the furthest thing from my mind”, but what I’m saying is there are probably other kids who want to sit at that table too. So I’m thinking they’re not going to have to clean up for themselves, but it is snack time and I feel that it is a time, whether or not you want to eat snack, it is a quiet time. It’s a time for kids to be together to talk about maybe how their day went or whatever. And when I noticed them not cleaning up I didn’t want to sort of, they were being very creative . . . and I didn’t want to stifle that because they are more than welcome to play after snack. I guess what goes through my head is “Well you know it is clean up time. We are having snack now, and give them some time to see if it registers”. . . . I maybe give them one or two minutes, and then I kind of realize well obviously it’s either they are ignoring me or they never heard me at all. So then I approach them personally and say “Okay guys, it’s clean up time - you’ll be given snack when you’ve cleaned up”. I think my process is . . . as things progress I probably get a little more stricter in the way I say things. . . it might start out with Phase One; it’ll be “Okay fellas, time to clean up for snack”. Phase Two; “I notice you’re not cleaning up”, then I’d say “You will not be getting snack until the Lego is away”. Phase Three; I might just say “Fellas, Lego away, no snack until it’s done” and I might get a little sterner in my voice - never raising it, never yelling. Approaching in a very non-threatening manner, but just letting them know that “Hey listen, this is clean up time”.

It is worth noting the complexity of Frank’s thought process while he stood in the midst of the action. He thought about what kind of reaction he was likely to get if he used a demanding, disrespectful strategy. He noticed that the boys were having a good time playing with the Lego and he recognized that they were being creative and that

having snack was perhaps the farthest thing from their minds at that particular time. But he also thought about the other children who wanted to sit at that table so that they could eat snack. Frank also thought about the overall purpose of the snack time, and that the boys can take up where they left off after snack is done. Frank managed to think about all of these issues and also about what he was going to say each time and the tone and volume of his voice.

Reflective Performance #2: Heather and the Mural

In this next vignette Heather is at the art table with a group of younger school-agers (6 and 7 year olds). In this particular session they are going to make a large mural to decorate the gymnasium wall (the program is housed in the gymnasium and they wanted to make it feel a little more colourful and welcoming). There is excited chatter amongst the children as they put on their smocks and get their paint brushes ready. Heather says "What would we like to paint here ? We should all have the same theme". At that point the chatter in the group ceases and several children stop what they are doing. Most of the children looked puzzled. There is silence. Heather is surprised by the children's reaction, there is a brief pause before she asks "Do you guys know what a theme is ?". Most of the children indicate that they don't know what a theme is (either by shaking their head or saying "No"). She explains what a theme is and then asks the group for suggestions.

One child enthusiastically suggests that the theme be “teddy bears”, and another child, with equal excitement, suggests that the theme be “diamonds”. There is another period of silence - all the children look at Heather. She pauses once again, and then says cheerfully, “Teddy bears and diamonds, now that’s a creative theme for a mural”. All the children seem quite pleased with this and get on with the business of painting the mural (the children ended up painting lots of brown diamonds).

During the interview Heather described her thought process:

I thought, when I did say “Let’s have a certain theme”, I didn’t get a response right away. So I thought “Okay, they don’t understand, or they don’t want to do a theme or anything that has to do with a theme”, so I thought I’d ask them if they knew what a theme was so that if they knew maybe they’d have some suggestions. . . I remember thinking . . . I thought that the two themes were quite different - diamonds, well if you combine them with [teddy bears] then it would make everybody happy. . . and it was a different theme. I thought it was a really neat thing to do. So, hey, why not ? Let’s make everybody happy and do it that way. . . Analyzing and looking at it [now] . . . it was a good way to handle it. I could have said “Well it can’t really be diamonds”. There are lots of ways I could have screwed it up [by saying the wrong thing].

In this vignette there are at least two examples of Heather thinking in the midst of her action. First, when she is surprised by the silence and general puzzlement after she suggests that they should

have a theme for the mural. She had to think on her feet - why are these children not responding ? She figures that either they don't want a theme or they don't know what a theme is. She quickly decides to ask whether or not they know what a theme is. She does not shame them, or blame them (she does not ask "What is wrong with you people ?"), or demand that they respond, instead she decides to ask in an upbeat tone of voice "Do you guys know what a theme is ?". She uses the general puzzlement as an opportunity to help the children learn something new. The second example of thinking in the midst of action comes when she asks for suggestions and one child suggests "teddy bears" and another suggests "diamonds". Several choices are now before her; she could arbitrarily choose one over the other, she could ask for more suggestions then choose one, she could put the whole thing to a vote, she could suggest another theme herself, etc. Her reflection-in-an-instant leads her to combine teddy bears and diamonds (not an easy combination for a theme - at least not to many adults), and to recognize the children's creativity.

Reflective Performance #3: Cindy and the Daypack

A child walks into the centre after school and tosses his daypack over into the corner where the children hang up their coats. The daypack is not closed properly; it is partially unzipped and his schoolwork is in danger of spilling out. He leaves the pack and rushes

over to another part of the centre where some other boys are playing. Cindy (the SACW) intercepts him on-route by moving near to him and asking him "Have you got your backpack all closed up ?" He looks back to his pack, then to Cindy and replies "No", then returns to his pack and zippers it up.

During the interview I asked Cindy to describe her thoughts during the incident. Rather than talk about the specific incident, Cindy chose to speak in more general terms about how she thinks in order to avoid power struggles. Later in the interview she talks about the importance of staff being aware of what they are saying to children.

S: So when, let's say the child is just walking away from the backpack, OK. Do you go through a range of choices or do you already know what you're going to say ?

C: I think in the beginning I went through a range of choices. They were a lot more conscious. But the longer I do it, the more the right things come out.

S: Right.

C: And when I do say a wrong thing, I think about it a lot to figure out what could I have done ? Because I've entered into conversations with kids and within split seconds had a power struggle going on. . . . So I've learned to talk that way because I don't like power struggles. There's no point to them. We're not supposed to be controlling them or that, we want them to learn for themselves.

Later in the interview I asked Cindy about new staff learning to

work with children. She emphasized that new staff:

have to take the time to think about what they're saying because you can insult a child, even accidentally, and scar them for life with just a few words.

Cindy admits that when she first started working with children she went through a range of choices in her mind in an attempt to find the right thing to say. When she says the “wrong” thing, she reflects upon what she could have said that would have been more effective. She wants to avoid power struggles with children. This helps to explain why she chose to ask “Have you got your backpack all closed up?”, rather than to demand “Go right back there and do that backpack up properly this instant !” or some similar response that would invite a power struggle with the child. As it was, the boy simply looked back at his pack, saw that it was left unzipped, and willingly returned to correct the situation.

Reflective Performance #4: Danielle Signing Children In

This next vignette involves Danielle (the SACW) interacting with several different children during the afternoon sign-in procedure. One child enters the centre a few minutes before school has been officially dismissed. Danielle engages this child in a conversation that brings a smile to the child's face. Then a child named Mary enters the centre after school when all the other children are entering as well. Mary

still has her jacket on when she rushes past Danielle and toward the snack that is set out. Danielle intercepts Mary by saying hello to her, making eye contact with her, and reminding her that she should put her jacket and her school books away before she goes up for snack. As the sign-in procedure continues Danielle also intercepts another child whose hands are covered in blue paint. She reminds this child to wash her hands before having snack.

During the interview I asked Danielle about her thought processes as she was signing children in:

S: So one of the kids came in a bit early and you said "How come you got out early ?". Your tone was real soft and interested, like "Hey ! How come you're out early !?". And the child replied that she went to the dentist and then she went to buy a guinea pig with her Mom. Do you remember that ?

D: Yes.

S: And you said "Oh, you'll have to bring it in one day", and then you asked "Don't you have cats too ?". It was obvious to me that you knew this child enough to have that conversation. Do you know most of the children that well ?

D: Yes, I think I've got to know them pretty well, yeah.

S: How did you get to know them ?

D: Um, well, I'm sort of interested in finding out what kind of situation they all come from. A lot of these kids here seem to be really needy kids.

S: Mm-hmm.

D: Most of them are from broken families and I, I just think that they need lots of attention. And they like to be able to tell me things about their lives. They like to talk and I like to listen.

S: How did you come to know that ? How did you learn that ?

D: Just, mostly from what I've picked up from the kids, from what they've told me.

S: OK, then in the observation I notice when Mary [a child] comes in you say "Hi Mary. You should put your stuff away before you have snack". Because she sort of tried to come around you with her jacket on and everything, and so I was interested to see if she would actually do what you asked, and of course she did. She hung up her jacket and then . . .

D: Just knowing Mary helps.

S: Yeah. It seemed to me that the way you spoke to her was real critical for her, because you didn't really tell her, you just sort of said, you know, this is the way it usually is, and it worked. So do you have ideas in your head about how to say something to Mary ?

D: Yeah. She doesn't respond too well to being told to do something at all, but she needs somebody, she needs a lot of direction, otherwise she'll just come in and she's just kind of wild. Especially after school, she can be really hyper and she needs to be directed, helped a little.

S: Yeah, I was interested because it seems like you were

assertive but soft at the same time. Is that a style thing for you ?

D: Well, I, Yeah, I try to be like that, but especially with her, just because I know it's not going to work if I say "Mary, go put your things away", because I know that it's going to be an argument right away.

S: Mm-hmm.

D: She has to be . . .you know, I have to use a different approach with her.

S: Mm-hmm . . . [during the observation] another child comes up and heads straight for the snack, and you said "You should wash your hands before snack".

D: Well, it's not the rule that all kids have to wash their hands before snack, but I think it was just that her hands were really dirty.

S: Yes, her hands were covered in blue paint or something.

D: Oh yeah, her hands had all that paint on them.

S: And again, it wasn't really a telling, you didn't say "Go wash your hands", it was more like you said "You should go wash your hands first", and then she looked at her hands and it was obvious.

D: It just made sense.

S: Yeah. So again, it wasn't really a harsh kind of telling. Has that style evolved ?

D: I think I pick up things as I go along, yeah, and I learn how to . . . <pause> . . . which way the kids are going to respond better, and so I eventually learn better ways of

talking to children, better ways of doing it.

Danielle has a very respectful way of engaging children in conversation and getting them to listen to what she had to say. She makes a conscious effort to get to know every child and to gather information from them about their day-to-day activities. When she spoke to Mary about putting her things away before having snack she chose her words carefully. Danielle admits that her response was tailored specifically to Mary as opposed to treating her simply as a “child in general”. She knows that she must use her knowledge of Mary in order to come up with an effective response. She also knows that Mary “doesn’t respond well to being told to do something at all, but she needs somebody, she needs a lot of direction, otherwise she’ll just come in and she’s just kind of wild”. In a split second (as Mary is rushing towards the snack), Danielle quickly thinks “It’s not going to work if I say ‘Mary, go put your things away’, because I know that it’s going to be an argument right away”. In many cases a SACW’s thinking in the midst of action must involve their prior knowledge of the specific child or children that they are dealing with at that instant. Danielle talks about learning in terms of getting to know each child and developing more effective ways to communicate with them so that they will “respond better”.

Reflective Performance #5: Betty and the Foozeball Table

In this vignette Betty (the SACW) responds to several children who call her over and complain that the handle has come off of the foozeball game. Betty responds by saying that she would go get the tool box and bring it to the foozeball table where they could all work together with her to fix the handle. The children waited while Betty retrieved the tool box and then they all worked together to fix the game.

I asked Betty how she knew how to respond in that manner to the children.

B: How did I know how to do that ? I guess that's been one of our goals - teaching the children responsibility for their own behaviour. Letting them know clearly what my thought process was and what my expectations were, communicating to them rationally and inviting their participation in fixing the foozeball table. . . . That I wasn't going to do it for them. I was going to do it with them, but not for them.

S: Right, and that was crystal clear. When you say "share your thought process" I guess that's another thing that I noticed about you, was it was almost as if you walk around and think out loud. I think the kids really appreciated that, because they sort of knew what you were doing. You could be walking away, but they still knew what you were doing. And I had a sense at that time that the kids felt fairly confident with you around because they didn't have to guess a lot.

B: Well that's nice to hear, because I think that's very true. I never thought of it in that light before, but I

think to keep myself rational most of the time - because there's so many demands of the children all at once - I try to let them know that I know that they are there, I acknowledge that they are there, but I can only deal with one person at a time, so they just have to learn to be patient, time is one thing we have lots of here, we'll get around to it, you know.

Betty highlights the fact that a SACW's reflections can involve thoughts about purpose. When she says "I guess that's been one of our goals - teaching children responsibility for their own behaviour" she is connecting purpose with action. She wanted to share her thought processes out loud with the children, to share her expectations that everyone involved would help to fix the situation and that she was "going to do it with them, not for them."

Reflective Performance #6: Steve at the "Fishing Hole"

This last vignette does not come from an observation of one of the SACWs involved in the study, it comes instead from my own experience working with children during a special event at the University's Winter Sports Complex during the time I was involved in the field work. The details of this experience were written down in my reflexive journal and the experience itself represents a breakthrough in my own understanding of reflection in the midst of action and of action in the midst of reflection. What follows is the entry from the journal (Feb. 20, 1993).

Yesterday evening I was working at the University arena helping the UBC Hockey School with a Family Night that was also used to promote the Varsity hockey team. I was helping to implement activities for children before the game and during the intermissions in the game. Some of the activities included a puck-shoot in the hallway, face-painting, popcorn-making, etc. My role was to move around between the various activities and help out where needed. One of the activities that was set up was a "Fishing Hole" where each child caught a fish (an object floating in a pool filled with blue-coloured water) and then got to guess at the magic number. If a child guessed the magic number, then he or she won a prize. As we were setting up we really didn't know if the Fishing Hole would be popular or not. As the families filed into the arena it quickly became apparent that the Fishing Hole was very popular - so popular in fact that there was an immediate problem with crowd control - children were trying to get a chance to "fish" from all around the pool and, at first, only the pushy, aggressive children were getting their turns. The adults running the Fishing Hole activity asked me for assistance, and one of them (an experienced school teacher) tried to organize the children by standing at the pool and calling to the children to form a line. This had little effect. I thought for a moment. I remember thinking to myself "I should know what to do here, but I don't - I don't know these children and I've never seen this activity run before so I don't even have a picture of what the game or the crowd control should look like". I also remember being disturbed by the fact that only the pushy, aggressive kids were getting a chance and many children who wanted to "fish" weren't getting a chance. I remember thinking to myself "This is unfair". I looked around for some material to make a sign with. At least that's how my thought process began. I got a couple of felt pens, some tape and a big sheet of poster-board. As I was thinking about what to write on the sign I realized that I didn't have a clue about where to put the sign. I also realized that there was more

than one piece of poster-board. Then it hit me - right there, right then - I knew what to do. I had an idea and I was certain that it would work. I clearly remember experiencing a sense of certainty - I just knew it would work !

I wrote out two signs and made a sandwich board. I taped the two signs together so that I could wear one on the front and one on the back. The front sign read "Please line up here" with an arrow pointing down, and the second sign read "Please line up ahead of me". Then I waded into the crowd, stood facing the fishing hole and began to invite kids to form a line in front of me. I thought about how I felt when someone let me in front of them at the grocery store check-out line if I only had to buy one or two items and they had to buy a whole buggy-load full. I thought how nice it felt to be let into a line. As I stood there I also thought about the phenomenon of "being in line" and I thought about two things. First, I don't like to wait in line if I think that other people are getting their needs met faster by not standing in line, and second I thought that it feels validating to be in line ahead of someone else - then I know that things are becoming somewhat orderly.

For the most part I did not say much, I simply looked for children who weren't getting a chance and then made eye contact with them, then I would point to the sign and motion with my hand for them to come and stand in front of me if they wanted to. If the child looked like he/she could not read, then I invited them verbally. As the line formed quickly in front of me I found myself in a good position to see the whole crowd. I could see the line and how it was operating. I would call out to children who had just finished their turn and invite them to come and take their place in the line in front of me. I also called out to several children who tried to "butt in line". I said assertively "Excuse me, the line starts right here in front of me - it says so right here on the sign". Within a couple of minutes order prevailed - each child got a fair chance to fish several times before the next period of the hockey game

started. I also got a chance to talk to most of the children, to ask them if they enjoyed the game, what they liked about it, where they were from, etc. I remember standing at the end of the line wearing my sandwich board and thinking "Now, this is fair".

Perhaps because of the research I was more in tune with the issue of thinking in action. As I have already mentioned, I initially felt that I should know what to do, and at the same time I knew that I really did not have a clue - there was no obvious answer or time-tested formula. I thought about making a sign because I did not want to raise my voice over and above the noise that was already being made around the Fishing Hole and because, since I did not know these children and they did not know me, I felt that I had no recognizable authority (but a sign might provide me with some). I was keenly aware that I was still "clue-less" as I collected the pens and went over to where the poster paper was kept. I had a felt pen in my right hand and was thinking about the wording of the sign when I glanced at my left hand and noticed that it was resting on two or three other sheets of poster board. That's when the idea hit me - make two signs, one for my front, one for my back. Then I thought "Great ! A sandwich board, just stand there and look at the kids and point to the sign, they'll figure it out for themselves !". What struck me about this idea was how instantly certain I felt about the ultimate effectiveness of the strategy. I knew

it would work.

Schon's Concept of Reflection-in-Action

From these six vignettes it can be seen that skillful performance in SAC can come about when there is a merging of thought and action, that is, when SACWs think in the midst of action. An interesting parallel to this can be found in Schon's (1983, 1990) concept of reflection-in-action. Schon (1983) states that, besides thinking about our actions after these actions have taken place:

We sometimes think about what we are doing. Phrases like "thinking on your feet", "keeping your wits about you", and "learning by doing" suggest not only that we can think about doing but that we can think about doing something while doing it. Some of the most interesting examples of this process occur in the midst of a performance (p. 54).

Schon goes on to give examples of major-league baseball pitchers and a group of jazz musicians. When he interviewed several major-league baseball pitchers they stated that, to be effective as a pitcher, one had to "learn how to adjust once you're out there". Schon comments:

the pitchers are talking about a particular kind of reflection. What is 'learning to adjust once you're out there'? Presumably it involves noticing how you have been pitching to the batters and how well it has been working, and on the basis of these thoughts and observations, changing the way you have been doing it. . . The pitchers seem to be talking about a kind of reflection on their patterns of action, on the situations in which they are performing, and on the know-how implicit in their performance. They are reflecting on action and, in some

cases, reflecting in action (1983, p. 55, emphasis in original).

It could be said, then, that a baseball pitcher learns to become more effective at his work to the extent that he becomes better at making on-line adjustments while on the pitcher's mound. He learns to become more effective as he cultivates the ability to reflect on his implicit know-how while in the midst of playing the game.

Schon also uses the example of a group of jazz musicians. He writes:

When good jazz musicians improvise together, they also manifest a 'feel for' their material and they make on-the-spot adjustments to the sounds they hear. Listening to one another and to themselves, they feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. . .As the musicians feel the direction of the music that is developing out of their interwoven contributions, they make new sense of it and adjust their performance to the new sense that they made. They are reflecting-in-action on the music that they are collectively making and on their individual contributions to it, thinking what they are doing and, in the process, evolving their way of doing it (1983, p. 56).

The SACWs in the vignettes, like Schon's baseball pitchers and jazz musicians, adjust their actions in the the midst of their performances. These adjustments are based on thinking about what is going on and, in the process, evolving their way of doing it. The six vignettes are examples of skillful practice precisely because they are

demonstrations of reflection-in-action. In each vignette there is a strong connection between the SACW's values orientation, the overall purposes that she attributes to her work with children, her strategies and responses, and the eventual outcome of the vignette.

The importance of "professional helpers" being able to think quickly (and effectively) in the midst of action has been underscored by Combs, et al (1972). In the following quotation they describe the concept of the "instantaneous response".

In examining the helping professions, it becomes apparent that the common characteristic of these activities is instantaneous response. That is to say, all the helping professions seem to differ from more mechanical vocations in the immediacy of reaction required of the helper. For example, in teaching, when the child says something to his teacher, his teacher must respond instantaneously. The interchange between a teacher and her pupils will be different every moment, and the teacher must be prepared to react to each child in terms of the unique question, idea, problem, and concern that he is expressing at that particular instant. Similarly, the patient asking the nurse, "Am I going to get well?" must be answered. A delay in the nurse's answer while she stops to think of what she should say is already an answer. This immediate nature of helping relationships is characteristic, too, of the social worker and his client, the pastor and the parishioner, or the counselor and his client. All are dependent upon instant response (p. 5, emphasis in original).

All of the vignettes in this chapter are examples of SACWs involved in instantaneous responses. Effective work in SAC requires

that SACWs construct instantaneous responses that are consistent with the purposes that they have set out for their work with children.

Hills (1989) has stated that:

Becoming a professional child and youth care practitioner is a complex and challenging process. It involves not only acquiring certain knowledge and skill but also acquiring the ability to use this knowledge and skill spontaneously in a wide variety of situations. Child and youth care practitioners need to make instantaneous responses to innumerable events encountered in their daily work. However, there are no formula responses or techniques that are appropriate in every situation. The professional worker responds "in the moment" to the situation at hand. The professional worker's ability to choose an appropriate manner of responding is therefore not a mechanical process, rather, the effective practitioner creates responses that are individualized and that fit the specifics of the particular situation (p. 17, emphasis in original).

In the same vein, Ayers (1989) has made the point that the "secret" to preschool teaching is in the details of everyday practice (p. 4). The same can be said of SAC. Maier (1990) stresses the importance of "the minutiae of child care" practice - the the small details of interplay between the child care worker and the child (p. 19).

The concept of instantaneous response and the importance of the details of everyday child care practice help to underscore the importance of the SACW's ability to reflect-in-action. Learning to become more effective, then, can be seen as a process whereby the

SACW develops the ability to think clearly within action. This requires that the SACW has acquired a selection of tools for her tool box, and has constructed a critical rationale for practice. At its highest level, learning in SAC involves constructing connections between the “What”, the “Why”, and the “How”, while immersed in immediate action.

Learning, in this sense, means developing the ability to “put it all together” in such a way as to actualize one’s guiding principles and overall goals within each moment-to-moment interaction with each child. An effective SACW is a reflective practitioner.

Chapter Six: Conclusions & Implications

In this final chapter I will summarize the main findings of this research project. I will also draw some conclusions from these findings and then highlight the major implications for adult education in the field of SAC. Finally, I will suggest some directions for further research in this area.

Summary of Findings

Throughout this research project I found that adult learning in SAC occurred at two basic “levels”. These two levels of learning can be viewed through Maier’s (1986) concept of first-order and second-order change. First-order change is incremental, linear, and progressive. It is characterized by small, tangible additions to the SACW’s skill or knowledge repertoire. It is essentially adding knowledge or skills to an already existing stockpile - “more of the same”. On the other hand, second-order change involves a more qualitative change, a transformation from one level of perceiving to a “higher” level. Second-order change involves a fundamental shift in the learner’s thinking, a reframing of previous learning which serves as a springboard for a transformation to a new level of understanding.

Several examples of both types of learning can be found in the data.

Consistent with the different levels of learning and change, it also became evident that adult learning in SAC can be viewed from a developmental perspective. At different times each individual SACW will require educational experiences that are closely related to their developmental level. At times first-order learning will be developmentally appropriate, at other times second-order change will be more appropriate.

During the fieldwork I encountered several incidents of “initial denial” - a tendency for some SACWs to deny or downplay the thoughtfulness involved in their skillful action. In all cases the SACWs eventually did clearly describe the thoughtfulness that served as a basis for their skillful action. This tendency of initial denial can be explained by a combination of the concept of “tacit skills and knowledge” (Polanyi, 1967, 1969; Schon, 1983) and the concept of “invisible skills” (Morley, 1993; see also Gaskell’s (1992) discussion on the the social construction of what is meant by a “skill”). According to Schon, competent practitioners usually know more than they can describe about their own skillful action. In their action they exhibit a tacit knowledge. Their knowing is in their action, and is thus difficult for them to describe. Sometimes their descriptions sound incomplete or inadequate in relation to the complexity of their skillful

action. On the other hand, the initial denials may stem from the fact that the skills are “invisible” because society does not usually recognize child care skills as valuable. Some SACWs may be predisposed to initially deny that their work involves thoughtful action that is worth reflecting on and talking about.

It is obvious from the data that SACWs do think about what they are doing and they do reflect on various aspects of their job. It is possible for SACWs to reflect upon their own upbringing, positive role models, and moments that make their work worthwhile to them. SACWs also reflect upon the purpose of their work, and consciously evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies and responses.

Two prominent patterns emerged in the reflections on content in the data. One pattern can be described as the “Golden Rule” and the other as “sane communication.” Many SACWs articulated some form of the Golden Rule, and traced the roots of their skillful performances back to this guiding principle. The consistent application of the Golden Rule is itself a form of reflective practice in SAC. Another pattern that emerged from the data involved the way that the SACWs communicated with the children. Two basic types of communication could be distinguished in the data. Adult-to-child communication is “sane” (Ginott, 1972) to the extent that it accurately reflects the situation at hand and the feelings of the child. Sane messages are

firmly rooted in the reality of the present situation, serve to clarify choices for the child, and help the child to trust her inner reality. “Insane” communication, on the other hand, serves to devalue and disrespect the child, and tells her to distrust her own capabilities and feelings. There were several examples of each type of communication in the data. Happily, the examples of sane communication greatly outnumbered the examples of insane communication. It became apparent during the interviews that using sane communication requires a special kind of reflective process. This reflective process involves self-awareness, self-control and self-censoring (choosing one’s words carefully) and parallels Wasserman’s (1990) notion of hearing what one is saying as one is saying it.

One of the most prominent findings of this study is that work in SAC can be seen as reflective practice, and that SACWs can be viewed as reflective practitioners. Skillful practice in SAC involves the integration of thought and action. At some point in their development effective SACWs must learn how to think in the midst of action. They must be able to act reflectively and to reflect actively. This has important implications for adult education in the field.

Conclusions

In this thesis I have demonstrated that SACWs do indeed reflect upon their work. I have also shown that SACWs can learn to become

more effective in their work by becoming more reflective - by becoming more conscious of their purposes, options, choice and behaviours - and by developing their ability to reflect in the midst of their action.

Ayers (1989) studied six preschool teachers as they reflected on their work lives. He hypothesized that:

In becoming more self-conscious, I figured, teachers could also become more intentional, more able to endorse or reject aspects of their own teaching that they found hopeful or contrary, more able to author their own teaching scripts (p. 5).

The same can be said about SACWs. Much of the data from my fieldwork suggests that as SACWs become more aware of what it is that they value for themselves and the children (respect, cooperation, trust, responsibility, etc.) the more they are able to harness their actions in the service of high quality SAC.

SACWs can learn by adding specific skills and activity ideas to their existing knowledge and skill bases. They can also learn by reviewing elements of their own practice. They can articulate their goals and principles and then re-align their strategies to create a closer match between what they do and why they do it. This requires the integration of thought and action. Argyris and Schon (1975) have asserted that "all human beings - not only professional practitioners -

need to become competent in taking action and simultaneously reflecting on this action to learn from it” (p. 4).

SACWs can learn by making the implicit theories that they use in their day-to-day practice more explicit. Spodek (1988) has shown that early childhood professionals use implicit theories in their work with children. He further asserts that these implicit theories form the foundations of their day-to-day practice.

These theories undergird professional practice. They are not those developed by scholars and tested through research. Rather, they are developed by professional practitioners out of the distillation of their experience and the experience of others and are tested in the crucible of clinical experience. These theories provide the basis for interpreting experience and help determine the decisions and actions of practitioners (p. 166).

Spodek has called the knowledge that practitioners have constructed out of their personal experience “practical knowledge”.

SACWs also use practical knowledge in their work with children. They can improve their effectiveness by becoming more aware of the practical knowledge that they use implicitly. Making their practical knowledge more explicit would help them to take more intentional control over that knowledge, enhance what works and reassess what needs to be improved. Reflection is the primary process through which implicit theories become explicit.

Reflection as Learning

Frank is involved in reflection-in-action when he chooses his strategy, words and tone of voice carefully. Betty is involved in reflection-in-action when she responds to an opportunity to help children learn about responsibility. These examples of reflective performances are descriptions of SACWs doing their job well. These descriptions are not, in and of themselves, descriptions of learning. Nevertheless, most of the informants in this study felt that they are much more effective now compared to when they first started working with children. Frank commented that he can now think a lot quicker on his feet, and that this quick thinking helps him develop effective strategies with children. Cindy commented that she is now more aware of the potential effects that her choice of words can have on a child. These examples suggest that SACWs can learn to reflect on and in their action. In other words, although reflection-in-action is a description of what a skilled SACW does, it is also an important avenue through which SACWs learn to become more effective.

Reflective performances involve several different elements: a sense of purpose, a matching of strategies to specific situations, and the intelligent application of those strategies in the midst of continuous action. Adult learning in SAC can take the form of the SACW becoming more aware of the purposes that she ascribes to her

work. Learning can take the form of the acquisition of more strategies. It can also take the form of the development of faster, more intentional applications of those strategies - a better developed ability to think on one's feet. Argyris & Schon (1975) have pointed out that "the formation or modification of a theory-in-use is itself a learning process" (p. 18). The acquisition of values is learning. The development of better ways to articulate those values is learning. The development of better ways to actualize those values is learning as well. When SACWs are involved in constructing ideas about what is important to them, when they are engaged in the acquisition of practical knowledge, and when they are actively applying that knowledge in the present situation, they are, in fact, engaged in the process of learning.

Reflection is not the only mode of learning in SAC. SACWs can acquire more activity ideas and intervention strategies without necessarily reflecting on them (for example Andrea's strategy of clapping to the beat "We will Rock You" to get the children's attention). However, it is unlikely that a SACW can learn beyond a certain point until she learns to reflect on her work, and ultimately, to reflect in the midst of her work.

Implications

There are several implications that result from the findings

presented in this paper. Three implications will be examined in this section: 1) the need to provide opportunities for adult learners in SAC to reflect on and articulate the what and the why of their practice; 2) the need to emphasize the complexity and richness of the skill and thoughtfulness involved in quality SAC practice; and 3) the usefulness of making a distinction between training and education for adult learners in SAC. I shall now address each of these implications in turn.

Opportunities to Reflect on and Dialogue about Practice

As discussed in Chapter One, there is an increased demand for formal training and education in SAC. Given the results of the fieldwork reported in this study, providers of formal and informal adult education in SAC must strive to provide opportunities for learners to reflect upon their action and to articulate what they do and why they do it. The learners can articulate this to themselves, to other learners, and to adult educators in SAC.

Jones and her colleagues (1993) apply a constructivist model to adult education in child care. In this model “each human actor, in interaction with others, constructs his or her own continually shifting knowledge” (p. xiii). According to this view, knowledge can be constructed by the learner through action on the environment, observation of that environment, reflection on that action, and dialogue

with others.

Beers (1993) writes about the importance of each child care worker's "unique knowledge" (p. 11). He asserts that to become effective both in terms of national standards (U.S. Head Start) and her own specific cultural context, a child care worker "must construct for herself, out of her observation and her life experience, a way of handling children" (p. 5). Speaking about his role as an educator of Native American Head Start teachers, Beers says:

I ask them to put themselves into a frame of mind in which they observe themselves at work and reflect on what they observe. Ask questions of themselves, ask questions of others - parents, elders, college teachers - and begin to integrate their practice as educators the results of their own and other's reflection (p. 9).

and further:

The emphasis is on describing action. Then I ask [the learner] to explain why what she is doing is important to the children's development (p. 10).

According to Beers, this learning process provides the learner with "the opportunity to reflect upon her experience . . .[and upon] the lessons she has learned from this self-reflective process" (p. 16).

Through this process the learner can:

internalize the mental discipline of observing and reflecting on her own behavior in order to talk through and think through issues such as these: "Is what I'm doing here good for children ? Do children grow and prosper from this

?” She can then modify her own behavior based on the feedback she provides herself (p. 17).

In this study there are several examples of this kind of “reflective conversation” (Schon 1983). For example, Cindy says “when I say a wrong thing, I think about it a lot to figure out what could I have done ?” In another example, Frank describes his thought process “I think how would I want someone to talk to me ?, and I think well how would I feel about it if they did it this way if I was a kid ?”

Besides learning from her own dialogue from within, the SACW can also learn when she engages in dialogues with other learners. Jones (1993) points out that “adults learn complex tasks and concepts by doing them and reflecting and dialoguing about them” (p. xii). She emphasizes that much important learning can come “through discussion with peers who are in the process of constructing similar knowledge” (p. xvi).

Supporting and encouraging SACWs to reflect upon and to articulate what they do and why it is important is a way of helping them to “find their voices”. They can discover the words and develop the confidence to describe their work and their skills in ways that do justice to the richness and complexity of SAC. Greenough (1993) points out that “to ‘find one’s voice’ is a significant step in recognizing oneself as competent” (p. 28).

Emphasize Skill and Thought in SAC Practice

The findings presented in this study point to the need for those who are responsible for facilitating the growth and development of SACWs (either in formal educational settings or in work settings) to emphasize the complexity and richness of the skills and thought involved in quality practice. Many adult learners in SAC may need to hear “other voices” recognizing and affirming the fact that the effective execution of child care work requires great amounts of skill and thought. It may be possible then for the SACWs themselves to recognize many of the skills and knowledge that they tacitly possess, and to begin to consciously plan to learn the skills and knowledge that they still need to acquire.

Hass-Foletta and Cogley (1990) have stated that “caring for school-age children during their out-of-school hours is a profession requiring a unique mix of skills and abilities on the part of the adult leaders” (p. 1). The very idea that SAC work is skilled work needs to be strongly represented to adult learners in the classroom and in the field. This recognition and affirmation would itself help to promote learning. When the skills are made more visible they become more tangible and thus more amenable to intentional acquisition.

Recognizing and affirming the thought processes that accompany

skillful action in SAC may be slightly more difficult than recognizing and affirming the skills themselves. I undertook an in-depth review of the literature pertaining to SAC and found little or no mention of the “thinking” of SACWs. This forced me to search elsewhere for clues to the kind of thinking that accompanies skillful caring. Ruddick (1989) provided me with some clues when she writes about “maternal thinking”:

Daily, mothers think out strategies of protection, nurturance, and training. Frequently conflicts between strategies or between fundamental demands provoke mothers to think about the meaning and relative weight of preservation, growth, and acceptability. In quieter moments, mothers reflect on their practice as a whole. As in any group of thinkers, some mothers are more ambitiously reflective than others, either out of temperamental thoughtfulness, moral and political concerns, or, most often, because they have serious problems with their children. However, maternal thinking is no rarity. Maternal work itself demands that mothers think; out of this need for thoughtfulness, a distinctive discipline emerges . . . Maternal thinking is one kind of disciplined reflection among many, each with identifying questions, methods, and aims (p. 24).

Like Ruddick’s maternal thinking, “SAC thinking” too can be viewed as disciplined reflection. Recognizing and affirming the kinds of thinking that accompany skillful action in SAC will help to give adult learners the confidence and the motivation to continue learning to become more effective in their work with children.

Reflective competence could be facilitated in a number of ways. In college-level courses for SACWs, adult students could be asked to reflect upon various child care situations that they have experienced. They could then be directed to ask themselves questions like: “What happened?”, “What did I do?”, “What knowledge, skills, and attitudes did I use to construct my response to the situation?”, “What other options did I have?” “In retrospect, would I have preferred to handle the situation differently?” and “How did my responses match my intentions and my overall purposes for my work in child care?” Adult students could also be presented with realistic SAC scenarios and be asked to imagine their responses to those scenarios. The students could then be asked to reflect upon their responses and connect those responses with their overall purposes.

Adult students could also be directed to discuss their reflections in small groups. These peer-learner discussions could be a productive forum for students to practice articulating their purposes and analyzing their responses in terms of those purposes.

Reflective competence can also be facilitated when adult students are exposed to specific examples of SACWs reflecting in the midst of their action. This exposure could take the form of students reading and discussing transcripts such as the vignettes found in Chapter 5, role-playing situations in class, or watching video tapes of

real-life SAC practice. Seeing and hearing other SACWs engaging themselves in “reflective conversations” (Schon, 1990, p. 40) will help adult students become more comfortable engaging in their own reflective conversations. It will also help them to realize that they can learn to become more effective in their work by becoming more reflective.

Reflective competence can also be facilitated in work-related settings. According to Schon (1990), senior practitioners can “function as coaches whose main activities are demonstrating, advising, questioning, and criticizing” (p. 38). Coaches can demonstrate what appropriate SAC practice can look and sound like, advise learners about a variety of options open in any given situation, help the learner to question the connection between actions and overall purposes, and constructively critique various aspects of the learner’s practice.

As SACWs are asked time and again to reflect upon their child care experiences and upon the experiences of others, they can get into the habit of reflecting on their work-related action. As their reflective competence grows they may also begin to reflect in the midst of their practice.

Making a Distinction Between Training and Education

Vander Ven (1986) makes an important distinction between training and education in the child care field. Several other child care

authors have also made a similar distinction (Demers, 1990; Peters, 1981). According to Vander Ven (1986):

Training refers to specific information and skill development which is provided in order to enable persons to do a specific job in a specific setting. It is primarily concerned with “how to” in the immediate situation, rather than with “why” and with whether the skill has applicability elsewhere.

Education, on the other hand, is concerned with broader perspectives: providing a conceptual base for the framing of information; inculcating thinking and problem solving skills that permit the practitioner to be able to adapt current practice to emerging and future needs . . . and encouraging long term transferability of knowledge and skills.

Training must not be confused with education in establishing recognized professional levels of preparation. Each has a different role (p. 17, emphasis in original).

There are important parallels between these definitions of training and education and Maier’s notions of first- and second-order change. Training seems to correspond to first-order change and education to second-order change. Training involves adding more tools to the tool-box. Education involves helping learners to think in new ways.

An important point to emphasize here is that training and education serve different functions. While they are related to each other, each performs a different role and each provides the adult learner with a different relationship to knowing and knowledge. “Pure”

training tends to be delivered by an expert - someone who is seen to have all the answers. "Pure" education tends to be more facilitative and places more value on the experience and competence of the learners.

Received knowers - learners who "conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own" (Belenky et al, 1986. p. 15) - are more likely to benefit from training than are people who are comfortable with the idea of constructing their own knowledge. At the same time, however, many received knowers need to be challenged by some pure educational experiences in order to develop new ways of thinking and to become more effective. Greenough (1993), writing about her own adult training and education efforts in the child care field states:

Showing and telling someone what to do may be useful for a time, but unless a [child care worker] can think for herself, her training will break down when new problems arise that she has never dealt with before (p. 35).

On the other hand, constructive knowers - learners who "view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 15) - would benefit less from training and more from educational opportunities which may include

observations of other programs, reflexive journal writing, and dialogues with peers.

Implications for Further Research

Several implications for further research stem from the findings of this research project. It would be interesting and useful to implement a longitudinal study of several SACWs as they enter the field, and trace the development of their skills and thought processes. This study could follow the SACWs for a three year period and document “learning markers” and transitional experiences in their development.

It would also be useful to do an in-depth study of one or two SACWs. This could be a collaborative ethnography similar to Rogers et al (1987). In that particular study the principal researcher collaborated with a front-line preschool teacher and the director of the child development centre. They pointed out that “for different reasons, we were all asking the same general but enormously important question: What makes a good early education teacher good?” (p. 34). A similar collaborative endeavour could be set up in the SAC field.

Research could also be done regarding training and educational opportunities for SACWs and the content of the curriculum in those opportunities. How much of the curriculum involves training in the sense used in this chapter ? How much of it involves education ? How

much of it encourages first-order change, and how much of it encourages second-order change ?

And of course, further research similar to the type used in this study would also be useful. This research could be done on a larger scale by increasing the number of SACWs and/or increasing the number of observations and interviews.

Final Summary

Given that there is an increased demand for adult education in SAC, there is now a need to understand the phenomenon of adult learning in this field. We now know that there are different levels of learning involved which can be characterized as first- and second-order change. We also know that important learning can come through content, process, and the interplay between the two. Working in SAC requires the adult to step outside of her action and reflect on it and, ultimately, within it. While reflection-in-action can be a description of what competent SACWs do, it can also be viewed as a process through which they (and other, less experienced SACWs) can learn to become more effective in their work with children. A SACW is engaged in a learning process when she makes an effort to become more aware of her goals, options, choices and behaviours, and when she consciously links her professional values with her day-to-day

practice.

References

- Albrecht, Kay M. (ed.) (1991) Quality Criteria for School-Age Child Care Programs. Alexandria, VA: American Home Economics Association.
- Albrecht, Kay M. & Plantz, M.C. (ed.) (1991) Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs. Alexandria, VA: American Home Economics Association.
- Anderson, G.L. (1989) "Critical Ethnography in Education", in Review of Educational Research. 59 (3), 1989, pp. 249-270.
- Argyris, C, and Schon, D. (1975) Theory in Practice: Increasing professional effectiveness. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Ayers, W. (1989) The Good Preschool Teacher. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Baden, R., Genser, A., Levine, J., Seligson, M. (1982). School-age Child Care. Dover, Massachusetts: Auburn House Publishing Co.
- Beckett, G. & Hookwith, N. (1991) Early Childhood Education: Professional competencies. A research project of the Co-ordinators of Early Childhood Education programs in Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology.
- Beers, D. C. (1993) "Telling Our Stories: The CDA process in Native American Head Start" in Jones, E. (ed) Growing Teachers: Partnerships in staff development. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. pp. 2-19.
- Belenky, M.F., Clinchy, B.M., Goldberger, N.R., Tarule, J.M., (1986) Women's Ways of Knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind. New York: Basic Books.

- Bender, J., Elder, B. S., Flatter, C. (1984) Half a Childhood: Time for school-age child care. Nashville, TN: School Age Notes.
- Canadian Child Day Care Federation (1990) Statement of high quality child care. in Interaction. V. 4, N.1, pp. 14-17.
- Charles, C.M. (1985) Building Classroom Discipline: From models to practice. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Inc.
- Cherry, C. (1983) Please Don't Sit on the Kids: Alternatives to punitive discipline. San Bernadino, CA: Simon & Schuster.
- Chudnovsky, R. (1990) Child Care in the City of Vancouver: A recommended civic childcare strategy. Vancouver: Social Planning Department, City of Vancouver.
- Combs, A., Avila, D., Purkey, W. (1972) Helping Relationships: Basic concepts for the helping professions. Boston: Allyn & Bacon Inc.
- Dahlgren, L. (1984) "Outcomes of Learning", in Marton, et al (1984) The Experience of Learning. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. pp. 19-35.
- Demers, M. (1990) "Transforming Perspectives in Child and Youth Care Education" in Anglin, J., Denholm, G., Ferguson, R., and Pence, A. (ed.s) Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 242-252.
- Denholm, C., Ferguson, R., Pence, A. (1987) Professional Child and Youth Care: The Canadian perspective. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Doherty, Gillian (1991) Quality Matters in Child Care. Huntsville, Ontario: Jesmond Publishing.

- Doney, M. (1990) "School Aged Child Care: Meeting the challenge of latch key children" in Interaction (Summer 1990). Ottawa: Canadian Child Day Care Federation.
- Entwistle, Noel (1984) "Contrasting Perspectives of Learning" in Marton, et al, (1984) The Experience of Learning. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. pp. 1-18.
- Entwistle, N. and Marton, F. (1984) "Changing Conceptions of Learning and Research" in Marton, et al, (1984) The Experience of Learning. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. pp. 211-236.
- Etter-Lewis, G. (1991) "Blackwomen's Life Stories" in G. Etter-Lewis, Women's Words. London: Routledge. pp.43-58.
- Exploring Environments (December 1991) "Are the Colleges Letting Us Down ?" in Exploring Environments: A newsletter about school-age child care in Ontario. Toronto, Ontario. pp. 4-5.
- Faber, A. and Mazlish, E. (1982) How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk. New York: Avon Books.
- Finkelstein, B. (1988) "The Revolt Against Selfishness: Women and the dilemmas of professionalism in Early Childhood education" in Spodeck, B., Saracho, O. and Peters, D. (ed.s), Professionalism and the Early Childhood Practitioner. New York: Teachers College Press. pp.10-28.
- Gaskell, Jane. (1992) Gender Matters from School to Work. Toronto: OISE.
- Gaskell, Jane (1987) "Conceptions of Skill and the Work of Women: Some historical and political issues" in Hamilton, R. & Barret, M. (ed.s) (1987) The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism and Nationalism. Montreal: Book Centre, Inc. pp. 361-380.
- Geertz, C. (1973) Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.

- Ginott, H. (1972) Teacher & Child: A book for parents and teachers. New York: Avon Books.
- Goelman, Hillel (1992) Visions of Program Revision: A report on the Early Childhood Education Review Project. Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction.
- Goelman, H., Pence, A., Lero, D., Brockman, L., Glick, N., Berkowitz, J. (1993) Canadian National Child Care Study: Where are the children?: An overview of child care arrangements in Canada. Canada: Health and Welfare Canada.
- Gordon, Thomas. (1989) Discipline That Works: Promoting self-discipline in children. New York: Plume.
- Greenough, K., (1993) "Moving Out of Silence: The CDA process with Alaska native teachers" in Jones, E. (ed) Growing Teachers: Partnerships in staff development. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. pp. 22-35.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983) Ethnography: Principles in practice. London: Routledge.
- Hass-Foletta, K. & Cogley, M. (1990) School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs. Nashville, TN: School Age Notes.
- Hills, Marcia. (1989) "The Child and Youth Care Student as an Emerging Professional Practitioner" in Journal of Child and Youth Care. Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 17-31.
- Hounsell, Dai. (1984) "Understanding Teaching and Teaching for Understanding" in Marton, et al, (1984) The Experience of Learning. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press. pp. 189-210.
- Jackson, Nancy. (1987) "Skill Training in Transition: Implications for women" in Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd. pp. 351-369.

- Jones, Elizabeth (ed.) (1993) Growing Teachers: Partnerships in staff development. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Katz, Lilian (1977) Talks with Teachers: Reflections on early childhood education. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Kelly, Carol S. (1990) "Professionalizing Child and Youth Care: An overview" in Anglin, J., Denholm, C., Ferguson, R., Pence, A. (editors) (1990) Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 167-176.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Little, David (1980) "Adult Learning and Education: A concept analysis" in Yearbook of Adult and Continuing Education, 1979-80. Chicago: Marquis Academic Media. pp. 3-19.
- Maier, Henry (1990) "A Developmental Perspective for Child and Youth Care Work" in Anglin, J., Denholm, C., Ferguson, R., Pence, A. (editors) (1990) Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 7-24.
- Maier, Henry (1986) "First and Second Order Change: Powerful concepts for preparing child care practitioners" in Vander Ven, K. & Titinich, E. (ed.s) Competent Caregivers - Competent Children: Training and education for child care practice. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 37-45.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (1989) Designing Qualitative Research. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Marton, F., Hounsell, D., Entwistle, N. (ed.s) (1984) The Experience of Learning. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

- McDonell, Linda (1993) The Final Report for the School-Age Training Needs Analysis Project. Victoria: Province of British Columbia.
- McMillan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (1989) Research in Education: A conceptual Introduction. (second edition) Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co.
- Mezirow, Jack (1990) Fostering Critical Reflection. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, E., Mauksch, H., and Statham, A. (1988) "The Qualitative Approach to the Study of Women's Work: Different method/different knowledge" in Stratham, Miller & Mauksch (ed.s), The Worth of Women's Work: A qualitative synthesis. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. pp. 309-315.
- Mishler, E.G. (1986) Research Interviewing. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Modigliani, Kathy (1986) "But Who Will Take Care if the Children ? : Childcare, women, and devalued labour" in Journal of Education, Vol. 168, No. 3, 1986.
- Morley, Anne (1993) "Springboard and Bridge: A study of a career program and its mature women graduates". Unpublished Masters Thesis: University of British Columbia.
- Musson, Steve (1994) School-Age Care: Theory and practice. Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley.
- Musson, Steve and Gibbons, Maurice (1988) New Youth Challenge: A model for working with older children in school-age child care. (Second Edition) Nashville, TN: School-Age Notes.
- Nelson, Margaret (1990) Negotiated Care: The experience of family day care providers. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

- O'Connor, Susan (1991) Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality. Wellesley, Massachusetts: Centre for Research on Women.
- Park, Norman (1992) A Comparative Study of School-Aged Child Care Programs. Ontario: Ministry of Education.
- Pence, Alan and Griffin, Sandra (1991) "A Window of Opportunity: Part II, Building the ladder" in Interaction. (Spring 1991), Ottawa: Canadian Child Day Care Federation. pp. 24-29.
- Peters, D. (1981) "New methods for educating and credentialing professionals in child care". in Child Care Quarterly. V. 10, N. 1, pp. 3-8.
- Pettygrove, W., Whitebook, M and Weir, M. (1984) "Beyond Babysitting: Changing the treatment and image of child caregivers" in Young Children. (July 1984), pp. 14-21.
- Polanyi, Michael (1967) The Tacit Dimension. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Polanyi, Michael (1969) Knowing and Being: essays; edited by M. Grene. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Powell, Douglas (1990) "Professionalism and the Child Care Field: What model ?" in Anglin, J., Denholm, C., Ferguson, R., Pence, A. (editors) (1990) Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 177-186.
- Prell, R.-E. (1989) Interpreting Women's Lives. Indiana University Press.
- Prescott, E. & Milich, C. (1974) School's Out !: Group day care for the school age child. Pasadena, California: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

- Province of British Columbia (1989) Community Care Facility Act: Child care regulation. Victoria, B.C.: Queens Printer for British Columbia.
- Province of British Columbia (1991) Task Force on Child Care. Showing We Care: A child care strategy for the 90's. Victoria: Ministry Responsible for Women's Programs.
- RMC Research Corporation (1993) National Study of Before & After School Programs. Washington, DC: Department of Education.
- Rogers, D., Waller, C.B., Perrin, M.S. (1987) "Learning More About What Makes a Good Teacher Good Through Collaborative Research in the Classroom" in Young Children. May, 1987, Vol. 42 (2), pp. 34-39.
- Ruddick, S. (1989) Maternal Thinking: Toward a politics of peace. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Schon, Donald (1983) The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.
- Schon, Donald (1990) Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- School-Age Notes (Oct. 1990) "SAC Instructor's Interest Session" in School-Age Notes. Nashville, TN.
- Scofield "How Do You Measure Up ? : 10 staff indicators of quality" in School-Age Notes. Nashville, TN.
- Seligson, Michelle and Allenson, Michael (1993) School-Age Child Care: An action manual for the 90s and beyond. (Second Edition) Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Sisson, Linda (1990) Kids Club: A school-age program guide for directors. Nashville, TN: School-Age Notes.

- Spodek, Bernard (1988) "Implicit Theories of Early Childhood Teachers: Foundations for professional behaviour" in Spodeck, B., Saracho, O. and Peters, D. (ed.s), Professionalism and the Early Childhood Practitioner. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Tom, Allison (1993) "The Messy Work of Child Care: Addressing feminists' neglect of child care workers" in Atlantis, Vol. 18, Nos. 1 & 2. pp. 70-81.
- Vander Ven, Karen (1986) "And You Have a Ways to Go: The current status and emerging issues in training and education for child care practice" in Vander Ven, K. & Titinich, E. (ed.s) Competent Caregivers - Competent Children: Training and education for child care practice. New York: The Haworth Press. pp. 13-34.
- Vander Ven, Karen (1988) "Pathways to Professional Effectiveness for Early Childhood Educators" in Spodeck, B., Saracho, O. and Peters, D. (ed.s), Professionalism and the Early Childhood Practitioner. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Verner, Coolie (1975) "Fundamental Concepts in Adult Education" in J.H. Knoll (Ed.) Internationales Jahrbuch fur Erwachsenenbildung. Berlin: Bertelsman Universitatsverlag. pp. 177-192.
- Wasserman, Selma (1990) Serious Players in the Primary Classroom: Empowering children through active learning experiences. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wax, M.L. (1980) "Paradoxes of 'Consent' to the Practice of Fieldwork" in Social Problems, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 272-283.