

Thesis
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**TEACHER/THERAPIST COLLABORATIONS: DISCOURSES,
POSITIONINGS AND POWER RELATIONS AT WORK**

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is on the collaboration relationships of teachers and therapists working in school-based provision for pupils with language and communication disorders. The research is concerned with how the collaboration relationship operates as a power relation for these individuals. There is an attempt to work out something of the effects of changing notions of professionalism in its historical and current versions. The research reveals individuals' identifications with the powerful discourses in this contingent context, manifested in their metaphors and discursive moves. It analyses the complex interaction of discourses and cultural discourses/practices, attempting to grasp the effects of the powerful discourses as individuals construct and re-construct multiple professional and cultural identities and subject positions. In its examination of the political and cultural functioning of the forces of power-knowledge-selves-desire, the research analyses the operation of five dimensions of power at work in these relationships. The analysis subsequently suggests some implications for teacher/therapist co-practice.

The research attends to the discourses of inter-professional collaboration in government policy documentation at the macro level, within local authority and school-institution policy statements at the meso level and in the way that participants write and speak of their collaborations at a micro level. Macro level discourses were examined in the relevant speech and language therapy and education agencies' policy documentation including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (HMI) Report (1996) and the Royal

College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) (1996) statement of professional standards. Meso level discourses were sought in the relevant local education authority and school policy documentation. Micro level discourses were explored in instances of individuals' talk about their collaborative practice. Participants' accounts were gathered in semi-structured interviews, audiotaped collaborators' meeting talk and written texts.

Individual experiences within specific collaboration relationships have not perhaps been grasped or understood in research into teacher/therapist co-working which draws upon positivist methodology and uses positivist methods. There is much previous research which theorizes collaboration at interagency or interprofessional levels or that takes a systems theory approach that seeks to generalize norms of 'effectiveness' at either or both of these levels. This research was concerned to explore individuals' experiences of co-practice in an analysis which questioned co-practice norms and attempted to unsettle certainties. Participants' accounts in this analysis suggested a more continuous, fluid process of construction and re-construction of individuals' subject positions characterised by unstable identifications. Analysis of individuals' accounts revealed their subjection to the powerful discourses and their active exploitations of those discourses as resources, their subject positions manifested in their discursive choices, ambivalences, oscillations, evasions and miscalculations. Certain of the ways were uncovered in which multiple, unstable practice and co-practice related discourses interplay and compete, working to produce individuals subject to their power; and providing the discursive resources which individuals deploy as they constitute and re-constitute discourse/practice identity positions in their struggles for domination within

their relationships. This analysis suggests certain of the effects of the powerful discourses as the participants constitute and re-constitute acceptable power sharing practices, positions within the dimensions of power which, at times collide with positions acceptable to the other.

A number of possibilities for the co-practice of teachers and therapists in school-site provision for pupils with language and communication disorders are identified and discussed. These suggest how school institutions' and agencies' policy makers might attend to the diversity and plurality of teachers' and therapists' discursive resources and co-practices. These also suggest that spaces for the exploration of teacher/therapist discourse/practice differences as these relate to the notion of shared discursive resources and co-practice should be opened-up. These further suggest the need to question current policies and practices using a wider variety of conceptual and analytical tools and the need for shared learning spaces which might promote more personally acceptable practices underpinned by knowledge of each other's aspirations.

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CONTENTS

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Outline of the dissertation	5
Chapter 2: New research traditions: methodological decisions	7
Lyotard's intellectual tools	11
Derrida's critical tools	12
Foucault's analytical tools	18
Chapter 3a: Methodology	29
Aims of the research	29
Overall research question	29
Research sub questions	29
The research approach	30
Introducing the metaphors which operate to constitute the concrete power relation	32
Research methods	40
Regarding reflexivity	45
Seeking a reliable, stable foundation for the empirical work	48
Seeking texts that manifested the therapist/teacher power struggles	49
Ethical decisions	51
Standards of judgement	55

	Frameworks and methods for analysis	57
	Introducing my positional voice and perspectival thinking	58
	Power dimensions in the move to collaboration	61
	Rethinking my overall research problem	66
Chapter 3b	Methodological decisions: chronological signposts	67
Chapter 4:	What's been written: the discursive effects	83
	Why critique mainly school policy?	83
	Collaboration: the focus of this research	85
	Outline of this chapter	87
	A view of 'discourse'	87
	Strand 1: policy documentation discourses	89
	Prevailing collaboration policy discourses	94
	Policy implementation strategy	98
	The effects of official statements	99
	Accommodating change	101
	Strand 2: new conceptualizations of 'professional'	103
	'Profession' and its related concepts	105
	New norms of professionalism	106
	The new view of collaborative professionalism	108
	Strand 3: collaboration	109
	Collaboration metaphors	117
	Grappling with collaboration: using metaphor as a tool	121
Chapter 5:	Getting to know them: the research sites and participants	125

	The participants introduce themselves and their settings	131
	Benian Primary School Special Educational Needs Base...	131
	Glenian Primary School provision...	133
	Inverian Primary School Language Unit	137
Chapter 6:	The way we were: cellular classrooms, clinics and collaboration	141
Chapter 7:	A self-critical eye on my previous attempts at analysis	150
	What did I do and learn in the second attempt at analysis?	154
Chapter 8:	The empirical material: strategies and selections	168
	The analysis: selection of texts from the empirical material gathered	174
Chapter 9:	The metaphors: positions constructed with/in the discourses	177
	The metaphors and how they are deployed in the Benian meeting	182
	The metaphors and how they are deployed in the Glenian meeting	193
	The metaphors and how they are deployed in the Inverian meeting	210
Chapter 10:	Power relations in the collaborations	231
	Foucault's tools for analyzing power relations	234
	Applying the power dimensions' analytical framework	236
	Slipping into something more comfortable: what does this analysis suggest?	255

Chapter 11: When all is said and done: some possibilities	258
How, specifically, might these suggestions be put to work?	263
The space for endings...when all is said and done...	270
References	

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The focus for this research is on teachers and speech and language therapists (SLTs) collaborating in school-based language support provision. This research explores the ways in which the notion of 'collaboration' between teachers and therapists has been and is spoken about. It seeks to understand the diversity in the different lived realities of collaborations in-practice in the cultural contexts of teachers and SLTs working together to support children with language and communication disorders. Teachers and therapists have recently been challenged by the possibilities and conflicts amongst the potential new identities for their selves created by recent policies that recommend new professional responsibilities, powers and practices for their joint work. There are seven participants in this research and it is their accounts collected in their provision meetings which are analysed here. The teachers' and therapists' accounts are not read in order to find a single ultimate 'objective' truth or essence of what collaboration is but rather to explore some of the effects of the power relations in collaboration practices in these practitioners' contexts.

In order to develop the conceptual and theoretical framework required to undertake the planned scrutiny of collaboration power relations in participants' accounts, I review and critique some of the discursive formations around collaboration in policy statements and in changing views of 'the professional' and its related terms. The analysis utilizes some of Lyotard's, Derrida's and Foucault's critical and analytical tools. An analysis of

the authoritative policy discourses and the diversity of the competing discourses and discursive formations around interprofessional collaborative practices is attempted. This analysis opens up a discursive space in which to examine notions of the 'professional' and of professional boundaries; and to attend to the beliefs and assumptions underpinning those discursive formations which legitimize or prohibit particular practices in collaboration relationships.

New and particular discourses which aspire to 'government' (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, 221), in Foucault's terms 'to structure the possible field of action' (ibid. 221), of teacher/therapist collaboration were deployed in the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) (1996) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (HMI) (1996) policy documentation. This research is concerned to examine the ways in which the discourses of 'interprofessional collaboration' and its associated terms have been deployed at different times in policy and the governmental effects of application of that particular label on practices. I critique the documentation and unpick some of the effects of the discourses of 'professionalism' and 'collaboration'. I explore, in participants' deployment of particular metaphors and discourses, individuals' compliances, contestations which signal their self-subjectifications and cultural aspirations in relation to notions of disciplinary based professionalism and of practitioner collaboration. I analyse the challenges to individuals' professional and disciplinary identities which might be signified in the functioning of the dimensions of power in these collaboration relations.

Consideration of the tensions and interplay between the discourses around conceptualizations of the professional was undertaken in the empirical work which sought to explore the reality of the diversity and hybridity of interprofessional collaboration-in-practice in different school-based contexts. I explore the effects of interprofessional collaboration discourses, what interprofessional collaborative practice choices and desires participants speak of and what teacher/therapist collaboration discourses do. In exploring participants' accounts, I am interested in the discursive positions they each take up. I uncover something of their 'agonism' (Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, 222), their struggles, acceptances or resistances, of the discourses. Drawing upon Foucault's (1972) work on the rules of exclusion and division that operate in discourses, I examine how these individuals' discourses are tied to desire and power.

This work and text foregrounds that Foucauldian 'ethical' question of the individual's role and activity in research. My own 'conditions of life and work and real, material, everyday struggles' (Foucault in Gordon, 1980, 126) have situated me as a worker engaged with the struggles that are explored here. I am aware that I operate here in my local, specific area of competence in ways suggested by Simons (1995), 'vested with a certain responsibility and power on the basis of close association with true discourses (as their producer, consumer or distributor)' (91) of the teacher/therapist collaboration discourses. It is as such, that I attempted to develop an analysis that explored the detail of the reality of participants' present professional boundaries or limits and of the ways

in which putative 'changing practices' work to transgress limits and dissolve previous practice boundaries.

This analysis explores what is at stake for individual teachers and therapists in doing collaboration. I will examine the ways in which diverse and hybrid forms of collaboration emerge and illustrate various stages of in-between-ness. I explore certain gaps and contradictions in prevailing ideas and concepts of 'collaboration'. Derrida (in Cahoone, 2003) asserts that:

the signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily inscribed in a chain or system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts (230).

Such an assertion would suggest that different meanings underlie the same term or 'signifier' (Derrida, 1981a, 8) and that any singular grasp of a signifier, for example 'collaboration', is always deferred. It further suggests that gaps omissions and exclusions always appear when we try to explain a signifier such as 'collaboration' which 'ties together a configuration of concepts' (ibid. 8). In keeping with Foucault's detailed historical studies which analyse 'the disunity of concepts within history' (Bouchard, 1977, 20), the strategy in this work is to:

take seriously what ... discourses were trying to do, that we attend to the features that distinguish these discourses from each other and from our own (Shumway, 1989, 21).

In this dissertation I build a text, a collage concerning collaboration, while seeking to remain 'reflexively' (see, for example, Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000) aware - 'self-on-self' - of my thinking, as producer of this work. In the space of a series of reflexive asides concerning current aspects of the research, I produce 'fragments of an autobiography' which articulate the changes in my thinking and how I think about thinking and ways of 'doing knowledge' over the time of the research. My attention to reflexivity produced opportunities for re-thinking and questioning my own and others' normative judgements, 'truths' and 'realities' during this research. What follows is a 'simulacrum' (Baudrillard cited in Lather, 1991, 160 and Usher and Edwards, 1994, 14,) which stories the 'reality' of this research. Scheurich (1997) describes such a 'simulacral story' as 'a story of something that never existed' (1).

Outline of the dissertation

Here, I provide an outline of the structure of the dissertation. Chapter 2 explores some of the analytical tools drawn from the new research traditions which are used in this dissertation, in particular, the intellectual tools of Lyotard, the critical tools of Derrida and the analytical tools of Foucault are introduced. Chapter 3a introduces the methodology, including the research questions, strategy, and frameworks and methods for analysis. Chapter 3b addresses my methodological decision making and practices

and provides some chronological signposts for the reader. In chapter 4 the literature's discursive effects are reviewed within three strands: the policy framework, notions of 'professional' and its related terms, and the concept of collaboration. I introduce the research sites and participants in chapter 5. Chapter 6 is an analysis of participants' accounts of the ways in which, in particular historical contexts, teachers and therapists performed collaboration. In a reflexive aside in chapter 7 I discuss my previous attempts to analyse the empirical material. In chapter 8 the analytical strategy of uncovering the metaphors operating in the empirical material is introduced. Chapter 9 introduces the metaphors and I discuss how they are deployed. In chapter 10 I use Foucault's tools for analysis of the power relations in the discourses as they operate in these specific cultural contexts. Instances of power imbalances and power sharing are analysed and the possible implications are discussed. The final chapter of the dissertation, chapter 11, 'When all is said and done', makes some suggestions about ways of overcoming power imbalances and developing collaborative relations to the other, in which account is taken of each individual's aspirations and self-subjectifications.

CHAPTER 2

NEW RESEARCH TRADITIONS: METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS

This research was not concerned to seek the 'objective truths' or ideal forms of interprofessional collaboration; rather, it examined how notions of 'interprofessional collaboration' have been constructed, valued and deployed at different times and the effects of the application of the label 'collaboration' to practices. I critically analysed the introduction of the notion of collaboration into this social and cultural context and explored how participant teachers and therapists impose particular versions and possibilities of collaboration on themselves and on their partner in the collaboration relationship. I analysed empirical material gathered from six teachers and therapists, attending to participants' discourses constituting their beliefs and assumptions of the 'realities' of interprofessional collaboration.

In these initial attempts at analysis, I sought 'collaboration' in participants' written and interview accounts. I assumed that what individuals said about collaboration would constitute the 'realities' of their collaboration. Subsequently, I became aware of the inadequacies of seeking to grasp the struggles operating in specific collaboration relationships, the power relations in-action, in what individuals separately said about them. Analyzing nursing research on 'caring', Paley (2001, 2002) asserts that the kind of knowledge which much of current nursing research produces about 'caring' is of the 'things said' about caring, 'essentially...caring-at-one-remove' (2001, 190). Paley argues that such an approach in which: 'knowledge of caring is an aggregate of things said

about it' (2001, 188) is 'plethoric yet absolutely poverty-stricken' (ibid. 188). I became aware of tensions in my position in this research, for example, I did not seek to produce essentializing and reductive lists of what collaboration is, but the first question that I asked of each participant was: *Can you tell me what you understand by collaboration?* I became aware that my interview questions prompted interviewees to speak of the 'attributes' of collaboration (Paley, ibid. 190). I discuss my use of interviews for data gathering further in chapter 3a. In chapter 7, I reflexively re-view my initial attempts to analyse participants' written texts and interview accounts in terms of the themes and categories spoken in policies' discourses.

As my thinking shifted in this work, I sought approaches to data gathering which were fitted to the aims in this research of exploring how participant teachers and therapists impose particular versions and possibilities of collaboration on themselves and on their partner in their collaboration relationships in-action. I sought ways to uncover the functioning of the power relations in these individuals' collaboration relationships. I analysed these specific collaboration relations, entangled in all sorts of ways between the power dimensions of 'initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability' (Bishop and Glynn, 1999, 54). I sought, through the empirical work, a better understanding of how individual participants actually conceive of themselves and their collaborative behaviour.

The conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins the research drew on notions about discourse and metaphor using the analytical toolkits of Lyotard, Derrida and

Foucault. Foucault's conceptual tools provided multiple sights from which to examine the power/knowledge at work in discourses. In keeping with a research perspective located after the 'postmodern turn' (Hassan, 1987, title page) attention was paid to reflexivity and this is written into the text. I did not seek a 'reality out there', knowable through the 'objective', 'rational' norms and techniques of scientificist research. The assumptions of Western metaphysics and the beliefs and practices of the positivist research tradition have increasingly been questioned and displaced. One example of this is the calling to question of the belief that logic, objectivity and neutrality guarantee authoritative and legitimate knowledge of ultimate reality. In another example, the belief that true knowledge is comprehensively explained in central and unchanging meta-narratives such as those of Christian doctrine or Marxism has been displaced. Knowledge is increasingly seen as contested, constructed from many standpoints by many voices (Foucault 1972, 1973, 1977, Foucault in Gordon, 1980, Derrida, 1981a, Foucault in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, Lyotard, 1984, Lather, 1991).

In the following chapters, arguments are made for an analysis which uses an exploration of the metaphor in participants' accounts to produce a critique of power in these particular contexts. Such an analysis borrows from Derrida's view of the way 'truth effects' are produced in language and discourse by means of metaphor and from Nietzsche's view of 'objective truth as a fiction, a will-o-the-wisp, a human pretension' (Novak, 2001, 10-11) which is produced through language and metaphor. Foucault's work on truth and power provided intellectual tools for this dissertation. Foucault (2000a, 2000b, 2000c) denies the progress of 'objective knowledge' about human

beings or of scientific knowledge that centralizes and essentializes the figure of Man.

Foucault, according to Simons (1995),

does not consider the truths of the human sciences to be lies. ... there are truths that correlate with modes of government...of domains, or 'regimes of truth' (44; original emphasis).

After encountering Derrida's thinking, I had come to view 'knowledge' as the sign/signifier for a signified that is an always unstable notion. Accepting the 'fundamental plurality and uncertainty of meaning' (Cahoone, 2003, 225), I had stopped searching for what knowledge is; rather, I sought to explore the effects of the operation of the rules of particular power/knowledge games. Reading the analyses of Foucault (1972, 1973, 1977 and in Gordon 1980) of the apparatuses and effects of power/knowledge, I began to question how the referent 'knowledge' was made use of tactically - whose knowledge? - valued how? - used for what purposes?

This research story does not seek to be judged by the standards, myths or 'masks' of validity valorized and distributed in the discourses of the human sciences and social sciences. My assumption in this account was that knowledge is subjective, that is, positional, partial, provisional and always subject to review and revision.

In what follows, I focus on the value of Lyotard's and Derrida's intellectual tools in my analysis. The relevance and applicability of certain of Foucault's analytical tools in this analysis is then discussed.

Lyotard's intellectual tools

How did I make use of the work of Lyotard? Reading Lyotard (1984) at the beginning of this work opened up a questioning of the previously unquestioned grand narratives of science and progress and of the legitimacy of the existing totalizing and unifying rules of scientific inquiry, science's 'language games' (1984, 10) that proved and guaranteed knowledge. Lyotard's thinking, for example, that knowledge is fragmented and provisional, provided a new take on the rules and categories that have governed the fixed, stable and central timeless essences of 'reality' and 'identity' (1984,75). Lyotard's work together with my subsequent reading of Derrida and Foucault, provided openings to constantly question, critique and re-think my previous beliefs and values.

The assumption underpinning this research is that reality is a text, subject to multiple readings and multiple uses. Lyotard (1984) asserts that in the condition of post-modernity meta-narratives are replaced by multiple mini-narratives, a plurality of stories that are characterized by very modest claims, none of them claiming to be ultimately true. In 'the postmodern', the criteria influencing individual choice to identify with a particular story are not those of truth or falsehood but those of instinct, preference or desire (see, for example, Bauman, 1992 and Zurbrugg, 1993). In theorizing the breaking up of the grand narratives, Lyotard offers analysis concerning

the move from 'the old poles of attraction' (1984, 15); one of which he suggests is the 'professions', (ibid. 15). Lyotard's turn to pragmatics suggests that individual selves are located in 'language games' and that these 'language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist' (ibid. 15). This perspective informed the present analysis which is concerned with emergence of a new social partner and new positioning of selves within the possibilities and limits of the language games of school institutions.

Lyotard's (1984) analysis of transformations in the nature, circulation and exchange of knowledge as an information commodity provided conceptual tools to rethink the work relations of the participants in this research. The exploration in this study of a particular contemporary work relationship in a context of changing service user demands of teachers and therapists and in a time of rapidly changing knowledge bases and of an information and technological explosion is informed by Lyotard's discussion of these matters.

Derrida's critical tools

How did I make use of the work of Derrida? From Derrida's thinking (1981a, 1981b, 2001, and in Cahoone, 2003) I learned to attempt to shift from my hitherto central thinking and to complicate previously unproblematically taken-for-granted notions. Reading Derrida and applications of Derridean thinking, (in Powell, 1997, Wolfreys, 1998, Biesta and Egea-Kuhne, 2001, Cahoone, 2003) I began to re-think my previous beliefs concerning truth, essence, unities and totalities, the idea of an origin and a centre, an ideal form, the centrality of God, Presence and the everlasting. I drew upon

Derrida's re-thinking of what he terms 'logocentrism', Western metaphysics' philosophy of Presence, that 'being' is present and further, that Truth is present in the word in spoken language. Hall (2003) argues that:

The logocentric bias of Western philosophy motivates thinkers to attempt to present the truth, being, essence or logical structure of that about which they think or discourse (512).

Derrida's refusal to seek order and structure in things; rather, to be concerned with difference and otherness, was an important conceptual tool in this research. This work draws upon Derrida's position that words do not point to some ultimate reality beyond themselves; what they do is refer to other words in a web of language. Derrida refuses metaphysics' theme of 'the direct grasp of the signified' (Houdebine in Derrida 1981a, 79). Derrida asserts that the 'signifier' never arrives at a stable 'signified'. He deploys the term 'différance' to signal 'a recognition of this fundamental plurality and uncertainty of meaning' (in Cahoone, 2003, 225). Borrowing from Derrida's positions, I explored the play of motifs of collaboration in participants' accounts. In the analysis below, I sought and examined participants' metaphors as the devices which construct the collaborative relationship. Reading their accounts, I looked for these participants' metaphors of collaboration, how they think collaboration, rather than seeking any single, central, logical and univocal meaning for the notion of collaboration. Exploring how language, the controlling notions, metaphors and categories of discourse, produce, delimit and exclude the possible constitution of concepts, I examined how certain forms

of collaboration are performed and produced and others are silenced. I sought to uncover how prevailing discursive conditions make certain forms of collaboration possible and legitimate and function to marginalize and exclude counter-discourses. In seeking the metaphors, the figurative meanings, at work in the collaborative relationships, I rejected the notion of a single given of collaboration; rather, I sought to bring into question how collaboration is constituted in language (Levinas, 2003) and how particular metaphors and norms structure and control present legitimizations of collaboration (West, 2003). In this work I was concerned with how participants' language and metaphor operate, how language speaks and manoeuvres. Participants' texts are not used as 'central' but are viewed as 'part of a vast intertextual field' (Ward, 1997, 164) constituting collaboration.

Derrida questions the foundations of the tradition of Western metaphysics and the particular relation to the world which it institutes through its notions of central ideas. For Derrida, the notion of 'the central' produces the marginal other, 'the binary oppositions of metaphysics' (1981a, 41). For example, if Man is valued, and privileged as central, woman is made marginal, other and lacking (see, for example, St Pierre and Pillow, 2000, Quinn, 2003, Irigary, 2003, Bordo in Cahoone, 2003). Reading the analysis of Levinas (in Cahoone, 2003) of the ethical construction of other compelled me to critique my previous thinking which attempted to 'reabsorb every Other into the Same and neutralize alterity' (530). Satterthwaite (2003) summarizes Levinas's ideas thus:

Levinas is telling us...that what matters is other people. Studying something (such as the being of another person) misses the point...because what matters is people, ethics takes priority over ontology - we consider primarily what we should do rather than what may or may not be. ...I am what I am by virtue of my being confronted by the Other. (115).

My reading of Satterthwaite's critique of Levinas's position on the notion of other had resonance with my reading of Foucault's notions of 'governmentality' and of 'historical contingencies' (discussed further below), of not asking 'what?' and 'why?' but 'how?' and 'by what means?' -crucially, 'by what ethico-political means?' Such readings, together with learning from Derrida's positions, shifted my thinking from an identity position privileging ideas of the central sovereign subject.

From my reading of Derrida, I re-thought my previous thinking that attempted to fix or freeze the play of 'binary opposites' in a constant and unchanging power relation of dominance and subjection. I deployed that new conceptual tool in this analysis of the play, between-ness or undecidabilities in the power relationships between teacher/therapist pairs. Derrida, like Lyotard and Foucault, suggests a new political and ethical turn in relation to knowledge. Derrida suggests a new practice of 'deconstruction' that decentres, takes apart and critiques the underlying central assumptions of systems of knowledge. This resonates with Lyotard's vision of knowledge as a search for 'instabilities' (Jameson, foreword in Lyotard, 1984, xix), and with Foucault's analyses of the history of the systems of thought. The Derridean notion

of 'deconstruction', concerned how the text unravels itself through discursive ploys, is complex, encompassing a variety of turns. Cahen (2001) stresses deconstruction's positive ethical turn:

to deconstruct is first and foremost to undo a construction with infinite patience, to take apart a system in order to understand all its mechanisms, to exhibit all its foundations, and to reconstruct it on new bases. (13).

Derrida's assertions which privilege new forms of theory and practice concerning knowledge, in particular in relation to notions of writing, the text and the subject have, together with Lyotard's intellectual tools and Foucault's analytical tools, informed the conceptual and theoretical framework of my research.

The writing turn

The turn to writing is part of the wider 'linguistic turn' (Rorty, 1967, title) or a concern to explore the language of representation of objects or referents. Derrida's analyses undermined metaphysics' assumptions of the privileging of speech over writing.

Derrida sought to dispel philosophical ideas about thinkers' and speakers' presence in, and intentional control of, their logical argument. Potter (1996) argues that for Derrida, speakers draw upon and use cultural systems of discourse made up amongst other things by metaphors. Through his genealogical analyses of the historical and cultural constructions of concepts, Derrida affirms the practice of ethical and political work

which constructs something new and other for the future (see for example, Biesta and Egea-Kuehne, 2001).

Foucault characterizes intellectual writing as a transgressive practice with the potential to enable the individual to think in other ways, providing one form of intellectual and practical work on limits. Simons (1995) suggests that intellectual writing constitutes a Foucauldian transgressive practice or 'art of the self' (see, for example, Foucault in Rabinow, 2000, 261-262). Simons (1995) and Barker (1998) argue that for Foucault, writing is the specific practice, more so even than reflection, that enables us to explicate the assumptions which underpin our practices and thought and to re-think them.

Foucault (in Kritzman, 1988) suggests that it is the kind of change and self-transformation which is brought about by writing which changes and alters the things he thinks and articulates his intellectual positions, over time.

The move from the sovereign subject

Derrida (in Biesta and Egea-Kuehne, 2001) discusses what deconstructing the Western metaphysical concept of 'the subject' means. For Derrida, deconstructing the Cartesian 'subject' is an attempt to analyse the assumptions in the layers of the history of that concept. Such a deconstruction opens up to scrutiny the underlying assumptions of the liberal humanist tradition's formation, development, legitimization and use of the concept of the autonomous sovereign subject as the centre of an identity and the subject of a life. Foucault is consistently concerned with opposition to the assumptions implicit in humanism. For example, Foucault (in Kritzman, 1988) asserts: