# TALKING ABOUT TEAMS WITHIN A TEAM BUILDING CONTEXT: A DISCOURSE ANALYTIC STUDY

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**SHARON CHAPMAN - BLAIR**

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## ABSTRACT

This research initiative responds to some of the issues raised by theoretical challenges leveled at Industrial Psychology (postmodernism), and practical challenges in the workplace (the use of teams) by investigating notions of what a team is via the postmodern methodology of discourse analysis. The research explores "team talk" – repertoires of speech employed by individuals to construct particular versions of "the team" for specific effects, of importance given emphasis placed on shared understanding, expectations and goals in a "team". A Rhodes University Industrial Psychology Honours class required to work as a team (having participated in a team building exercise), as well as their lecturers who facilitated the team building process were interviewed to obtain "talk" to analyse. This uncovered a multiplicity of meaning, namely four ways of speaking about (constructing) the team. These repertoires are explored in terms of how they are constructed, how they differ across context and speakers, how they interrelate and what they function to achieve. The educational team repertoire constructs academic hierarchy, justifies individualism, positions members as experts and maintains distance from interpersonal processes. The machine repertoire divides work and interpersonal issues, regulates productivity and constructs team roles (defining individual activity and "team fit"), but is inflexible to change. The family repertoire voices emotive aspects to maintain cohesion via conformity, leaderlessness, group identity and shared achievement, but cannot accommodate conflict or work-personal boundaries. The psychologised team repertoire constructs the team primarily as a therapeutic entity legitimately creating individual identities (and expertise) and facilitating personal growth, but this flounders when support in the "team" fails. Given that each repertoire has a different emphasis (reflective learning versus work processes versus building relationships versus personal growth), there are slippages / clashes between repertoires. This postmodern look at "the team" thus assists in recognizing and problematising these multiple meanings and identifying practical implications.

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## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

The highly dynamic nature of the world of work (developments in technology, higher demands for productivity, global business strategies and communications etc.) requires the adaptation of organisations to perform in the face of mounting pressures. Teams of employees in the workplace (either cross-functional or not), are being used increasingly in response to this change, to boost worker satisfaction, productivity and quality of work. However, a lack of clarity and incisive research in team literature has recently resulted in scepticism concerning the efficacy of teamwork in its current formats (Lembke & Wilson, 1998). Despite these occasional voices of caution, a multitude of offerings have been made available to organisations to enhance team performance. These offerings come in the form of management literature (which Hames (1994) maintains is prolific and content to merely observe, accommodate and comment on, rather than challenge, the present and then to propose what "might be" through reflective inquiry), as well as an increasingly popular intervention offered by management / organisational consultants to organisations termed "team building".

"Team building" refers to such a variety of approaches that what is offered by one consultant may in no way reflect what might be offered by another. Perhaps this is not surprising given the lack of agreement in the literature as to what constitutes a team in the first instance (which in addition, is largely considered from the point of view of management consultants and facilitators of team development rather than participants). Hames (1994, p.85) refers to

> "paraphernalia of a host of new, more sophisticated routines that give the appearance, at least, of axiomatic change: participative work groups, incentive schemes, social clubs, quality circles, new technology, training, and generally turning … peoples' lives into an endless therapeutic session of recycled programmes and consultants' fads."

In accordance with the technical, political and social change of today and resultant practical dilemmas - as well as the empirical challenges facing Psychology as a discipline - new theories and philosophies are being brought to bear on issues of organisational development and management effectiveness. These theories are quite unlike those traditionally applied (Hames, 1994).

Postmodern thought stands out as one of these theories; a broad movement that originated in arts and philosophy, that is now impacting the social sciences (Kvale, 1996). Postmodernism does not subscribe to beliefs of universal systems of thought, and of one true, universal and objective reality (Kvale, 1996). Knowledge is therefore no longer regarded as mirroring reality, but rather reality is socially constructed, and focus is shifted to an interpretation and negotiation of meaning in / of the social world (Kvale, 1996). Postmodernism emphasises an openness to a multiplicity of meanings and local context. In this respect, postmodernism attempts to overcome certainty by proposing that meaning is dependent on and situated within a particular historical context (Hames, 1994). Because reality is contextual (understanding developed between interacting individuals) there is no neutral insight into the "real".

Writings pertaining to postmodernism and Psychology - and more recently, to postmodernism and Organisational / Industrial Psychology - are becoming increasingly prevalent. Hames (1994) notes that this is firstly in response to organisational theory largely being dominated by a positivist philosophy for the last 50 years. This philosophy holds that "the practice of management is not only a road to the truth, but a vehicle that will carry us all to a bigger, brighter and better future" (p.xiii). Hames (1994) refers secondly, to a need for new approaches in organisations because of today's unprecedented pace of change. This has created a volatile environment in which many of the rules about managing organisations are becoming ineffectual.

Harding (1998, p.5) refers to the 'new sciences' forming a new set of frameworks for viewing the world, which in turn challenge the way we think about organisations. These new frameworks include relativity, quantum mechanics, chaos theory and complexity theory. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996, p.327) point out that many conventional methods of organisational inquiry are "partial and monolithic". This is a result of the fact that Organisational Psychology still operates very strongly within the scientific management paradigm, a positivist epistemology.

This criticism of organisational theory is part of a call, made to the discipline of Psychology as a whole, for the development of a critical Psychology (Levin, 1991). This call echoes as a response to "a crisis of legitimation" grounded in the understanding that Psychology, although previously drawn towards the rigorous sciences, is a discursive formation produced by social, political and cultural activities (Levin, 1991). A critical Psychology would therefore disagree with a theory of truth as being consistent because it maintains that no system is closed, that there is no totality of knowledge, and that there is therefore no mastery of meaning and discourse.

Postmodern deconstructions imply that Psychology must recognize its existence as, and its participation in, an ensemble of social practices. To this end, Pietersen (1989) (specifically referring to Industrial Psychology) advocates a shift from the traditional analytic mode of science where knowledge is seen as being something 'out there' awaiting discovery, to a synthetic mode of knowledge where knowledge is seen as 'in here' where the knowledge will inevitably be affected by the researcher's own personal values and belief system. By adopting a synthetic mode of knowledge development, the aim of research is to determine context bound and particular truths rather than general truths as advocated by the analytic mode of thought.

This introduces the point of this research initiative, to respond to some of the issues raised by the theoretical challenges leveled at Industrial Psychology, and the practical challenges in the workplace. Thus, taking into account the postmodern challenge set to Industrial Psychology, and the popular and increasingly common, yet ill-defined organisational form: "the team", upon which the process of team building is based, this research attempts to investigate notions of what a team is via the postmodern methodology of discourse analysis.

Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.1), prominent discourse analysts, note that all social interaction is inseparable from language, and point out that "the failure [of any theory] to accommodate discourse damages [its] theoretical and empirical adequacy." Hames (1994) acknowledges that our perception of reality is constrained by the very language we use. Reality or meaning is "an understanding developed between interacting individuals in their particular use of language, symbols and conventions - it is contextual" (Hames, 1994, p.xiv). Therefore, there can be no such thing as an organisation because they can be many things at once, and exist as fabrications of our own reality. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996, p.311) claim that multiple, valid and powerful discourses exist simultaneously in organisations, and that different dynamics of discourse point to a richness and subtlety that can inform organisational theories and change efforts in the work place, one of which is team building.

It is with this in mind that this research attempts to explore "team talk" – repertoires of speech that are employed by individuals to construct particular versions of "the team". These constructions are utilized for specific effects, which are important to examine, given the emphasis placed on shared understanding, expectations and goals in the literature on "the team".

Exploring the meaning ascribed to a team from the perspective of team members also provides a way in which to expand the base of organisational theory through the use of a methodology (discourse analysis) that contributes towards a critical and postmodern Psychology. It allows for the comparison of participant and facilitator voices, and an exploration of a multiplicity of meanings. A "process of discourse descriptions" has the benefit of "appreciating multiplicity and dynamics and of recognizing the limits of any one description" (Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996, p.327).

Importantly, each way of talking about teams, e.g. as a machine, a family, a mirror etc. which is presented here, does not decisively claim to be *the* way teams work (as many current theories do), rather the use of discourse analysis identifies a variety of alternative ways of talking about teams that carry with them certain implications for organisational and experiential practice. Discourse analysis has thus primarily been used to enrich the theory available on team building, for by adding to the complexity of meaning, multiple constructions may provide some insight into the *process* of team building. This applies especially in terms of exploring meaning via the constructions of participants which function to produce specific effects. The research may also generate ways of speaking about teams that are common to other team settings, though this is certainly not the intention of the initiative. Discourse analysis therefore problematises the notion of shared understanding as evident through the multiple repertoires presented here.

This research was conducted by using a team of Industrial Psychology Honours students (and their lecturers) at Rhodes University, who had completed a team building process and were subsequently required to work together to produce group assignments. This was a convenient group of people to use given their physical proximity and easy access, as well as the knowledge they would have acquired in their organisational studies. However, the group is technically not a work group; rather it is situated within an educational institution. The primary purpose of the team therefore was (arguably) to be educated and learn rather than produce outputs in an organisational environment.

Bearing this in mind, the existing research and managerial literature may not be directly applicable given the different operating contexts, but is nevertheless used in this instance to generate and identify notions of teams. In addition, the challenge of a postmodern paradigm is not only being leveled at organisations but is relevant to consider in an educational context, as evident in Hames' (1994, p.87) criticism of the conventions of education and training that,

> "typically advance the conviction that, in learning, worthwhile knowledge is transmitted or acquired rather than individually created. Indeed, the actual experience of the learner is generally held to be of little or no consequence. We assume that all wisdom resides in the teacher who decides what is 'worthwhile' learning. The minds of those being taught are simply empty receptacles waiting to be filled with this knowledge."

Through examining student constructions of teams in this research, as compared to those of lecturers, differences become apparent that are of pedagogic interest.

This thesis begins by reviewing the literature pertaining to teams and team building, and highlights the need for new research. Following this, the way in which the research was conducted is set out in the methodology chapter through explaining aspects of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis pertinent to the study, and the process of interviewing. Four analytic chapters are devoted to the main notions of teams identified in this reading of the data that students and lecturers use to talk about teams and to construct the concept of "the team". The functions of these constructions as well as the variation between them are considered. Following the analytic chapters, concluding comments are made regarding future research and the limitations of this study. Discourse analysis does not purport to present a complete picture, but this research hopes to generate thought about the importance of language as constructive in this sphere of study, to encourage readers to create new meanings as they engage with the material, and to enrich approaches to understanding teams.

# CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the organisational environment of the 1980s and 1990s more than in any preceding era, "the only constant is change" (Waterman, 1987, p.xii). Organisations need to keep pace with not only changes in technology and economic conditions, but also with changing world politics, and social and demographic change. In this context, work teams have become one of the primary and most popular means that organisations use to improve productivity, quality and worker flexibility (Bishop, Scott & Burroughs, 2000; Johnson & Johnson, 1997; May & Schwoerer, 1994). This is not only because of the changing nature of work, but is also due to the demand from all workers for greater levels of involvement at work (Hames, 1994). Legislation applying to South African industry in fact prescribes new levels of involvement for workers e.g. the Labour Relations Act of December 1995 (specifically Chapter 3: Parts B, C, and D regarding collective agreements and bargaining councils, and Chapter 5 regarding workplace forums – especially sections 85: consultation and 86: joint decision making).

Above the involvement of workers however, Collins (1992) points out that teamwork is assumed to be a characteristic of healthy organisations, and crucial for organisational success. Not only are employees who previously worked as individuals being re-organised into work groups / teams, but it is expected that organisations will continue to rely on group-based activities in the future (Van der Vegt, Emans & Van de Vliert, 2000). Robyn (2000) points out that collaborative learning, learning communities, team building and learning organisations have been buzz words in the 1990s not only in business but in education too. A knowledge of group dynamics is central to effective businesses, industries and education because cooperative learning typically produces higher achievement, more positive relationships, and greater psychological health than does competitive or individualistic learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). According to Robyn (2000), in education specifically, teamwork beneficially impacts upon student retention, productivity, learning objectives and participation.

Huszczo (1990) notes that small groups are being utilised to re-energise workforces and gain employee commitment, and have also been found to have innovative ideas and high-quality solutions to problems. Team strategies have therefore become practical in order to keep up with competition. They have also become so commonplace that Huszczo (1990, p.37) notes that organisations are being transformed by turning the

> "organisational hierarchy upside-down. Work teams … are being seen as the top of the organisation. The rest of the hierarchy is the support staff to make sure that those teams are effective."

Despite the glowing reports, Stewart and Barrick (2000) argue that although research has generally supported the efficacy of teams for improving work satisfaction, studies have been inconclusive concerning the effect of teams on productivity. Johnson (1996) does however note that as part of this trend toward teamwork, some organisations form teams even when the work does not require it, and that some work is still best left to individuals.

A survey of current literature on teamwork and team building has revealed that the literature available is lacking in a strong theoretical base. Assuming all teams are alike is a common pitfall of team building (Huszczo, 1990), yet there is no consensus on what actually constitutes a team, and a variety of team discourse abounds. As far back as 1982, Payne noted that the variety of team definitions was problematic, and debate abounded as to whether a team was really a team or was something else. This does not seem to have resolved, as more definitions have been generated. Payne (1982) proposes that the word "team" is often used where someone hopes that it exists. He also cautions that much of the literature about teams is based on literature regarding experimental, therapeutic or growth groups and not work teams.

In addition to the lack of consensus about what actually constitutes a team, accounts of team processes articulate facilitators' and management voices rather than the participants themselves describing the diversity of their experience. Little experiential material is in fact recorded. This lack may obscure the very contradictions surrounding team building necessary to improve the process.

Bearing in mind that *how* individuals understand teams is central to having a common purpose within team building, and that literature is lacking in the aforementioned ways, it would seem vital that this diversity of meaning (resulting in different expectations and levels of commitment) is exposed. The following review of available literature strives to consolidate some of this diversity.

## 2. TEAM LITERATURE

Creating and maintaining committed co-operative groups is far from easy, and Johnson and Johnson (1997, p.25) maintain that they are rare "because many people are confused about the basics that make groups productive and lack the discipline to implement those basic elements in a rigorous way." This sentiment is echoed recently by Silberman (2001, p. 66) who notes that "Now, collaboration is in and teams are hot. But not everyone knows how to play the game."

### 2.1 WHAT IS A TEAM? – THE BIG QUESTION

Literature purports that at its most basic level, a team is *an effective group* (Johnson & Johnson, 1997), and Johnson and Johnson (1997) identify various elements that signify a group entity. They include goals, interdependence, interpersonal interaction, perceptions of membership, structured relationships, mutual influence and motivation. Emphasis on each one of these factors results in a different definition of what constitutes a group. Johnson and Johnson (1997) therefore suggest a number of different definitions (with extensive corresponding citations) as follows:

- A number of individuals who join together to achieve a goal.
- A collection of individuals who are interdependent in some way.
- A number of individuals interacting with one another (emphasizing interpersonal interaction).
- Two or more persons who perceive themselves as belonging to a group.
- A collection of individuals whose interactions are structured by a set of rules and norms.
- A collection of individuals who influence each other.
- A collection of individuals trying to satisfy some personal need via their joint association.

Despite the broad definition and subsequent opportunity to be described as a group, Johnson and Johnson (1997) make the point that not every collection of people can be considered a group. They contrast aggregates (collections of individuals who are present at the same time and place but who do not form a unit) with groups, finally conceding that groups consist of a number of characteristics not of equal importance. Whilst definitions may emphasise one or two aspects (for example Payne's 1982 definition of a team as a group which emphasizes common goals, the division of work amongst members, and shared responsibility), Johnson and Johnson (1997) integrate the elements outlined to provide an inclusive / comprehensive definition. Accordingly, a small group may be defined as

> "two or more individuals who (a) pursue common goals, (b) are interdependent, (c) interact with each other, (d) share norms concerning matters of common interest and participate in a system of interlocking roles, (e) influence each other, (f) find the group rewarding, and (g) define themselves and are defined by others as belonging to the group" (Johnson & Johnson, 1997, p.11).

Because a group can be defined does not mean that everyone agrees on the nature of groups. There are two contrasting positions within social science debate (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). The first position is that of a *group orientation* which focuses on the group as a whole, the influences of the group and the larger social systems of which it is part. This translates into a group mind or collective conscience dominating individual wills. Lewin (1935, in Johnson & Johnson, 1997), for example, noted that something new is created when individuals merge into a group, and it is not possible to only consider the qualities and characteristics of each member as making up that group. The second position is that of an *individual orientation*, which focuses on the individual in the group. More specifically the attitudes, cognitions, and personalities of the members are focused on, and individual members are used as the unit of analysis. In this research, individuals are regarded as the "unit of analysis" although they utilize discourse from a common pool of linguistic resources available to them.

## 2.2 GROUP / TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Where definitions seem to blur to an even greater degree is whether "a group" qualifies as "a team". Caudron (1994) notes that calling a group of workers a team does not make a team, and although all teams are groups, not all groups are teams (Barnard, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 1997). If a team starts out as a group however, it follows that some kind of process results in a group becoming a team. To add to the variety of definitions of what a team is, many different models have been suggested to explain this progression. Methods for grouping and classifying these explanations proliferate in available literature.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1997), there are two types of theories as to how a group and consequently a team (as a type of group) develops: *sequential-stage theories* of group development, and *recurring-phase theories*. Sequential stage theories specify the typical order of the phases of group development, whereas recurring-phase theories specify the issues that dominate group interaction and which recur. These two types of theories are not necessarily contradictory in that a group may develop over a number of stages and yet deal with recurring issues.

The structure of the group is defined by the role definitions that differentiate what members do and the norms (the group's common beliefs – formal or informal – regarding the appropriate behaviour, attitudes and perceptions for members; the prescribed modes of conduct and belief that govern the group) that integrate their actions. Johnson and Johnson (1997) suggest a range of *sequential-stage theories* of group development as can be seen below:

- Tuckman's (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) popular theory of group development of five stages – referred to as forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The focus on specific issues at each stage determines members' behaviours. In the forming stage members become oriented to each other and the group. In the storming stage members focus on managing the conflict that arises between them. In the norming stage the group forms norms and becomes cohesive. In the performing stage the group works on tasks to meet goals. Group membership is terminated in the adjourning stage.
- Moreland and Levine's (1982, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) model of stages of membership includes stages of prospective member, new member, full member, marginal member, and ex-member, where members are accordingly concerned with different aspects of group life.
- Worcel, Couyant-Sassic, and Grossman (1992, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) propose six stages to group development. An initial stage of discontent is followed by a participating event uniting group members. A third stage involves identification of individuals with the group. The fourth stage involves group productivity as a focus. Next, attention is focused on the individual group member and a negotiation occurs to reconcile task efforts with personal goals. The final stage is one of disintegration.
- Levinger (1980, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) suggests a theory of five stages to close relationships. These are: initial attraction, building a relationship, continuation, deterioration and ending the relationship.
- McGrath (1991) proposes a model of groups and their development that gives particular attention to temporal processes in group interaction and performance, known as the "Time, Interaction and Performance" (TIP) theory of groups. According to this model, groups perform three distinct functions: production functions, well-being functions, and member support functions which are to be attended to within four modes of group activity. These modes of group activity are: Mode 1: Inception and acceptance of a project; Mode 2: Solution of technical issues; Mode 3: Resolution of conflict; Mode 4: Execution of the performance requirements of the project. This can be compared with Tuckman's (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) stage theory. All projects begin with mode one and end with mode four, but may not involve modes three and four. There is a set of modes for each of the functions which means that groups are always acting in one of the four modes with respect to each of the three functions, but not necessarily in the same mode for all functions.

Stewart and Barrick (2000) in their paper on team structure and performance note that almost every model developed to explain team performance is grounded in McGrath's (1984) input-process-output perspective. Summed up, the basic proposition of this model is that inputs such as structural characteristics combine to affect team processes, which in turn influence team outputs. However, they question its legitimacy, drawing attention to the fact that the input-process-output links have received little empirical attention, and may not always apply.

Both McGrath's (1984) and Tuckman's (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) models of teamwork have been criticized recently on the basis that they do not acknowledge cognitive transitions of members and do not account for individuals' perceptions of, and interaction with the environment (Lembke & Wilson, 1998).

There are also numerous *recurring-phase theories* outlined by Johnson and Johnson (1997):

- Bales (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) proposes that an equilibrium needs to exist between task-oriented work and emotional expressions to build better relationships between group members striving for solidarity. The group tends then to oscillate between these two foci.
- Bion (1961, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) argues that groups focus on three basic themes of: dependency on the leader, pairing among group members for support, and fight-flight reactions to perceived threats to the group.
- Schultz (1958, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) states that groups develop focusing on affection, inclusion and control.

Where Johnson and Johnson (1997) distinguish between recurring phase and stage theories, Payne (1982) refers to two main approaches to group development, and classifies group / team development models accordingly. He identifies a *developmental approach* where teams change in a recognizable pattern i.e. work groups grow into collaborative teams. This approach encompasses Tuckman's (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) model described above, and Brill's (1976, cited in Payne, 1982) model of processes of orientation, accommodation, negotiation and operation. Woodcock (1990) notes that although Tuckman and Brill's models suggest development as a natural, evolutionary process, many teams get stuck in an undeveloped stage and need an outside push to progress to further stages. Carrell, Jennings and Heavrin (1997) also note that a change agent may be needed to stimulate development and the team building process. The second approach Payne (1982) distinguishes is what he calls the *contingency view*, which includes models that maintain that the type of team depends on the preferences of those involved, the nature of the work required, and the kind of organisation the team is situated in. This results in the possibility of many different types of "proper" teams co-existing, and no necessity for members to move along a collaboration continuum if their context does not demand it.

Having outlined these two approaches to team development Payne (1982) suggests a compromise wherein teams might or might not progress through stages depending on contingencies affecting them. Teams can progress through group development suggested by authors above only if pressures affecting them make development relevant.

Lembke and Wilson (1998) raise questions around these models and perhaps align themselves more closely to Payne's (1982) compromise in saying that the teamwork in an organisation involves an overlap of team and individual activities, and the different backgrounds, expectations and interpersonal styles of people as well as varying work pressures and restrictions make it difficult to apply traditional and highly popular group dynamics models such as Tuckman's (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) and McGrath's (1984). Again, this points to the need to explore different meanings ascribed to teams and teamwork from members' perspectives.

## 2.3 TYPES OF TEAMS

Huszczo (1990) adds to the debate about what constitutes a team by noting that there are several types of teams and assuming all teams are alike is a common pitfall of team building processes. Van der Vegt et al. (2000) state that innumerable types of teams operate in organisations, e.g. autonomous work groups, project groups, and multifunction work teams. This research, by exploring constructions of teams, picks up on this multiplicity, by attempting to highlight different ways in which team members themselves speak about teams and how these varying constructions impact on group/team members. The literature consulted (Aranda, Aranda & Conlon, 1998; Dyer, 1987; Huszczo, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; Payne, 1982) again suggests several ways to classify teams into varying types. Thus teams may be classified according to:

- The *setting in which they exist/are applied* (either a work team, sports team or learning team).
- *How they may be used* in an organisation (as problem-solving teams, special-purpose teams, action committees, or self-managing teams).
- *What they do/their type of task* (teams that recommend things, teams that make or do things, and teams that run things. Huszczo (1990) suggests quality circles specifically).
- Their *structure* (structured co-operatively, competitively or individualistically).
- The *interrelationships between members* (leader-centered or coordinative; individual or work groups).
- The *types of skills and roles fulfilled* by members (integrated – having homogenous skills/roles or differentiated – having heterogeneous skills/roles).
- The *level they work at* and the *duration of their work* (work teams, management teams, and task / project teams).
- The *degree of autonomy* of the team (managed or autonomous / self directed work teams).
- How the team is *elected* (elected or appointed committees).
- Who the team is *comprised of* (employee-participation groups, joint union/management leadership teams or supervisory councils).

## 2.4 EFFECTIVE GROUPS

In addition to a suggested developmental process, although vague, it appears that it is “effective groups” that are regarded to be teams (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). Johnson and Johnson (1997) consequently differentiate between pseudo, traditional, effective/cooperative and high performing cooperative groups to identify effective teams. Pseudo groups are those whose members have been assigned to work together but who have no interest in doing so (problems with conflicting goals, interaction etc.). A traditional work group is a group whose members agree to work together, but see little benefit from doing so. An effective group is more than the sum of its parts, has a sense of commitment to the group and is accountable to the group. Academic and personal support is provided as members produce work; social skills are important, and all members accept the responsibility for leadership. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on continuous improvement of the quality of their learning and teamwork processes. Finally, a high performance group is one in which a very high level of commitment is demonstrated by members.

Thus, Johnson and Johnson's (1997) model of an effective group comprises five basic elements. These include positive interdependence, individual (personal responsibility) and group accountability, promotive interaction (face-to-face), social skills and effective group processing. Johnson and Johnson (1997) and Johnson (1996) also consider group effectiveness in terms of several other areas of proficiency. With regard to goals, these are to be closely matched between the group and the individual, take precedence over individual goals, as well as be co-operatively structured (as opposed to being competitively structured) and elevated. Communication is to be open (candid) and two-way. Participation and leadership are to be distributed among all group members, although a principled and respected leader is in place. Power is shared in a collaborative environment, and contracts are created. Competent members are required who give feedback and reinforcement and have a unified commitment, a results oriented milieu, and a standard of excellence. External support is also important. Huszczo's (1990) seven components of successful teams closely resemble Johnson and Johnson's model of effective groups, being: clear goals, talent, defined roles, effective and efficient operating procedures, supportive interpersonal relations, active reinforcement systems for sustaining teamwork, and constructive external relationships with its broader environment.

Collins (1992) outlines several assumptions about the way that effective teams work pertaining predominantly to interpersonal functioning. These include that people care for each other, people share both feelings and ideas, conflict and disagreement are worked through, decisions are usually made by consensus, the team has clear direction and goals, and people listen to each other.

Payne (1982) suggests that a team's efficacy be assessed on a more limited range of factors including the goals of the team and how they are agreed, internal and external expectations of the team, leadership in the team, communication, and group processes.

### 2.5 Developing Effective Groups – The Need for Team Building

May and Schwoerer (1994) highlight that due to the prevalence of teams in organisations today, managers are faced with the challenge of finding ways to enhance work team effectiveness and develop teams to achieve the abovementioned measures of efficacy. Barnard (1999) maintains that the reason that team development has become a popular buzzword is that the inability to work in groups is costly to an organisation in terms of production and production of other teams. Dyer (1987) points out that team building (a particular way of developing teams) is appropriate when there is a need to improve some basic condition or process interfering with the achievement of organisational goals or output. Team building initiatives as a means to development have thus become a more frequent investment in organisations today than ever before. Mackay (2000) asks when the last time was that readers of his paper attended a conference or seminar that did *not* have at least one session devoted to team building. Some scepticism however is evident in the literature, with Lembke and Wilson (1998) noting that research and models available on teams on which team development is based lack clarity regarding how teams work, that teamwork is not actually described, and that emotional and cognitive processes involved with teamwork are often neglected. Dyer (1987) does caution that team building is not always an appropriate intervention.

A useful way of looking at different team development approaches is to consider that effective groups/teams can be developed via two approaches: designing and developing groups (structuring), and training groups (team building). Katzenbach and Smith (1993) outline a holistic process to forming and nurturing teams addressing both these aspects. The team needs to be presented with its mission, structured to facilitate positive interdependence among members and encouraged to redefine the mission into team-specific, operationalised goals. Regular and frequent meetings need to be held to facilitate team relationships and learn to be a team. In a first meeting, clear rules of conduct are to be established regarding attendance, confidentiality, contribution, constructive confrontation, end-product orientation etc. Accountability is ensured by measuring the progress of the team in achieving its goals. Results should be measured to demonstrate progress. The team should be exposed to new information that assists in redefining its understanding of its mission, purpose and goals. Training should be provided to enhance teamwork and task work skills. Team celebrations and the recognition of members' contributions to team success should be frequent. Finally, frequent team-processing sessions need to be held.

Focusing specifically on *structuring and designing* teams, Johnson and Johnson (1997) define group structure as a stable pattern of interaction among members. They, as well as Katzenbach and Smith (1993), list several guidelines to inform the process of forming a team that pertain to its structure. Firstly the size of the team needs to be kept small. Secondly, team members need to be selected on the basis of their expertise and skills as well as consideration of their potential for developing new expertise and skills. Belbin (1993) highlights several key aspects with respect to choosing team members to complement one another in terms of disposition and ability. Thirdly, careful planning should be undertaken bringing together the resources the team will need to function (support personnel, space, information, materials).

Other than designing teams, however, *training* is employed to develop effective groups. Team building is among the fundamental methods used to enhance teams effectiveness, and as mentioned has become a buzzword of contemporary organisations. It is assumed to be necessitated by the fact that good team members are "trained and not born" (Caudron, 1994), because teamwork does not always happen naturally and is something that team leaders and members must work hard at in order to achieve (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn,1994). The actual process of building teams does however refer to a variety of approaches, and is - not surprisingly - ill defined. A survey of current literature has revealed that little has been written about team building, and that the literature available is lacking strong theoretical bases.

One area of literature that might be used to access team building commentary, is amidst Organisation Development references, where it is often described as a change/OD intervention (Muchinsky, 1993; Smither, 1994). Renede (1991) refers broadly to team building as an activity (undertaken with a group of individuals) controlled by a facilitator, designed to build the strength or cohesion of the team through the development of work or interpersonal relationships. Johnson and Johnson (1997) argue that essential are clear co-operative goals, effective communication, good leadership, effective decision making, constructive conflict management, and positive use of power.

Amongst team members it is important to ensure that there is a strong perception of interdependence, members interact in ways to promote each others' successes, members are individually accountable, employ their small-team skills and process how the team is working.

## 2.6 THE PURPOSE OF TEAM BUILDING

According to Woodman and Sherwood (1980), there are a number of assumptions underlying a decision to engage in team building. The first of these is that the group has a reason for existing. The second is that interdependent action is required to achieve the group's goals, and thirdly that it is valuable to spend time diagnosing, understanding and improving how group members work together. Woodman and Sherwood (1980) also point out that the collaborative nature of team building rests on a body of research that indicates that direct involvement in planning change is more likely to result in favourable consequences than is the imposition of change. A final assumption is found in the central role that groups play in organisations.

Bearing in mind that team building is undertaken in various literal and temporal contexts, it follows that the purposes of team building will vary accordingly. The literature suggests that team building can be modified to suit particular instances of team building, but very broadly can be used in the following instances: to strengthen an existing team, establish a new team, re-form a team after a restructuring, or improve interfaces between several teams (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982). It is used to accelerate group development or act as a catalyst for change (Carrell, Jennings & Heavrin, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1997).

Johnson and Johnson (1997) note, even more specifically, that most team building initiatives aim to improve the productivity of the team, the quality of members' relationships, the levels of members' social skills, and the ability of the team to adapt to changing conditions and demands. According to Woodman and Sherwood (1980), the objectives of team development are to remove barriers to effective group functioning, and build up an ability to manage group processes effectively to more effectively meet future challenges.

## 2.7 TYPES OF TEAM BUILDING

The fact that there are different varieties of teams (as previously outlined), necessitates that different approaches to team building are undertaken. Not only does team building take place across this variety of teams, but team building also occurs in a variety of contexts or organisations. This is revealed in literature by the wide diversity of applications of team building initiatives ranging from industry to governmental, educational or more informal settings such as NGOs. Payne (1982) terms the organisation / agency / institution that the team belongs to the host organisation. He goes on to say that team relationships with their hosts are often complicated because they share various structures, and objectives may differ. In the context of this research it is important to acknowledge the context of the team building as a university rather than a typical "organisation".

Questions are then raised as to whether the team building programme purposed to develop collaborative learning or purely to develop a team. A learning exercise might prioritise developing individuals rather than purely focusing on production. Setting of group assignments and awarding a common mark rather than quantifying individual inputs however, would suggest that the group in question was being assessed on its ability to produce collaborative work rather than learn about collaboration regardless of the final output.

Team building interventions can also differ according to the point in team development at which they are applied i.e. undertaken in a newly formed group or well established (temporally) team (Dyer, 1987). Distinction is thus made between initiation team building and performance team building for example, as was made evident when outlining the purposes of team building (Carrell et al., 1997). Initiation team building is undertaken in order to accelerate the development of a newly formed team. Performance team building is undertaken to increase the effectiveness of an established team.

Literature differentiates between team building initiatives, however, not only on the basis of the environment of their application, but also classifies them according to the nature of, and techniques used for initiatives. Techniques used include workshopping, formal training, experiential getaways, and discussion groups. More frequently team building over the Internet is appearing wherein virtual team exercises are engaged in by participants connected to the Internet at different locations (Maritz, 2000). This is particularly important given the demands of a global work environment. The nature of initiatives range from dealing with personal growth training (Conger, 1993), to job specific material (content), and the multi-skilling of workers.

## 2.8 MODELS OF TEAM BUILDING

Woodman and Sherwood (1980) and Liebowitz and de Meuse (1982) have attempted to classify the variety of approaches to team building into four models. They propose that the activities in a team development (or team building) intervention may focus on *group processes* (such as working relationships or problem solving skills) or on *group tasks* (emphasizing goal setting and action planning). Woodman and Sherwood's (1980) and Liebowitz and de Meuse's (1982) four models are outlined below, and have been integrated with other literature on team building.

The *goal-setting model* involves the setting of objectives by the members of a group, and then the identification of problems that interfere with the accomplishment of these goals.

The *interpersonal model* is based on the assumption that people who are competent in their interpersonal skills can function more effectively as a team. It emphasizes the importance of opening communication by increasing mutual trust, interpersonal cooperation, and group cohesiveness. The interpersonal approach is intended to positively affect problem solving, conflict management, and decision making techniques. This model is largely subscribed to in the literature, with much written about team relationships, conflict etc. and increasing attention being paid to the role of emotions.

Van der Vegt et al. (2000) note that given the prominence of organisational groups, it is important to create workplaces where employees are helped to feel positively about the groups in which they work. They point out that dissatisfied group members can destroy the team because of unresolved conflicts and divisive interactions. Bishop et al. (2000) maintain that members of work teams should be able to form perceptions as to whether, and to what degree, their teammates value their input and care about them, and further that managers should consider the salience of employee support in the modern workplace. They draw a direct connection between support of employees and productivity.

The *role model* views a group as a product of interacting roles. It is assumed that group effectiveness can be increased by a better understanding of these roles. A variety of role theories do however exist. Napier and Gershenfeld (1989) propose that roles are norms at an individual level; expectations for the behaviour of a particular person. Johnson and Johnson (1997, p.20) define a role as a set of expectations defining the appropriate behaviour of an occupant of a position toward other related positions, and "members who conform to their role requirements are rewarded, while those who deviate are punished." Role conflict occurs when the demands of one role are incompatible with the demands of another role. Different roles are accorded different status (Johnson & Johnson, 1997), which affects group processes. Effects have to do with high status individuals being more highly valued by the group and so being treated more tolerantly (Johnson & Allen, 1972 in Johnson & Johnson, 1997). This is because status refers to the degree to which an individual's contribution is crucial to the success of the group, how much power that individual has, and the extent to which the person embodies some idealised or admired characteristic.

Belbin (1997) differentiates between a team role and a functional role. A *team role* refers to the tendency to act, contribute and interrelate with others at work in distinctive ways, while a *functional role* refers to the job demands that a person is required to meet through applying the appropriate technical skills and operational knowledge. Literature actually sets up several universal team roles. An example of this is those suggested by Payne (1982): leader, fighter, catalyst, know-it-all, manipulator, peacemaker; and also a joker, radical, activist and a representative of the silent majority.

The fourth team building model is called the *managerial grid*, and is a specific intervention designed by Blake and Mouton (1968, cited in Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982). It is standardised and has its own instrumentation, and emphasises developing a team-culture focusing on productivity and concern for people. Its focus overlaps with each of the other models.

## 2.9 THE PROCESS OF TEAM BUILDING

Payne (1982) differentiates between team building that is focused on content and that focused on processes. Content includes aspects such as task differentiation, role integration and problem solving. Processes include a variety of aspects such as Dyer's (1987) important aspects to be communicated and clarified. These include revealing and setting of priorities, expectations, goals and operating guidelines. He also refers to looking at ideas of creating an identity (a name for the group), statement of purpose, contracting, leadership, discussion of values, intimacy and trust, communication and problem solving.

Johnson and Johnson (1997) define a process as an identifiable sequence of events taking place over time. Process goals then refer to the sequence of events instrumental in achieving outcome goals. Group processing may be defined as reflecting on the success of members' actions and how to improve on/change them, essentially monitoring group functioning. Effectiveness in this context refers to the ability to manage problems facing a group and to accomplish group goals, so that members of a work group can examine their own behaviours and develop means by which to improve group effectiveness.

In order to do this, a strategy needs to be formulated to meet specific objectives based on identified needs (Renede, 1991), team members need to be selected (Belbin, 1993) and relevant exercises / activities need to be devised and conducted that can be reflected upon to achieve action learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Woodcock, 1990). In other words, members work together in a participative way to assess group functioning, analyzing procedures and activities of the team to take corrective action and improve long-term effectiveness of a team by improving processes of working together (Carrell et al., 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Schermerhorn et al., 1994). Johnson and Johnson (1997) note that in actuality, most team building interventions are based on an action research model employing three basic processes: information collection, feedback of this data, and action planning based on collected information. Yarks (2000) claims that action learning has been an increasingly popular approach in the last decade to producing solutions for organisational problems and developing management talent. It can also be a catalyst for organisational change when clearly linked to organisational goals and well supported with appropriate systems and activities.

Activities chosen for the team building can be work related, fun, or even a social activity (Renede, 1991), and can pertain to content issues such as job related problems, or process issues such as communication skills. The nature of activities also vary depending on the context of the team building both with respect to the practicalities of budget, venue, time and atmosphere, as well as team development, participants involved and the nature of the work to be conducted (Dearling, 1991; Schermerhorn et al., 1994). Exercises need not only be reflected upon as discussed, but need to be applied back into the work context (Carrell et al., 1997; Collins, 1992), to integrate the team building (Du Frene, Sharbrough, Clipson and McCall, 1999). Although Du Frene et al. (1999) maintain that outdoor activities are an effective medium for self awareness because participants cannot hide behind organisational and educational norms, they suggest that elements of outdoor activities can be adapted to the indoors to make them physiologically and emotionally safer as well as more easily transferable to the work setting, and more closely related to the actual job. A review phase should be built into any intervention to evaluate its efficacy, not only at completion but at points during the process too.

Ultimately the relevance of types of team building e.g. diagnosing current problems or developing interpersonal relationships is dependent on the type of team and setting (Robbins, 1996). The nature of the team building initiative should be derived from the objective of the intervention. Different foci are evident in the literature between taskwork (content) and teamwork (process) as briefly introduced.

## 2.10 HINDRANCES TO TEAM BUILDING AND PERFORMANCE

Dearling (1991) notes several reasons for resistance to team building, including: firstly lack of trust and respect between team members; secondly fears that too many sensitive issues will come up in team building; thirdly fear that the team building process will expose individuals' inadequacies in terms of personal or performance skills; fourthly there is too much work already and too little time to do it in; fifthly unhappiness with regard to the team building facilitator/agent; and finally poor previous team building experiences for some of the team members.

Dyer (1987) notes the importance of acknowledging that: team building takes time (changing entrenched associations / behaviour); people in power must support change; involvement enhances commitment in team building; team development may need to be done more than once; and team building must be rewarded. If these aspects are not acknowledged they might hinder team building.

Johnson and Johnson (1997) refer to several factors affecting group performance when an imbalance of work can be found in the team. The free rider effect (Kerr & Bruun, 1983, in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) refers to when less able team members allow a particular team member to take over tasks, and expend decreasing amounts of effort, just going through the teamwork motions. The sucker effect (Kerr, 1983, in Johnson & Johnson, 1997), refers to more able team members doing all the work. The rich-get-richer effect refers to high ability team members taking over important leadership roles at the expense of other team members (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). Team efforts can also be hindered by self induced helplessness, diffusion of responsibility, social loafing, ganging up against a task (reactance), dysfunctional divisions of labour, and inappropriate dependence on authority (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). Avolio (1995) refers to the problem of groupthink, defining it as a mode of thinking wherein concurrence seeking becomes so dominant in a cohesive in-group that it overrides a realistic appraisal of options available to the team. It is characterised by a deterioration in mental efficiency, reality testing and moral judgements, as well as by an avoidance of conflict. Avolio (1995) also mentions what he terms the killer instinct, whereby a group becomes hardhearted when it comes to dealing with outgroups. This can lead to intergroup conflict within an organisation. Finally, group cohesiveness can result in group conformity and a reluctance to rock the boat.

## 2.11 CRITIQUE OF TEAM BUILDING

Although team building has implicitly been critiqued throughout this chapter, Collins (1992) notes some very specific criticisms of team building. She maintains that the popularity of team-building sessions on the basis of their tendency to be creative and stimulating. She points out, however, that they are usually held in a venue which promotes team interaction "away from the stresses of the workplace" (1992, p. 37). She claims that often little of this learning is translated into the work place subsequent to such training, despite the fact that people come away feeling that they have discussed some issues in depth and on the basis of having got to know one another better, feel that they are able to work together better. Collins (1992) maintains that 90% of business decisions are operational, making sharing and trust "nice-to-haves" rather than essential.

She does however concede that teamwork and sharing are useful within a context of strategic decision making where every member of the group should input with regard to the future direction of the organisation. Collins (1992) summarises by saying that high levels of trust and openness are seldom essential in work done by management groups, and that anyway, very few groups are teams. She proposes a diagnostic stage / needs analysis to avoid team building becoming "just the latest panacea from the training department" (1992, p.37).

Huszczo (1990) notes that teams are often viewed as closed systems in team development, demonstrated by a focus on their internal dynamics (how members relate to one another, the roles people play etc.) and not on the teams relationship to the larger organisation. He further highlights that team building is often confused with teamwork, as relationship building is only one of several things that effective teams need. Another downfall is that team training is often undertaken without assessing team needs where "canned approaches" rather than tailor made approaches are applied. Without any pre-data, team effectiveness cannot be said to have improved following team training interventions. Huszczo (1990, p.39) makes the critical point that

> "not looking into team knowledge and skills before a program is like pretending that team members don't know anything about teams before they go into training. It's as if we send people to these magic sessions and some person external to the team (a trainer) 'fixes' the team."

## 3. ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF TEAMS

Bearing in mind that how individuals understand teams is central to having a common purpose within team building, and that literature is lacking in the aforementioned ways and so diverse in its commentary, it would seem vital that this diversity of meaning (resulting in different expectations and levels of commitment) is exposed, and at a participant level. Lembke and Wilson (1998) make the critical point that teamwork is a function of how team members perceive the team and their role in it, challenging the fundamental assumptions of management research to integrate social identity findings. Isaacs (1993) notes that humans operate within shared, living fields of assumptions and constructed meaning, however due to the diversity of individuals, these fields tend to be unstable, fragmented and incoherent. When bringing together a group of individuals, constructed meaning is likely to reflect the diversity of that group. Thus, there are implications for any group of people attempting to reach a common understanding in order to reach a mutual goal. Most literature pertaining to this and to changes in the workplace is however, cognitive rather than discursive. For example Hames (1994) refers to cognitive maps, (see also Lembke & Wilson (1998) and Hirschhorn & Gilmore's (1992) paper on how to deal with organisational boundaries that have become cognitive because of flattening structures of current organisations). This presents an opportunity to expand the base of organisational theory in a discursive direction. Only fairly recently has organisational theory been looked at through a postmodern or discursive lens (Hames, 1994; Pietersen, 1989). A significant paper in this regard is Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya's (1996) article entitled "Organisations as a play of multiple and dynamic discourses" in which they consider a multiplicity of organisational stories subscribing to a Foucauldian ("critical") approach. Various approaches to discourse analysis will be explained in the following chapter.

Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) present their research as an attempt to theorize organisations in a way that is “evocative, multiplicitous and generative”, and describe how organisations can be understood as “multiple discourses operating simultaneously” (p. 308–309). These discourses create a pluralistic construction of many stories, which participants in an organisation realize differently. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) differentiate their research from other studies on the basis of their rejection of the idea that the multiple discourses identified by the research can be integrated by a logical, common purpose. This is in line with a postmodern stance that rejects a grand theory of reality and accepts a plurality of narratives and meanings (Gergen, 1990). Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) also challenge a binary assumption about the nature of discourses (that either a discourse is present or absent), claiming that this allows for a richness and subtlety that can inform theories and change efforts. Importantly, there are a variety of approaches to discourse analysis, each of which defines the term “discourse” differently. When Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) refer to discourse, they refer to sets of ideas and practices that condition our ways of relating to particular phenomena that are embedded in social practices. They regard discourses as being changeable and dynamic.

Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya’s (1996) study was conducted over a three year period in a large global nongovernmental organisation. Through interviews and reference to documentation (organisational reports, brochures and policy documents), they identified four main discourses of participation, global social change organisation, intense reflexivity and spirituality as well as considering the dynamics of these types of discourses. In this respect they outline continuous discourses as enjoying a privileged status throughout the life of an organisation, and existing in organisations to offer a linear history. Introduced discourses come into use as a result of a significant event or reconceptualisation of core activities in an organisation. Cyclical discourses are those that are privileged, deprivileged and reprivileged over time. Transformed discourses change dramatically in form while preserving critical elements of their earlier identity, such as when core constructs of an organistion change dramatically. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) also suggest other possibilities of dynamics of discourses such as dialectical, spiral and mosaic which they do not define. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) ultimately maintain that considering discourses that form and shape organising is a powerful way to inquire into the multiplicity of meaning in organisations.

This research aims to expose different constructions of teams by identifying and studying the language participants use to describe teams. A basic theoretical tenet of discourse analysis is that people’s talk (discourse) constructs a specific reality or meaning, affecting practical actions in the world (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Phenomena are thus created by the language used to describe them, as discourse is now seen as a social practice in itself, rather than a neutral transmitter of meaning (Wetherell & Potter, 1988). Discourse Analysis seems an unlikely methodology to apply to the typically empiricist and often applied research findings of Industrial Psychology (within which the study of teams falls), however Potter and Wetherell (1987) note that a concern with discourse assists with a better understanding of social life and social interaction via the study of social texts.

Teamwork revolves around the interaction of team members and having shared goals and understanding. Yet, Isaacs (1993) and Lembke and Wilson (1998) amongst others point out that individuals have different assumptions and perceptions. As a solution to this diversity of meaning, Isaacs (1993) maintains that if people can be brought into a setting where they can become conscious of the very process by which they form (construct) tacit associations (in this case about teams) then they can develop a capacity for working together, suggesting that discourse can be reflected upon once recognized as constructive.

Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis which emphasizes looking at constructions of teams, the variation between constructions, and how these function is therefore a particularly useful way of looking at the multiplicity of meaning in this area, and the effects created by different discourse - employed not only by members of a team but in the literature too. Importantly, this is then a generative way of looking at teams because multiple constructions are not necessarily integrated by some overarching logic, but are simply discourses / repertoires coexisting simultaneously (Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996).

The research question to be investigated therefore is to consider notions of "the team" via discourse analysis with respect to constructions of the team, variation between these, and what particular effects are achieved by these constructions.

# CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

## 1. METHOD

### 1.1 A QUALITATIVE, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

This research lies squarely within the qualitative paradigm. A qualitative approach was chosen to address the issue of notions of teams because it allows for the collection of rich, detailed, descriptive material. Also, qualitative researchers focus on the context of research material thereby producing sensitive, detailed and holistic research (Banister, Burman, Parker, Tindall & Taylor, 1994). In addition, qualitative methods "are thought to meet a number of reservations about the uncritical use of quantification in social science practice", and act as a vehicle to make explicit the relationship between researchers and participants (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p.42).

A qualitative paradigm is not however unitary, but rather encompasses approaches that differ in terms of their epistemology, methodology (theoretical analysis defining a research problem) and method (research strategy / technique) (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1994). Henwood and Pidgeon (1994) differentiate between three strands of qualitative inquiry that they refer to as: reliability and validity, generativity and grounding (a contextual epistemology), and a discursive and reflexive approach (constructivist/nist epistemology, methodological principles of interpretive analysis). The first strand has an empirical focus on the discovery of valid representations, appraising research in light of criteria of reliability and validity. The second strand prioritises generating new theory firmly grounded in participants' own accounts and experiences, using interpretivist methodologies such as Grounded Theory. The third strand focuses on how language reflexively constructs representations of the world, and is situated within general epistemological position of social constructionism (as opposed to interpretivism in the second strand).

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) also differentiate between research methods based interpretivist and social constructionist traditions and explore this further in terms of their different understandings of reality. Whilst both approaches are qualitative, interpretive and thus concerned with meaning, interpretivist approaches focus on subjective understandings and experiences of people, treating them as the origin of their beliefs and experiences, whereas social constructionism considers how understanding and experience are derived from and are a part of larger discourses. In other words, social constructionism considers peoples' thoughts and feelings as products of social rather than individual systems of meaning, e.g. personal attitudes or dispositions. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) explain that social constructionism accesses this meaning by focusing on language, and holds that the human life world is constituted in and by language. They therefore define social constructionism as an approach attempting to investigate the power of signs and images to create specific representations (underlying the experience) of people and objects.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim's (1999) argument is as follows. Language is deemed inescapable as we have learnt and adopted it before we can reflect on it. In a profound way language constructs reality rather than merely transmitting it, and encodes patterns of social meaning. It is not a collection of signs each referring to specific concepts, but is rather a system of meanings wherein a sign has meaning by

virtue of its difference and position relative to other signs (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The meaning of a word can thus be understood by comparing it with other meanings (Durrheim, 1997).

Social constructionism pays attention to interpreting the *social world* as a "language" / system of meaning. A wide range of social practices provide the context of meaning (Durrheim, 1997), i.e. language, as well as other representations of reality e.g. pictures, practices and physical arrangements of the world construct versions of the world by providing a framework through which the world can be understood and our place and role in it. We therefore reproduce and re-enact ruling discourses and relative patterns when we act (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Discourse analysis is an example of a social constructionist method within Henwood and Pidgeon's (1994) third strand of qualitative enquiry that is utilized in this research. According to Durrheim (1997) discourse analysis is an appropriate social constructionist method because it addresses the problem with empiricist science. It does this by rejecting both the idea of truth, representation and objectivity as well as the idea that, psychologically, meaning is derived from individual sensory experience or cognition / mental operations. Discourse analysis can be defined as a range of methods showing how language is used to achieve particular effects in specific contexts (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

## 1.2. THE APPLICABILITY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis has its roots in a variety of perspectives: philosophy, sociology and literary theory (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Burman and Parker (1993) refer to discourse analysis as offering a social account of subjectivity by attending to the linguistic resources by which the socio-political realm is produced and reproduced. This would place discourse analysis as the latest successor to, or version of, approaches such as hermeneutics and social semiotics. All approaches to discourse analysis involve an attention to the ways in which language (as with other representational systems) does more than reflect what it represents, with the corresponding implication being that meanings are multiple and shifting, rather than unitary and fixed (Burman & Parker, 1993). Discourse analysts understand research to be interpretive and productive, not a descriptive practice (Durrheim, 1997). Rather than describing and explaining the world, discourse analysts attempt to account for how particular conceptions of the world become fixed 'truth'.

### 1.2.1 INTRODUCTION TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The basic foundation of discourse analysis is the view that language functions in the world, reflecting and constructing it rather than simply representing it. Because social texts do not merely reflect and describe objects, but actively construct versions and do things, they have social and political implications (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language is so central to social activities however, that it is easy to take for granted, and its familiarity makes it transparent to us (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). It is absent from most studies in Psychology, having become a forgotten object, assigned an essentially neutral and mediating role between the 'individual' and their 'environment' (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p.58). Language should however, be recognised as an intrusive and sticky medium, that cannot be merely wiped off surfaces i.e. because it constitutes objects and subjects it cannot be treated as distinct and detachable.

The recognition of language associated problems and the recognition that language is crucial to self reflection, and furthermore, to the development of Psychology as a moral science fired the "paradigm crisis" - an outcome of which was a “turn to language” in Psychology. Burman and Parker (1993) note that this “turn to the text” is useful for those who wish to transform rather than simply reproduce Psychology. Traditional methods used in Psychology are not progressing in identifying the semantic processes occurring in language as people recreate the phenomena psychologists usually want to understand and measure (Burman & Parker, 1993). Positivist approaches (highly favoured in Industrial Psychology) are faced with an insuperable problem when subjects start to make their own sense of the research setting, and researchers then try to make sense of the situation they have constructed for their subjects. Discourse analysis breaks most explicitly with the empirical model because representations of the world do not reflect an objective reality, but reflexively construct objects and subjects (constructivism) or are constructed as objects or subjects through discourse (constructionism), i.e. people are using their language to construct versions of the social world.

Discourse analysis is now a well established method (with many different approaches) of analysis that addresses ways in which language is structured to produce sets of meanings (Banister, Burman, Parker, Tindall & Taylor, 1994). It is essentially an exploration of how meaning is made. Discourse analysis treats the world as a social text, a "system of texts which can be systematically read by a researcher to lay open the psychological processes that lie within them" (Banister et al., p.92). In other words, discourse analysis deliberately systematises different ways of talking so we can understand them better (Parker, 1992). So then, instead of studying the mind (or, in this case of this research, the team) as if it were outside language, spoken and written texts (conversations, debates, discussions etc.) are studied, where images of the team are reproduced and transformed (Burman & Parker, 1993). Wetherell and Potter (1992) see the tensions, strains and contradictions in discourse as representative of underlying psychic strains and inconsistencies. Discourse analysis focuses on psychological activities such as justification, rationalisation, categorisation, naming, blaming, making sense, and identifying. It links these with collective forms of social action, and so has the potential to integrate psychological concerns with social analysis / analysis of team theory (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The psychological and social field is constructed, defined and articulated through discourse.

### 1.2.2. CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS - DIVERSITY

Discourse is seen to shape or configure social and psychological realities and as a term in itself is used in varying ways (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Generally speaking however, discourse refers to sets of statements that construct an object in a particular way. These shared patterns of meaning and contrasting ways of speaking are called *interpretive repertoires* by Potter and Wetherell (1987), *discourses* by Hollway (1989 in Burman & Parker, 1993) and Parker (1992), and *ideological dilemmas* by Billig (1988 in Burman & Parker, 1993). Burman and Parker (1993) make the point that these units / patterns of meaning are not “objects” awaiting discovery, but are actually produced through analysis, and are as much creations as they exist independently of us.

Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.6) note that the label discourse analysis has been used "as a generic term for virtually all research concerned with language in its social and cognitive context." Fairclough (1992) and Burman and Parker (1993) outline the diversity of discourse analytic approaches spanning several disciplines (and having multiple origins), and aiming to achieve different goals. Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.6) note “it is a field in which it is perfectly possible to have two books on discourse analysis with no overlap in content at all”. This proliferation of types of discourse analysis and the multiplicity of debates in discourse research can be overwhelming for a researcher new to the area. Each 'brand' of discourse involves different emphases or levels of styles of analysis. To speak of discourse analysis as a unitary entity would blur together approaches subscribing to specific and different philosophical frameworks. What unites approaches however is their subscription to social constructionist philosophy (i.e. common attention to the significance and structuring effects of language, as well as the association of discourse analyses with interpretive and reflexive styles of analysis) (Burman & Parker, 1993).

Both Fairclough (1992) and Burman and Parker (1993) provide outlines of various approaches to discourse analysis that are a useful means to consider the context out of which Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach emerged, and its distinction from other approaches. Fairclough (1992) surveys those approaches which in some degree combine close analysis of language texts with a social orientation to discourse. He takes a historical view of approaches distinguishing between approaches he calls critical, and those he considers to be non-critical according to the nature of their social orientation to discourse. This is not a complete division, but more of a distinction. Critical approaches are differentiated from non-critical approaches on the basis that they do not just describe discursive practices, but show how relations of power and ideologies produce discourse. These approaches also illustrate the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. Power relations, ideologies and the constructive nature of discourse aren't normally apparent to discourse participants (Fairclough, 1992). Burman and Parker (1993) survey a variety of approaches that are concerned with how language produces (and constrains) meaning. They further refine the approaches they consider, to those that focus on available forms of talk arising out of social conditions as opposed to meaning residing within individuals' heads.

The first category that Fairclough (1992) proposes is *Non-Critical Approaches* including:

- *Sinclair and Coulthard* (1975, cited in Fairclough, 1992), who focused on the classroom to develop a general descriptive system for analysing discourse.
- *Conversation analysis* which is an approach to discourse analysis developed by ethnomethodologists, oriented to discovering structures in texts, considering aspects of conversations such as conversational openings and closings, and understanding the nature of structures in dialogue.
- *Labov and Fanshel* (1977, cited in Fairclough, 1992), involving a study by a linguist and a psychologist of the therapeutic interview wherein language is seen as heterogeneous, reflecting contradictions and tensions of the interview situation.
- *Potter and Wetherell*'s (1987) original work showing how discourse analysis can be used as a method in Social Psychology to research issues traditionally approached with other methods.

Fairclough's second category refers to *Critical Approaches* including:

- *Critical linguistics*, an approach attempting to marry a method of linguistic text analysis with a social theory of the functioning of language in political and ideological processes.
- *Pecheux* (1979, cited in Fairclough, 1992), who like critical linguists combines a social theory of discourse with a method of text analysis, focusing largely on written political discourse.
- *Fairclough*'s (1992) own integrated approach, developed in response to previous approaches being considered linguistically oriented, and needing strengthening by drawing upon accounts of language and discourse in social theory. The object of analysis is linguistic texts and the processes of text production and interpretation (avoiding seeing texts as only products). Text analysis is in terms of a range of features of form and meaning.
  Discourse is regarded as socially constructive and is studied historically and dynamically within wider social change. Discourse analysis is concerned with power relations, how these shape and transform the discourse practices of a society / institution, or ideologies / practices.

*Burman and Parker's (1993) categories of discourse analysis* focus not on the aims of different discourse analytic approaches as do Fairclough's (1992), but rather distinguish approaches on the basis of different theoretical and methodological positions and different units of analysis. Their distinctions therefore do not necessarily contradict Fairclough's (1992) divisions. Burman and Parker (1993) note that the very terms and tools of discourse analysis become matters of interpretation and debate. They point out that often the use of particular writers as references is a reliable guide to the framework of discourse adopted, and identify three reference points in discourse analytic research in Psychology:

- *Repertoires and dilemmas* involve writers who have popularised discourse analysis in Social Psychology, (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987).
- *Conversation and the making of sense* is a category referring to approaches intended to develop a sense of the way in which language is used, and which focus on the inferential and interactive aspects of talk.
- *Structure and object* is a post-structuralist reference point, referring to an array of approaches that view language as inescapable, i.e. not being able to experience any aspect of ourselves as outside language. Post-structuralism (some referring to it as postmodernism) provokes a deconstruction of 'truths' that are accepted, as reality, behaviour and subjectivity is always in a text. Research orientation is based on a postmodern view of the "socially constructed nature of reality, or the socially constructed reality of nature." (Burman & Parker, 1993, p.6). Discourse analysis considers how both objects and subjects are constructed in discourse.

### 1.2.3. POTTER AND WETHERELL'S APPROACH AND ITS APPLICABILITY

When Potter and Wetherell refer to discourse (1987) they specifically note that they use the term "discourse" in its most open sense, referring to all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds. They include meanings, conversations, narratives, explanations, accounts and anecdotes (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). It follows then that a discourse analysis would mean an analysis of any of the above mentioned forms of discourse, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of social life and social interaction through the study (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Language is after all the most fundamental and pervasive form of interaction between people and a large part of activities are performed through language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach revolves around three concepts, namely the construction, function and variation of language.

**Construction**

People use their language to construct versions of the world. According to Potter and Wetherell (1987), the term construction is applicable for three reasons. It initially is a reminder of the fact that accounts of events are built out of various pre-existing "linguistic resources" (1987, p.33) known as interpretive repertoires. Construction also implies an active selection (and omission) of resources. Finally, construction as a notion emphasises the powerful, consequential nature of accounts. Potter and Wetherell (1987) note that "much of social interaction is based around dealings with events and people which are experienced *only* in terms of specific linguistic versions. In a profound sense, accounts 'construct' reality" (p.34). Important to note is that this process may occur and a construction emerge through unselfconscious social activities. Despite this, there is no language that is not of consequence for discourse analysts as all language is constructive. Potter and Wetherell (1987) emphasise that people are *always* constructing versions and re-describing events, not only when they are prejudiced. Discourse analysts are thus concerned with functional aspects of *all* kinds of talk. Also, language is both constructed and constructive. Importantly, discourse analysts are not attempting to try and uncover reality, but are looking rather at how discourse is manufactured to present versions of reality.

**Function**

The focus on function is one of the major components of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) brand of discourse analysis, concentrating on what language *does*. Talk has a variety of functions above merely transmitting information (Burman & Parker, 1993) and is put to a range of functions, such as explaining, cajoling etc. (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysts are therefore interested in different ways in which texts are organized and the consequences of using some organisations rather than others. Analysts must not only describe representations, but also determine how they are used. Analysis of function cannot be seen, however, as a simplistic process of categorising pieces of speech, but depends on the analyst reading the context within which the speech is situated (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In other words, the function of the language can only be recognised from the context. Functions can be specific or more global. A person trying to present him/herself in a favourable light as an example of a more global function that people commonly employ talk for (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Potter and Wetherell (1987) also propose that instead of assuming one account is correct, the functions that each account serve must be highlighted so that the purposes of talk can aid understanding of what is happening in social life. They recommend in this regard, that analysts focus exclusively on the discourse rather than on the possibility of accounts being accurate or inaccurate.

**Variation**

If talk is oriented to many different functions, there is considerable variation of language. In other words, discourse analysts see variation in accounts as a consequence of performing different acts in their talk. The variation in peoples' accounts is seen to be of more importance than consistency which is usually focused on by psychologists. People's language use is far more variable than is indicated by the well known 'realistic' descriptive model of language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Because discourse analysis does not presume that accounts reflect underlying entities, attitudes etc., individuals' discourse is not expected to be coherent and consistent. The same phenomenon can after all be described in a number of different ways.

Further, with respect to the realistic model, there is no way to determine ‘accurate’ accounts from those that are rhetorical or misguided. Focus is then on the discourse itself and what it is doing, based on how it is organized.

So then, function involves constructions of versions, and is demonstrated by language variation. Addison (1989) makes the point that the choice of a method of investigation depends on the problem to be researched, and that the method chosen must fit the problem of the investigation. Bearing in mind that this research has aimed to consider meanings (shared and individual) of what a team is, Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) discourse analytic approach as thus far defined is an appropriate tool to consider how participants are constructing their experience of “teams” (and creating meaning within a team building context). In particular, Potter and Wetherell’s attention to the construction, function and variation of language provides a useful framework to consider notions of teams. Firstly, the construction of phenomena by language determines how such phenomena are known and experienced.

It is also important to understand participants’ constructions of the team in terms of whether they differ across participants (variation of discourse), and how and why participants use particular constructions to create specific effects (function of discourse). Further to this, variation is of definite relevance when researching a team who might describe themselves and events differently especially considering that a version of an object indicates an evaluation of that object, and that teams supposedly have shared goals and expectations. Also, to attempt to locate an ‘accurate’ version of the team would deny others’ interpretations that regardless of recognition, function to achieve specific effects.

Burman and Parker (1993) note that language (organised into discourses/interpretive repertoires) has an immense power to shape not only the way in which people see (and construct) the world, but how this translates into the way that they experience and behave in the world, given that language contains the most basic categories that we use to understand ourselves. This has tremendous implications for how the notions of “teams” impact on team contexts, suggesting that the diverse meanings ascribed to teams might result in different experiences of the team for most team members. Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) approach is most useful in this regard as they focus on the practical role of talk and what is being achieved by it. Discourse in action is studied rather than language as an abstract system (Potter et al., 1990). This provides somewhat of a greater fit with the applied and practical nature of organisational theory in which research findings are often operationalised into action statements.

There are several other salient aspects of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) approach that make it an appropriate one to use to investigate the notion of a “team”. With respect to function, when reading a text, an analyst would move from the surface of discourse to the supposed latent content, which would be the active, purposive, or functional nature of the talk designed for that context. This of course would be an interpretive endeavor on the part of the analyst to account for the speaker’s choice of discourse. Abrams and Hogg (1990) refer to this as attribution of agency to users of the system rather than to the system itself. Potter and Wetherell critique Foucault's work in this regard commenting that "too much seems to be lost when the subjects of history are replaced with rituals of power" (p.86).

Texts are constructed out of cultural resources (Burman & Parker, 1993), which as outlined above, Potter and Wetherell (1987) would say that we choose from (perhaps unconsciously) in order to construct a particular "reality" for specific effect. Wetherell and Potter's (1992) perspective is not a form of subjectivism, because they acknowledge that despite a speaker's sense of agency, the constitution of objects is socially organised, and highly dependent on our existing forms of discourse and past discursive history including in the case of this research contemporary organisational literature and lectures that inform participants of the study. Potter and Wetherell (1987) thus consider how forms of discourse available to speakers come to constitute their subjectivity. Potter and Wetherell's (1987) position on agency is of particular importance in this study. It distinguishes their approach from many other approaches to discourse analysis, and is best suited to the subject of study. This, because it implies that team members, team building facilitators etc. have some agency with respect to their talk, and so can apply and utilize the findings of the results themselves in a somewhat practical manner. Further the acknowledgement of pools of linguistic resources provides a link between participants' context of knowledge and their current talk.

The relevance of agency as discussed here is not however meant to imply a reference to more 'real' behavioural aspects behind discourse. Wetherell and Potter (1992) acknowledge that there is more than just discourse, but note that we come to know what there is in the context of historically specific and socially contingent accounts. To understand even physical actions, accounts are to be developed. Things are not just words, and practices are not necessarily caused by discourse, but they are inseparable from words, from a complex of discursive practices of understanding and interaction (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). They illustrate this point of there being more to reality than ideas using a scenario of an aeroplane crashing into a hill. They point out that the plane's passengers would still die whether the hill is understood as a "product of a volcanic eruption or a petrified mythical whale", but how those deaths are understood and what caused them is constituted through our systems of discourse (p.65). Wetherell and Potter (1992) maintain that there are some versions of reality that may be preferable to others, but there is no "versionless" reality. They caution further, that because discourse is thoroughly constitutive it can be assumed that no scientific account of reality should be privileged or placed in "some non-social realm of pure representation or pure description" (p.65). It follows then, that instead of treating as the crucial question the truth of certain facts, Potter and Wetherell (1987) ask instead how those facts are constructed as facts, and the consequences the particular constructions might accrue. Wetherell and Potter agree with Foucault's (1980 in Wetherell & Potter, 1992) broad argument that one way to undermine a "truth" is not to counterpose it with another "truth", but to examine "the discursive process by which true and false statements become distinguished" (1992, p.67). This translates into an avoidance of the correspondence approach (to truth and reality) and the view of truth as created and discovered.

Wetherell and Potter (1992) emphasise that despite their relativism there is still an imperative to establish the claims of some versions over others. The operationalisation of this in terms of criteria for privileging one account over another however remains vague, and is a critique of Potter and Wetherell's approach. Despite that however, it remains an important position theoretically in terms of how the exposure of some interpretive repertoires/discourses (of the many possible interpretive repertoires) that may be contradictory can be applied and used/acted upon in an organisational context by privileging one account/construction over another.

In addition to the abovementioned reasons why Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis is appropriate for this study (including concern with practical nature of talk and agency, relativism etc.), Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis has been chosen for this research precisely for the reasons it has been criticized by Fairclough (1992) as being non-critical. This, because it is not overtly concerned with how discourses stem from power relations and ideology. A concern with these aspects may have resulted in participants of the research being positioned as particularly powerful / powerless (and potentially abusing or maintaining these positions at the expense of others). The avoidance of this is of importance given that the research has been conducted within the institutional context that it will be presented back to, hence the priority of the research being to protect participants rather than pit their accounts against one another in terms of how power is wielded etc.

## 2. THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Potter and Wetherell (1987) outline that the research questions in discourse analytic research are broadly related to construction and function, i.e. how discourse is put together and what is achieved by this. In this research, although function was explored, emphasis was placed on variation and the effects of this, essentially problematising the notion of a team.

Despite however that the research questions guiding the research have been largely defined by the specific methodology, i.e. attending to constructions of teams, and the variation and functions of these, it is important to identify the motive behind my choice of the overarching aim to investigate notions of teams.

Having attended a variety of interactive workshops and events (admittedly, not specifically team building exercises), I obtained feedback from other participants as to what they had learnt from the workshops. It became apparent that we walked away having understood the workshop to be about different things altogether. This multiplicity of meaning, and often confusion, was not recognized or addressed in the forums we participated in. Although different interpretations of material and events are inevitable and enriching, it is important that these are made explicit for the purposes of collaborative work. Some of these events were / are actually sold as corporate packages, and I became somewhat disillusioned with the popularity of programmes that I saw as highly problematic in terms of achieving the results they claimed to deliver. "Team building" is a type of package widely offered by business consultants but it has not undergone close scrutiny revealed by the lack of literature pertaining to it. In addition, it became apparent to me that the theory available on issues such as team building, is lacking in theoretical depth, hinging rather on examples of application. I had an agenda to perhaps narrow the gap between the "pop" nature of some organisational theory, and a substantial body of social psychological research by using discourse analysis – a method employed often in Social Psychology to critique and problematise concepts. By identifying different constructions of teams, the research aims not to negate team building as a technique to enhance collaborative work, but rather to draw attention to the sensitive way in which it should be conducted, and perhaps highlight overlooked reasons that detract from its effectiveness. Importantly, however, as a researcher based on conversations with other participants of events, I anticipated different and contradictory constructions of a team would emerge from this research.

The research questions that guide this research are as follows:

- What notions of "the team" are used by different role players within this particular context of team development? (construction)
- How do these different notions (interpretive repertoires) compare in terms of their use by role players within the team building context? (variation)
- What are the implications of the use of these interpretive repertoires for individuals in the team and for team building? (function)

## 3. DATA COLLECTION

### 3.1 CONTEXT, ACCESS AND SAMPLING

Discursive patterns must be located within an account of their wider context (Wetherell & Potter, 1988). It therefore remains important for the specific context of this research (out of which team interpretive repertoires will emerge) to be outlined. The participants of this study consist of six students selected (via a rigorous academic and interview selection process) to complete an Honours degree in Industrial Psychology at Rhodes University, Grahamstown in 1998. The year long programme is an intensive practical and theory based course utilizing a "seminar system". This system is a process whereby a small group of students discuss and present prepared material to fellow students on a daily basis, and the lecturer of the particular topic / course / module facilitates this discussion. These students worked together to complete group assignments, and this constituted a work team, co-operatively structured to problem-solve, and complete group work projects.

The lecturing staff of the Honours programme comprised three lecturers; one permanent lecturer who was course co-coordinator of the Honours year (Helen), and two junior lecturers employed on a more tenuous contract basis (Nick and Natalie).

A "team building" initiative was conducted at the beginning of the programme. It had multiple purposes as outlined by the lecturing staff (see Appendix B). Specifically, its primary aim was to increase individuals' understanding of themselves and of how other team members functioned in a group, as well as to raise awareness of what skills and processes are needed to work in groups effectively. Given its timing at the beginning of the year, the initiative was also used for participants to get to know one another. The experience was to function as a launch pad to establish basic processes amongst group members to work together effectively after the initiative, e.g. to better communication processes needed to complete group assignments. Recognised as a starting point, the team building initiative aimed to equip students to meet the new demands of intense group work that the Industrial Psychology Honours degree required. This group work was assumed not only to aid in learning processes, but also to reflect in some way workplaces of the 1990s, and thus prepare students for the working world. The team building initiative involved a weekend getaway, and comprised of experiential learning. Small group work was engaged in, and personal growth aimed at.

Seven students were originally selected to complete the degree, however in the middle of the year one student (Alice) elected to leave the course. The reasons for this are explored in depth in this research, however it is necessary to highlight this event beforehand because students use it to construct the "team" in various ways.

Because this chapter begins by looking at the context and therefore my role as researcher, it is important to highlight the concept of reflexivity (later defined). Banister et al. (1994) differentiate between two types of reflexivity. Personal reflexivity involves the acknowledgement of the researcher of levels of personal involvement in work and emphasizes the impact of the researcher's life experience on the research. Functional reflexivity involves critical examination of the practice / process of the research to reveal its assumptions, values and biases. Ribbens (1989) adds that wider institutional constraints in which the research takes place should be acknowledged. Specifically, account must be taken of who the research is written for, "who the audience is going to be must exert an influence on the whole nature of the research project because it relates so strongly to the basic reasons or purposes we have for doing the research" (p.589). Importantly, the context of the research and my role as a researcher are closely entertwined issues in this research given that I am a student in the same University Department – Psychology - as the participants. I was known to both the lecturers and student participants having been lectured by the staff, and having tutored most of the student participants. Although I am an MA student in Research Psychology, I had completed my Honours degree in Industrial Psychology in 1997, a year prior to the start of this study, and had personally attended a team building weekend (somewhat different from the one described in this research) with my colleagues. Furthermore, this piece of research involving the Rhodes University Psychology Department will be submitted to the same Department for examination. Banister et al. (1994) note the importance of acknowledging any potential effects of prior relationships with participants, and it is therefore of importance that my familiarity with respondents / the unique context and my relationship to it impacts on every aspect of the research from accessing the participants, interviewing them, accountability for research findings etc. Before describing the actual research process, consideration will be given to sampling issues.

Due to my positioning in the Department, a convenience sampling design was utilized to select the post graduate class of Industrial Psychology students at Rhodes University (N=6) who participated in a team building weekend in April 1998, and the facilitators of the weekend (3 lecturers), as research participants. Participants had some theoretical knowledge of the area, having written reports on their experience of team building, and had done a considerable amount of group work. This meant that they had engaged with notions of "team building" theoretically and experientially at a fairly high level. It was anticipated that this would result in multiple notions of teams – being informed by their experience and by literature and it allowed a unique opportunity to explore the integration of literature and experience. Both the team building initiative weekend agenda and course outline in which team building as an area of study is covered, are appended to this thesis (see Appendix A and B).

Accessing all those involved with the team building (all 6 students and the 3 lecturers) provided the multiple perspectives needed to assess the complexity of a team, and served the purpose of highlighting and comparing jointly negotiated and individually ascribed meanings of teams. Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out that the success of a study is not dependent on sample size because language is of primary importance rather than the people generating the language. A large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people; so small samples such as the one used in this study are generally adequate for investigating phenomena. Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, p.107) also note that with respect to Grounded Theory (and to some extent all qualitative research), when the aim is the "elaboration of a conceptually rich, dense, and contextually Grounded Theory, there is not compunction to sample multiple cases where this would not extend or modify emerging theory".

Kvale (1996) argues that qualitatively focusing on single cases (e.g. the Rhodes University Industrial Psychology programme) allows detailed investigation of relationships between meaning and its context, and that quality is preferable to quantity in interviewing research.

Seidman (1991) claims that interviewing involves a relationship between the interviewer and the participant, and therefore how interviewers gain access to and contact potential participants can impact upon the beginning of that relationship and every subsequent step in the interviewing process. The route used to contact participants and the way in which specific participants come to be included in a study impacts on how they view the researcher and affects the balance of power in the research relationship (Banister et al., 1994; Ribbens, 1989). Seidman (1991) differentiates between making access through formal or informal gatekeepers, and also notes the difficulties experienced when interviewing friends, colleagues, subordinates or superiors. He suggests that when possible, participants should be accessed through their peers rather than through people 'above' or 'below' them in their hierarchy.

In addition to these cautions about channels to use to approach participants, Seidman (1991) recommends accessing potential respondents oneself and in person because it establishes and begins to build the interviewing relationship and initiates the process of informed consent. Another practical benefit of this personal contact, is that the researcher gains some familiarity with the work / home setting of participants prior to the interview taking place (Seidman, 1991).

In the case of this research, the students of the Rhodes University Honours in Industrial Psychology class were approached by myself, at the start of one of their group seminars. I had had time allocated to me at the beginning of their session which I used to explain the purpose of my research and where they fitted into it. I also used the forum to invite any questions. Subsequent to this interaction, I distributed a written appeal for their participation and awaited response.

I approached the students all together in an attempt to appear open and casual about their involvement and although at the time I felt it was also practical to approach the class all together, they were in fact accessed through their course coordinator (a lecturer participant), made obvious through the fact that I was allocated teaching time to chat to them. This was clearly contrary to Seidman's (1991) advice against using a formal or a superior gatekeeper, and in retrospect my use of course coordinator may have produced a coercive element given that she was teaching them at that time, and so sat in on the meeting. Furthermore, when one student gave an immediate affirmative answer (which I did not expect or request at that point), others may have felt obliged to respond similarly in front of their peers, and, of course, their lecturer. In the course of the interviews, no hesitation from students was apparent, however the way in which they were accessed did highlight the potential for obligatory participation.

In addition to the students, given the initial support of the course coordinator, it might have felt awkward for the other two lecturers to decline to participate. Being part of the Department did, however, assist me, giving me an "insider" edge, and being known to all participants resulted in some basic level of trust.

Particular respondents are referred to by the following pseudonyms, using an (L) or (S) behind their names to indicate a lecturer or student position (rather than a "person").

| Lecturing Staff | Students |
|---|---|
| | **Rory**<br>Only male student |
| **Nick**<br>Male, Youngest lecturer<br>Registered for an MA<br>Contract position<br>+/- 2 years lecturing experience | **MOIRA**<br>Female, only "non-white" student |
| | **FIONA**<br>Female student |
| **Natalie**<br>Female<br>Registered for an MA<br>Contract position<br>No lecturing experience | **SUSAN**<br>Female student |
| | **LIZ**<br>Female student |
| **HELEN**<br>Female<br>Course coordinator<br>MA graduate<br>Permanent staff member<br>Experienced lecturer (+/- 5 – 6 years) | **RUTH**<br>Female student |
| | **ALICE**<br>Female student<br>Left the course halfway through the year |

### 3.2 INTERVIEWING - A POSTMODERN APPROACH

In-depth, individual interviews were conducted to collect material. Interviews are the most commonly used source of data collection for constructionist research (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Interviews were appropriate because they are concerned with subjective meanings, and are able to explore complex issues (Banister et al., 1994). Furthermore, interviews allow the entire sample of people to be questioned on the same issues, giving greater comparability in responses and facilitating easier initial coding (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). An interview can also obtain a multitude of subjects' views of a theme to picture a manifold and controversial human world (Kvale, 1996). In addition, the researcher has room for active intervention: interview questions can be tailored to participants' responses, and issues raised can be responded to and followed up on by interviewers, i.e. interviewers build on and explore participants' responses to questions (Banister et al., 1994, Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Seidman, 1991). Further to this, as researchers are recognized in in-depth interviewing, they are required to face up to their own position in the research (Banister et al., 1994, Seidman 1991).

From a phenomenological perspective Seidman (1991) proposes that the goal of an interview is to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) argue that although interviews are used in both interpretivist and social constructionist research, the difference is in how the interview is seen. In this research, interviewing was not undertaken in order to obtain a representation of 'reality' but to provide rich accounts of participants' experience in order to work with this in a framework of discourse analysis. In other words, the interviews were interpreted beyond my understanding of participants' understanding.

The interviews were framed in a postmodern social constructionist philosophy, which has implications for the design at every step. According to Kvale (1996), philosophy addresses the conditions for knowledge of the human situation, and the mode of understanding in the interview. A postmodern approach has been followed, which notes interrelations in an interview, the social constructions of reality in an interview, and interactional aspects of an interview (Kvale, 1996). The interview is a forum within which linguistic patterns can come to the fore (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). A social constructionist interview also differs from an interpretivist interview. More specifically, as opposed to positivist or interpretivist frameworks, the interviewer is not deemed to be purely a facilitator of interviewees' thoughts and feelings. Rather, the interviews conducted for the purposes of this research are acknowledged to have been an interaction whereby both the interviewee and interviewer within the larger social system they operate in, create, comply with or resist the context. An interrelational approach regards meanings of a conversation to belong neither to the speaker nor the interviewer, but as existing between the subjects in their interaction (Kvale, 1996). The interviewer is then a co-producer and co-author of the resulting interview text. Ribbens (1989) points out that interviews are a particular type of social encounter not that differentiated from most social situations that are also socially constructed. In a postmodern approach, there is a shift from a substantial to a relational concept of meaning. Thus, a strength of the interview method is that different interpreters would construct different meanings of an interview.

Kvale (1996) uses metaphors of a miner and of a traveler to describe the data collection process and how the material is positioned. A miner represents a positivist philosophy whereas a traveler metaphor refers to and explains a postmodern understanding of interviewing, which is congruent with the analysis tool of discourse analysis. The traveler engages in a variety of conversations that are qualitatively reconstructed as a particular version of events unfolds through the traveler's interpretations. The meanings ascribed to events are validated through listeners' reception of them. The traveler may even change throughout the journey, engaging in self reflection sparked by experience.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) make clear that interview texts of participants' talk is the data, as opposed to it referring to some objective reality referred to by the talk. Language is not only a tool of interviewing, but also the object of textual interpretation. In addition to this, Potter and Wetherell (1987) emphasize discourse analysis as more than a method, but as an approach that includes how questioning, transcribing and analyzing constructs particular accounts. Thus, this research acknowledges the constructive nature of the knowledge created through the interaction of the partners in the interview conversation and the qualitative research interview as "a construction site of knowledge" (Kvale, 1996).

Knowledge in postmodern thought is also determined by context, and acknowledgement of the interpersonal context in which the interviews took place is thus important, because knowledge obtained within one context is not automatically transferable to knowledge within other contexts (Kvale, 1996). Further, where hermeneutics and other interpretivist methods attempt to present a consensus of interpretation, postmodern thought places emphasis on the plurality of diverging interpretations (Kvale, 1996). Potter and Wetherell (1987) propose that the goal of traditional interviews is to obtain consistency of response as evidence of corresponding actions / beliefs: a consistent reality. Interviews in a discourse analytic approach, however, are unconcerned with the "accuracy" of accounts, focusing instead on construction and function. In a postmodern approach, the search for true meanings is given up, and emphasis is rather placed on descriptive nuances, differences and paradoxes (Kvale, 1996).

### 3.2.1. THE LOGISTICS OF THE INTERVIEWS

Although philosophy addresses conditions for knowledge, it does not provide specific methods for obtaining knowledge (Kvale, 1996). The diverse and specific nature of interviews, forms of interviews and interview subjects requiring different approaches means that there is no common procedure, blueprint or set of standard techniques for conducting or analyzing interview research that can be determined in advance (Banister et al., 1994; Kvale, 1996). Kvale (1996) highlights that the virtue of interviews is their openness.

Kvale (1996) suggests conducting interviews based on an interview guide and with a reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal interaction of the interview. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest a detailed interview schedule setting out questions to guide the interviewer through the questions and ensure the same questions are asked of each respondent. This, to achieve a systematic coverage of a range of topics, and to allow respondents to elaborate on questions. Banister et al. (1994) suggest a looser approach of writing down topic areas with lists of related issues to cover pertaining to each. Topic headings can be framed as questions to assist interviewers in the moment. The interviews that I conducted were loosely structured, and an interview guide was used. I followed a semi-structured approach, and began by designing the interview in terms of topics, which then were expanded upon to form actual questions (see Appendix C). Although questions were devised and participants were asked about the same issues, I did not necessarily use exactly the same wording or even the same order, because if an issue was raised by a participant (perhaps preempting a question), I explored it further then and there to avoid repetition by sticking rigidly to the guide and asking about the same issue when the guide allowed. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest that researchers should try and generate interpretive contexts *in* the interview to make apparent variations in functional context. They recommend focusing on an issue more than once in an interview to do this. For this reason, some repetition of questions can be noted in the interview guides appended.

Two 60 – 80 minute interviews were conducted with each respondent following Seidman's (1991) suggestion for multiple interviews. These serve the purpose of clearly setting the context within which a respondent is situated, building relationship and following up questions. The first interview was descriptive which had the advantage of obtaining lengthy and less measured responses from participants that outlined contextual issues important for analysis. The second interview was more reflective, getting participants to reflect on their experiences and the implications of these for teamwork.

The second interview served the additional purposes of clarifying details raised in the first interview, as well as expanding exploration of areas of interest or varied response / opinion that emerged in the first round of interviewing. Interviews were conducted as close together as possible (within a week of each other) following Seidman's (1991) recommendations.

### 3.2.2. THE INTERVIEW RELATIONSHIP: POWER DYNAMICS

The impact of my "psychology student" status extended beyond accessing participants into the actual interviewing relationship, which is important to explore. An interview is according to Kvale (1996, p.6) "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose". It is important to acknowledge who sets the purpose, and that the conversation in a research interview is not the reciprocal interaction of two partners, but rather that a definite asymmetry of power exists because the interviewer defines and controls the situation, by introducing topics, and steering the course of the interview (Kvale, 1996, Ribbens, 1989). In addition, it is important to be aware and acknowledge that the research is influenced and created via an unequal conversation, because of how unequal power relations might impact on the relationship and data. The most obvious implication of my embeddedness in the Department, and that this research is being produced within and "for" the same department, was that participants may have felt inhibited for fear of exposure. Although in this research with the students, I was clearly a more senior student, they regarded me as being a student nonetheless, and having just completed their own mini research theses, were willing to assist with a research project. Other than stressing that they would like to remain anonymous, there was little evidence of discomfort amongst the students during interviews, most of whom spoke openly. They assumed that I understood their frustrations and viewpoints and that I identified with them more than I would with the lecturers, given that I too was subjected to the demands of "the system" / academia and had graduated with an Honours degree one year previously. Openness was also enhanced by the timing of the interviews at the end of the University calendar because students and lecturers felt that there was little more to achieve in the rest of the year and so reflexively evaluated the process.

Despite that the research is impacted upon by the researcher's power, respondents may also position themselves in and through the interview to achieve specific outcomes. Oakley (1981, cited in Ribbens, 1989, p. 583) argues that interviewees are "people with considerable potential for sabotaging the attempt to research them". The interviews I conducted provided a perfect platform for students to air their grievances about their workloads and experiences with each other as can be seen in the later analysis chapters. Lecturers on the other hand, adopted more cautious positions, trying to pre-empt what students might say, or adopted a more apologetic / critical stance, pointing out the "holes" in their role before these were pointed out by anyone else. The research process appears to have been more threatening for them as if it were some kind of evaluation of the programme rather than an investigation into how students and lecturers alike construct teams, although admittedly, students appear to have engaged in more blaming than lecturers who are automatically placed in positions of authority and responsibility by virtue of their status. Interestingly, lecturers were not only trying to pre-empt what students might say, but were also wary of potentially contradicting one another – presenting a united front, more so than students who clearly had different views from one another. Despite this attempt to present a somewhat consolidated view, variation among the lecturers emerge clearly through the analysis.

Lecturers' were more guarded having a vested interest in the material produced that might reflect on them, presumably being more wary of revealing aspects of their own pedagogy given that the research is situated within the Department. What also may have created some unease in interviews is that the teleology of the interviews was rather opaque, because although a brief explanation of the research was offered, I was not just asking about teambuilding and teams, but wanted to use the accounts to assess varying constructions of teams I suspected existed.

Ribbens (1989) argues with respect to the interview relationship, that lack of reciprocal interaction in an interview, i.e. an interviewer trying to maintain no expression and not comment in order not to "lead' the interview is not the same as lack of effect. No reaction on the part of the interviewer might be interpreted by the participant as threatening, as disinterest or even disapproval. Ribbens (1989) takes this further quoting Oakley's position of "no intimacy without reciprocity", implying that personal involvement is thus not only inevitable to some extent, but the condition upon which respondents will participate openly. The contradiction in this is that the interviewer aims for rapport despite considering the persons account critically (Ribbens, 1989). In this research, my familiarity with the respondents resulted in a fairly easy and open interviewing relationship.

## 4. DATA PROCESSING AND INTERPRETATION

### 4.1 TRANSCRIPTION

The interviews transcribed for analysis were, according to Potter and Wetherell's (1987) guidelines, accurate and detailed enough to explore constructions in a meaningful way. Within a discursive framework, an interview is an active and constructive encounter, with questions asked setting some of the functional context for answers given (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Thus, it is important that questions are included in the interview transcription, and acknowledged to have affected participant responses. The transcript is a document that is co-authored by the interviewer in the sense that interviewees' statements are not just collected, but steered by the interviewer.

Although transcripts in their original format were very detailed, the portions of text presented in this document have been cleaned, an obviously subjective process, to make for easier reading. This means that most "ums" and "ahs" as well as repetition have been removed. A transcript is a selective representation because the interviewer brings his/ her memory of the interview to the transcript (Banister et al., 1994). Extracts used in this research report are in some instances fairly lengthy, to give the reader a perspective of the context of the utterance.

### 4.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The theoretical conceptions of what is investigated should provide the basis for making decisions of how the method is to be used for analysis (Kvale, 1996). Despite this, there are no set methods to arrive at deeper implications of interview conversations. Kvale suggests that "the lack of standard techniques of qualitative analysis may, however, also be due to the richness and the complexity of the subject matter" (Kvale, 1996, p.180).

Henwood and Pidgeon (1994) note that although discourse analysis is clear in highlighting issues of epistemology and methodology, it requires mores systematic guidelines as it is somewhat opaque with respect to method. Burman and Parker (1993) identify a more specific problem of how to develop alternative methods as part of discourse analytic work in particular, that although there have been numerous attempts to outline "how to do" discourse analysis (1993, p.2), (citing Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), there is a danger of pretending that there is a simple method for gathering interpretive repertoires / discourses and of glossing over the differences between discourse analysts. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.157) claim that there are no hard and fast methods for analyzing texts. As a starting point however, they state the importance of extracting oneself from "living in culture" / discourse to reflecting on culture / discourse/discourses.

## 4.3 POTTER AND WETHERELL'S APPROACH TO ANALYSING DISCOURSE

Potter and Wetherell (1987) concur that there is no mechanical procedure involved in discourse analysis and no recipe-like analytic method to deal with data. A broad theoretical framework is deployed which "focuses attention on the constructive and functional dimensions of discourse, coupled with the reader's skill in identifying significant patterns of consistency and variation" (1987, p.169).

In explaining their approach to discourse analysis, Potter and Wetherell (1987) pay attention to the importance of context, because contextual information gives the researcher a fuller understanding of the organisation of accounts which clarifies the action orientation of talk, and can change the meaning of an utterance. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) differentiate between context at a macro and at a micro level. They maintain that Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach is situated at a micro level and is thus concerned with the interactional context of conversation and debate (over a short period of time), whereas at a macro level context refers to the context of institutions and ideologies that has been in place over a significant period of time. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) also refer to the references of discourses / interpretive repertoires to one another and how these provide contexts for one another. Overall, however, the context of an utterance is important to analysis because of how it impacts on the meaning of talk.

As previously outlined Potter and Wetherell (1987) identify three core analytical concepts for use in discourse analysis: 1. variation, 2. construction and 3. function of language. Wetherell and Potter (1988) point out that each of these translate into actual actions when analysing discourse:

1. The researcher looks for the account presented in the material, and is concerned with categories, which present different, contradictory pictures of the world (from within the text). These reveal how the text is organised by a number of competing themes;
2. The text is broken into categories to be pieced together. Different statements in the text from the basis for and are constructed around category headings;
3. Different functions are identified asking of each category "What is being done here?" or "Why is this construction being used?" Different turns of phrase may have different effects at different points in the text, and wider social interactions are considered.

### 4.3.1. CONSTRUCTION

Potter and Wetherell (1987) term their initial method of analysis “coding”, which involves locating and labeling, pulling out “themes”. At this stage, the emphasis is not placed on finding results, but on transforming a large body of discourse into manageable sections. The purpose of coding has a pragmatic rather than analytic goal of collecting together instances for examination, and so should be done as inclusively as possible (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). All instances, even those vaguely related, borderline, fragmented or contradictory should therefore be included. Only what is actually said or written (not that which seems intended) is considered given that discourse analysis treats the discourse as reality with nothing beyond it. The process of coding involves reading and rereading data to search for patterns in the data with respect to variability (differences in content or form of accounts) and consistency (features shared by accounts). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) call this looking for recurrent terms, phrases and metaphors. They also add that each identified pattern includes both the content of an utterance and the way it is said. Research questions are asked of the data in order to derive interpretive repertoires. Basic units of discourse that identify particular constructions of teams are called interpretive repertoires. Interpretive repertoires refer to repeatedly used terms that characterize and evaluate phenomena (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), e.g. recurrent ways of talking about a team as a “family”.

Parker (1992) critiques Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) account of how to analyse discourse, in that,

> "their account of the 'method', their 'ten stages in the analysis of discourse' is useful, but sometimes bewilders new researchers as it dawns on them that each step rests on a bedrock of 'intuition' and 'presentation..' At points the reader is told, quite rightly, that discourse analysis is like riding a bike, is warned that the stages are not sequential, and advised that 'there is no analytic method'" (p.5).

Parker (1992) therefore questions how other researchers replicate or even follow these guidelines.

Kvale (1996) highlights that formalised pictures of the research process are presented in social science journals (as a result of editorial requirements of a logical, linear process), but that these are far from actuality. Due to the “vagueness” of Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) guidelines to analysis, I decided to utilize aspects of Grounded Theory methodology for analysis to transform transcripts into manageable sections. Although different qualitative approaches prioritise different things in conducting research (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994) Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) approach of discourse analysis and Grounded Theory are not so far removed that aspects of each cannot be used in combination with respect to a focus on *emergent* constructions and patterns of themes.

#### GROUNDED THEORY CODING

Although Strauss and Corbin (in Miles & Huberman, 1994) are quick to point out that Grounded Theory is much broader than an actual method, Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) do acknowledge that the term Grounded Theory has become associated with the specific data analysis strategies. In a later paper, Henwood and Pidgeon (1994, p.236) note that in the course of their work it has become clear that some elements of Grounded Theory method can potentially serve “as a vehicle for certain forms of deconstructive analysis”. Importantly, only aspects of the method of Grounded Theory, specifically coding of data, and not the entire approach to generating theory, etc. was applied in this research.

Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) suggest that researchers begin by allowing a variety of concepts / categories to emerge from systematic inspection of a body of data. This necessitates the development of an open-ended indexing system where the researcher generates labels from transcripts to describe low-level concepts and more abstract features deemed relevant, moving towards a "data description language" (p.103). As opposed to traditional content analysis that involves slotting data into predefined, mutually exclusive, exhaustive categories, the researcher is allowed flexibility in generating new categories from the data. Although this is a creative and interpretive process for the researcher, descriptions are required to "fit" the data well.

Leedy (1997) outlines the three types of coding in Grounded Theory that take place whilst developing the indexing system. *Open coding* refers to the process of "breaking down, examining, comparing conceptualizing and categorizing data" (p.164). *Axial coding* occurs later in the process, and refers to a process of putting data back together in new ways after open coding by making links between categories. *Selective coding* refers to a process of identifying and selecting a core, overarching category at a higher level of abstraction, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories needing further refinement and development. Beneath all the levels of coding is a constant comparison method of analysis – continually comparing data segments and codes across categories. A category is defined as an abstract term that encapsulates the meaning of similar topics. A pattern is "a relationship among categories" (p.164).

I followed all the steps of coding sequentially. Literally, I began by reading through the transcripts and marking anything of interest that pertained to how respondents saw or experienced the team, with a different colour pen. I put a summary word / code next to each section marked to indicate what the piece of text referred to – a very basic form of open coding. After reading again and looking for patterns (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), I noted several consistent or similar codes as well as contradictions to these codes. These groups of codes / categories of consistent codes and exceptions were renamed, e.g. fighting, celebrating = interpersonal focus, and I listed / indexed them separating printed copies of the marked transcripts into groups, noting where in the text they could be found thereby completing a phase of axial coding (see Appendix D).

Each "new" category arose in relation to others as a result of constant comparison. Also, the way in which categories were related often changed as new codes emerged, and were labeled in the data. Having an index of code words, subsequently categories to look at was helpful to look for new or different patterns or contradictions that I had not noticed. A final phase of selective coding took place when the relationship between repertoires was defined and overarching interpretive repertoires were identified, within which several themes / codes could be slotted. This process was aided by following Potter and Wetherell's (1987) suggestion of printing / photocopying copies of all textual material that had been coded, so that extracts of data could be arranged as pieces of a puzzle literally on a table to visually explore relationships between interpretive repertoires. Potter and Wetherell (1987) maintain that photocopying all relevant codes in the transcripts and putting them into files will serve as the basis for detailed analysis.

This research report does not reflect all the possibilities of interpretive repertoires that emerged, however the core interpretive repertoires are presented, and the relationships between them explored. Some interpretive repertoires required searching for more linguistic evidence (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), particularly as they developed in contradictory ways to other interpretive repertoires, and contradictions between the repertoires thus became inevitable and could be expected and looked for. This highlighted that hypotheses about the various interpretive repertoires had been formed during analysis which guided the research. Other categories of potential repertoires were "swallowed" into core interpretive repertoires deemed appropriate – never forgetting the context of the account. The main work of analysis, however, was reading, re-reading and re-reading transcripts to more clearly see repertoires and relationships between them.

### 4.3.2. VARIATION OF DISCOURSE

Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.156) claim that,

> "because people go through life faced with an ever-changing kaleidoscope of situations, they will need to draw upon very different repertoires to suit the needs at hand. From this theoretical perspective what is predicted is exactly variability rather than consensus. Consistency is important in discourse analysis, it is useful to identify the occasions where some people draw on one repertoire and some another, but analysts do not assume that on other occasions these people would necessarily produce the same repertoires."

Variation is closely related to function, because one way in which to consider how interpretive repertoires operate in a text, is by illustrating how interpretive repertoires relate to each other and how they function on different occasions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Potter and Wetherell (1987) note that talk is oriented to many different functions, and accounts will vary according to function, i.e. variation in accounts is a consequence of people performing a whole range of acts in their talk. Analytically, a variety of accounts were considered from the same and different speakers. Because categories and then interpretive repertoires were developed via constant comparison, variation in constructions was immediately apparent. Contradictions also pointed to exploration of the context to explain the reasons for difference.

### 4.3.3. FUNCTIONS OF DISCOURSE

Following the identification of constructions and interpretive repertoires, hypotheses are formed about the functions discourse serves, and the effects of the use of specific and varying discourse. Linguistic evidence is gathered for support. This in line with the social constructionist position which does not try and establish whether versions are accurate, but rather links accounts to their effects (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). To establish functions of talk, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) suggest considering why the particular terms (constructions) are used, what other language could have been used and how this construction works to achieve specific effects. Potter and Wetherell (1987) specify considering function first in terms of what it achieves for the speaker interpersonally (micro-context), and then in terms of wider social implications. In this research, this has been combined in the analytic chapters and perhaps superficially investigated in terms of wider social implications given the lack of emphasis on power and ideology in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach. This will be raised more explicitly in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

Bearing in mind the nature of discourse analysis, it is difficult to separate out data processing from interpretation because processing itself is highly interpretive. However, where identifying constructions is a descriptive process, Potter and Wetherell (1987) refer to the function of constructions as an interpretive endeavour. Potter and Wetherell (1987) emphasise that function cannot be understood in a mechanical way as when people are using their talk to blame, persuade etc., they most often don't do this explicitly. Kvale (1996) identifies three different contexts of interpretation, i.e. a meaning of a text can be addressed in different interpretational contexts: self understanding of interviewees; broad but critical common sense understanding; and theoretical interpretation / understanding. These contexts have corresponding communities of validation to be discussed under the evaluation of research in this chapter.

The first interpretational context is that of self understanding. Here the interpreter attempts to determine and then rephrase a condensed form of what participants' themselves understand to be the meaning of their statements, hence interpretation is confined to participants' self understanding. Researchers feedback the meaning of participants' statements from their own viewpoints as these are understood by the researcher. In other words the function of the construction would be a conscious act openly admitted by the participant.

The second context of interpretation is that of critical commonsense understanding. Interpretation extends further than reformulating participants' self understanding but remains a commonsense understanding. The interpretation is thus critical of participants' statements or even of the participants themselves. Kvale (1996, p.215) maintains that "by including general knowledge about the content of the statement it is possible to amplify and enrich the interpretation of a statement … the questions put to the text may also center on the person, asking what a statement expresses about the interviewed subject".

The third and final context of interpretation is termed theoretical understanding wherein theoretical frameworks are applied to interpret meanings. This means that the interpretations will most likely exceed participant self understanding and commonsense understanding to incorporate theory.

Kvale (1996) does however point out that these three interpretational contexts are based on the researchers' perspective of the research, and can result in different interpretations. The contexts can thus be further differentiated or merge into one another. To some extent, common sense interpretation was employed, however linguistic evidence (respondents' statements) was searched for to provide support for interpretations, and theory was also drawn upon to give insight and direction to interpretations of function thus drawing in all three of Kvale's (1996) contexts of interpretation. Given the highly philosophical nature of the research however it would seem that it is best aimed at a theoretical/research community. This does not however exclude readers from the general public, especially given one of the objectives of this research to provide a voice for participants in team building. Readers from the general public can also decide whether the research is valid according to Potter and Wetherell's (1987) criteria of coherence, fruitfulness, participant orientation and the raising of new problems. These concepts are defined more thoroughly later in this chapter.

It is vital at this point to consider my role and perhaps bias in transforming the interactive encounter into a piece of written research (raised again in the conclusions of the thesis). I acknowledge that my interpretation of the functions of the interpretive repertoires (supported by linguistic evidence) reflects one reading of the texts which may yield other readings from other interpreters. In addition, the interview quotes chosen are not necessarily entirely typical of the interviews as a whole, but reflect particularly pertinent constructions that may be recorded less vividly elsewhere in the transcripts. They were selected from a theoretical perspective because they point to key issues for understanding (Kvale, 1996). Despite this, Banister et al. (1994) and Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.7) argue that, with respect to the selection of material, "naturally we have been guided by our value judgements as to what is the most productive and interesting", hence the outlining of my motives for conducting this research. Also, from a practical perspective of space and time available, it would be impossible to explore each page / quote of the interviews, and so the remaining material provides a background context for interpretations of selected accounts and perhaps only a partial interpretation of texts (Banister et al., 1994; Kvale, 1996). This highlights the privileged access of the researcher to full transcripts and to the participants themselves, and importantly this access and resulting knowledge infuses the research findings (Banister et al., 1994).

Banister et al. (1994) refer to overinterpretation or misinterpretation as to a common response to qualitative research, meaning that the data has been manipulated to produce meanings that were not "originally" there. Although I acknowledge the possibility that aspects of the transcripts may be magnified, this thesis represents one of multiple readings of the text. In this research, participants may well disagree with some of the interpretation (potentially based on their personal agendas) given the in-depth analysis of constructions, however the research will be most likely be validated in this case by a theoretical community as one of many potential readings via the examination process.

Banister et al. (1994) regard the interpretive stance of the researcher and countertransference issues as further aspects to consider. As a researcher I bring with me my multiple positionings, identifications and preferences, and the research has thus been presented within the constraints of these. Those particularly obvious and clearly relating to this research have been presented, however it would be impossible to present my personal history in detail to assess how it may have impacted on interpretations. Suffice to say, personal issues will impact on how the research is presented. Although this research is often presented in the voice of a third person, a style that has been criticized for cleaving apart the knowledge produced from the producer of knowledge (Richardson in Kvale, 1996), it is hoped that this reflexive note that prefaces the analytic chapters to follow will act as a disclaimer to the potential for readers to consider the use of a third person narrative as an attempt to present an objective account which is by no means the case.

## 5. EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH: VALIDITY AND REFLEXIVITY

Osborne (1994) maintains that traditional notions of random sampling, reliability, validity and replicability amongst others are not necessarily appropriate in the qualitative context. Banister et al. (1994) concur that completely valid research that records and represents an unchallengeable, "truthful" view of reality is impossible because all research is constructed and is understanding in process, and different ways of understanding and knowing exist.

The belief that researchers are being objective through a distance between self and participants is erroneous, “A position of distance is still a position and it is all the more powerful if it refuses to acknowledge itself to be such. Research is always carried out from a particular standpoint and the pretense to neutrality is many quantitative studies in Psychology is disingenuous” (Banister et al., 1994, p.13).

Banister et al. (1994) also maintain that (because of knowledge as a construction being accepted as one version of reality of multiple possible interpretations), the concept of reliability is not applicable to qualitative research. Reliability is essentially the notion of consistency (Banister et al., 1994, Kvale, 1996), and replication might produce different interpretations based on different viewpoints rather than consistent accounts. Repetition will thus result in a different piece of work. Instead of contradicting and nullifying the research, different interpretations add to and enrich it.

Kvale (1996) however (despite acknowledging that from a postmodern perspective issues of reliability, generalizability and validity are deemed part of the rejected modernist correspondence theory of truth), avoids completely discarding these notions preferring to “reconceptualise” them. So, with respect to validity he regards it not as a distinct phase, but as an ethos infusing the research. “There are no methodological criteria capable of guaranteeing the absolute accuracy of research. However a number of good practices have been suggested by qualitative researchers which can be used to guide both the progress of the study and its ultimate evaluation” (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p.104), and Kvale provides frameworks / “practices” to do just this. He promotes instead of absolute truth, communities of validation that depend on interpretations of the text. He explains that the context of the interpretation of the research determines how the research can be validated. Thus, if the interpretational context of the research is self-understanding of participants, the participants / interviewees themselves are required to validate the researcher’s interpretations of their understandings of statements. Logistically this can be problematic to present every single interpretation to interviewees, however, if interviewees are the relevant community of validation, the researcher is required to match interpretations to interviewees’ context of understanding (Kvale, 1996).

If a critical common sense understanding is the interpretational context of the research, the corresponding community apt to validate interpretations is the general public. The interpretation is made within the understanding of the general public and lay readers are then able to judge whether the interpretation is sufficiently documented and logically argued. An interpretation that convinces members of the public is deemed valid.

The final community of validation is termed the theoretical community, and applies within a context of interpretation of theoretical understanding. The validity of an interpretation will therefore depend on whether the theory is deemed valid for the area of study, and whether interpretations fit and follow on logically from the theory. The presumption of theoretical competence implies / dictates that interpretations are thus validated by a community of researchers familiar with theory.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest several criteria to validate research, being: coherence of the research in terms of how the discourse fits together and effects and functions of this; presenting participants' orientation (albeit subjective interpretation), raising new problems, and fruitfulness of findings with respect to generating novel explanations.

With respect to the *coherence* of the research, analysis has attempted to clearly outline how discourse is used to produce effects. Potter and Wetherell (1987) note the importance of reporting exceptions to constructions as an indication of the coherence of the research. By setting up four main interpretive repertoires against one another each interpretive repertoire is in a sense an exception to another. In addition, each analytic chapter attempts to set out where each interpretive repertoire appears to "work" in the team, as well as where it breaks down i.e. accounts positioning the interpretive repertoire as useful and accounts criticizing the same interpretive repertoire i.e. exceptions to it.

The second criterion of validity pertains to what Potter and Wetherell (1987) term *participants' orientation.* This means focusing on what participants see as consistent and different in the research rather than my opinion as an analyst. Linguistic evidence of respondents' constructions in this research is provided in order to achieve a participant orientation. Although lengthy, by surrounding quotes with some context of the utterance I have aimed to illustrate participants' orientations by featuring talk that corroborates what I have indicated as distinct interpretive repertoires.

The third criterion of validity is to create *new problems* in the process of clarifying linguistic resources used to achieve particular effects. Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.171) claim that the presence of new problems and solutions "provides further confirmation that linguistic resources are being used as hypothesized." This research raises the problem of how to conduct team building despite the diversity of notions of a team. It essentially set out to problematise the notion of a team.

The final criteria of validity is termed *fruitfulness* which refers to whether new kinds of discourse are made sense of analytically, and further whether they can be used to generate fresh solutions. Evident throughout this research is the clear lack of identification of organisational discourses / interpretive repertoires within which to look at a team context. It is hoped that this study would generate further research in this regard. The value of this research lies in feeding it back into teambuilding processes conducted annually at Rhodes University through making the material available to key players in the Department. It further aims to contribute towards and highlight the need for a process of dialoguing about participants' meaning and consequent expectations of teams based on their construction of teams i.e. through problematising the notion of teams. Identifying notions of teams that are commonly used might provide a basis for dialoguing or at least an investigation into expectations of a team, thereby reducing conflict associated with unmet needs. The research will also aid in narrowing the gap in literature written by management consultants, and facilitators to present a variety of voices – namely giving voice to the participants.

This piece of research lies within dual contexts of interpretation. It is situated firstly within in a theoretical context of interpretation because of the theoretical and philosophical nature of the content and complexity of discourse analysis. It can therefore be validated by a "community" of researchers familiar with discourse analysis as well as Industrial Psychological theory, in order to determine its fit

with theory and whether or not it is a logical argument as well as whether it is fruitful and raises new problems. The research is also situated within a critical common sense context of interpretation and thus can be validated by the general public based on the linguistic evidence provided and logical argument and application of theory in terms of all the criteria outlined by Potter and Wetherell (1987).

Altheide and Johnson (1994, cited in Leedy, 1997) put forward four types of interpretive validity similar in some ways to those outlined by Potter and Wetherell (1987). *Usefulness* pertains to whether it enlightens readers or moves them to action. *Contextual completeness* refers to the extent to which a comprehensive view of the situation is provided. *Research positioning* refers to researchers' awareness of their own influences. *Reporting style* refers to perceptions of the reconstruction of participants' perceptions as authentic.

These criteria make explicit the requirement for reflexivity which has been alluded to throughout this chapter. Reflexivity is possibly the most distinct feature of qualitative research (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992), and involves making explicit the process by which the material and analysis are produced (Banister et al. 1994). What Banister et al. (1994) propose is that the way to arrive at the closest we can get to an objective account, is through an exploration if the ways in which the subjectivity of the researcher has structured the way the research is defined in the first place. Subjectivity thus becomes a resource as opposed to a problem for qualitative research. Assumptions structure all research and recognizing and theorizing the impact of assumptions is essential to locate the analysis within the context of the research.

Reflexivity involves acknowledging the ways in which research activity inevitably shapes and forms the object of inquiry, "the researcher and the researched are characterised as interdependent in the social process of research. … one practical implication of accepting the inevitable role of the researcher in the research process is that this should be highlighted and revealed in the documentation of qualitative studies." (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992).

Reflexivity is however a process that needs to be employed throughout the research process (Banister et al., 1994). It therefore needs to be considered when formulating the research question, identifying and setting up interviews, during the actual interview, and when transforming interviews into a written document. This notion of reflexivity (pertaining to personal, functional and "contextual" (Ribbens, 1989) reflexivity i.e. acknowledging the effect of the literal context the research is conducted in) as outlined throughout this chapter has been largely neglected, particularly in quantitative research. Each of these aspects has been referred to in this methodology chapter particularly by outlining the context of the research (and my position in that context) as openly as possible.

## 6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A variety of ethical issues are important to address in the research process that come into play throughout the process of the research.

At the start of the research it is important to obtain the informed consent of participants. This was obtained for each of the interviews conducted both in a written format, and verbally at the start of each interview. Banister et al. (1994) highlight that it is important at this stage to disclose all elements of the research. This ensures that not only is consent given, but that the actual participation of respondents is properly informed. This means being as open as possible about the aims of the research, the researchers position and involvement in the research, what is involved in terms of time and commitment, how the research will be conducted, how many participants will be involved and what will be done with the data collected. Specific issues like records and audiotaping need to be discussed.

Aspects such as anonymity and a promise to terminate interviews if any discomfort is expressed need to be agreed upon (Banister et al., 1994; Seidman, 1991). In my case, respondents were consulted about audio-taping, which they were entirely comfortable with. I also ensured them that I would not hand over the tapes to anyone else. We also discussed the extent of their involvement, time commitments etc. Although I informed respondents of the aims of the study, I could have been more open, explaining the purpose of the research and how specifically it would be interpreted, i.e. discourse analysis.

A related ethical issue is that of protecting participants. This not only in terms of informing them of their right to withdrawal from the research or to move on from uncomfortable issues, but also of informing them of their ownership of the research material. Banister et al. (1994) suggest giving participants the interview tapes after transcription. They also suggest that researchers make themselves available for respondents to contact should they wish to during the course of the research. These measures are said to aid in decreasing the power differential between the researcher and the researched. I did not give respondents the interview tapes as suggested, not thinking of it at the time, however I tried to remain as open as possible inviting questions prior to the interviews or at any other time.

It is important given that because “in researching a private world, we are then taking it into the public domain when we publish our results” (Ribbens, 1989, p.589), particular attention is paid to the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. These are closely interwoven with the protection of participants, and are often confused as synonymous. Participants’ anonymity in this context has been ensured to an extent through the use of pseudonyms allocated by myself. Also, where particularly obvious mention is made of identifiable characteristics of persons, these details have been obscured in the research. Confidentiality however in this research is a more complex matter. Certain issues that respondents requested not to be revealed have remained confidential in this research. Despite these measures however, given that I interviewed a particular group of students and lecturers in the Rhodes University Psychology Department in their entirety, the participants may be able to be identified by themselves, or by others embedded in the institutional context. In addition, several demographic and other identifying aspects such as course coordinator, class representative, gender and race have not been altered in the research because of the importance they have in terms of understanding functions of certain constructions and thus interpretive repertoires.

Further to this, the research is being presented back into the Department within which it was conducted for examination purposes. Although students and lecturers have moved on, staff that know (of) them have remained, making the respondents even more vulnerable to identification. It is for this reason that transcripts have not been appended to this study, which include personal references that apply not only

to team members and lecturer participants, but to other characters in the literal context of the research. Pseudonyms as mentioned will maintain anonymity for the most part however it is inevitable that certain readers may recognize participants. Participants were aware that their talk would be featured in this thesis however, and that the thesis would be submitted to the Department for examination and placed in the Department's resource center or university library.

A final issue to consider pertains to the accountability of the researcher. Banister et al. (1994) maintain that "accountability is not an all or nothing issue but a matter of degree or nuances". The degree of accountability has to do with who the research is for and what functions it is to serve, and in this regard Marshall (1986 in Banister et al., p.156, 1994) identifies three main audiences: the research community, the researcher him / herself or the participants (and the researcher). Clearly this research is aimed at the research community in terms of the issues it hopes to raise, however the research no doubt has evoked some institutional interests. The Industrial Psychology programme has expanded, and this may be reflected on to feed back into the process which in turn exacerbates concerns about anonymity. It would seem in the context of this research that a balance somehow needs to be struck with maintaining the privacy of respondents, and the public nature of a criterion like usefulness. Ribbens (1989, p.587) notes a related concern that "the particular paradox that is worrying about depth interviews is that you give the interviewee the power to control the interview itself, and yet as a result they put themselves very much in your hands by exposing themselves in a one-sided relationship. When you come to depart you take their words away, to be objectified as an interview transcript."

Ultimately however despite attempts to be accountable, meaning is indexical to context, i.e. an explanation is always tied to a particular context of use, and will change as the context changes (Banister et al., 1994). Thus results in this research are highly specific.

## 7. THE WAY FORWARD

Following this methodology chapter are four analytic chapters that explore notions of "the team" via four interpretive repertoires: the educational team, the team as a machine, the team as a family and the psychologised team. These interpretive repertoires are considered in terms of many different "themes" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) that form part of the overall patterns of speaking about them. For example an interpretive repertoire of the team as a machine includes themes of production, mechanical parts and so forth. Constructions, their functions and variation between them are discussed with respect to each "theme" (category) identified in the research for ease of understanding rather than discussed later without the actual linguistic evidence at hand. The implications of these interpretive repertoires for team functioning are also highlighted in the text both in terms of seemingly positive spin offs and frustrations spoken of by students and lecturers. In addition, literature pertaining to themes is integrated with accounts given to provide a theoretical perspective of constructions.

# CHAPTER FOUR – THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

In accordance with the methods proposed and described for processing and interpreting data, various interpretive repertoires emerged from the interviews. Conger (1993) suggests that leadership / team training can be approached in essentially four ways: personal growth, conceptual understanding, skill building and feedback. His segmentation of approaches is somewhat reflective of the team interpretive repertoires that have emerged in this research. The personal growth approach is reflected strongly in the psychologised team, feedback in the relational focus of the family interpretive repertoire, skill building in the team as machine, and conceptual understanding in the educational team. These interpretive repertoires are explored in depth in this chapter not only in terms of their construction, but also in terms of how they vary across and within individuals, and how they function in the team – what the implications are of subscribing to and constructing different versions of the team.

It is important to have some idea of how the year progressed, and so before exploring the interpretive repertoires used to construct the team, a brief outline of events follows. The Grahamstown, Rhodes University (RU) Industrial Psychology Honours class, consisted of (originally) 7 students registered for a year long programme of which teamwork would play an important part. The RU Industrial Psychology Honours course began with an initial seminar based course / module on personnel Psychology (with a session devoted to team building) (see Appendix A) followed immediately by a team building weekend. This involved a three day getaway to a remote venue in the bush to take part in group activities and discussions compiled by the lecturing staff (see Appendix B). Following this weekend students were required to submit several group (and individual) projects through the year in addition to attending seminar-based courses. This ongoing requirement for teamwork predicated by the team building weekend created a "team building context" within which students operated throughout the year. Because of this, the team building weekend itself does not form the major focus of this study, but rather features as an aspect of the year. In addition to the requirement of group work, students were required to submit an "Honours thesis" towards the end of the year. This was essentially a practical research project, and an individual endeavour. Each student was supervised by one of the three staff who were involved in the team building.

Further to the requirements of attending daily seminars, participating in group work and completing a mini thesis, students were required to complete a number of "practicals". These were interactive, practical, skills based courses participated in once a week. An example of this would be attending a Hospice Care Giving programme. As part of these courses or for one open choice theoretical module during the year, students might participate with "General" Psychology students. The General class focused on the broader discipline of Psychology - social, clinical and counseling. The General Psychology class was substantially larger than the Industrial Psychology class, and General students were therefore not required to go through as extensive a selection process.

One event of particular importance was the decision of one of the members of the RU Industrial Psychology students to leave the course half way through the year. This event was of some importance to both the students and lecturers of the Industrial Psychology Honours course.

Bearing in mind this institutional context, it is perhaps fitting to begin with the construction of the Honours team as an educational team.

## 2. INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

The educational team construction is a relevant starting point because it represents chronologically the beginning point of the Honours course for students in terms of initial exposure to theoretical models of teams and team building. There are various ways of talking about the team that construct this educational team interpretive repertoire. The interpretive repertoire will consider the construction of context and pedagogic aims within the educational team, the construction of shared languages of an educational team, and barriers or breakdowns in the educational team. Overall this interpretive repertoire functions as a way in which to create cohesion (through shared language and information sources etc.), to define the purpose of the team, to protect individual ambition in the team, and to excuse problems experienced in the team on the basis of developmental issues typically experienced on a learning curve.

## 3. CONSTRUCTING CONTEXT AND PEDAGOGIC AIMS

The first aspect of the educational team interpretive repertoire involves constructing the context of the team building and the pedagogic aims it set out to achieve. One particular lecturer, Nick's construction of the aims of team building provides an excellent resource to examine as a case study rather than considering multiple sources / speakers. This is because of his incisiveness and clarity of expression as well as his critical viewpoint of the team building process. Important to note is that Nick positions himself as an educator strongly in this repertoire whereas other lecturers construct the team using alternative interpretive repertoires. This signals a variation in lecturer constructions that will be explored at a later stage.

By extracting critical aspects of Nick's accounts, a useful list of criteria emerge against which to consider other constructions of the team building, its purpose, and the team. This will thus function as an analytical tool to assess variation in constructions between both lecturers and students. The following quotes are excerpts from Nick's accounts of specifically the team building weekend and its implications.

1. "I think it gives students the tools or the framework to start looking at. I think it's empowering in the sense that it gives a **framework** or a **set of tools** to start dealing with group issues and **group dynamics**. And to start being more aware of them. If anything they walk out of it with a sense of group dynamics, how they relate in a group, how they think of themselves, how others see them, as being brought more to the fore to be made explicit.

I think there's something to be said for that. I think it can be very **empowering** if done in a constructive, comforting, supportive manner. And I think that they come out of the weekend with a **set of principles** for working effectively in a group... also part of being in a team is that you know it's not always going to be rosy, and it's probably not always going to work out like you want. And, and maybe the team building isn't about always making it perfect, but it's about giving them a **schema** or framework to say 'Well, what do we do when things are not like we want?' ... Maybe that's its aim instead of making them a perfect team. Instead it gives them **a language** or framework or **set of conceptual skills** or **practical skills** to **reflect** on what's happening in the team, and to be more aware of where they fit into that team and how they see them, and to be more comfortable and kind of articulate to the rest of the group how they feel about the rest of the group. And in doing that I think it empowers students. It brings all these things which are usually submerged, underlying currents out, and then lets them try and deal with them. Whether that's possible in the space of a year to deal with all of them is doubtful. ... People are going to want different things. But to make that explicit I think is something. And maybe that's what it does. It's not about building this rosy team. Because it hasn't done that ever." Nick (L)

2. "[apprehension of students prior to team building]... it's not built up by the staff I don't think. Students come with something in their minds about what it might be about, and it's a Psychology thing. It's the Psychology Department again. There's this fear of 'What are we going to do?', and because it's not open in what the kind of agenda is for the weekend, I think they fear the worst that they're going to be put on display and forced to divulge. ... And I don't know where that fear comes from. It comes from the fact that it's not maybe out in the open. And I think there's reasons for that ... I think some of the thinking is that to make it too open at the start would deny some of the experiences of the weekend ... to say to them upfront ... puts paid to the benefit of the exercises which gets them to **experience and reflect on their experience** in a team setting. So if they knew all that upfront then they would come with this kind of **meta-perspective** already having engaged with the material, maybe having thought through it, and then not really **engage** with it first hand. ... I don't know. Maybe it's sometimes better just to make everything open and say 'Look here are the rules of the game. This is what we're going to discuss.' Partly because of that I think. And it happens very year. The students come with some kind of heightened expectation of what this is going to be about. And then, I think that sets a particular, pitches the team building at a particular level after that. It's not a fear of teams though. It's a fear of whatever, self-disclosure, and having to bear oneself to people that you don't know very well. It's not a fear that people come to terms with, I don't know, maybe they do. I don't think it's as pronounced as that. And that sets up a particular type of team building weekend I think, which then runs its course. Cause it's where people pitch it at the start. It's where the students pitch it. And they immediately pitch it at that level, because of expectation. ... I mean a level where there's quite a degree of self-disclosure which is unusual in the light of how they've engaged with each other in the year so far. ... And maybe those expectations create the space that communicates that it's appropriate to speak about it now, or it's expected to speak about it now." Nick (L)

3. "I think part of what, what happened with their team building is there was some arguments over all the work they were putting into this one project after team building. I think it speaks of the fact that people were coming with different expectations and capabilities as well. I think it's o.k. to **put people through a hoop or some string on a farm on a weekend.** But get them, get into an academic setting and do a project together, and those differences start coming out." Nick (L)

Nick constructs the team building as aiming to:

- provide a "framework" / "set of tools"/set of principles to work effectively in a group by:
    - assisting students in dealing with group issues and dynamics.
    - making students aware of group issues and dynamics in terms of how they relate in a group, and self and group perceptions of self.
- provide a schema / framework to deal with problems arising in the group and surface "underlying currents" to be dealt within the group.
- provide a language / framework / conceptual skills to reflect on the team.
- heighten awareness as to where each individual "fits" into the team.
- increase individual comfort in the team and assist individuals in articulating feelings in and about the group.

This is said to contribute toward the ultimate aim of the team building: to empower students if done in a constructive, comforting and supportive manner. This overarching aim Nick puts forward suggests students will move on to apply their knowledge without the constant support or medium of lecturers' involvement, i.e. that the teamwork will be self sustaining.

The nature of these aims is primarily educational as opposed to various other aims suggested for team building in the literature. Johnson and Johnson (1997) do acknowledge the use of team building to teach, but point out that team building is most often undertaken to improve team productivity, the quality of relationships amongst members, the level of members' social skills and the ability of the team to adapt to change. Where Nick focuses on using the team to teach, Johnson and Johnson (1997) broaden aims to include foci on relationship building and on productivity rather than on imparting conceptual frameworks and theory to facilitate a learning process. By excluding these types of purposes for team building from the pedagogically motivated aims he sets forward, Nick clearly focuses the team as an educational team, and distinguishes it from those situated in an organisational context.

Nick sets up these pedagogic aims in contrast to building a "rosy", "perfect" team. By doing this he again explicitly constructs the team as a learning unit (being empowered by principles, schemas etc. taught to / communicated to them by lecturers) as opposed to a production unit for instance with measurable outcomes. This solidifies and clarifies that his position as a lecturer in the team building process is one of teacher (as opposed to counsellor or manager for instance). The educational aims of the weekend are constructed in opposition to the idea of team building as being about "divulging" and self-disclosure (see psychological repertoire in chapter 8). Nick constructs this as a bi-product of team building based on students' erroneous expectations, which are informed by the Psychology Department as an institution. Harris and Nicholson (in French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994) hold a view that a consultant involved in team building intervenes in an organisation in a collaborative, facilitative, theoretical and confrontational manner. Through the aims that Nick established for team building, he constructs the lecturers as intervening in a primarily theoretical manner by providing frameworks etc. He mentions confrontational intervention in terms of surfacing underlying issues and in putting people through "hoops", and perhaps a facilitative role in assisting articulation, but collaboration is notably absent, constructing a distance between students and lecturers in the educational team.

In addition to clarifying his role as a teacher, the construction of the team as a *learning* unit defends against a pressure to build a "perfect' team. Nick is thus rescuing and defending the relevance and applicability of team building regardless of how the team produces based on its inexperience. Nick constructs the notion of perfection as an impossibility of the team building programme in this particular institution (based on its history).

This educational construction functions therefore not only to define the role of lecturers (and their relationship to students) and to stress the relevance of team building as a learning process, but also sets up lecturers in a position of legitimate power over students - as being the source of skill, knowledge, experience needed for their empowerment - as opposed to collaborating with one another to create solutions. It further suggests that a defined set of principles will be appropriate for working in any group, i.e. sets up an existence of theoretical universals of team behaviour. Nick sets up the entire year (as opposed to the weekend) as an extended team building period by questioning whether all the issues raised in the team building weekend would be able to be dealt with in one year.

Nick's accounts are peppered with pedagogical jargon highlighted in the excerpt. This may be a function of the institutional context he is embedded in, or purposely used to add credibility to his account by elevating it to that of an expert educator distanced from non-expert students.

Nick constructs not only the aims of the team building weekend as facilitating learning, but also the decisions as to whether the agenda should be open or not as in aid of the learning process of experience and reflection. He stresses in particular the avoidance of students developing "meta-perspectives", but does not acknowledge that to a lesser extent perhaps students' past undergraduate course material, as well as framing Honours seminars before the team building weekend, might already constitute such perspectives. Nick sets up (quote 2) a construction of experiential learning which clearly originates from the theorizing of Lewin (1935, 1945 in Johnson & Johnson, 1997).

Johnson and Johnson (1997) describe the process of experiential learning as being about generating an action theory from personal experience and continually modifying it to improve its effectiveness. This modification is made by assessing consequences of the theory, obtaining feedback, and reflecting on the effectiveness of the theory. Experiential learning as a concept is based on a number of principles involving active learning, changes to cognitive structures, attitudes and values, perceptions and behavioural patterns, and the interaction of experience and theory. Clearly Nick's approach is grounded in pedagogical theory, and he employs a team building method of experience and reflection as a learning technique.

Despite the aims Nick attributes to the team building, he does not construct it as tapping directly into the pressures experienced in an academic setting. The knowledge gained in team building therefore has to be applied and worked out in a setting where relevant "capabilities" and "expectations" operate as part of the learning process. This sets up the real context of the educational team as an institutional environment rather than a learning environment situated elsewhere. There is however controversy about this suggestion evident in the literature.

Statham (1994) claims that team building which takes place in outside environments is problematic in the long term because it takes place in a situation different to that in which the team usually operates, and because the setting determines problems for the team to solve that are different to those they will need to deal with in the workplace (see also Dyer (1987) on "regression effect"). Laabs (1991) raises two sides to the argument for outdoor team training: concerns as to whether outdoor events can be translated to the office environment, and contrary claims that outdoor team building techniques are not focused on task-oriented skills, but rather develop process skills such as communication skills, which can be transferred into any setting. Solomon (1993) presents a possible solution that concedes that simulations occurring outside of a work environment can succeed if the facilitator strongly links the simulation and the daily work environment, and if the simulation involves the entire team that works together in the work place. Du Frene et al. (1999) suggest their solution, which is to adapt outdoor activities to become indoor activities because they are safer and more closely related to the workplace.

## 4. CONSTRUCTING SHARED LANGUAGES OF EDUCATIONAL "TEAM"

Members of the team utilise several terms particular to an educational context or to specific theory to construct cohesion and shared meaning in an educational / learning team.

### 4.1 THEORETICALLY INFORMED TALK

4. "Essentially [a team means] being able to **work together**, to **co-operate** towards a **common goal**. To have **common vision**, and work towards that." Moira (S)

5. "It means a group of people who are **working together** towards some **common goal** and they have kind of **process, dynamic issues** you know ... it's getting the **synergy**..." Ruth (S)

6. "It means a group of people **working together** openly and **in sync** with the dynamics." Natalie (L)

7. " A group of people **more than one**, who work towards a **common goal** and who share some **common responsibility** for whatever they do. I guess that sounds like kind of a theoretical response to what a team is and maybe it kind of comes from a lecturer perspective to get through that." Nick (L)

Quotes 4 – 7 reflect almost identical definitions of a team given by different students and lecturers. Potter and Wetherell (1987) state that consistent responses suggest that "participants are drawing on a limited number of compatible discourses or interpretive repertoires when answering questions" (p.164). This suggests that these responses are informed by a similar or the same source, which in this case is clearly Industrial Psychological theory. The highlighted aspects of the definitions given, clearly coincide with the summary of definitions by Johnson and Johnson (1997) located in the literature review of this thesis.

Other theoretical terminology was also apparent in interviews and descriptions of the team as can be seen in quotes 8 and 9 overleaf.

8. “We’ve gone past the norming, storming. Now we’re in the performing phase.” Susan (S)

9. “I remember the one thing that irritated the hell out of me, is you know each time we would say ‘Process. Content. Focus on the process before you do the content. Slow down. Plan.’ ... And that was frustrating. A sense of ‘Come on! There needs to be a sense of some kind of learning here’. But perhaps we’re unrealistic in terms of what they can really acquire in terms of skills.” Helen (L)

Susan (extract 8) clearly draws on Tuckman’s (1965, cited in Johnson & Johnson, 1997) theory of the development of groups (formulated in an educational context) to locate the position of the Honours team. This constructs the team development as a linear process of set stages guaranteed to build on one another (explained in detail in the literature review). Not only does the literature serve to validate Susan’s opinion, but it provides a source of comfort in representing “known facts” about teams, a normative standard against which to benchmark oneself and a source to help predict the future of the team.

Helen (extract 9) refers to a process / content divide, “the content process distinction” (Harris & Nicholson in French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994, p.218; Payne, 1982) which she clearly imparts as part of team building, which is drawn directly from team building approaches and team theory (Laabs, 1991; Payne, 1982). This attention to process involves a team focusing on the ways in which they *do things*, thus taking the focus off purely academic content to examining behaviour and self. These theoretical terms and theories are used by participants to safely construct the team as an already researched entity. Their use suggests adherence to various theoretical ideas that informed them.

### 4.2 INSTITUTIONALLY INFORMED TALK

Both lecturers and students also talk about the team and its players by using particular categorisations based on academic ability (performance) or as part of, and influenced by, an institutional context.

10. “I also came in at the beginning of the year and encountered them. So it was a whole lot of barriers that we had to work through. ... I think the barriers were that I didn’t know them from undergrad so I hadn’t categorised them in any way. I didn’t know who was the weak student, and I was new to Grahamstown. I was new to Rhodes whereas they had, all of them had come, except for one who left subsequently, but all of them came through the whole structure. So in a sense I was lecturing them in a context that I didn’t necessarily know myself. So that I think was a barrier in that I had to become familiar with the whole kind of Rhodes culture and so, get to know them better in terms of how they got to the Honours level.” Natalie (L)

11. “I think we have a fairly diverse group in terms of the way people work. Also, sort of academic levels are slightly different. We’ve got the range from quite a high first down to sort of a second.” Moira (S)

12. “A threat to the team environment is stress. Also, we’ve got weaker members of the team that are weaker academically” Susan (S)

In quotes 10, 11 and 12, members of the team are labelled as "high firsts", "a second" and weak students. Students are thereby differentiated on the basis of their marks rather than other features. Marks are, however, not neutral descriptors, but construct the possibility of a hierarchy within the team, and suggest that being weaker academically translates into being a weak member of the team within 'educational team' repertoire. An exploration of this can be found accompanying quote 25.

13. "There is quite a strong work ethic on the one hand I suppose, although it might just be a charade. It's you know people kind of lapse into these rhetorics. Or, they have I s'pose a life rhetoric. You know, 'Ag, I'm so hard done by', or 'You know I'm the oppressed', or 'My husband's awful', or 'I've got no money', and it's the same rhetoric you know. And I wonder whether there isn't this kind of student rhetoric ...[All the students] moan about work. And you know so you reduce the work. Is that going to take away the moan? No! So it's something you have to put up with you know. And maybe that's part of my discovery as a lecturer, is that you kind of, you learn things. And it evolves you know." Helen (L)

14. " I don't think they'd ever get angry with me, but ... I remember sitting in on one meeting and there were like dirty looks and there was quite a lot of like inside hatred, no, not hatred, anger. It's a better word. And what I actually did was I went and I said 'I think that this is unacceptable.' I said, 'Let's talk about this'. I said 'If you have a problem you must come out and talk about it you know. It's ridiculous.' And we actually sat, and I said 'Actually I'm feeling very hurt by this' And I was quite open about my feelings about it. And then we kind of sorted it out then and there. I think it made them realise that lecturers aren't objects, which I think is a common problem with students. You know they kind of see you as, everything will just bounce off you, you know like a duck with water ... But I also think we open ourselves up to it as well, because there is so much self-awareness in the course, and there is so much 'How are you doing? Are you coping? How's it going?'. And it's quite easy to actually ignore that and not to interact with the students ... I'm beginning to understand ... why perhaps older lecturers kind of shut themselves off, because emotionally it's just so much easier. You know you don't expose yourselves to students saying 'Well, actually ...'." Helen (L)

Helen in quotes 13 and 14 refers to a student rhetoric used, as well as to a student perception of lecturers as emotionless and invulnerable objects. By constructing student concerns as a rhetoric of moans common to all and employed for particular effect (a charade to obtain pity and attention), she discredits these concerns. The construction of this type of team talk / student rhetoric places Helen in a position of considerable power in that she is able to dismiss any problems communicated to her as part of this rhetoric and label it accordingly.

In quote 14, she describes how students construct lecturers as objects at whom to direct their criticism, frustration etc. She constructs this as a highly problematic feature of an educational team that requires, necessitates and validates lecturers creating a distance between themselves and students – widening the gap between the two groups. Helen's reference to self awareness in the course opening up lecturers to experience students' emotions hints at perhaps a different construction of the team to Nick who does not deem self disclosure etc. appropriate (see later psychologised repertoire).

The educational repertoire (underpinned by theoretical knowledge of teams, and enforced by an institutional context communicating via pedagogical jargon and assessing courses and members based on their educational value) closely links to a rigid and mechanistic construction of teams. This construction (itself informed by theory) is explored in great depth in the following chapter, but is beginning to become evident in the educational repertoire through constructions of linear development, the existence of team roles.

## 5. BARRIERS AND BREAKDOWNS IN THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

The construction of the educational team is not without its problems. Those highlighted (to follow) however, further reinforce the educational repertoire by virtue of the expectations they reveal (whether met or not), or the particular nature of problems experienced.

### 5.1 BLAMING THE SYSTEM

15. "I think her [Alice] leaving had also to do with the way the program is handled. They [the students] made a comment about it at the occupational psych, during the course that you know, 'Why of all departments must the Psychology Department scare the living daylights out of them?' And that they didn't feel human kind of understanding for some issues that might come up for them. And they used Alice as an example of somebody who didn't cope in the system of, 'It's marks. You've got to get good marks. You've got to submit by this date. It doesn't matter what's happening in your life.' That's their perception of why it happened." Natalie (L)

16. "When you know Alice left, a feeling that Helen didn't quite do enough for her. … I don't know if it was true ... And often there's a feeling that being the Psychology Department of all places you know, being the Industrial Psychology Department, you'd understand stress, understand all work related performance. All these things that they're teaching us that they don't seem to apply to us and use on us. There's things that we're supposed to you know apply in the work place to get maximum performance out of people, and it doesn't seem to come through in their treatment of us, which I think that's also quite a problem." Susan (S)

17. "I thought she was incredible. ... And like for her to drop out was a like a shock for me. Like, 'Hang on a minute. Alice can't crack it. I'm in big trouble.' You know like it was a huge shock. ... I felt like the system couldn't accommodate her. ... I just thought 'How deep is Rhodes?', cause it was a huge loss for them. And I'm not sure they realised it, it didn't seem such a big thing. And it was a big thing for us. Like I didn't dig the way she was made to come say cheers to us. ... I thought that was completely wrong. I don't think she should have cause I mean she sat there all awkward, and she knew we didn't understand what she was going through, and that made her awkward, and we were sitting there thinking 'What the crap's going on here?' And I don't think that was the right dynamic, or unfair on her. If she wanted to have said goodbye to us she would have done it in her own time. I don't think she needed to explain anything or had to say cheers to us formally. I think it should have been socially done, not in 15 minutes of an introductory lecture to a course. I didn't enjoy that. And we never spoke about it. I don't know if it was a big thing, but it did affect us. But it wasn't ever spoken about. Till like end of year. It was weird. I don't know what happened there." Rory (S)

Quotes 15 – 17 refer specifically to one team member, Alice, leaving the RU Industrial Psychology Honours course, and reflect the students' construction of the context of the educational team, "the system". It is constructed as impersonal, rigid, and insensitive to particular needs of students. Its focus is constructed as being purely about academic achievement, and not extending to related support or caring issues, "treatment". In other words the fact that the Department is a Psychology Department resulted in higher expectations of support that went unmet. The primary focus of the Department thus remains to educate rather than care for students. In addition, the system (and so the educational team) is constructed in opposition to a social context / group as formal, with a rigid programme around which personal issues should revolve. This construction allows students to construct themselves as victims in a system which is unchanging and relentless. It provides and unseen "object" on which to place the blame for Alice leaving as well as constructing overall expectations for students to aim toward / conform to. In this respect it provides a familiar context within which students can operate bearing in mind undergraduate experience. In addition, the construction of the system sets up an object of resistance to unite the team as will be seen later. Nick describes this process in quote 18, whereby students thwart the system making evaluations of them that they are aware of, in favour of group acceptance and conformity.

18. "Oh, the idea of leadership? People are very reluctant to take it on ... maybe they're all too psychologised about it. I mean it's going with the allegiance of the group thing, and you're already aware of the process. It's like you go on this Unilever weekend, and you know you're expected to behave, and what people are looking for. And maybe it's already out there. They know these things and they resist taking on the obvious role. 'Here's an obelisk o.k.' I mean it's obvious what Helen, Natalie and Nick are looking for. Seeing who's going to be leader now. And maybe people are just saying, 'you know I don't need this'." Nick (L)

Constructing the system as to blame for problems in the educational team also raises questions as to how the system is structured and the impact of this as can be seen in the section to follow.

## 5.2 SLIPPAGE BETWEEN "CLASS", "GROUP" AND "TEAM" – THE PROBLEM OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

### 5.2.1 An individual set-up – one degree per person

19. "...and the team, the whole class, well the team, I don't think they're a team. They're a **class**. ... as the year's progressed and there's been a splintering between the two **groups**. That presumes that at some point there was a holistic group. I don't know if there was. I don't know if that's like an unrealistic expectation which is created by calling it team building, saying, 'You guys are a **team**'. I don't know if they were ever a team. They were always a group. I think to a degree they're a team ... I think Honours is very competitive. I don't know if it's individualistic. I think the nature of the seminar system and all that, works in **groups**. You learn through groups. That's why it's important to have this weekend where you look at group dynamics. I don't know if it shouldn't be reframed as a group awareness or group dynamics workshop. Something like that instead of a **team building**. Cause that's what they're looking at. ... But whether they'll ever be built into a team or [if it's] necessary to set it up. ... I don't know if this year just seemed different

because we're being asked to articulate it or reflect on it in a different way. ... I think it's just cause we're reflecting on it now that maybe it seems maybe not as cohesive as we thought ... maybe if we look back over the years it's always been a bit kind of fractured anyway." Nick (L)

20. "Firstly, I don't think this should be called a team building weekend. I don't think that the Honours group is a team. I don't think that they work together. I mean they do a couple of group projects together throughout the year. Two or three I think. But for the rest of the time Honours is a very individual year. You work for yourself. ... It's about doing well. And I think it's set up to be this kind of individual competition." Nick (L)

21. "They're a group of kind of disparate, different individuals with different strengths and values and expectations of the year, and are willing and able to pitch themselves at different levels, and throw themselves at their work in different ways. ... they all want different things out of Honours ... there's a couple ... I don't know if they haven't really coped with the Honours year, or they're just increasingly realising that you know, they've got to find their own level, or find their own path to their own ground or whatever. They've got to just say 'This is where I stop. This is what I'm capable of.' It's almost like they've walked out and said 'Well, this is as far as I, as good as I get. I'm not going to push myself to be something that I'm not.'" Nick (L)

22. "As a team they expect that our work will be like a combination of the best of everyone, and that our teamwork is going to be stronger than our individual work. Often group things are really, they're getting less. That's what confuses me. They're even less percentage at times because I think maybe this is your individual degree, and you don't want, I mean I know there's controversy in the Department about how much team work counts. Because there is this feeling that <u>you're</u> getting the degree in the end. You don't want people who get fifties in third year or whatever, are getting 80s for their group report. Is that fair you know? Whose degree is it then? So there's this whole idea that group work is important, but maybe it's not as important as, because it's not weighted as much." Ruth (S)

Nick (quotes 19 – 21) constructs the team as a "class", revealing his preference for talking about the group in academic terms. His account acts as a disclaimer for the team building process, reconstructing the team as a learning group in light of admitting that the team is not so cohesive, i.e. he is using the framework of the educational team to combat failure of the team if it was constructed, say as a "family", where cohesion is a vital feature (see later family repertoire). Nick also notes that group work is necessary for the seminar system in order to learn, but that the purpose of the team / group does not extend beyond working together in seminars and is not facilitated by an academic setting. In this regard, he highlights that the academic institutional context rewards individual performance and implies that this encourages competition above cooperation which erodes cohesion and breaks down the group. Dyer (1987) points out that if work is done primarily on an individual basis, team development is inappropriate. Ruth (quote 22), a student, combines the concern about differing academic ability with being rewarded with an individual degree to conclude that the only solution that is fair, is reducing the importance of teamwork. Robyn (2000) highlights in an educational context student resistance to teamwork, because for many students "team" connotes a dynamic in which a few students do all the work.

The question is thus posed by Ruth and Nick whether Honours students, by virtue of the institutional set-up and their differing academic abilities and work styles, could ever be a team.

Tension between teamwork and individual achievement is documented in the literature. Liebowitz and De Meuse (1982) draw attention to a "systems point of view" which asserts that a team building intervention must be compatible with the organisation's personnel systems. This includes both the overall culture of an organisation, and how teams are rewarded for teamwork (Harris & Nicholson in French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994). Teams that do not receive team rewards revert to individualized behaviour (Bishop, Scott & Burroughs, 2000; Huszczo, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1997; May & Schwoerer, 1994; Wageman, 1997). Harris and Nicholson (in French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994) refer to an individualized culture as structurally dissonant from building teams, and go so far as to describe this as rendering the implementation of teams counterproductive. Robyn (2000, p. 66) referring specifically to educational teams, regards the biggest problem with teams to be "the lack of a cohesive philosophy" linking the use of teams to the course or curriculum.

Johnson and Johnson (1997) distinguish between co-operative, individualistic and competitive efforts. Dyer (1982) notes that different teams require different amounts of collaboration which can be situated on a continuum from low to average, to high teamwork. In addition to this reference to reward (that reflects a theoretical perspective on the potential problems of rewarding individual academic achievement) encouraging individualistic behaviour, Belbin (1993, p.13) raises a concern with competitiveness developed in educational systems. He blames this on the "pressures which our educational system and culture exert on clever people" and maintains that,

> "Those who at school are 'top of the class', or who have it within their reach, are continually being judged in terms of their scholastic pre-eminence. To come second is to fail. Beating the next man is the name of the game. Difficult problems excite the greatest rivalry and so destroy the bonds of mutual co-operation and complementary functioning upon which the success of a team ultimately depends. In other words, overconcentration on coming top of the class provides an unconscious training in anti-teamwork."

Johnson and Johnson (1997, p.157) also note that, "those who seem to know the answers, who need no additional information, and who see themselves as teachers rather than co-workers tend to arouse defensiveness in others." Belbin (1993) and Johnson and Johnson (1997) thus highlight problematic areas in an educational team.

The barriers to the educational team constructed by Ruth and Nick do not however favour another team interpretive repertoire, but instead construct the team as flawed and unable to be fixed unless reframed completely e.g. as a class (rather than a team). The construction functions to preserve the current operating and assessment procedures of the educational system as well as to preserve the ability to achieve as an individual and outperform colleagues. It is not surprising that Ruth, a high achiever and perhaps one of Belbin's "clever people", constructs the possibility of an educational *team* as fundamentally flawed.

### 5.2.2 Academic performance counts for everything

23. "You've got seven individuals, or lets count me out and say six okay? Cause I've never achieved firsts in this Department. And like you've got six individuals that have and do incredibly well that they're expected to hand in a document of that standard ... There's like an incredible pressure (I don't know if it's in General, but Industrial), to do well. I don't know if you're discriminated against, but definitely if you're not if you're not wanting to achieve those high standards, you're very much not, I don't know what to say. You're not like discriminated against, but you're not thought of. I mean you had to achieve, or like this is your life.... in my own head, I think they think we'd get a first, or that was what was expected of us and we had to work towards that. … it's more a group dynamic though. I don't know if it's the staff's fault that we were working for such high standards." Rory (S)

24. "And the four of them were going to work on spots and not bother to phone us. Just complete lack of concern like that. And I found that within the projects as well. There wasn't a respect for the processes that people were going through or where there'd be difficult times or not." Rory (S)

25. " [on whether the Honours class is a team] Yes, and no again. I've always associated that absolute high that a team goes through, with a team like a sports team. … In a sense there's never really euphoria like 'Wow guys, we're a team' type thing, you know. But I don't know whether that's romanticised or idealised. I haven't experienced that euphoria although a lot of that's got to do with a deadline, with fatigue, with tiredness, it doesn't lend itself to euphoria. I think it's a lot circumstantial. Also for instance, the projects that you do, they're for an Honours, for a degree. None of us is like a person sort of did charity work and you make 50 kids happy, you get that euphoria because you've done something. Here we produce a policy and we hand it in to Helen. It's like ugh! It's a policy. We're making no contribution to the greater scheme of things." Liz (S)

Rory (quotes 23 and 24) constructs a further break down in the educational team induced by categorising members based on their academic performance and the tensions and pressures this generates. He constructs the group as a competitive team with respect to academic work, (also by implying a secretiveness about exams and the "clever people" acting to "exclude" others not worth bothering with when assessment is involved) and describes how a focus on achievement excludes members of the team. This focus results in the role of work taking precedence over and eroding other aspects of teamwork such as support or understanding. Unlike Ruth Rory's construction of the team favours "process" issues and not merely outcomes which are implied to be self-focused. Rory also constructs the educational team as placing value on academic ability as opposed to other skills members might have through regarding himself as a non-member. He constructs the educational team as potentially exclusive and elitist because of the focus on excellent academic results. Belbin (1993) however in his work on team roles insists that a team full of "clever people" does not make for success, but that instead a variety of personal characteristics are required in correct combination to secure success. Thus, the individual abilities of each of the members are not as important as the interaction of their abilities and personalities with one another. Rory's description of himself as "not thought of" is interesting in light of Robyn's (2000) view, that invisibility in a group is a form of punishment.

Rory's construction of lack of personal concern and a focus on outputs is closely linked to the machine repertoire to follow. Rory's dissatisfaction may indicate that his expectations of a team have gone

unmet, implying a preference for an alternative construction of a team to that experienced. The focus on academic work is also problematic for Liz (quote 24) who blames this focus for the lack of team "euphoria" which enhances cohesion. The educational team is set up by Liz (quote 25) as flawed in this regard, in working toward selfish goals rather than goals which might extend beyond self to impact others.

## 5.3 STUDENT – LECTURER POWER RELATIONS

Although power is a theme in a variety of constructions of teams, it is constructed in a particular way in the educational team, where assessment is the ultimate goal of performance and learning, and is so clearly controlled by the lecturers.

### 5.3.1 A lecturer perspective

26. "No we're not part of the Honours group. ... sure there's an Industrial psych ethos and a love for the subject, and I think we've worked very well together in terms of an understanding of starting to communicate more openly with each other. But ultimately I'm the one who marks things and so there's a power dynamic. And I haven't worked on individual projects or on group projects with the group and I'm not part of that group as such. There's definitely an Industrial ethos, but no, I'm not part of that group." Natalie (L)

27. "I don't mean to imply that the whole team building is a function of students' expectations, as if they expect something and then that determines it. I think it's how they meet, students come with expectations and fears, and how these are met by what they're expected to do, how the weekend is structured by Helen and myself and Natalie, and how it's run by us. How those two come together. And we can't push people to a point where they're not comfortable with it. People will find their own point. So usually students define that, and then we meet halfway." Nick (L).

An interesting contrast is evident in lecturers' perspectives of their positions. Natalie (quote 26) openly acknowledges a power dynamic based on her ability to reward or penalise students in an educational context making her role as lecturer incompatible with a role as team member. Saddington (1989, p.191) refers to assessment as "the final bastion of institutional power and control in formal courses". Nick however constructs the lecturer role as less powerful and more participative in that students have a say over what they are prepared to engage in.

Nick's construction (quote 27) takes no account of any form of coercion which is likely to operate based on an inherent unequal, positional power relationship between students and lecturers. As such, the account constructs an almost equal relationship which is incompatible with the idea of an educational team focused on academic achievement. By awarding this choice to students, Nick in fact disempowers students by disguising the effects of their complex relationship with lecturers.

Aitchison and Graham (1989, p.18), note that

> "The way that many educators go on about how they never teach but only facilitate; ... makes one wonder why they are necessary at all. Denying the key role the educator has in structuring and engaging learners in the process of reflection is a mystification of power strongly exercised. The possession of power needs to be owned up to ... the role of educator should not be masked behind terminology about facilitation and participation that obscures rather than reveals. This is not to say that we do not wholeheartedly support the drive to recast the educator from didactic teacher to facilitator. But the facilitator plays a crucial part in the unveiling, recognition, transmission and production of knowledge."

Johnson and Johnson (1997) also identify all different types of power – reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, expert power and informational power all of which lecturers hold.

These different constructions of power in the educational team may have entirely personal functions. Natalie who experienced initial rejection from the group may be defending herself by justifying this rejection as resulting from a power relationship rather than based on personal reasons. Nick, who students describe as most easily fitting into the team, has outlined the team building process as an experiential learning process to empower students and so may be constructing his role as "equal" to appear that students can be empowered and not dominated by lecturers. By constructing students as responsible for their choices and as having agency, Nick is able to disassociate himself from their choices regarding self-disclosure etc. to contain his role as teacher / facilitator and avoid merging it with counsellor or any other role.

### 5.3.2 A student perspective

28. "... The second time [Natalie lectured us] was much better than the first. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe it was the course material. I remember Helen coming in the one day and saying, 'Ooh, why are the desks like this?'. Because we were all sort of faced around the board you know. And Natalie was there and the group was here. As opposed to the lecturer being a part of the group, which I think was a lot better, you know if they're a facilitator as opposed to a lecturer." Fiona (S)

29. "[the divide between the lecturers and the students is evident] in little, little ways. Like even where people sit in lectures, you know, our seminars. ... It's sort of like there's 3 chairs, and you know everybody makes sure that Helen will sit in the chair, but nobody wants to sit next door to her. It's ridiculous. It's like being in primary school. Little things like that. So it's evidenced in very, very subtle little ways ... It's almost like being in high school again. You know what it's like where you can't be friends with the teacher 'cos then you're a nerd ... Everybody's aware of it ... I think it's just an unsaid thing that happens" Susan (S)

30. I think they're [the lecturers] an integral part of team cause they obviously like guide and lead you. But I wouldn't know if they're involved in interior processes as such, and guidance in the academic side, not in the dynamics." Rory (S)

In quotes 28 and 29, students (Susan and Fiona) express their discomfort with a teacher-scholar relationship which they construct as inherent in an educational team. It is constructed (by Susan) as potentially dividing the team should a member befriend a lecturer, kept in place only by a desire to show loyalty to the group, and maintain self image for fear of sanction by the group. Fiona favours facilitation as a less intimidating power relationship in the educational team. Interestingly Johnson and Johnson (1997) cite several sources noting that how group members seat themselves in relation to one another exerts significant influence on their perceptions of status, patterns of participation, leadership activities and affective reactions, and that the arrangement of furniture affects learning by communicating a symbolic message of what is expected. Rory however (quote 30) favours the role of the lecturers in the educational team (and not of his team members as earlier explored), constructing their role as more focused and businesslike, work-related advice and guidance rather than a messier involvement in “interior processes” and “dynamics”. This reveals a buy in to the content / process divide whereby lecturers provide guidance on content and do not interfere in process issues. The educational team for Rory provides clear boundaries as to the nature of relationships with authority by making power relationships explicit. This results in a feeling of security and professionalism.

# CHAPTER FIVE - THE TEAM AS MACHINE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The team as a machine is a largely theoretically informed interpretive repertoire, closely linked to the educational team. It is constructed in two main ways. Firstly the team is constructed as an entity consisting of set parts and pieces called roles. Secondly, it is constructed as an entity focusing on production, because the task / output of the team, represents its sole or most important purpose rather than any emotive, membership, interpersonal or social reasons. Like the educational team, the interpretive repertoire of the team as machine has its downfalls, however, it functions overall to provide a practical and measurable purpose for the team to achieve a tangible and recognizable reward thereby enhancing the esteem of the team. It also functions to define places for members, and in this regard the construction further sets up particular modes of operating by defining where / how each member contribute. In addition, the machine repertoire functions to emerge a team in the sense that it is used by lecturers to set up a team from its nascent stages. As stated, it is a very theoretical repertoire, and theories drawn on will be highlighted along the way.

31. "I don't think they [the lecturers] expected us to come out [of team building] this well oiled team. I think their primary purpose was to create an awareness, and through that start working as a team" Liz (S)

The above quote as a comment on expectations of the team building weekend constructs the team as a machine, viz. the "well oiled team", and highlights the abovementioned function of creating a team. Interestingly, this utterance was made whilst talking about the team building weekend, and specific techniques used on the weekend to "emerge" the team are explored below.

## 2. THE FUNCTIONAL TEAM AS PARTS OF A CAR: THE ROLE BASED TEAM

The first and most obvious way the team is constructed as a machine is through constructing it as made up of or divided into various parts, termed roles. These parts / roles are mostly constructed as rigid and mechanistic resembling the components of a machine. They specifically link to the structure of the team and its consequent functioning.

The initial construction of the role based team arose through an educational / team building exercise students participated in on the team building weekend. This is described in the quotes below. The construction is therefore not <u>necessarily</u> one that students would have generated, but instead was presented by the lecturers / theory to students at the beginning of the team building process as a particular "tool" to use.

32. "We actually did an exercise during the team building weekend. We had to draw this car, and each person had to be labelled as a part of the car. And we had to say why the person was. And there were various sorts of strengths. I mean people being more the solid ground, the more stable types. And there were those that were the brakes for example,

someone who could say, 'Stop and think!'. Then there was more the steering wheel type of person who gives the group direction. ... And I can remember Susan in particular wanted to be the paintwork, sort of finishing things off, getting things rounded off. Each individual has their own particular strengths that will get the group to the end point." Moira (S)

33. "I was the body work, the base, the outline of it, the structure. Cause I kept things together. When people were stressing I was calm. Or when they were bleak, I'd be happy. And that apparently I was like the gelling force amongst us. I quite enjoyed that. I didn't see myself as that at all. I had a huge problem you see coming into this group because I worked at Rhodes, but I haven't excelled myself ... When I come amongst 6 very sharp individuals, I'm really completely intimidated by it. So I didn't see myself as having any role, like not respected at all. I wouldn't challenge them academically. More taken lightly as such ... And so it was weird that my role had been seen as positive for me. I didn't expect it to." Rory (S)

The prior accounts describe the process of allocating roles to members and explicitly constructing the team as a machine. Moira (quote 32) describes this process as labelling, and refers to one part of the car per person suggesting one role each. The experience was very positive for Rory (quote 33) who had based his understanding of roles purely on academic ability, and was pleasantly surprised at the broader nature of the roles allocated. This construction was in fact one of the "frameworks" passed on to the students, and being a car in particular relates roles to mechanistic parts, but parts that are not necessarily producing anything. The car metaphor used lends a particular interpretation to the roles allocated, i.e. emotive or work related roles may have been ascribed to students had the object / machine used as an analogy in the exercise been an academic robot student (work related roles / functions), or family group (emotive roles) etc.

The overall framework used is derived from a particular model of team building called the role model. Liebowitz and De Meuse (1982), and Woodman and Sherwood (1980) describe this model as based on a view that a group consists of a set of interacting roles. A role is defined as a set of behaviours one member feels obligated to perform, and other members expect him / her to perform. Thus the assumption made by this model of team building, is that group effectiveness can be increased by a better understanding of these roles with respect to reducing unnecessary competition, conflict and ambiguity thereby availing more energy for task-relevant behaviours. Dyer (1982) also makes reference to the "role-clarification" model which is considered to be appropriate for a newly organised team where people are not clear about what others do and what is expected of them.

### 2.1 UNIVERSAL ROLES – ROLES DETERMINED BY THEORY

34. "I'm more of **a controller**." Susan (S)

35. "I think we have a fairly diverse group in terms of the way people work. You get **the planners**. We have those who try and work sort of without planning too much. All these differences actually have strengths in themselves. And so for us it was a matter of working with all of us to get the optimum. I think it was actually quite nice for us that we had a male member. It would have been nicer having a second male, cause I think he feels a bit isolated at times when we talk female issues. We often hassle him in a sense that he's a white male,

> and I mean with current affirmative action policies and all of that, they've sort of right at the bottom of the rung. … He's sort of the class clown. So that's a particular strength … We've also got people who are able to say, 'Stop. Let's think about this before we actually go on,' And then you get the people who are driven, which helps to drive the group. ... Car exercise ... Each individual has their own particular strengths that will get the group to the end point." Moira (S)

36. [And if you had to give yourself a role?] "No you see, you can't say that, because we've already done it in team building [theory] – the shaper, the motivator. So I can't think off the top of my head anymore." Ruth (S)

Evident from these quotes (35, 35 and 36) is that students (Susan, Moira and Ruth) are drawing upon and refer to set, pre-determined roles- terms with which they are familiar, "a controller", "the planners" to construct the team as a machine of many components. This illustrates a process of members being given a role that exists universally in team settings / team theory, i.e. using a theoretical manual to build the machine. The roles allocated by the students in quotes 34, 35 and 36 are fixed roles that determine individuals' contribution to the group and are constructed as being contingent on predominantly personal characteristics, and in a more limited sense, on gender.

Robbins (1996, p. 353) refers to Margerison and McCann's (1990) model of nine potential team roles "that people prefer to play". These include creator-innovators who prefer to initiate creative ideas, explorer-promoters who champion ideas after they're initiated, assessor-developers who analyze decision options, thruster-organisers who provide structure, concluder-producers who provide direction and follow through, controller-inspectors who check for details [See Susan's role above in quotes 32 and 35], upholder-maintainers who fight external battles, reporter-advisers who seek full information, and linkers who coordinate and integrate. Robbins (1996) maintains that a successful team will have people to play all these roles, and that individual preferences matched with team role demands will increase the chance of team members working well together. Robbins (1996) notes further that Margerison and McCann argue that unsuccessful teams have an imbalance of individual talents, with too much energy being expended in one area at the expense of other areas. It is important to note, that such a model presumes consistency in individuals preferential behaviour over time, across tasks, and in different groups.

Brill's (1976, in Payne, 1982) theory of team positions includes roles which members "take up, or are pushed into" based on their personality or how they are seen by others. These roles include: the leader, the fighter, the catalyst, the know-it-all, the manipulator, the peacemaker and possibly also a joker, a radical, an activist and a representative of the silent majority. Solomon (1993) suggests roles that include: the shaper (leader), innovator (creator) and monitor/evaluator (analyzer).

Belbin (1993) also proposes a model of "team-roles" which he devised conducting group experiments using psychometrically tested group members. The team role defines the way in which members with characteristic personalities and abilities contribute to a team. Belbin (1993) maintains that useful team-roles are limited in number and the success of a team depends on the interlocking pattern of roles. He claims that given certain information on the team roles to which members

of a team are predisposed by nature and ability, a fair estimate can be made of whether that team is likely to succeed or fail in meeting its objectives. He highlights that this is complicated by people who are often disinclined to accept the team-role for which they may be best suited, preferring instead somebody else's team-role.

Thus Belbin's (1993) model is based not on preference (like Margerison and McCann's), but rather on what is assumed to be an unchanging personality and ability. He proposes eight types of people as useful to have in teams who are those who possess strengths or characteristics that serve a need without duplicating those already there. These roles are therefore relevant in relation to one another, as Belbin (1993) regards teams as being a question of balance, "What is needed is not well-balanced individuals but individuals who balance well with one another" (p.77).

Evident from the investigation of these theories, is that students and lecturers alike have a wide pool of resources in terms of already-defined group roles to choose from. Because of the constancy implicit in these roles, they can be highly problematic, particularly in light of how students construct roles as seen below. In addition the theories described require a full complement of roles to define the team suggesting that each role is similar to a piece of pie which fits into a particular shaped dish (the ideal team).

## 2.2 PERSONAL ROLES – ROLES DETERMINED BY PERSONAL TRAITS

37. "[my role is] The class clown or the light hearted side of things. ... I kept the group together in terms of when they're bleak, I'd be motivating, or that kind of issue." Rory (S)

38. "I think my role perhaps is in lateral thinking, in acceptance, in allowing people to put things forward, and being okay with that. So it's quite a non-judgemental, quite open role." Natalie (L)

39. "Maybe that's one of the things I bring to a team which could be frustrating, these expectations that I have. You know, of things working, and working well." Helen (L)

The above described roles are based on random personal qualities deemed relevant to the group as opposed to the pre-defined team roles outlined previously. It follows then that these imply that the team is an entity determined not by pre-determined parts or task determined roles, but purely by the individuals who make it up, defying the shape of the pie dish to construct a shape that is determined by whatever personalities are brought together. This is similar to Lewis's 1975 contingency view (in Payne, 1982), which asserts that the type of team depends on the preferences of those involved, the nature of their work and the kind organisation they are involved in. The construction does however suggest rigidity in that if a role is determined by a members personal strengths and weaknesses, these presumably will remain constant across tasks and groups i.e. the individuals role may remain consistent, but the shape of each team will vary based on the roles different individuals play. This construction allows each individual to give him/herself a label as to what their role is and to "bring" things to the team which evolves or adapts to absorb and combine individual roles.

Thus, this construction of roles is influenced by theory which advocates that roles are related to personality etc. e.g. Belbin (1993), but differs in the sense that no entire, defined set of roles emerges to be applied across teams. It functions to provide some freedom for individuals to determine their role in the group, and as a means of categorisation in that members' roles will be somewhat similar across groups and tasks because they are based on individual characteristics.

### 2.3 WORK RELATED ROLES – ROLES DETERMINED BY ABILITY OR TASK

40. "I think that we've come to this point in the year where we're quite open with each other. I think it's really, we know what peoples' problems are and we're not embarrassed to say 'you know I've been depressed in my life.' 'I've been anxious you know.' 'I don't feel I'm as bright as everyone else.' It's come out. So I think that's also a strength. We're able to be open with each other, and we now quite aware of what each others needs are ... We also know what, who's the logical, like mathematical one, and who's the artistic mind, and who can write well, and those kind of things. So, we know each others' strengths, and they're definitely there. We're not lacking anything I don't think." Ruth (S)

41. "And there is an awareness of what the lecturers expect from every person differently ... I think he's aware that Helen's watching him. And we know that too. And those kind of issues we're aware of. ... I don't coast along, but I don't always have to be checked up on. And I don't feel like I'm being watched, my every move. I don't think I'm coasting in terms of my work, but maybe in terms of being watched by the lecturers, always being expected to keep up. I know that I won't be picked on. That's what I mean. So I think, ja, they expect us all in different ways to meet our full potential." Ruth (S)

In quotes 40 and 41 roles and related expectations / assessment of individuals are constructed on the basis of *personal skills or ability* that is work related. As opposed to personality, or roles required by the task, individual talents determine what roles individuals play in the group. The team thus consists of a combination of people sharing the work based on their strengths and skills (not necessarily their personal traits as seen in 2.2) which do not change according to the demands of a project, but instead are considered to be a fairly consistent ability (assuming no major training / development has been undertaken). Although this construction also defies the pie dish in that the shape of the team will depend on the skills and ability of the members rather than on a pre-determined roles, the team is constructed as a bounded unit with the potential of reaching a set end point, "we're not lacking anything". This statement also indicates some sort of checklist of roles / skills against which to evaluate the team in order to conclude that nothing is lacking - perhaps linking in with sets of "universal", pre-determined roles of 2.1 available to students for perusal.

Ruth's (extract 40) description of lecturers' expectations differing across students according to their different abilities rather than communicating an overall expectation of the group, enforces a construction of different parts. Her construction however does more than just construct the lecturers as setting up expectations / assessment criteria, but implicates the lecturers in powerful positions within the machine repertoire in terms of surveillance over the quality of outcomes / work produced and the functioning of individual parts of the machine.

42. "[A team is] people ... sharing the work ... people who write well you know will do the writing. People who do other things well will do that. So then, sharing the work in terms of what their skills and abilities are" Fiona (S)

This construction (quote 42) although closely related to that reflected in quotes 40 and 41, is arrived at in a different sense. The team is constructed of roles that are purely task related i.e. the task calls for particular skill based roles, and individuals are slotted into these to share the work as opposed to individuals being assigned a role based on their particular skills regardless of what those might be. To be more explicit, where in quote 40 reference was made for example to "the artistic mind" a skill perhaps independent of the task at hand, in quote 42 Fiona relates roles directly to the work in terms of aspects that are delegated / shared, i.e. a member might be allocated the role of the "artistic mind" regardless of the task, or alternatively, members might be allocated a particular role only when the task is explored and participants decide what roles the task calls for. Lembke and Wilson (1998) maintain that attention needs to be paid to the skills of members, not on members being responsible for a particular task only.

Belbin (1993) refers to these skill-based roles as functional roles, contrasting them with his team-roles outlined earlier. A functional role is the role that a member of a team performs in terms of the specifically technical demands placed upon him. Belbin maintains that typically, team members are chosen for these roles on the basis of their experience, and without regard to any personal characteristics or aptitudes that fit them for additional tasks within the team i.e. those beyond the task at hand. Payne (1982) describes a process of "role integration" (p.53), whereby tasks are clustered together into roles which make sense, and these roles are allocated to individuals in ways which create sensible domains for them, also reflecting the task as calling for and determining the roles played. Stewart (1996, p.87) describes this division of the task into roles as a "phony team", "Gone is the phony 'team' where the leader tells the finance guru to run some numbers, the marketing wiz to do some research, the manufacturing maven to come up with cost and capacity data and everyone to report back two weeks hence. These days team members are likely to work together many hours a day, mucking about in one another's specialties and jointly hammering out the final product rather than slotting together individually made components."

### 2.4 GROUP-ROLES – ROLES DETERMINED BY OTHER PIECES OF THE JIGSAW PUZZLE

In this final construction of the team as a machine made up of parts / roles, the team determines the role of the members rather than members' roles determining the shape of the team i.e. each team member is required to be a piece of pie fitting into an already determined shaped dish. Another way of considering this construction is using the words of a student, that the team is a puzzle with each member representing a specific shaped piece to fit in. Each member however has to fit into another member, so in a way members' roles are defined in relation to one another because there is no room for overlap.

43. "building your team a lot depends on finding your niche where you can contribute without antagonising others, and where you can do your absolute best, contribute most effectively. So when I think of building a team, I think of finding your role, your niche." Liz (S)

44. "Teams naturally evolve. You can't force a team structure upon 6 or 7 people. I think it's very much a natural process of discovering who you are, and who other people are and fitting, you know there's a lot of adjusting and fitting yourself in." Susan (S)

45. "I think team building should be more about trying to identify who you are, set your boundaries so you can learn how to you know, fit everyone in - almost like a jigsaw puzzle of everybody, to build a puzzle. You know everybody's different shapes, different things." Susan (S)

46. "I think I've been one of the more, slightly more silent members. I'm not quite sure why. I don't know if it's the dynamics of the group when we have people that are particularly assertive, who may be perhaps more assertive than myself. ... there will be those people that will sort of overshadow other people." Moira (S)

The team is clearly constructed as a jigsaw puzzle with members' roles contingent on one another to form the ultimate team shape. This construction functions to ensure harmony and even to justify the role one plays as a result of roles other members have chosen (see Moira in quote 45) – implying some sort of power structure in the group to determine who gets what role first. The idea of roles fitting into one another is reminiscent of the balance of roles Belbin (1993) suggests.

Payne (1982, p.6) refers to a requirement of collaborative teamwork being a process of "helping members *fit* [my emphasis] in their personal skills and responsibilities." He later describes four different kinds of boundary relationships between team members in terms of their work roles of which two are interesting to highlight at this point. He notes that overlapping boundaries exist where team members' roles cover the same territory, and that though this is common it is associated with invasion, which can lead to hostility and jealousy. This might be the motivation for a jigsaw puzzle–type construction of roles / parts, to maintain what Payne refers to as mutual boundary relationships. These occur when the boundaries between members' roles are consistent and mutually agreed upon largely through a process of team building, which will obviously avoid conflict to a degree. This avoidance of conflict in the team is explored in great depth in the family repertoire where its emphasis and importance seems most apparent.

Although varying constructions of how roles are allocated in the team have been presented, it is important to note that no one construction is adhered to all the time. Students and lecturers alike use a variety of constructions to determine roles in the team, and these are not necessarily mutually exclusive e.g. one might use a universal, personality type of role. Problems associated with this role-based construction as a whole are however explored later in this chapter.

### 3. THE FUNCTIONAL TEAM AS PRODUCING OUTPUTS: THE TASK ORIENTED TEAM

47. "You'd have to [call our group a team], because it was like we got something done and it got handed in and we got rated as one." Rory (S)

48. [Q "Is there a standard for a good team"] "Yes I suppose there would be, there must be...I suppose it would be if you look at our outcomes, I mean we got firsts for most of our projects as far as I can see...so outcome-wise we've succeeded. But I think sometimes well, we, we had a fight at the end of the last one [group project]" Fiona (S)

49. "The first project we did was an absolute nightmare ... It was hideously awful. I don't think that the team building weekend I felt had brought out enough of the issues. You know it wasn't a very work related setting, so it wasn't really team building." Susan (S)

Fiona and Rory (quotes 47 and 48) construct the team / team success as being defined by the outputs it has produced and (in Rory's case) also by the fact that the group was rated as a single unit rather than by looking at individual contributions. Rory however prefaces his account with "you'd have to" as a disclaimer, implying that an external person / theory specifies this definition. This reduction of the team to being defined by its output and the quality of that, denies any other aspects that might contribute toward making a group a team, e.g. relational aspects. This results in a task-based, production focused construction of the team. The same tension suggested in Rory's disclaimer is evident in the "but" at the end of Fiona's statement, implying an incomplete team success. She goes on to list relational difficulties, experienced by the team as the hindrance to total success.

The team is also constructed as a work related entity by Susan (quote 49), through the view that team building must be conducted in a work setting to bring out the relevant issues. Because the team is constructed as inextricably linked with work / work related tasks, Susan invalidates the team building undertaken outside of the work context, regardless of what relationship building might have taken place outside of the work setting. This invalidates those aspects as definitive of a team. It is a similar concern to that raised earlier by Nick (quote 3) citing similar issues.

50. "I think to build a team means to create, no, lets try it again, means to put in place a strategy, or to build skills in order to make teamwork more effective. ... And then if one has more time, I think looking at building the skills of problem solving, conflict management, the kind of skills that you would hope that people have, but you may find that people don't have." Helen (L)

Helen defines team building as putting "in place" or building "skills". Her construction is of particular interest because of the power she holds to influence students' constructions as designer of the team building and as course coordinator of the Honours program. In Helen's account, relationship between members is not mentioned as part of team building, but instead an effective team is constructed as one containing the "correct" skills which can be built, as in constructing a machine to be effective when all its functions are operating. Problem solving and conflict management skills are listed as secondary, to those related to "effective" team performance. The team is thus constructed as a network of task-based skills rather than relationships. Woodman and Sherwood (1980, p.167) note that problem solving skills are a key feature of the goal-setting model of team development, and that this model "focuses most directly on the work group's task". Lembke and Wilson (1998) propose that in most organisations teamwork is the process and not the goal of management because most team initiatives are project- and productivity- driven.

The task-based team is thus concerned with the demands of the task at hand and producing outputs above all other aspects of team functioning. This construction suggests a team functioning over a shorter time period because it is task related i.e. endures for the length of time the task endures, as opposed to longstanding teams structured around relationships for example.

## 4. DYSFUNCTION IN THE TEAM AS MACHINE

A variety of problems are however constructed by students and lecturers with respect to the machine repertoire. The first to be explored is that of allocated roles that are deemed to be too rigid and thus not representative of individuals.

### 4.1 RIGIDITY – THE ENDURING ROLE

The negativity of Ruth's experience with role allocation is described both by Ruth and Helen (quotes 51, 52 and 53 to follow). Particularly problematic is the awarding of unidimensional, rigid roles that do not take into account how roles may change in different contexts, or that a person is capable of playing a multiplicity of roles. This frustration calls the entire interpretive repertoire into question as a rigid way of constructing a team, that does not allow for adaptation - to be discussed later. Ruth (quotes 51 and 53) blames this allocation of rigid roles on a limited and superficial knowledge of individuals in the group, thereby invalidating the ability of the exercise to work in a team building context where individuals do not have prior knowledge of one another i.e. to emerge a team. (Her response to the manner in which the group reflects / creates her through role allocation is explored in more depth in the psychologised team repertoire.) Helen, however, (quote 52) blames the problems in the exercise on the way in which the process worked, i.e. "jokey jokey" and no negotiation.

This raises questions as to whether fellow team mates can "allocate" roles and what the role of individuals is in determining their part. It highlights a tension between roles being "found" by individuals in the team as a bottom up approach, or allocated by others in the team as a top down, more imposed approach. This tension is evident throughout constructions of the role-based team, particularly in terms of set, universal roles applied to individuals. Helen's description of the exercise as a "hoot" is in direct contrast to Ruth's experience of wanting to block it out of her memory. Helen was however constructed as being the engine of the car, placing her in an extremely powerful position in the group which may result in greater comfort with her role and thus the exercise.

51. "We had to draw a car and see what part everyone was. I wasn't sure I liked the way people were seeing me. The kind of perceptions or even prejudices they had about me … That was very difficult for me, because I didn't want to be seen in the way they put me as. I don't know. I can't even remember. I've blocked it out of my mind. … It upset me immensely. I can't remember because I didn't want to. I think I was the handbrake or the ignition, or one of those, the steering wheel. And I just didn't feel like I wanted to be that. I felt like I wanted to be something more important, or have a different role. Why did I have that role? I just felt like they didn't really know me like I wanted them to know me. Everyone knew me from my academic record and what they expected of me, and that was difficult." Ruth (S)

52. "One of the exercises we got them to do was 'What is your role in a group?' OK, first of all they started doing it in a jokey fashion which I think was problematic, particularly for Ruth. I think that irritated her. … then the exercise shifted and it suddenly became more serious. But some people had been allocated roles based on the jokey jokey. And I think that created a dynamic. ... And there wasn't really a negotiation of 'Well, what do I see my role as?' it was 'Oh well, you're the headlight' And again, I think that's where you've got to say 'Hang on. I don't want to be the headlight', or 'Why do you think I'm the headlight? Actually I think I'm this. So are there any common characteristics?' And again it's that mediation you know of the issues. ... I remember very distinctly Ruth being the ignition. And she just didn't want to be the ignition. And I think it comes, I think it comes back to the leadership. You know there's a sense of 'I'm the one that starts the group and gets them going' and I think also a kind of wanting to not always be responsible. You know it can be quite weighty to always be the one that must get things going. ... hurt feelings ... Alice was the headlights. Because you know, she makes quite incisive comments. ... Moira was sturdy, maybe the windscreens - sturdy, responsible, guiding. Fiona was maybe the windscreen wiper. Ruth, the ignition. There's me, Helen - the engine. Susan was the bumper, the paintwork probably. Ja, - creativity, presentation something, I don't know. Rory, maybe Rory was the wheels. I can't remember. It was a hoot." Helen (L)

53. And ja, you want to say 'I'm not always a clown", and some people wanted to say that. Everybody said 'You make me laugh', 'You're funny'. 'You're great for the morale of the team', but they don't always want to be seen that way." Ruth (S)

Benne and Sheats (in French, Bell & Zawacki, 1994) refer to the problem of stereotyping members into a limited range of roles which are played regardless of whether the task requires them. They, however, attribute this to members who "insist" on playing a role "in and out of season" (p.429). This idea of enduring roles is clearly related to the team building exercise involving the car as outlined, but is also imparted via principles learnt on the weekend. Nick's account (below) demonstrates how the enduring role is constructed in terms of the overall self awareness goals of the team building. He refers in particular to students becoming aware of <u>their</u> role (singular) that they play across <u>groups</u> (plural).

54. "That they would have a sense of how they relate in a team, how they relate to everyone else in the team, which I think they do. Got a sense of their particular role that they adopt in groups. And a sense of how one might go about being in a functional group. And what functional groups are about. And what kind of principles one needs to engage in to be in a good group...If it was intending to build a team, I don't know if it did that. I don't know if it'll ever do that." Nick (L)

Potter and Wetherell's (1987) criticism of trait theory is interesting to consider at this point. They refer to trait theory as "asocial" (p.97) because it ignores the inconsistency in human behaviour, and different parts social creatures play in society which require different manifestations of the self.

## 4.2 TASKS VS. EMOTIONS

The second area of dysfunction constructed in the machine interpretive repertoire is the tension between a focus on task and a focus on relationship. The machine repertoire advocates dehumanisation and high production at the expense of human concerns. Dyer (1982) makes the point that in team building there has been an increased emphasis on helping teams achieve results as opposed to a previous focus on team relationships.

55. "I think when you've got this heavy deadline, you don't really have time to think about those softer - being nice to people, patting them on the back, 'you did a great job with the heading' you know. But people wanted that. So it was also you know because we had a real rush deadline, and we put a lot of pressure on ourselves ..." Ruth (S)

56. "I think that working through your problems is very important, but I almost feel like it's a waste of time. Although I know it's so important, I don't feel like it's the <u>real</u> work." Fiona (S)

57. "I'd say they're like machines. They're complete academic machines who strive for the ultimate perfection. Little detail, incredibly important. Perfectionists. Which I agree with, because I'm a perfectionist as well, but I do have like other things that are important for me, which I don't think they understood ... So like it wouldn't be done in the small. Like we wouldn't do the bare minimum or like just get it done. We would hand in way more than we had to. And I think that strained a lot of the whole thing. ... It was like if I was only looking for a fifty and everyone else wanted a 75, that wasn't even discussed. ... So ja, there are perfectionists who strive. … there are limits to, to what you should do I think. Especially in a team." Rory (S)

The tension between interpersonal, relational concerns and production is clearly constructed though Ruth and Fiona's accounts (extracts 55 and 56). This idea of task focus at the expense of all else is however described by both Ruth and Fiona as legitimate given the pressure to perform / produce i.e. although team relationships are acknowledged, the task to be completed and deadline to be met takes precedence over team relationships. Relational / emotional concerns are constructed by Ruth (extract 55) as not only secondary, but somewhat insignificant in the face of a "real, rush deadline" by using a patronising example of what team members required (in terms of affirmation) that relates to a relatively minor aspect of the work. She also emphasises the role of the deadline by describing it as "heavy", "real, rush" whereas the relational aspect is somewhat vaguely described and underplayed. Fiona (extract 56) admits that problem solving represents a distraction for her from the legitimate work to be done, again emphasising performance and production above relational aspects in keeping with a machine repertoire. Huszczo (1990) maintains that interpersonal relations are important, but relationship building is only one of several things that effective teams need. He warns that team building overemphasising interpersonal aspects is often viewed as "too soft". Collins (1992) claims that 90% of team decisions are operational, and consequently "sharing and trust are nice to have …but not essential. On the other hand, strategic decisions which concern the future direction of the organisation need input from every member of the group … <u>This</u> is the time when teamwork is essential [and] 'sharing' comes into its own" (p.37).

Payne (1982) puts forward that teamwork is for contributing to better work, not just for having a happier work group. Hames (1994, p.81) suggests that organisations as a whole can be machine-like in that quality is measured "solely as a technical attribute of the final output." Rory (quote 57) responds to this tension describing his class mates as "complete academic machines" implying that they are focused on production of academic material / units only, expending time and effort to achieve "the ultimate perfection". Rory's suggestion of robotic-like performance is particularly interesting in that he raises this in the context of discontent with team relationships - as if class mates are so work focused and machine-like (robotic) that they lack emotion / understanding and tolerance for other interests and commitments. Although Rory constructs the team as a machine, it is a construction he clearly finds problematic and does not buy into. Interestingly, he constructs team members as having some agency over their outputs in terms of determining how much to produce. This is in direct contrast to how the rest of the team constructs power relations in the machine interpretive repertoire in terms of lecturers determining the outputs the team must produce. It was also Rory in particular who was most positive about the explicit power relationships of the educational team.

Because of the focus on tasks and production, trust in the team is constructed as a function of equal production levels amongst members. In other words, if group members are performing adequately in relation to the rest of the team, they are deemed trustworthy. In a machine, this could be considered as a trusty part that performs reliably. Trust is based on performance and not relationship. Thus the attribute of trust which might in a family interpretive repertoire for instance encompass emotional and psychological aspects, is reduced to a mechanical function related purely to production as seen in quote 58 to follow. Ruth relates trust clearly to performance and work produced rather than using interpersonal and relational criteria / experiences.

58. "I mean trust links probably to not everybody pulling their weight, or some people pulling away ... I trust myself to get the work done and other you know people, have given me rational reason not to trust them unfortunately. They've like you know skipped meetings or not done their fair share to the best, to the same standard as everybody else... And that's a real problem, when you're geared up and other people aren't, then you lose trust that they can get it done you know … I think I trust people, but I'm hesitant to just let it all go and not to see the final product." Ruth (S)

In quote 59 to follow, Fiona takes a different stance to Ruth (quote 58) in how she constructs trust. She questions Susan's use of the word trust in relation to checking work, implying that checking work is not a matter of trust, and trust cannot be reduced to a productive / work related function. However, indirectly she is supporting the relationship between trust and work produced, by setting it up in a different way. She positions herself in contrast to Susan as being secure in and open to her work being checked by other members of the team. This is constructed as an act of loyalty to the team, and as placing value on the team because she is making herself open to improve her contribution, (which is ultimately for the good of the team). Fiona is still subscribing to the link between trust and output because she positions her approach of transparency (to expose work) as demonstrating her trustworthiness to the team.

59. "If something's going into a group project I want someone to say to me, look, if it's just for me and it's not so good then that's OK. But it's for other people I like them to say 'No, look I think you should change this, this and this so it fits in with this and this'. And I'm quite happy for that to happen. But I think with Susan she didn't feel like that. She was like, 'I've done this. You trust me because this is my, you know this is my piece of work'. She kept on using the word trust, trust, trust you know...but [actually] you do have to go through people's stuff." Fiona (S)

The focus on task not only differentiates the machine and family interpretive repertoires, but interestingly also sets up the machine interpretive repertoire against the educational interpretive repertoire. Harris and Nicholson (in French et al, 1994) note that effective team building can only be achieved through members learning and observing team interaction, rather than being entirely preoccupied with the "content" of the processes, problems or specific subject matter. Thus the learning of the educational team is juxtaposed with the focus on content in the machine repertoire.

### 4.3 CONFLICT AND CHANGE IN THE TEAM: THE BROKEN MACHINE

Perhaps one of the most dramatic shortcomings of the machine repertoire is most clearly illustrated in response to change. In the following quotes, students and a lecturer describe the impact on the structure and consequent functioning of the team when a classmate (Alice) left the RU Industrial Psychology Honours course mid year.

60. "It would have been nice to have a couple more people in the class maybe. Especially after Alice went you know...It has never turned into a problem, but there was always like this gap, a bit of a hole like somebody's missing." Fiona (S)

61. "But I think there is still a big gap because when we mentioned it yesterday there was still a lot of hurt feelings ... it hadn't been resolved. And there is still a gap." Susan (S)

62. "And so it is weird to know that you know a lot about an individual personally, like on a personal level, and then they're dislocated from the group...And it's like almost like this weird sense of like severing you know." Liz (S)

63. "And we said to her, well you know we wish we could have talked about it and grieved about it ... gained an acceptance and an understanding that we'd lost you, you know like a limb. It's almost like you know one of the 7 limbs had been cut off in a way." Susan (S)

A machine being composed of mechanistic parts is clearly unable to adapt to change. The team is constructed by students in a similar light, being described as having a "gap" following Alice's departure that was never filled, or as experiencing the finality of a severed limb. This highlights a lack of adaptive ability. Mechanistic parts created by a manufacturer cannot change without external assistance. The team is constructed as a broken machine with mechanisms unable to replace one another because they are so clearly defined. Payne (1982) refers to distant boundaries which exist when there are gaps between team members' roles and suggests closing the gap by reallocating work to different individuals.

64. "Perhaps that's [student response] quite indicative of it being a team is that there's a sense of someone really needing to be there and that there was a contribution." Helen (L)

Helen (quote 64) acknowledges that the impact of Alice leaving affected the team. She constructs the students' response in positive terms, as an indication of Alice's contribution to the group and a need for her specifically, determining that the group is a team. This implies a dependence between / on students for particular "contributions" constructing a team as made up of parts, but positioning this construction as positive in that it ensures recognition for the part each member plays (and ultimately makes assessment of individuals easier because their roles are defined – this is explored in greater detail in terms of power relations in the machine interpretive repertoire). The students, however, describe this event as having an extremely negative impact on their team.

65. "If you imagine like the 7 of us holding hands and you know leaning back and then the one person is just gone and the rest of the group sort of like falls back you know. It's you're just like floundering at the end for a while. It takes a while to get the two end pieces together. You know that function she performed in the group wasn't there anymore. So other people had to take over her role and do her, what she normally did...And there was almost like having to quickly mend and quickly fix and get on with it without actually mourning that we'd lost a person, moving through it and you know reassigning roles." Susan (S)

66. "I think everybody was upset at the time, but the way of dealing with it I think pretty much because of the lecturers, it got swept under the carpet. So for example the day she came well, first day of term, we went to the Spur for our seminar. And Helen had asked her to come and say goodbye. But that was as much as we dealt with it as a group. We never spoke about it as a group. I mean people would often say you know, 'It really makes me bleak because Alice's left', or 'It's really a pity that she's left'. I mean she was academically very strong. And had she I think had more assistance, she would've excelled this year. And we'll say as a group we haven't actually dealt with it ... I think we were pretty much forced to (and even sort of by the lecturers' attitudes) to get up and go and move on. Which is what we did. I mean there were times when we'd maybe work on something and ah, 'Imagine if Alice was here', or 'Alice's missing' and make those sorts of comments, but pretty much got on with it. There was always that sort of feeling of, 'there's a gap'. And people acknowledged that. But in terms of how we worked, there was that element missing, like for example her being the steering wheel just as an example. And we've had to sort of compensate for that and try and work with that and fill that gap, which I think we've sort of done. But I think we still would have been better off with Alice in the group." Moira (S)

Although quotes 65 and 66 seem to construct the team as adaptive and evolving, a closer look reveals that they do not vary from constructions of the team as a machine that is incapable of change. Susan describes the group as "floundering" at the loss of Alice because of the loss of the "function that she performed", which highlights once again set individual roles / parts that originate in response to an enduring group format rather than shared responsibilities originating in response to each task undertaken. In addition, adaptation is described as a process of "reassigning roles", rather than recreating new roles altogether based on the change. Thus peoples' roles did not significantly change, but instead had extra components of "Alice's role" added to them.

Moira (quote 66) describes the adaptive process as one of compensation for Alice's loss. This again allows for a rigid set of roles to exist, with other members merely carrying part of the unfilled role rather than re-inventing themselves. Susan admits this conceding that "we should have ... rebuilt the team". Interesting to note in Moira's construction is that Alice was academically very capable, but required "more assistance". This implies that the RU Industrial Psychology Honours course extends beyond a pure academic programme to include aspects such as the activities set up on the team building weekend that students were unprepared for. These less overt and measurable experiential and emotional aspects will be considered in greater detail in the family and psychologised repertoires following the machine.

Not only is the team largely constructed as being incapable of adapting to change, but Nick (quote 67 to follow) constructs a difficulty / inability to adjust to conflict. He implies rigidity that results in individuals withdrawing from the team rather than adjusting role expectations i.e. he implies that roles are so set and a task orientation so entrenched that the team cannot accommodate a change, so individuals "leave" the team when their interests conflict with others.

67. "Well, they're not bailing out, they're bailing out of the team. I think ... people are realising that what's important is what they want out of Honours, not what Ruth wants out of Honours, or what they think Helen wants." Nick (L)

Only one response to a change in structure is constructed differently to the machine interpretive repertoire as evident in the quote to follow.

68. "A person withdraws from the group and maybe they're feeling angsty or anxious or depressed, and you definitely see a situation where the group tends to move on without that person, and then it's five against one. I think it reminds me of like an amoeba. It like swallows in but it spits out and ja, it's constantly [moving]", Liz (S)

As opposed to a "gap" being left requiring that roles be reassigned, Liz constructs the team as adaptive - an amoeba that continues moving and transforming. Her construction that the group continues in motion implies extreme adaptive ability to a withdrawal ("spitting out") or return ("swallowing") of a member.

### 4.4 POWER BASES IN THE MACHINE – THE PROBLEM OF AGENCY

69. "I got the feeling that they wanted us to come back a fully wonderful little, you know, manufactured little team, that was going to work together perfectly." Susan (S)

70. "[On team building] we were always with Natalie, Nick and Helen, and it was very much we were being built by them." Susan (S)

71. "I think they see it [the team building weekend] as their weekend in that it's about them you know, it's about them learning this methodology. ... Whether they own it? Probably not. Because it's done to them in the way that the course, the issues are decided beforehand." Helen (L)

The previous quotes examine how power and responsibility is constructed in the machine interpretive repertoire. Susan (quotes 69 and 70) constructs the lecturers as having extremely high levels of power over the group as manufacturers or builders of the team / machine. This functions to construct the team as being at the mercy of lecturers, victims of the lecturers' designs – reminiscent of being a victim of "the system" in the educational team. This construction however makes the team the lecturers' responsibility to fix and maintain, as well as operate. This in contrast to Rory's earlier construction (extract 57) of productive members of the team exerting power over the outputs of the team as a whole. This is perhaps what makes the family interpretive repertoire still to come, so attractive. In that interpretive repertoire all members of the team belong and exert power equally rather than a distinction between higher and lower producers.

In the machine repertoire, Helen (quote 71) as a lecturer regards the students as seeing the lecturers as actual operators of the team, and as having agency because of their lack of involvement at decision making level on the team building weekend, but, positions this as erroneous. Where in the educational team power relationships were deemed to be overt, students in the machine interpretive repertoire are regarded (by Helen and Rory, at least) to have some agency over the amount of work produced. This serves to disguise power wielded by lecturers. The educational team operated via openly set up goals (marks) whereas power is less explicit in the machine repertoire, with control being exerted via perceived expectations of individuals as earlier outlined.

72. "Everybody was in total shock [when Alice left] and there was no process of grieving. It was never actually acknowledged that we had lost a group member. There was never any acknowledgement that there might be something wrong with the team that we needed to work through. ... There was never a time when the group sat down with Helen and Natalie and Nick, you know like a post team building weekend, and said, 'Listen. What's been happening here? What are these dynamics that are going on here that made one of us leave? You know how is the group going to handle it now that one of us is gone?" Susan (S)

73. "They've expressed a sense of not having, wanting to have spoken about it, uh, about what happened. And then maybe the way that they expressed it felt that maybe we as lecturers should have set up some kind of forum for them discussing it, which maybe should have happened. … And then again, maybe it's up to them as a group to decide what they want. You know, I think that's always the tension as an outsider. As a lecturer, aren't you interfering in the group process by saying, 'Here. Here's a date where we are going to meet and speak about Alice'? Maybe they don't want to. Maybe they deal with it in their own way. For us to set that kind of agenda I think would be too invasive, too imposing." Nick (L)

Based on the construction of lecturers as operating, building etc. the team, it follows that team functioning is constructed as being their responsibility. This is made evident in Susan's (quote 72) description of the failure of lecturers to coordinate a discussion about the "dynamics" that were responsible for Alice's departure. Nick, however, (quote 73) justifies a lack of involvement from the lecturers by terming it "invasive" and "imposing" suggesting that the group does not need an external agent to coordinate or operate it, and that this would be a misuse of lecturing power – disempowering students. Clearly lecturers deem the responsibility for such a discussion to rest with the students.

Nick's view is supported in literature by Harris and Nicholson (in French et al., 1994, p.223), who note that ownership of team development "comes through internal commitment to the work and to the team, rather than external pressure … the foreman's role must be redefined so that he or she is the 'facilitator of internal commitment' rather than the enforcer through external control." Importantly however, the above exploration illustrates conflicting constructions of power within the machine repertoire that are problematic and allow for blaming, resentment and avoidance of responsibility. A clash of expectations between Susan and Nick is evident through Nick's subscription to a pedagogical interpretive repertoire, and Susan's use of a psychologised interpretive repertoire through suggestions of "grief" and a need to "work through" it.

The construction of power in the educational and machine repertoires differs to that of the family and psychologised team where students exert their own pressure. This is possibly because the foundation of the educational and machine repertoires is highly theoretical and knowledge based (meaning lecturers are at an overwhelming advantage), with the overt power tool of assessment being at the lecturers' disposal. This assessment being of the students' knowledge and academic outputs rather than emotional states and relationships.

The machine repertoire thus operates through constructions of a task-based and role-based functional team, but is associated with several shortcomings involving rigidity and a neglect of relational issues. These issues require a different construction of the team to give them meaning which can be found in the family repertoire which follows.

## CHAPTER SIX – THE TEAM AS A FAMILY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The team is constructed in a variety of ways as a familial-type unit. This repertoire, is apparent operating in constructions of openness, harmony, hierarchy, the level and importance of relationship, and problems in relationships, and is directly linked to the lack of an adequate way to articulate "related-ness" in the educational team, or the team as a machine repertoire. It therefore is used to give voice to emotions in the team, and functions to create a sense of belonging and cohesion. When threatened, students resort to various forms of "glue" to ensure a degree of conformity to hold the team together which protects and enforces the family interpretive repertoire. This construction operates across social and work settings in a somewhat haphazard way, resulting in blurred work – personal relationships. Although this interpretive repertoire may construct the team as a set of close relationships other than familial relationships i.e. a group of friends, the definite sense of loyalty displayed and filial hierarchy established with respect to the lecturers, as well as an acknowledged lack of choice amongst students as to who the members of the team are, result in relationships that are constructed in both a positive and negative light (unlikely to be featured as strongly in a group of friends). The family construction is set up quite evidently in literature, (and can be sourced in the lecture notes of the Industrial Psychology 3 course preceding the Industrial Psychology Honours course) in the proposition that teams are deemed good for people in that they satisfy affiliation and membership needs, allow individuals to do a range of activities, provide support in times of stress and crisis, and provide a setting in which people can learn to be trusting and helpful to one another (Harris & Nicholson in French et al., 1994).

### 2. CONSTRUCTING THE HAPPY FAMILY IDEAL

74. [describe your team] "A bunch of loons. They're almost a support group. And at the same time they are also the same people who drive you absolutely crazy from day to day. In some ways they're my best friends. In some ways they're a family. And in some ways they're just part of me. You know the six of us are so close. You know you see each other day to day. You almost become one person." Susan (S)

75. "I think they [the lecturers] actually wish that we weren't a happy family. Because we are quite closely knit." Susan (S)

Susan (extracts 74 and 75) describes the level of relationship between classmates as highly intimate to the degree that she considers the team part of herself, implying like-mindedness with respect to purpose and values. She bases this on friendship, familiarity and comfort experienced in the team that has developed from their frequent interaction. She constructs the team as being a "happy family" that the lecturers exist outside of, and positions them as unsupportive of the closeness of the relationships. This sets lecturers up as a comparative point against which to highlight the cohesion of the team despite that Johnson and Johnson (1997) point out that co-operative experiences promote more positive attitudes to supervisors / superiors. Yet, quotes 76, 77 and 78 to follow are examples of lecturer perspectives that contradict Susan's construction of their opposition to close relationship.

76. [Is the class a team?] "I think the way that they've gelled together and followed their own kind of patterns I suppose does make them a team. And they've had to work together." Natalie (L)

77. "As a lecturer I expect them to do their work and also to contribute to each others growth in a sense, by contributing their own understanding and contributing their own experience. And that they will be open to whatever it is that is out there. And also be more human about a lot of issues. Not see life as very static ... As a group, I expect them to have some sort of understanding between them. Because walking into a situation where they're arguing over something makes it harder for me to teach them. So I expect them to have reached some sort of compromise, to be open with each other, to have dealt with their issues. And to do that on an ongoing basis." Natalie (L)

78. "But beyond the task I think there are outcomes that take a group and make it a team. Outcomes like, that there is a sense of affiliation, that there is a sense of dependency in a very positive way, that there is a sense of support and commitment to each other, and that there is a sense of a common vision of what it is we're trying to achieve here." Helen (L)

Natalie (extracts 76 and 77) and Helen (extract 78) construct a focus on relationship as a definitive aspect of a team that needs to be continuously maintained and not something against which they are opposed. This maintenance of relationship is by implication something that occurs outside of the lecturing environment (in order to make the students easier to teach), thereby extending expectations of team relationships into a personal realm. Natalie (quote 76) describes this process as quite natural and more instantaneous, "gelled" whereas the majority of the aspects set out by Helen (quote 78) are emotive criteria revealing her construction of an ideal team as having gone through developmental stages to become a team. These stages include: caring, belonging and commitment to each other and to a common goal. Helen and Natalie clearly subscribe to literature that highlights two important conditions of team effectiveness: accomplishing something of value, and maintaining or increasing a sense of cohesion and willingness to work together (Harris & Nicholson in French, et al., 1994).

Both Natalie and Helen's constructions are in sharp contrast to the highly functional criteria that Nick sets up in the educational team (see quotes 1 – 3). While he primarily constructs the team as an educational team with a purpose to learn, Helen and Natalie construct the team as a family unit defined by relational outcomes. Lecturers therefore appear to be sending out differing messages to students (based on their varying constructions) in terms of expectations, "correct" practice etc.

Manning (1997, p.54) refers to organisations as being "noisy" and that a "cacophony of messages confuses people". He maintains that this is a common and serious problem, and that fewer messages result in greater effectiveness. Contradictory messages sending different sets of signals detract from this. The existence of different constructions evident in the talk of Nick versus Helen and Natalie thus raises questions as to the impact of this dissonance on students' interpretive repertoires. This is exacerbated by the positional authority held by the lecturers, and the role they play in setting standards against which students are measured. The effects can be seen in confusion experienced with respect to relationships in the family interpretive repertoire, explored later in this chapter.

79. "I think we are [a real team] because we've worked together so much in the past year. I think as time's gone on, more through just, not necessarily working together and towards that common goal type thing, but more just because **we know each other so much**, we know each other well." Fiona (S)

80. "[I describe my class] with a lot of like **affection**. And I enjoy **sharing** my experiences with them with others because I regard them quite **fondly**. ... Strengths [of the class] would be ... a shared sense of what we're doing together, a feeling that we're all in this together ... A lot of fun, a lot of **laughter**. ... A lot of **camaraderie**. ... an **intimacy** where you know other peoples' strengths and their weaknesses, and you've shared a lot, and you've definitely got an intimate sense of, well it's a **connectedness** in a way." Liz (S)

81. "I think now we're more **comfortable** with each other. We know each other, so we can now **speak more freely**." Susan (S)

82. "A team is about finding out, and **getting to know each other**, and ja, the interpersonal dynamics take a long time to work. And we found that in our class. We don't really know each other, and things that come out. And ja, and now if I would have known before I would say if I would have known you're an anxious person, or if I'd known you get stressed about this, or this isn't your strength you know, so it takes time to learn each others skills and abilities and to develop the **closeness** where you can almost **move like you know, like a flock of birds**, just without even thinking about it." Ruth (S)

83. "What other strengths do we have? ... I think we're also quite **brutally honest** about how things are going, and that's good..." Ruth (S)

84. "I just hope that everybody is happy with the end product, and everybody is **happy working together**. It's one of my biggest hopes that everybody's **comfortable**, there's no sense of antagonism, there's no hard feelings." Liz (S)

In student quotes 79 to 84, the team is clearly constructed as a family through the manner in which the Honours class is defined as a team. This is on the basis of their history together (time spent together) and openness in sharing with one another that has bred intimacy and familiarity. The closeness and level of relationship constructed is somewhat intense, and implies a comfort in the relationship (which facilitates more open communication without fear of ending a relationship – quote 83), friendship, companionship and sharing. The descriptors highlighted extend beyond work-focused relationships or knowledge of work styles / abilities observed in the group, but are rather a conscious result of emotional investment beyond that required by task work.

Ruth describes a flock of birds (quote 82) implying a family grouping that suggests a unified, cohesive unit. The constructions imply that this type of relationship would not be formed without time spent together and a detailed knowledge of each other. Liz (quote 84) constructs her ideal team as a unit where harmony prevails in process and results - with a lack of conflict occurring at any level, even at an unseen emotive level. This level of relationship is positioned as highly positive

for the group and functions to justify an extension of the team beyond the content / experience of the lecture room into a more personal realm of interaction. The family repertoire also functions to construct the team as a vehicle through which to show acceptance of others and thereby provide an environment of belonging and friendship.

The construction subscribes to what is termed the interpersonal model of team building (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982, Woodman & Sherwood, 1980). This model rests on the assumption that "a group with few interpersonal problems can function more effectively as a team" (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982, p.7), and focuses on developing and allowing mutual support and trust, open communication, cooperation and cohesion, and a sharing of feelings. This is said to create a climate in which conflict can be confronted and resolved, all in aid of enhancing commitment to the team. Johnson and Johnson (1997, p.107) maintain that "within organisations, committed relationships are not luxuries, they are necessities." Co-operative relationships are hypothesized to increase co-operative efforts. Johnson and Johnson go on to note (p.109) that "within co-operative efforts, every person can form friendships." They also maintain that developing and maintaining a high level of trust among group members is an essential aspect of group effectiveness.

## 3. TROUBLE IN PARADISE – THREATS TO THE TEAM

The problems experienced by the group highlight expectations of the team as family, revealing interesting specifics of how the team is constructed in this repertoire, and what its shortcomings are in this context.

### 3.1 FIGHTING AND POLITENESS

85. "Our first project was very difficult. We worked till late every night, and it was taking us longer than we should have and I think we had this huge overload of work and we were putting too much on ourselves, and besides you know a huge amount of content, we weren't really getting on very well, and we didn't really know how to share it. I think some people felt they were taking on all of the work. Other people were shirking and there was a lot of also interpersonal problems like, I don't know, people were being bitchy towards each other and there was some fighting and a bit of talking behind each others' backs, getting into little cliques and stuff. And that was a huge problem. But afterwards, even though our project was great, we did well, it was excellent, we were happy with it, there was this feeling that things had really gone wrong. Like, I had you know problems with somebody, and I didn't want to talk to them, and you know other people were resentful of other people, and afterwards we had to have a big thrashing out sort of. It was me who initiated it. … And it was really useful. I mean we spoke you know, people got to say openly and honestly what they thought of other people, and what had gone wrong and why." Ruth (S)

86. [re the meeting after the first group project] "Everybody was just very upset. There was just bad vibes, very bad energies. And we decided 'No. There's something wrong here. We've just got to sit down and clear the air.' So we did. Everybody had their little, it was more like a bitching session you know. It cleared the air. It was more like a reflection." Susan (S)

87. "They can pull the rabbit out of the hat at the end of the day. I mean for example, their group project … they managed to kind of get it done. Ja so, but at what cost? And I think that the cost's too high. You know I think that they, you know their group project, they alienated people and you know, there were problems. … The kind of conflict that I've seen, is peoples' inability to be sensitive to each others' needs." Helen (L)

88. "What else could be a weakness? I think some of us in terms of interpersonal issues, some of us aren't as sensitive as they could be, they're still quite, I don't know, maybe frustrated with other people, and they're not patient and you know, get huffy and, you can see that. They openly get [huffy], especially when it's late at night or our deadlines are coming. So we have a long way to go. If we had two years to sort things out, then it would be brilliant." Ruth (S)

The interpersonal problems experienced (or lack of interpersonal "success") that are described, suggest a construction of the team as ideally harmonious and open, and further where all members are equal to one another, i.e. no cliques and no one person standing out from the group. In addition to this, an expectation of the group is to have no unresolved business, in order to maintain harmony. Helen in quote 87 also reveals her expectations and consequent construction of a team as being about more than production, but also about maintaining relationship and not sacrificing it to achieve a task. Her construction of a team therefore highlights the importance of harmony, belonging and not alienating people.

The aforementioned talk of both students and a lecturer constructs the notion of a team as a harmonious, accepting, trusting, honest unit. This construction is highlighted by dissatisfaction in the team, and by what the team defines as problematic again clearly subscribing to the interpersonal model of team building (Liebowitz & De Meuse, 1982). Dyer (1982, p.41) maintains that difficulty between team members is a common symptom of a "sick team", thereby pathologising team conflict. He expands on what he means by difficulties by referring to fighting in the team, personality conflicts and subscription to different philosophies, goals or values. Huszczo (1990) also refers to the importance of interpersonal relations, noting that conflict hampers team performance. Dissent is said to disrupt stability (De Dreu, De Vries, Franssesn & Altink, 2000). Johnson and Johnson (1997), however, regard conflicts amongst members of a healthy group to be inevitable, and that the important aspect is how conflicts are managed. Lack of conflict is said to indicate apathy, disinterest, non-involvement and alienation of members as opposed to maturity. It is interesting in light of this to note what expectations are associated with the family repertoire, and how these contributed towards conflict.

89. "For some of them there was this feeling that you know, 'We've got to come back and be all like cosy, cosy' And there was this funny conception of team, which is what your research has raised, which is quite interesting. … I think that these kind of conceptions of teams got in the way of, of how they were working. And they experienced a lot of grief." Helen (L)

90. "I think that these particular students see teams as 'We all get on together. There are no real problems. Everything will be alright. As long as we have each other' you know. Isn't there a song like that? I think that there's that kind of conceptualisation of teams. Well there was.

And I think that's why the group project was such a rude awakening. And again it comes back to this politeness in the course. And yet it's quite interesting that people in their reports commented on politeness as being an issue. There wasn't a kind of a depth. And yet we don't set the pace. We facilitate. But we don't set the pace. So I think there's a conflict there for them." Helen (L)

91. "[Our expectation of the team] I think it's quite idealistic, like things will work out well, and we're all capable of getting on because of our backgrounds and what we've achieved. And I think that's quite ideal. Like it's not going to be that rosy. And I don't think we were ever made aware of the fact that maybe it's not going to be rosy. We were never prepared for things that might go wrong. We were going to gel as a team and we were going to be awesome. You know cause like the people in the group are sharp, and are academically sound to achieve that." Rory (S)

92. I think it was just stress and we don't actually quite realise how monstrous you can be and how monstrous other people can be, and it just really brings out the worst in people. And it [our personal baggage] was all brought together, put into Liz's room at 2 o' clock in the morning with a deadline the next day and a lot of stress ... we weren't quite sure what levels of acceptance and perfectionism was wanted. You know we were all very tired and very run down and very stressed. And I had printed out the front page and somebody didn't like the font, and I blew my fuse. ... I think it was just a wonderful learning experience, personal growth experience. So it was because of personal issues, not team issues or interpersonal issues." Susan (S)

Helen in quotes 89 and 90 describes the students as having a problem free, "cosy, cosy" construction of teams which is a flawed notion. She blames this on a lack of openness in the group, thereby advocating a greater depth of relationship to address the breakdown. Rory sets up his expectation of rosiness (quote 91) and bonding closely as a team as having been based on the academic achievement and "background" of the members. He does attribute his expectation to an unknown source for not informing the team of potential conflict, and he thereby constructs the team as victims of their ignorance. Both Rory and Helen describe the disillusionment of this expectation not transpiring, and position it as unrealistic. Where Rory appears to abandon the possibility of "getting on" and thus in some sense the family repertoire as a whole, Helen however suggests as mentioned developing relationships further to address the problem. Susan (quote 92) like Helen (quotes 89 and 90) protects the family interpretive repertoire by blaming the problems experienced during group projects on personal issues and stress rather than on flawed expectations of harmony.

Harris and Nicholson (in French et al., 1994, p.222) point out that team members must be taught that "the happy ending" is a myth because team building is a dynamic process that involves living in a constantly changing environment. They go on to say that a further, common pitfall involves the myths of "we like each other and therefore we are a team", "if we get to know one another then we will trust each other and then we will be a team" or "we get along so well together we make a good team", because they presume little or no conflict, which prevents dealing with it openly. Silberman (2001) regards the expectation of obstacles as a tip for team building.

93. "So it was all the way we perceive ourselves and the way we think we can work in a team, and really, no-one knew how to express it so early in our work together. And they couldn't say what they need and we didn't know what other people needed. I think that's why it just came out because it was all kept inside." Ruth (S)

94. "We're just so scared of stepping on each others' toes that there's no honesty at all. There is no confrontation at all. So a lot of things sit under and they brew and they bubble ... And because there's no honesty there at all, you know so it's broken the group apart." Susan (S)

95. "My expectation would be that if there's a problem you must address it. I can't imagine what you may be feeling or might not be feeling, and although I will try to be sensitive to you in a team, as part of a team, there are often times when I could not imagine what you may be feeling. And you cannot hold me responsible for that unless you aren't an adult." Helen (L)

Quotes 93 – 95 reinforce the notion of honesty and openness in the team in order to maintain harmony and a sense of belonging. Students Ruth and Susan (quotes 93 and 95) blame (and justify) the problems experienced in the group / destruction of the group on not expressing needs or conflict.
Ruth (extract 93), however, does not only set up openness as for the good of the group, but she also constructs the team as an entity that should meet the needs of others with respect to how they perceive themselves to work in a team. Johnson and Johnson (1997) suggest several reasons for avoidance of conflict, these being: fear, ignorance of how to engage in controversy, lack of training in how to use decisional conflict effectively, an anti-conflict culture, group norms of avoidance, and inertia in the group. They note that when controversy is suppressed and concurrence seeking emphasized, defects in decision making will occur because debate produces higher group productivity, individual achievement, enhanced problem solving and quality decision making. Johnson and Johnson note that when engaged in a conflict two major dual concerns are taken into account: reaching an agreement that satisfies our needs and meets or goals, and maintaining an appropriate relationship with the other person.

A tension is however apparent in the texts as to where the onus lies for resolving conflict. Ruth (quote 88) highlighted the insensitivity of members to others' issues / personal problems, whereas in quote 93 she places the onus on those experiencing issues to communicate them to the group. In other words, blame is shifted between those with problems who aren't being open and communicating them, and those who aren't sensitive enough to pick up on the problems. This same tension between openness and sensitivity is evident in Helen's talk (quote 95). She positions a lack of openness and consequent conflict as childish thereby constructing openness as mature.

## 3.2. POWER RELATIONS

### 3.2.1 Rebellion and cohesion

The following accounts of power relations are slotted into this family interpretive repertoire because of their role in creating / enhancing cohesion which is so valued in the family interpretive repertoire.

96. "I think there's quite a division. I think we feel we've been a difficult, you know we put a proposal forward, or want to change a deadline, or want to take away a project. We feel it's us against them often. So, I think we're quite strong when we're together. ... I mean they are the lecturers. They are marking us. Come thesis time when they're marking our theses …We can all get together and bitch and moan and feel this cohesiveness … It comes to a separation, when it starts coming towards exams and you know they need to be marked and it's like judgement and it's you and them, and ja, I think that's also difficult." Ruth (S)

97. "[lecturers expectations are] way too high, and at the same time I think that they think we're about to overthrow, threaten to strike, a bit of mutiny going on and stuff like that. We challenge the lecturers I think a lot more than a lot of classes have before. We don't accept much from them ... I think we drive Helen absolutely round the bend. I think she is so scared when she sees us coming down the corridor. We're very much a 'We know what we want and we know what we won't do, and we know what we will do, and nobody's going to come between that', but that's <u>as a team</u>. Within a team we're all so different." Susan (S)

98. "You know it's the external threat that makes us cling together and work together you know. It's almost like working together against that external, evil force - the deadline that Helen's set that almost makes us work together and keeps us together." Susan (S)

99. "I suppose it's also what makes our group so cohesive in the same way is because you know Natalie and Helen are 'the other' and we're the, you know the group. ... they're the out-group. So I think it defines a lot of who we are. ... The divide between the group and Natalie and Helen is a <u>huge</u>, a big, big gap." Susan (S)

100. "As a group we manage conflict well. When it's other people against the group, there's very much a consolidatory attitude." Liz (S)

101. "I think sometimes they [the lecturers] feel they're in the firing line, particularly when we're not happy with a particular situation and we speak to them about it. Sometimes I do think we come across as demanding or a bit aggressive instead of assertive." Moira (S)

Quotes 96 - 101 highlight how lecturers and the deadlines they set are constructed as external threats to the team, an out-group that unites and consolidates the team. Tajfel (1982, in De la Rey, 1991) introduced and expanded on this process in his Social Identity Theory, maintaining that defining social identity through group memberships is a normal, healthy process of categorisation. He further noted that group membership is used as a source of pride and self worth, but to feel pride, ones own group must be assumed to be superior. As a result positive aspects of ones own group are emphasised, relative to other groups. When a group is threatened, they experience an enhanced attraction to their own group, and disparage others – displaying intergroup bias. This division between lecturers and students is based on an unequal power relationship (quote 96) and students' resistance / rebellion to this authority (quotes 97 – 99). The resultant cohesion is constructed either as a passive response with emotional outcomes of feelings and attitudes of cohesion that in turn motivate unity, or in quotes 97 and 101, as a more reactive and defensive response and means to challenge power.

In other words, cohesion is constructed either as an emotional buffer to a state of powerlessness (i.e. feel better by discussing the situation and empathising but not actually changing it); or as a vehicle with which to challenge authority (the "them"), and exercise rebellion. Hirschhorn (1990) maintains that members of an organisation reduce threats by erecting symbolic representations of the threat in the form of particular people. Thus the unknown environment becomes known symbolically through knowing particular people as psychological representations of the environment. Hirschhorn (1990) also refers to one persons anxiety triggering an anxiety chain when people collaborate, through which people "deploy collective fantasies to deny risks" (p.42).

In contrast to this rebellion, Fiona in quote 103 below suggests a slightly paradoxical relationship with the lecturers positioning them in a more supportive, guiding role:

102. "Yes, I think they [the lecturers] definitely are [part of the team], because again, you spend so much time together. I mean they direct everything." Fiona (S)

Fiona regards the lecturers as part of the team because of the time spent together which implies (not an equality, but) a relationship built on familiarity and "companionship" which does not deny authority and the filial guidance given by lecturers, but suggests a closeness and comfort in each others company, and an acceptance of the power differential.

### 3.2.2 Helen as a parent – nurture burnout

Considering then, how lecturers construct the family in terms of a hierarchy and power relations inherent in the repertoire. Where Nick provided an excellent source for a case study of the educational team repertoire, similarly Helen provides useful information and talk with respect to the family interpretive repertoire.

103. "I think I still have a sense of responsibility for these students. And you know for example, I say to Nick 'How is it going with your supervision? How are the students doing?' And it's not just, 'Well, I've taught my courses, so I don't take an interest.' It's all the time you know. Like with Natalie 'How's the course going?' ... And I take a very active interest in what's happening, and, and it's important to me that the students are ok and that they're doing ok. But it's a more detached, it's not a kind of physical thereness." Helen (L)

104. "You can have a group that you want to make into a team. You can have a bunch of individuals that aren't even a group yet." Helen (L)

105. They've learnt to negotiate with us ... They're not quite at the stage where they come and say 'We'd like to make these proposals'." Helen (L)

Helen positions herself as having a responsibility for the students, implying an authoritative or parental - type role (quote 103). She constructs this role as a caring role, through showing interest in the students and monitoring their wellbeing. She also implicates herself deeply by highlighting her role in forming the team and in observing their development (quotes 104 and 105).

A developmental theme is particularly evident in her constructions as she outlines a progressive evolution from a bunch of individuals to a group to a team, and as acquiring new relational skills at particular "stages". This position of observing the development of the team and "making" them into a team further positions Helen as having a vested interest or pride in the growth of the team as almost a guardian/creator of the process. This is perhaps not surprising given that she was the Industrial Psychology Honours course co-ordinator, but was perhaps exacerbated by the nature of the course focusing on self awareness etc. (see quote 14).

106. "So let me talk in the third person. The students would think that Helen would expect them to be able to work together effectively, and that she would probably be disappointed (how's this for projection?), she would probably be disappointed if they didn't and they may feel that she would think that that's a failure. You know when there was all this problem with group work, we didn't get involved. And we kind of deliberately said, 'Should we be involved? Or should we just leave it?' And the feeling was, 'No, we need to leave it. They must sort it out. It's their issue and there's no use facilitating it and then it falls apart. The energy has to come from within.' We were the energy for the team building weekend, but that has to become their responsibility. And if they want to be a team, they've got to develop it. But perhaps we don't make that clear on the team building weekend. So ja, the expectation is that they will be able to work together, that they'll be able to resolve conflict. I think one of the big issues is just, for Heavens sake, just be an adult. Don't be a child. You know, you're adults now. But maybe students find that overwhelming, because they're not quite adults." Helen (L)

107. "I think more so than any other group this group has challenged the lecturers much more in the sense of 'We don't like this. We don't want this. We're not happy with this mark. We think we've got too much work' And that has been quite difficult to deal with, and, and at one stage there was quite a lot of antagonism kind of a sense of anger towards us. I think particularly with the group project. It's almost as though instead of trying to deal with their anger amongst themselves, they were projecting it onto the lecturers. And I found that quite difficult. I mean from an intellectual point of view they have been very challenging, which has been wonderful. But also at an interpersonal level, there are people that are quite insecure in some ways, and quite anxious." Helen (L)

Despite this "mothering" type role Helen ascribes to herself, in quotes 106 and 107 she constructs her position somewhat differently in the face of conflict. She justifies being distanced from the group (quote 106) as being a conscious decision to give the group independence and allow them to develop the team. She also explains away students' criticism of the lecturers and the process of students defining the lecturing team as an out-group by justifying their actions as a result of the immaturity of the group (quote 106 - implying an unwanted parent-child relationship), and by using psychological labels such as "projection" to highlight their emotional weaknesses of insecurity and anxiety.

108. "You know my position in this is strange in that you live with a bunch of people, and living with people implies a closeness that I'm not prepared to have with students. I s'pose, it's a physical closeness. I don't like physical closeness." Helen (L)

109. "I'm very giving at work ... I cope with my giving in my job because I go home and I shut it out. And when you go on a weekend like this, you don't go and shut it out. You're there all the time. And I think that's part of the draining experience. Perhaps for me it's kind of an issue of authenticity ... but I do have a sense of ownership and responsibility and ja, but at the same time, not wanting to engender a sense of closeness. You know for me, there's a relationship here that needs to be built. I want people to understand them better. It's not as though I want to be your friend. How's that for a lovely discourse? Even with Nick, I don't expect to be his friend. ... It's a nice by-product of us working in a team, but I don't expect it. And I don't know whether students do in that environment, whether they think we must all become buddies or something." Helen (L)

Helen (quotes 108 and 109) distinguishes between her role of ownership and responsibility, and "closeness" which she compares to friendship. She implies that friendship creates / takes the form of a peer relationship rather than a more appropriate and more likely unequal power relationship. She is therefore not necessarily rejecting a parental type role where inequality in power exists between parent and child, (but which co-exists with closeness), but rather rejects a relationship based on equality between peers. Helen also constructs herself as a giving person in her job, and describes the toll of her involvement when she cannot "shut it out". (In quote 14 she also referred to her openness and interaction with students as emotionally difficult, and as indicative of why older lecturers "shut themselves off" from being exposed to students.) This suggests a nurture burn out as a result of high investment into the course / students within this interpretive repertoire.

### 3.3 BLURRING BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIVES

The issue of boundaries between work and personal roles, and how these operate (or don't) in the team is problematic in this relational interpretive repertoire. This is facilitated and exacerbated by the closeness described in quotes 110 and 111 to follow. Although a slightly different issue, Benne and Sheats (in French et al., 1994) claim that there is frequent confusion between roles members enact in a group and the individual personalities of group members.

110. "I think the better a group knows each other, the more effective the team building is. And the better it can take it. … You need to get to know those kind of [personal] issues. And it was good to get know people socially. That I liked." Ruth (S)

111. "... people know where you're coming from. A lot of fun, a lot of laughter. You know a lot of camaraderie and intimacy … where you know other peoples' strengths and their weaknesses, and you've shared a lot ... There's a lot of openness, which is funny, because a lot of the time I restrict myself in terms of talking about close friends. … But with the group it's weird because there's a precedent that allows for it. That allows you to be angry when you want to be angry … I think it's cos you've shared so much with these people and they encounter the same things as you do. And there's a lot of pressure, and there's a lot of tension so like, to blow your top is a lot more accepted in these circumstances than it would be with a close friend." Liz (S)

In quotes 110 and 111 Ruth and Liz position a knowledge of each other (of personal issues and socially) as the basis for more effective team building, and relationship. They thereby construct the team as being more than purely focused on work issues, and intermingle work and social relationships. Liz explains the high levels of openness in the group as a result of work pressures experienced entertwining the relationships.

### 3.3.1 The sources of the overlap between personal and work related relationships

112. "Alliances … I think it's more of a social thing. I think people who have similar ideas about what's fun or you know, are better friends and go out after class. We don't go out really after class together. Some of us sometimes go to the same places, but I think that those who do go out together phone each other up and say 'Let's go to The Rat for a drink', and they're close when they come into class. ... So it does have to do with like social similarities and cultural similarities as well. Like I think Moira is Indian, and she's got her own wide group of friends… I've found that there is a little bit of a cultural gap in what she does, and where they go - her and her friends go, but are different to white students … And maybe also similarities in your intelligence levels, or in your interests [affect alliances]." Ruth (S)

113. "Yes, definitely, but I think they [alliances in the group] fluctuate a lot. Like at a stage where I didn't feel like working a lot, and Rory was playing a lot of sport, I think him and I were alliances. We were both walking into lectures and not having a complete and utter clue of what we were doing. And you know we relied on each other because we were both so useless at a particular stage. But then like last night, it was Ruth and I who stayed up till 2o'clock [working] ... So it definitely does fluctuate." Liz (S)

114. "It was very difficult. I didn't enjoy it. I felt I needed more time to myself and I wasn't getting any of that … I think it was very intensive, very group. I mean we were all sleeping together, all sharing the same bath water … you know, eating together, you know all those exercises. Everything leisurely we did together. … it was quite intensive, and I think for me, I got a bit stifled … I think, a lot came out … and then I think I learnt so much about everybody else I didn't even know before. You know I didn't know their interests. I didn't know what they wanted to do with their lives, why they came to Rhodes. ... I think self-disclosure was difficult, and saying things that maybe I didn't want to have to say ... And being with people all the time was most challenging for me ... You didn't have space. To eat and to sleep and to bath with people you didn't know was difficult" Ruth (S)

115. "I battle with work and pleasure in terms of in your class. Are they your mates? And do you socialise with them? Or do you keep them academic? ... Are these your work associates who you don't go on a personal level? Or do you? And is there a border to cross? Or what is the story? But I think in General we had this idea that the group is like, we went on a team building weekend and everything was great and positive and we had a big year together and all this. And then you think they're your friends because you've shared so much with them, and they know so much about your past and history that people (even your close friends) didn't know, because it came out in your team building and all that weekend." [how did it come out?] "You know those exercises you do. You share with someone. ... So they know a lot about you, and then I felt like I had friends at, at a different level, and then was disappointed. ... I decided not, they weren't friends.

Even today I wouldn't go for drinks with them. ... I've got my own social circle and it was like important for me to realise that I mustn't go, I didn't want to go on that other level, and not to feel bad about it." Rory (S)

116. [Do the lecturers expect you to be close?] "I think so. Cause we're made to do a lot together. Like we're made to go for braais and lunches and this and that, and maybe that's important. Maybe it's just me. Maybe I just didn't enjoy it and that's why I didn't like that element of it. But maybe it is important for the group to get on. Maybe it's an essential element. I just maybe didn't touch in on it." Rory (S)

Blurring between work and social relationships is facilitated in the team in various ways, with various effects. Ruth and Liz in quotes 112 and 113 make mention of the extra –work activities (socialising and sport etc.) and lifestyles, and make assumptions about members in the work context on the basis of these observations / experiences. This intimate knowledge / experience with class members both inside and outside of the "class" environment results in some difficulty in defining relationships and roles. This type of knowledge about other students is possibly enhanced / particular to a small university context, i.e. Rhodes University, in a small town – Grahamstown, where students do encounter each other in the more limited number of social venues, sports teams etc. available. It affords students a look into each others' lives outside of "class" and outside of the team context.

Consequently Ruth (quote 112) describes alliances in the group as based on social criteria, and conflates "social" and "cultural similarities" by explaining cultural similarities in terms of where Moira socialises and with who. Liz (quote 113) describes an alliance in class between herself and Rory based on their lifestyles outside of class, which detracted from their work focus, and secured their alliance in the work context, (and perhaps resulted in perceptions of Rory which lingered).

In quotes 114 and 115 Ruth and Rory blame the team building (self disclosure and intensive sharing) for encouraging close relationships that create confusion and discomfort, and set up false expectations that clash with the formal context. Although in quote 110 Ruth cited the importance of knowing each other personally and socially/extramurally, she experienced the team building weekend as stifling and essentially describes a point at which she is uncomfortable with sharing - this point being personal routines completely unrelated to the work of the team. Rory's contrasts of "work" versus "pleasure", "mates ... you socialise with" versus "keep them academic" sets up these types of relationships as mutually exclusive. He blames the experience of the team building weekend as setting up his expectations of team relationships because he regards intimate personal knowledge obtained via self disclosure on the weekend as the basis of friendship and not necessarily work related relationships. Incidentally, his view of team relationships raises some curiosity as to what other team members have ascribed to and meant by "knowing each other so well". Rory's disappointment is however also mixed with a lingering guilt over not supporting team members resulting in further confusion as to how team relationships are constituted (later explored in the psychologised team). Rory tries to justify his guilt based on the exclusion he feels as earlier described, as "the complete non-academic".

Dyer (1982, p.20) notes that T-groups was an initial methodology that purported to "help participants examine group processes, experience group problem solving, openly share information, establish a highly cohesive group climate, and build norms of shared and collaborative action", but that it failed in "family groups" (groups composed of people who had worked together for some time) because T-groups disbanded and never met again whereas the work group continued intact after the sessions and "people had to continue to be responsible for issues raised in the group". This tension somewhat resembles the difficulty described by Rory in transferring the expectations raised by the team building weekend into the work context of the team – an enduring group.

In quote 116, Rory blames the lecturers' expectations of the team to be close and the social events the team is forced into, as confusing as to the nature of team relationships (in addition to team building in quote 115). He questions whether this is important and necessary for the team, and sets up social relationship as an "element" of team building rather than a definitive aspect. This relates back to his comfort expressed in the educational team in (quote 30 with the accompanying commentary) because of the set boundaries in that repertoire. Rory finds himself falling between two ways of constructing the team which are championed by different lecturers. This is because of his disappointment with relationships in the family repertoire (thereby invalidating it as a construction), and his insecurity in his ability to academically perform in the educational repertoire.

Helen's response to this discomfort with the level of relationships encouraged by the team building weekend and the resultant confusion, is to blame it on the students, as can be seen in quote 117 to follow.

117. "I think you know, being part of a team is that you do have boundaries. And maybe teams struggle when the boundaries are fluid. And it's 'Well, are we friends?' or 'Are we this?' And not saying, 'Well this is what I'm about.'" Helen (L)

Helen describes the students as having "fluid boundaries" thereby explaining their difficulties as a result of their own indecision. She is not however explicit about what the relationship between team members might be called other than friendship, "or are we this?" offering no direct alternative to friendship and what form their relationships might take.

### 3.3.2 The effects of blurring

As a result of these unclear, close relationships that extend beyond work, a number of effects of blurring are described in the group as can be seen in quotes 118 - 123.

118. "I think it was hard to be burdened with people's personal things, like their self disclosure. And then, to know, you know how to try to, how am I going to deal with this person in lectures. How am I going to deal with this person being anxious? How am I going to deal with this person going through a crisis saying to me how to come to terms with who they are, and these big existential issues, and they're being opened up. And now, what do you do with it you know?" Ruth (S)

Aside from Rory's disappointment in relationships in the team, Ruth openly describes the difficulty of dealing with personal issues self disclosed stating an inability to, or at least confusion as how to integrate or translate her knowledge of people into her treatment of them within the lecturing environment. She experiences difficulty in marrying the work context with this information.

119. "Liz and Helen had issues in the beginning of the year, feeling that you know, she never used to come to lectures last year, third year, and it was known, and it was a big thing, and how she was going to perform ... we were aware of how the lecturers feel about certain people. And that makes us know what they expect from us a team." Ruth (S)

120. "I know Rory commented that when he did the group project he wanted to come in at 10'o clock and the group wanted to come in at 9'o clock, and he was kind of like 'What's the issue here?' You know I want a little bit more time at home and, and the group kind of interpreted that as lazy. ... Well in the case of Rory the group kind of said 'Well you know it's a vote' and, 'Well tough, you lose', which of course isn't a good way to deal, I mean you don't build teams on majority vote. You build teams on consensus." Helen (L)

121. "He's very different to us, to the women. He's like a joker, and I think we're a lot more serious about our work than he is." Ruth (S)

122. "I was like well, you know he's not actually clueless. He's just bloody lazy. That's it you know. He's there twiddling his thumbs ... he's not stupid, he just can't be bothered. And he toddles off. He spends double the time of tea break than anybody else. I mean I know Ruth's getting pissed off with him. Cause she said at the beginning of the week, 'Rory is not taking any more time off. We've carried him enough.' There's always been this understanding undertone, 'Well Rory's Rory'. Now is just like boom, no more!" Fiona (S)

In quote 119 Ruth describes the relationship between Helen and Liz as tenuous because of Liz's previous lecture attendance record. She illustrates how behaviour outside of the immediate, current work context is translated into a current and real concern, and positions this as unfair. Liz according to Ruth was not considered in the same light as other students, but based on past attendance. Despite this, Ruth and Fiona in quotes 121 and 122, do not see their conflation of Rory's personal characteristics and his work style as problematic, which Helen clearly does in quote 120. In Rory's case, he most often was described as easy going, laid back and the class clown, which are interpreted in this instance as being behind his request to meet later. Roles ascribed to him personally are thus transferred and blurred into a work context. Harris and Nicholson (in French et al., 1994) outline that team members need an agreed upon basis for dealing with one another when they meet as a group to maintain interpersonal relations and function effectively. This suggests consciously separating out social and work roles / experience of one another to maintain effective boundaries.

Fiona also experiences a form of labeling as seen in quote 123 following.

123. "I do get irritated with one aspect. I said to Ruth last night, uh, I said to her a couple of times [during the year] I said, 'Ja. I went out last night and I got a little bit drunk'. And then she'll go and tell everybody that I got, I got <u>totally slaughtered</u> the night before, and you know, <u>meanwhile</u>, I'd just gone out and I had a nice evening and came home and I was a bit tired.

> With my hypoglycemia it takes me a while to get over it, and I'm like, 'Ja, I can't work. I'm too tired. Got a bit of a hangover', and then no, I got 'completely and utterly slaughtered', I'm a 'complete piss cat', and this, that and the next thing. And Liz and I get this name" [tape ends] [interviewer: Just to recap, social labels ...] "The social label: piss cat, yes. That did worry me. It hasn't been there the whole time, but I don't really like it." Fiona (S)

Fiona (quote 123) describes how her social activities are communicated to the group resulting in her being labeled by the group. The implications in the group, in terms of others' perceptions of her, highlight further how knowledge of her personal life is transferred into the group context. This can perhaps be attributed to the small scale setting of a university town earlier described. Renson-Armer and Stickel (2000) maintain that team members should carefully consider how others perceive them because colleagues base their trust on an individual's "reputation."

## 4. CONSTRUCTING COHESION AGAINST THE ODDS

The participants also use various repertoires to hold them together as a team / family whenever threatened, as can be seen in the accounts that follow. These interpretive repertoires are utilised to protect the group, facilitate cohesion and conformity, as well as differentiate the group from others. The idea of utilizing such ways of speaking about the team was introduced when exploring the construction of power in the family repertoire, but is expanded upon here.

### 4.1 CONFORMITY

In order to ensure and consolidate group cohesion, students construct the team as a uniform entity. The following quotes are interesting with respect to expectations of / hopes for the team:

124. " [hopes in a team]... That there is a sense of support and commitment to each other, and that there's a sense of common vision of what it is that we're trying to achieve here. And I think often groups fail, or teams fail and become groups because they lack that vision. And they lack a common understanding of what it is they're trying to achieve." Helen (L)

125. "I fear that ... everyone takes it as seriously as you do ... you want everyone to believe in the goal just as much as you do." Ruth (S)

Conforming to a common goal is constructed as the most basic starting point for the functioning of any team. Helen (quote 124) suggests a regression to a "group" from a team should this vision not be clear. This research highlights the complexity of this being positioned as a fundamental starting point, as many goals are unspoken, "coded" or contradictory and therefore not conformed to, so resulting in conflict. However, conforming to a set goal is taken further with a requirement to conform to the same means (thought processes etc.) to achieve goals, as seen in the quotes to follow.

126. "That's our biggest problem, is that we want everyone to see the same thing and not have these big debates about every small little issue." Ruth (S)

127. "I guess it comes back to their [students'] own perceptions of a team, and whether it's o.k. for people in a team to also have different ideas, and that's up to how they define it I guess. You know, whether it's o.k. to have a team with different goals and lots of different issues.
It can still be a team when everyone disagrees. I just don't think that's the image they have in their head." Nick (L)

In quote 126, a lack of group cohesion on the basis of similar thought patterns and perspectives is seen as highly problematic, underscoring the importance of conformity which extends beyond merely having a common goal to how you think about and achieve it. Nick, in quote 127, disputes whether this conformity is a defining aspect of a team, but positions students as subscribing to this notion. Conformity of goals and thought patterns, however, is further generalised to more behavioural or emotional aspects of the group. In other words conformity becomes holistic as group members have the same purpose (quotes 124 and 125), patterns of thinking (quotes 126 and 127), and behaviours as can be seen in the quotes to follow. Lembke and Wilson (1998) however, claim that the free expression of diverse opinions is one of the keys to successful teamwork.

128. "And it worries me in Honours groups when you have alliances and it means people feel excluded and feel alienated. And I do sometimes worry about that in the current group in terms of where are, where are people at ... Rory and Liz are sort of fused at the hip. You know it irritates me. Because I see it as unhealthy - that particular alliance. I suppose with alliances you have to look at what the nature of the relationship is. But I think it can be divisive for a team." Helen (L)

129. "You know the six of us are so close. You know you see each other day to day. You almost become one person." Susan (S)

130. "We're not a very deep and introspective group. Everyone will just say, 'Just deal with it and go out there and get it done'." Susan (S)

131. "[fears in a team] ... feeling out in a team situation would be a fear." Natalie (L)

132. "None of us are brave enough to air our views, so it's our problem." Rory (S)

Helen (quote 128) sets up the danger of having alliances in the group on the basis of it being divisive and alienating others, thereby establishing conformity as for the good of the group. Susan constructs the team as being "one person" implying no separation or distinct differences between members, which allows for the smooth and efficient functioning of the group. She illustrates this construction of uniformity by making a sweeping statement about all members of the team (quote 130). Quotes 131 and 132 raise the issue of fear of sanctioning for not conforming. Although what these sanctions are, is not made explicit, some indication is given about a lack of acceptance in a team situation or perhaps of general conflict. This fear of conflict and consequent sanctioning reiterates that group members themselves can represent a threat to the team through not conforming. In addition to the external threats in the form of lecturers and work deadlines already discussed, quote 133 highlights how students can pose internal threats.

133. "[threats to the team] I'd say unrealistic deadlines. Okay. That normally throws us into a tumble. But we normally get together very quickly, and very closely and we like mass action, and knock on Helen's door, 'No, we don't like this' So maybe that's a positive thing, but it is a threat to the team environment, stress. Also, we've got weaker members of the team that are weaker academically. I don't know if that's how I see it or if it is you know, some people do pull less weight, but it's not because they don't want to. It's because they can't. For instance, Rory's way behind in his research project, so he can't pull his weight so much in terms of group things. I think it's just our individual personalities when they become too strong within the group instead of us trying to leave our personal differences aside and try and you know get into one brain, so we can actually think on the same wavelength. And I think that's a threat. So it's actually the things that make our team positive that also threaten. So it's trying to find a balance." Susan (S)

Susan (quote 133) identifies lesser performance and different personalities as threats to the team, resulting in a desire to "get into one brain". This illustrates how conformity is constructed as a unifier and necessity for teamness. Weaker academic performance (based on lack of ability rather than lack of effort) although not a result of lack of conformity (which can be controlled through exerting sanctions), is explained as a result of stress - an external threat. External threats to the team therefore have a dual purpose in producing cohesion as well as in serving as a basis to justify internal threats. If internal threats to some extent can be blamed on external threats, it lends some stability and harmony to the team aiding in cohesiveness because students are then not pitted against one another. In addition, despite that the internal threats are explainable (blamed on deadlines etc.), they do serve a function in facilitating cohesion, in terms of caring for team members similar to a support group - which will be discussed in the psychologised team. The idea of sanctions that govern conformity is expanded upon in the quotes to follow.

134. "In the first one [group project], I thought I was almost a gelling between two separate alliances that had established. There was definitely an 'us' and 'them'. And I felt like I was caught between the two trying to facilitate ... But now in this group project I was definitely the 'us', in the 'us' team, you know like I was the person working extra hard, too hard perhaps ..." Liz (S)

135. "[I played] no role [in the last 6 months]. I felt stifled. The fact that I wasn't prepared to shred or work as hard as wanted I think. I can't use the word discriminated against me, but I think it made people have no time for me at all. And it was hard to deal with that, and then try and get through as well. I just felt every time I saw someone, that they're thinking, 'Oh, he's useless', or whatever. That's the feeling I got ... my role did (if I had that role), it did diminish. I just didn't care." Rory (S)

It is evident in quotes 134 and 135, that non-conformist behaviour in terms of the amount of work contributed is described to have produced some tension and division in the group. The sanction applied for not producing an equal amount of work is described as being allocated to the 'them' team, or as Rory (quote 135) describes being ignored by the team. Avoidance of team members, and building of cliques or alliances, are regarded by Dyer (1982) to be signals of team member problems which signify a "sick" team.

## 4.2 LEADERLESSNESS

Leaderlessness in the team is another discursive strategy used by the team to ensure cohesion. Lecturers, as can be seen below, ascribe a lack of leadership in the group to this desire for harmony and the importance placed on equality and ensuring belonging in the group. This is confirmed by students Liz and Ruth in quotes 138 and 139 following. Although questioned by students, leaderlessness is however overtly positioned by lecturers as ineffective (and pathologised by Helen in quote 136). The literature supports the lecturer position, and Harris and Nicholson (in French et al., 1994) maintain along with many other writers (Caudron, 1994; Wolmarans, 1997), that group members need a clearly identified leader to co-ordinate activities and maintain positive interpersonal relations.

136. "A particularly bizarre dynamic in this group is that none of them want to be in a leadership role ... When you say the word 'leader' it's automatically associated with being autocratic and therefore not liked, and therefore rejected by the group and hanna hanna hanna. ... Because they didn't plan properly then problems happened later and it put extra stress on people." Helen (L)

137. "It's something they didn't want to take on. ... It was very much that leadership is unpopular and is seen as being bossy." Natalie (L)

138. "[leadership is] non-existent at this stage, to its detriment. I think we've dealt with it quite a number of times, like how we've all had this perception of a leader to be someone who takes command, who's quite authoritarian, who asserts themselves, almost like a prefect at school. And everyone wanted to stay away from that type of leadership, … then no-one assumed the leadership role, largely cause they're scared of alienating group members." Liz (S)

139 "I'm class rep and I try to take that seriously. Like when we had these proposals that we wanted to bring ... So I think I play quite a leader or facilitator. You don't really get one leader or facilitator. We've got negative attitudes towards what leaders are. We don't want anyone to be this bossy boots who takes over, and orders other people around ... maybe that's what was the downfall in our last group, big project, is that no-one was really a leader. ... We all tried to do it by consensus, and it often didn't work out. But we've got a negative attitude towards having a leader, so when I say, 'I think I'm a leader' ugh - maybe not a leader. ... I do feel I play an important role." Ruth (S)

Liz and Ruth (quotes 138 and 139) construct the team as avoidant of imposed positional leadership (as opposed to elected, relational leadership), but also acknowledge that this impacts on the willingness of any individual to take on a leadership role for fear of rejection. This represents a further blurring of work and personal roles, in that rejection may mean the loss of the team as a close knit family. They therefore construct the team as functioning to provide acceptance, and leaderlessness as a strategy to maintain the family, harmony ideal. Also apparent is the subscription of set parts, "the leadership role", thereby making an assumption that being a leader implies maintaining that as a set role, and having one, constant leader.

Susan (quotes 140 and 141 following) offers a different account of why leadership is avoided in the team. As opposed to a concern with autocratic leadership and alienation of group members, she justifies the lack of leadership in the team based on the strength of individuals in the group. What this functions to do is to maintain equality in the group and ensure that no-one assumes greater visibility or importance than anyone else, which ultimately maintains harmony.

140. "We're a team because there's no leader in the team. There's no one person who stands out from you know, and brings everybody along. We all push together. You know we all come to consensual decisions although Rory sometimes doesn't." Susan (S)

141. "We're all such strong individuals, and I don't know if they meant to put us together when they did the interviews and things, if they thought that one of us would come out as a leader. But we're just all so strong and so bull-headed if you can call it that ... We've just got so different ideas that I don't think that one person could emerge as a leader because I don't think that one person could lead us all or facilitate us all. I think it would be a nightmare. I think Helen, Natalie and Nick know this. We just are a loony, leaderless bunch of people." Susan (S)

142. "If you get over-dominance in a team environment, it's very easy to suppress individuals. And I think that's wrong. ... I don't think you need a strong leader. I think you need more of facilitation, if necessary. If you're trying to do an assignment as a group academically, you can't have someone's idea honing in on the whole thing. You've got to try and come to a compromise. So you've got to try and work out where people are coming from and what people are wanting to achieve and you've got to respect that." Rory (S)

In quote 140, Susan constructs the Honours group as a team <u>because</u> of the lack of leadership that functions to ensure a common effort and she justifies this lack of leadership by describing the group as too "strong" (quote 141). This functions to protect individuality with respect to members' ideas and personalities, and to prevent conflict.

Harris and Nicholson (in French et al., 1994) note that consensual decisions are often about concern for "permission" to do something, which can be inefficient, thus necessitating a leader in the team. It would seem that Susan is concerned (despite her constructions) with being overshadowed by a leader rather than autocratically ruled. Rory (quote 142), however, warns against a leader being able to "suppress individuals" and ignore their needs. Leadership is thus consistently constructed as an authoritarian position rather than relationally based amongst peers, suggesting a setting up of a definite hierarchy of authority. This, despite that literature suggests (Stogdill, in Payne, 1982) that leaders usually acquire status in groups through active participation and demonstration of capacity to perform rather than pure position Rory sets up "facilitation" as an alternative / anonym to leadership. Despite that these tensions with leadership in a team setting are given little attention in the literature, Stewart (1996, p.88) argues that "fly solo on these teams and you'll be ostracized, … the ethos is to make your teammates look good, not to make sure the boss knows how much you contributed … the culture of teamwork helps explain why people give themselves self-effacing titles like 'facilitator' and 'coach' instead of 'boss' or 'leader'."

Payne (1982) points out that all people with designated status such as a leader (and even those who do not exercise power), are distrusted by others because they may not perform adequately, or may use their status against team members. Hirschhorn (1990) maintains that people fear exercising power / leadership because they do not have a sufficiently good internal image of their character. Hirschhorn (1990) also notes that the primary anxiety of making decisions can be denied by distributing decision making and accountability over the entire team. In academic teams, however, perhaps another layer of fear is added to taking responsibility because the decisions of the leader will impact on others' marks.

Despite this fear amongst participants of over-dominance and a dominant interpretive repertoire used was that by not appointing a leader the group was protected / excused from this over-domination, Rory describes the team differently.

143. "You probably know we've struggled a bit. I find it an incredibly difficult experience. I found my personality was completely suppressed. I wasn't able to be myself at all. I didn't enjoy it at all. It was a schlep to get involved. I thought there was a complete lack of understanding. No-one was prepared to listen to your side of the story or to even try and understand where you were coming from. There were too many individuals, too many people striving to dominate the group, which led to a lot of conflict. … they're too dominant in their fields to be able to try and come together and work together. There was too much, I wouldn't say competing, but everyone wanted things done their way, and they'd like tread on a lot of towers of the others who wanted the same thing. ... And you can see how if people had suggestions they would be shut off by people that would dominate. You could see people being suppressed. So it felt like, 'Well. I'm not going to say anything anyway.'" Rory (S)

Rory's description is in sharp contrast to other team members' constructions of the team as a "flock of birds" or as a "happy family". Rory rather describes a competitive and individualistic context that resembles the educational team in terms of Ruth and Nick's constructions (extracts 21 and 22). Rory also defers to team members being too dominant "in their fields", implying some expertise and using terminology from an educational institutional setting. Lembke and Wilson (1998) note that dominant personal agendas do distract from working effectively toward a common purpose. Silberman (2001) maintains that *all* members of a team should be free to express themselves and have equal opportunities for participation i.e. not just the 'experts.'

### 4.3 PRESERVING INDIVIDUALITY

144. "I think it's inherent in groups that sometimes you have to kind of let go, and it's a balance of individuality with the needs of the group and where the group's at. And so people didn't have to participate, but again, it's kind of a subtle coercion. … Is there a suppression of individual needs for the good of the group? I would say yes. But, it's a point. It's a point that you say 'How much am I prepared to sacrifice of myself to the good of the group? And what will I get in return?' And I think that's what teams are about. And it's drawing that boundary and saying, 'I'm not prepared to go beyond this.' So, 'I might feel uncomfortable, but how uncomfortable will I feel? Is it because I feel lazy and I've had a big lunch, or is that genuinely am scared and I think that my ego is going to disintegrate?" Helen (L)

145. “I think that we’re quite brutally honest about how things are going. And that’s good. You know we’re not gonna get all touchy when people aren’t pulling their weight, asking people who have their own personal agendas in terms of their thesis getting done or other individual projects, but we’re also there to say, ‘You know, the group first when it’s a group project’. That’s quite a good thing I think. We see the group coming first, because it’s something you owe to everyone you know.” Ruth (S)

146. “I cannot stand bickering in the group, so I stop it. I don’t think that there’s that much fighting anymore. I think there’s more of a negotiation until maybe we realise the agg., the conflict levels are too high, and we’ll just make a decision and that’s that, and it’s final, and the decision is better than the conflict is. I don’t honestly think there’s much resentment. … I think it’s more of an acceptance and dealing with, going with it. There may be a couple of hurt feelings along the way like ‘Oh, I really wish we could have done it. But you know it’s five people’s opinion against mine. We’ve got to go with the group feeling.’” Susan (S)

147. “They expect us to get it done. I think there’s a big dislocation, like they don’t realise what comes with it, the angst, the problems, the time constraints, everyone else’s commitments. It’s a sense of, ‘Here’s your group project. Here’s your deadline. And we’ll have it in.’ There’s never a sense of, ‘How are you getting on with your group? Have there been any problems?’ And if the lecturer does broach it, it’s to one of the group members which creates a breeding ground for negativity or you know backstabbing. ... If you want to know if there’s a problem in the group, go to the group, you know what I mean? Don’t go to a member of the group and put them in a predicament of having to say, ‘Well, so-and-so is not pulling their weight’. ... there’s never any involvement in the actual process of working in a team and how we’re dealing with it.” Liz (S)

In quotes 144 - 147, the group is constructed as coming before the individual in a “real team”. This in terms of expressions of individuality as well as individual wants / needs. Sacrifice for the group is either motivated by reward or by an emotional obligation, “something you owe to everyone”, or as a necessity to avoid conflict. The effect of group decisions on individuals is minimised by focusing on the overall good, by referring to “hurt feelings” as opposed to suppression, and by describing the point at which individuals come first as that at which severe personal harm is experienced (“ego disintegration”). Quote 147 illustrates group identity being deemed the appropriate interface with outsiders to the group, to reduce conflict and blaming in the group, and avoid a breach of trust in / loyalty to the group. Although interfacing with the group as a whole suggests subscription to the notion of group identity, and is set up as being in the interests of group members comfort, it also suggests a mistrust of individual group members by insisting that interactions take place in a more public team environment to ensure accountability.

148. “I think part of what the team is about, is about this expectation of some and the way of operating which is for the team, or for the benefit of others. Or operating in a way which is giving up some of that individual, kind of being more than what you are for the team. ... I can see it in Rory. He seems kind of disillusioned ... And it’s important what he wants out of it. I think he’s started to realise. More than for the good of the team.” Nick (L)

Only Nick in quote 148 (contrary to quotes 144 to 147) suggests that the notion of group first is a declining strategy that individuals begin to back out of as their self awareness grows. This tension between prioritizing the group or individual first is apparent in quotes 149 and 150.

149. "I think one of the tensions is, 'Where are we pitching this? What is the vision? Do we want to get a first? Do we want to get a lower second?' I think that there are people that want different things. And that has to be negotiated, and it's quite difficult Very, very difficult." Helen (L)

150. "There are some people who don't pull their weight as much as other people, because they are worried about their own personal work or, they take over like if you know when we had group things to do and the thesis was looming if you weren't as far as other people you were sometimes pulled, you pulled away from the group work to go and work on your own thing because that was like weighing on you. So sometimes people ja, don't pull their weight because of their own personal issues. … I mean there are lots of things on now - people getting sick and those kind of things that I suppose it's not really their fault. It's not a weakness, but it's maybe a weakness in our team in terms of like you know, cohesiveness." Ruth (S)

Helen (quote 149) raises the issue of level of performance as a complex one to be negotiated in an academic / pedagogic team. Ruth (quote 150), a "high performer" notes that placing individual commitments above a commitment to the group is a team weakness without any positive spin offs for the group such as perhaps reducing individual stresses i.e. freeing up individuals so that they could give more to the team. She constructs the giving of attention to personal work as a neglect / rejection of group work. Stewart (1996, p.40) highlights the difficulty of individual and team responsibility in an organisational context positioning it as an unsolvable problem in that setting, "Talk about individual responsibility – it's absolutely important. But you're part of a team – that's absolutely important. But has anybody married that? The short answer: No, and maybe the marriage can't be made." Regardless, Ruth's positioning (quote 145) of individuals prioritising their own work above that of the group as a weakness, reveals her construction of the team as one in which individual needs are sacrificed for the good of the group.

151. "I was described as the layman's perspective. So I would never be looked at to help them. And I think Moira's seen in that light sort of as well. She's not as sharp as they are. … It was like if I was only looking for a fifty and everyone else wanted a 75, and that wasn't even discussed. ... So ja, there are perfectionists who strive. I don't think there's anything wrong with being perfectionist, because I believe in handing in good work, but there are limits to, to what you should do I think. Especially in a team. You have to take peoples accounts into consideration and not strive for your own individuality. Cause it's not your piece of work. It's everyone." Rory (S)

152. "I don't enjoy teams that you're involved with that don't give you scope, or don't allow you to be your individual ... and that don't appreciate the fact that you're trying. Teams that are overrun by individuals or over-dominated in a way, I can't stand that. That's very negative for me." Rory (S)

153. "That's why there's a complete lack of understanding in the group. There was like even right at the start I said, 'Do you guys mind if we come in at 10?' And they were like, 'No. 9:30 we should be'. And it only came out at the end of the year when they actually understood. I'm not a late riser. I get up at 7 every morning. I wasn't wanting to come in at 10 because I wanted to sleep. I wanted to come in at 10 because I'd love to watch CNN and eat my breakfast. And we've got a break. What's the difference between working between 9:30 and 11:30 than between 10 and 12. … So why couldn't they accommodate that small need. ... I find things like that important, to be able to spend time by myself." Rory (S)

Rory (quotes 151, 152 and 153) describes several ways in which his individual interests are superseded by those of the group, as well as his dissatisfaction with this. Describing himself as issuing a "layman's perspective" immediately implies expert attributes to other members of the group, thereby enhancing their status. In quote 153, the personal /work related roles blurring (earlier discussed), is highlighted, whereby students transfer what they believe to be true about Rory socially / personally to the work environment, assuming reasons for his reluctance to come in earlier are selfish and laid back. With respect to individuality and the group, is the apparent contradiction between quotes 151 and 152, "not strive to be … an individual" and then "I don't enjoy teams that … don't allow you to be your individual". Looking more closely at each of these quotes clarifies that the decision between group and individual rests in the context of the decision Rory is making. He refers to a dislike of individuals dominating the group by imposing perfectionism on others, therefore, "it's a group piece of work", and similarly he promotes individualism when he feels outnumbered by those aiming for a higher standard, "perfectionism". Wolmarans (1997) interestingly notes that perfectionism is a characteristic that disqualifies individuals from a leadership role.

### 4.4 MAINTAINING THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF A SHARED GROUP IDENTITY ("US")

A further strategy used in participants' talk about teams (to conformity and prioritising the group) that is employed to ensure cohesion, is highlighting the distinctiveness of the group. In a variety of ways and by drawing a variety of comparisons with others, the team is constructed as clearly differentiated from others to secure their own identity. These (often highly critical) ways of speaking listed below serve the purpose of creating commonality to justify the "team" label.

154. "In terms of team development I think one thing that's very important is because we're the Industrial group as opposed to the General group, there are six people who see each other every day, all the time. So maybe part of our team's development in this whole in-group, out-group thing. We're definitely not the General students. We do not act like General students. We don't go where General students go. We don't party like they party. You know we're very different. Maybe I think that's what keeps us together" Susan (S)

155. "That's <u>us</u>. <u>We're</u> doing Industrial Psychology. We're a specific set of people in the <u>entire</u> university. There are 6 of us. It's quite a small group. It's not very elite, but you know we are different to the General students, and that difference has been made clear, you know clearer as the year's progressed. <u>We're</u> the Industrial students. ...

Rory always says, 'They're the bungys who smoke dope in the trees.' Although hey, I know a few people who smoke. ... But regards that, we're Industrials, and we're much more down to earth. We're not you know up in the clouds. But at the same time I quite like the Generals, the General trend. I am an arts student as opposed to a B.Com student or a social sciences student ..." Fiona (S)

156. "Librarians, ja, they're definitely the out-group. The General students you, they're normally seen as a bunch of gooks. No, it's very much a different lifestyle that they lead. … raucous parties, a very bohemian lifestyle - a bit like that in thinking and living. [Regarding Industrial Psychology lifestyle] I think they're a lot more down to earth, more realistic, more 'This is life. Deal with it'. It's a lot less of this searching for your deeper meaning. It comes through quite a bit, but I think with us that it actually just annoys us." Susan (S)

157. "We just call ourselves the Industrial Class. We love to differentiate ourselves from the General class. … Our groups are quite different. I don't know if our group is seen to be a bit more conservative, but the General group somehow is always seen to be a bit weird." Moira (S)

In quote 154 - 157, the category "Industrial Psychology" is extended to account for various other team attributes outside of the scope of Industrial psychological theory, "down-to-earth", "conservative" etc. Susan (quotes 154 and 156) focuses on "lifestyle" as an all encompassing term to solidify the distinction between themselves and others. She sets up her definition of Industrial Psychology students as what they are not, i.e. by comparison. By calling this team "development" she validates the process by constructing it as helpful in forming group identity and cohesion. "Others" studying different courses, "General" Psychology in particular are defined not in terms of the course work, but rather in terms of their personal lives and habits (highlighting the uniqueness of the Industrial class), which perhaps is a heightened comparison made in light of frequent social encounters with colleagues in a small, student town. Nevertheless, this allows for / normalises potential judgement and discrimination, enhancing and personalising difference as was seen in the discussion of blurred boundaries. A further criterion (quote 155) used to establish the difference of the Industrial class refers to the small number of students in the course relative to other courses, implying an inevitable exclusivity. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that categorisations are not only used to group and separate individuals, but are used for category based inferences made available, i.e. the RU Industrial Psychology Honours class as "bright" and "dynamic" (quote 158), and General students as "a bunch of gooks" (quote 156). The importance of categories in discourse is not in identifying cognitive processes, but rather in demonstrating *how* they are actually used to position self and others in a particular way.

158. "We're very bright and we're dynamic, and a lot of people who are different to the normal Industrial Psychology student, [we are] like artistic and creative ..." Ruth (S)

159. "I think there is a teamness about the Honours group and the Honours staff. And I think that evidences itself in how we talk about other people. And there's a sense of pride about the programme." Helen (L)

160. "And it's been quite interesting how when, not our programme has been under attack, but when we've been questioned about things, how there is like a 'Phew!' you know. Everyone like groups together and, 'Raise the forces.' And I've had Nick defending me and that sort of thing, which I think demonstrates that support I was talking about earlier, and the kind of commitment and the togetherness." Helen (L)

In quote 158 Ruth contrasts the team to, and thereby differentiates the Honours class from all other years currently completing Industrial Psychology courses, as well as from previous students. She first establishes the academic ability of the team, and then makes her contrast with the "normal" Industrial Psychology student, distancing the team from the ordinary on the basis of positive attributes the team possesses. Helen highlights the internal pride of the team as a unifier, as opposed to how "other people" are spoken about (quote 159), and illustrates support in the face of criticism from others (quote 160).

161. "You don't expect that in this elite Honours class, you don't expect there to be people with weaknesses that aren't dealt with that are going to affect their work when it's such a stressful year ... I mean I don't mean we have to exclude those kind of people from the Honours class because that's how we all are ... But in the pressure to get work done we lose sight of people's problems." Ruth (S)

Elements of quote 161 are worth re-emphasising before discussing the quote, "You don't expect ...people with weaknesses ...I don't mean we have to exclude those kind of people ... because that's how we all are ... we lose sight of people's problems". Ruth constructs herself on the one hand as separate from "people" with weaknesses, and on the other as unprejudiced against such people. She consequently distances herself from her prejudice by including herself (although using the plural only) in a general, inclusive statement about the commonality of dysfunction. This disclaimer is a thin veil however, as she ends off her statement by reaffirming her distance from weakness in, "we lose sight of people's problems". In other words Ruth attempts to hide her disappointment at weakness shown in what she had perceived to be an academically superior grouping.

### 4.5 UNDERSTANDING HONOURS AS A RITE OF PASSAGE

A further form of "sticky glue" holding the team together is the use of the interpretive repertoire of a rite of passage that team members have endured. The following accounts illustrate how this is constructed.

162. "Everybody's suffering from it. I think we're all on the verge of breakdowns … the Industrial Honours degree is a hectic, hectic degree. It's the hardest degree on campus without a doubt." Susan (S)

Susan (quote 162) begins by generalising to the whole group regarding suffering, automatically constructing suffering as a group phenomenon. This allows for conformity within the group of experience, thereby setting up suffering as some sort of achievement or rite of passage. She goes on to describe the extent of the challenge in terms of its impact on the group in psychological terms,

i.e. “breakdowns”. She sets up the group as facing the most difficult challenge on campus - distancing the group from their peers (elevating the group) in terms of endurance and suffering. This is another one of the ways in which the group is constructed as different in addition to those already explored, as well as somewhat elite. As seen below, this suffering functions both as an achievement, and as a differentiator (creating a unique identity for the group), as well as facilitating group cohesion. This suffering further assists in demarcating “the other” - the other being threats or enemies to the group as earlier discussed. The group is then identifiable by virtue of their difference to the other.

163. “We’re not lacking anything I don’t think. And I think we’re all quite committed to you know, like I said the team has to have a goal. We’re quite committed all to passing our degree and we know that these projects are hurdles to you know, goals to achieve. And I think it makes us quite committed to, I think everybody’s prepared to work ...” Ruth (S)

164. “I think we’ve had a hard time. Every time we have a group project comes up, it’s like that, ‘Ooh’, bells ringing, and everyone’s scared [because first group project was so bad].” Ruth (S)

165. “I don’t think she [Alice] wanted to see any of us [to say goodbye] to tell you the truth. I think she felt embarrassed because in a way she was saying, ‘I can’t deal with it’. ... And the term before as far as I knew she was just going to soldier on like the rest of us. But I think every team member I suppose has a different attitude towards Honours.” Fiona (S)

Ruth (quote 163) describes projects as “hurdles” and “barriers” to achieving common goals rather than the projects being the goals. In other words, she constructs projects (outcomes / tasks) as hurdles to build motivation and in-group cohesion. The hurdle is thus a facilitator / motivator for cohesion rather than an end point in itself. In quote 164, Ruth constructs the team members as survivors/heroes, and emphasises the reality/extent of the obstacle/enemy by the team’s reaction, “Everyone’s scared” - implying the issue to be confronted warranted fear, thereby validating survivor status implicitly ascribed to the group and justifying her feelings. Fear is no longer an isolated individual reaction which might indicate weakness, but normative and shared by all. In quote 165 Fiona sets up her classmate leaving the course as an “embarrassment” of admitting she could not cope where Fiona and the rest of the students could, again ascribing them survivor-type status. Further to this, Fiona describes the team as having to “soldier on” implying involvement in an arduous task or facing a difficulty to be overcome.

166. “The fact that we’ve <u>had</u> to stay as a team, almost being forced to move past that [group project] and now work again in a group project again and again, it’s forced issues to be resolved, forced the issues to be dealt with and forced us to come up with ways of coping. … I’ve also learnt a lot about myself in terms of teamwork, you know through having to push myself and cope, <u>make</u> myself cope with this. It’s you know a lot of things that you wouldn’t normally have found out because you’ve just quit, I have found out.” Susan (S)

167. “I think there’s an understanding that it’s not easy for us, and it’s not our choice and we don’t like teamwork much.” Ruth (S)

168. "They kind of became victors of the situation instead of victims. And they really tried on their own to make it good for them." Natalie (L)

In quotes 166 and 167 Susan and Ruth construct a theme of "force", implying an external source of power (hierarchy) exerting control over the group. This sets the group members up as victims who have overcome issues. This suffering/forced togetherness is however constructed as the positive force, a rite of passage to graduate to survivor status. Susan elaborates on this status as a team member who endured the year by constructing it as extraordinary and distinct, "wouldn't normally …". The rite of passage is constructed as prevalent and as a force for positive growth and development thereby elevating those who experience it and triumph over it. This status is confirmed in quote 168 as students are described as "victors". This is used by this team to justify their unique identity as seen in the theme prior to this one.

169. "And I would hope that at the end of a team in an Honours group, that there is a sense of pride that, 'We did it. It was well worth it.' And I think with the group project that they did for the personnel Psychology course, I don't necessarily think that there was that. There was kind of, 'Thank God it's finished. …' There wasn't a sense of, 'We've overcome', or 'Yes, in spite of the difficulties we are better for this experience.'" Helen (L)

170. "I've seen teams in other scenarios that I think are a team, and it's never smooth. I don't think it's meant to be." Natalie (L)

From a lecturer's perspective, struggle in a team is constructed as inevitable and expected, and thus a rite of passage. This ultimately functions to make normative the "difficulties" students must overcome, and how these difficulties should be viewed / constructed as a positive force for growth. The actual "suffering" / "rite of passage" is articulated as various things as can be seen from accounts given, and students articulate different aspects of teamwork as hardship as can be seen in quotes 171 and 172.

171. "Prior to this year, a team was synonymous with fun. There were always sports teams and a team of friends, and this year it's changed somewhat. A team for me means a lot of extra work, a lot of trying to get a team to gel together, to start working as a group, to share a commitment and like a shared vision which is very difficult. ... a lot of extra hard work and responsibility." Liz (S)

172. "Well, we've actually had a long, hard road. 'Cos initially at the beginning of the year, everybody wasn't used to each other and peoples' ways of working ... so it's a matter of compromising and accommodating peoples' differences. ... So there was a lot of compromising there. There was also a lot of uh, tension to put it nicely." Moira (S)

## CHAPTER SEVEN - THE PSYCHOLOGISED TEAM

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretive repertoire of the psychologised team is perhaps unsurprising given that the team of RU Industrial Psychology Honours students were situated within a Psychology Department. There are however two primary ways in which this repertoire emerges, with distinct functions. The psychologised team is in some respects an extension of the family repertoire in that it serves as a container for emotions and personal development. The team is constructed as a mirror of the self, functioning as a family might to provide identities for individual team members. The team is also constructed as a support and growth group almost facilitating therapy for members to extend the caring function of the family repertoire. These constructions of course have their pitfalls as can be seen in the analytic commentary to follow.

### 2. THE TEAM AS A MIRROR OF THE SELF

The team is constructed as being an object in which an image of self is reflected. Within this repertoire the group either challenges or creates perceptions of individual selves and presents these reflections, or the group is used to reflect the individual's entrenched perceptions of him/herself through justifying, rationalizing and playing back only selected perceptions. Either way, the comments / perceptions of the group as a whole are positioned as reflecting some truth about individuals in the group, as can be seen in the quotes to follow.

173. "So I think it was very much an interpersonal, exploratory thing ... it was breaking down the perceptions that we had of other people, and breaking down what we thought the other peoples' perceptions were of us. And so basically trying to get to a truth of what we actually thought about each other and ourselves. So we could start off at a level where everything could, almost on a level playing ground where everything was equal, there were no pretences, lies. Almost like a truth from which to start from." Susan (S)

174. "I think it's definitely hard [to work together and know each other]. You don't want to know those things [personal issues], but you have to. And you have to come to terms with people's personal issues and how you work in a group, and how the people see you, and where your strengths are, and where your weaknesses are. And if you don't know that, you are never going to move forward." Ruth (S)

175. "And maybe people were hurt about what, how other people see them. People saw me as confident and driven, and I don't see myself as that. And those kind of things. You don't want people to have those expectations of you all the time. So it's hard when you hear, when it comes out how people really see you, and even if they're positive, it's sometimes a burden to hold on to that. You know Moira we all see as a mother figure - strong ... and ja, sometimes that's probably a burden for her." Ruth (S)

Here, the team is constructed as revealing some truths about its members and who they are, which is necessary to work together and be productive,

i.e. it is implied that it is essential to know oneself through the eyes of the group - allow the group to define the self. The group is also constructed as authoritative in terms of pointing out individual strengths / weaknesses (quote 174). The "truth" is positioned as being beneath incorrect perceptions, pretenses and lies (quote 173). A singular, true self is reflected. This assumes that each group member has a set identity and can achieve a single set of correct perceptions of others that will not change. It neglects to address different aspects of self, and different contexts, instead favouring what is constructed by the RU Industrial Psychology Honours group as a correct, achievable perception of true self. In this regard, Ruth (quote 175) raises a tension between self perceptions and group perceptions of self. However she awards some substance to group perceptions, by describing them as "burdens to hold onto" as though one is resigned to carrying others' expectations and perceptions of self as if they reflect an unchallengeable, correct truth. These perceptions are constructed as a fairly rigid, constant reflection disallowing change, weakness etc, which contribute to them being a burden. In this vein, Conger (1993) explains the issues/concerns surrounding leadership training called "personal growth" training, noting that at the heart of the personal growth approach is discovering what your true self is and wants.

176. "But I think team building should be more about trying to identify who you are, set your boundaries, so you can learn how to, fit everyone in - almost like a jigsaw puzzle of everybody. You know everybody's different shapes, different things." Susan (S)

177. "On the weekend I was going through quite a bit of personal definition problems, … I was using the group as a stage for exploration … it was my little playground. But I think we all did that ... I think everybody was just arbing and relaxing, trying to use it as a playground to find out where everybody fitted in. So I think we were pretty much using everybody else in a nice way ... I approached it [the team building weekend] as being a playground you know, 'I can do whatever I want and what feels comfortable. What doesn't feel comfortable don't do it." Susan (S)

178. "I took full advantage of the team building weekend and saying to them, 'Listen. This is me. This is who I am. You know I'm normally neurotic about what other people think of me. That's why often I don't speak my mind, because I'm too scared of what other people are going to think'. And they said to me, 'Don't be stupid', I mean, 'Let yourself go'. So I have. And I haven't thought back on it. And I said to them, 'Well listen. If I'm making a total fool of myself just please tell me to shut up because I'm going to test the boundaries and the waters here, so if I'm pushing too far or I'm doing something wrong, just tell me and I'll stop'. So that was sort of an agreement I made with the group. And they haven't told me, 'Stop", so I presume that I'm doing o.k. So ja, I really don't know about their opinion of me has changed." Susan (S)

Susan takes the reflective process further as having a definitive role in identity formation and consequently where members fit in to the team. She contextualises this within her endeavour to define herself (quote 177) using team feedback. In constructing the team as a reflective device (that assists in forming personal identity and finding an individual role / place in the team), she also justifies this by generalizing it to the whole team to make it a normative process, "but I think we all did that" (quote 177).

By tasking the group with helping to set boundaries, Susan is overtly implicating the group to play a specific reflective and creative role in her process of defining self. Solomon (1993, p.100) reflects this view in her article on simulation training, by citing an interviewee who notes that team building is important to enhance self awareness in teams, because when individuals understand themselves better, they can "function more fully as team members". Team members are said to discover their typical responses within the team context, i.e. the team creates an awareness or reflects back aspects of self.

179. "To go back to your other question about if they are honest - not completely ... like * for example, she'd kind of say, 'this is like my weakness', and they'd be very kind of superficial, not really looking at herself with kind of steely eyed determination, unflinching gaze. I mean it's very, you know, 'I'm o.k.'. No-one pushes it then. No-one says, 'No. You're not like that. You know, what about this? And what about when you're like this?' And she always tends to kind of reframe things so that it excuses her." Nick (L)

Nick highlights a problematic aspect of the team as a mirror. He positions the group within this interpretive repertoire as very inactive in reflecting back self images in quote 179, by not challenging a student who portrays a particular view of herself that he describes as "superficial" and inaccurate. The group, however, is instead constructed as a blank canvas which does not reflect back an image, rather than a mirror which will reflect back perceptions. The group is thus constructed as a mirror only when individuals choose to employ it as such. So, if student does not want the group to reflect and create an image of him/herself the group does not impose this.

Ruth however produces a different account of how the group operates in this respect, noting that the group constructs their versions of self that an individual might or might not agree with (regardless of whether the individual has employed the group as mirror), and may consequently want to challenge (quote 180):

180. "I think self disclosure was difficult. And saying things that maybe I didn't want to have to say, and seeing how other people saw me and trying to challenge those perceptions and maybe, wanting people to see me how they saw me and being proud of that …" Ruth (S)

181. "We had to draw a car and see what part everyone was ... I wasn't sure I liked the way people were seeing me all the time. The kind of perceptions or even prejudices they had about me .. ... It upset me immensely. I can't remember because I didn't want to. I think I was the handbrake or the ignition, or one of those, the steering wheel. And I just didn't feel like I wanted to be that. I felt like I wanted to be something more important, or have a different role. … I just felt like they didn't really know me like I wanted them to know me. Everyone knew me from my academic record and what they expected of me. And that was difficult." Ruth (S)

182. "And ja, you want to say 'I'm not always a clown", and some people wanted to say that. Everybody said 'You make me laugh', 'You're funny'. 'You're great for the morale of the team', but they don't always want to be seen that way. ... They wanted people to know what they really want, who they really are, ja, it was quite a superficial exercise." Ruth (S)

183. "People believe I have these huge expectations. And ja I don't know what it is about me that sends out these vibes. I mean if I could turn it off, it would be great. But I make it quite clear that I kind of say 'I expect a lot of myself.' I think that's part of it, is that I work hard, I'm committed, and people think that because I do that, I therefore expect that of others. And I kind of say 'You've got to set your own boundaries'. But I think they think I want a lot of them. And there in the end there was a feeling, there was a fear 'Can I live up to what you want?' And I try to dispel that." Helen (L)

The team is constructed as reflecting images of self (180 – 183), based on particular and limited sources of information such as personal expectations or an academic record. This experience is described as somewhat disempowering, in that Helen and Ruth construct the group as having perceptions that they cannot control. The group thus does not reflect an image an individual necessarily tries to place before it, but independently creates images and roles of individuals. Both Ruth and Helen however imply that they are multi-dimensional, and group perceptions are limited making them an inaccurate reflector.

184. "[Why the "thrashing out"?] I think it came out from definitely peoples' personal feelings, their characteristics, how they see themselves. And that impacts on how they are in a group. Somebody felt insecure and unhappy, and needed praise for example, that she wasn't getting ... So she felt taken for granted and unhappy. ... There was somebody else who felt like they weren't academically the same as everybody else, felt insecure and then, I saw that this person would belittle other people or possibly shirk their own work because they wouldn't feel up to scratch and they needed a lot of help. So it was all the way we perceive ourselves and the way we think we can work in a team, and really, no-one knew how to express it so early in our work together. And they couldn't say what they need and <u>we</u> didn't know what other people needed. So I think that's why it just came out because it was all kept inside … it came out in other ways like walking out of the group, or shirking your responsibility, but it had a lot to do with how you see yourself in, in terms of the team, and your own ability." Ruth (S)

In quote 184, Ruth makes a connection between self perceptions and group behaviour, highlighting the importance and practical application of what happens if group members do not grasp self perceptions held by other members (about themselves) and play back a supportive version of these perceptions. She constructs this process of reflection of images as necessary to discuss in the group. Because, if the team is made aware of, and can recognize, what individuals want others to affirm of themselves, this might prevent members from acting out (e.g. "shirking") if a particular version of themselves is not reflected via the group. May and Schwoerer (1994, p.31) note the importance of verbal encouragement (that Ruth mentioned one member needed), and how it can enhance efficacy beliefs of members by "convincing team members of their ability to perform their job". This responsibility placed on the group leads into an exploration of another theme that is apparent within the psychologised team – the team as support group / therapy.

## 3. THE TEAM AS SUPPORT GROUP / THERAPY

A further construction of the psychologised team is the team as support group. Within this interpretive repertoire are constructions of how the team is represented as a support group (or fails in this regard), of how psychologised phrases are used to blame, justify, discredit etc. team members, how team building is implicated in this repertoire, and finally of how various accounts of how the team experienced a student (Alice) leaving the course and thus the team. The psychologised interpretive repertoire as said, functions as an extension of the family repertoire in terms of its emphasis on caring, but clearly draws on contextual elements of the university setting and Psychology Department in particular. Thus terminology and notions of psychological health (resembling the jargon highlighted in the educational team) are applied to caring and supportive relationships in the group to represent them in particular ways.

### 3.1 CONSTRUCTIONS OF SUPPORT

185. "You can't separate the emotional stuff from, from your work stuff. You just can't, because the way you see yourself and the way you think, and if you're anxious, comes through. And you can't, what do you do with the values you get on team building. Well it's going to come up, so you've got to deal with it." Ruth (S)

Ruth (quote 185) constructs the inevitability of the team as operating at an emotional level, by setting up the "emotional stuff" and the "work stuff" as inseparable and as inevitability coming to the fore. She further sets up the "values you get on team building" as specifically eliciting an emotional response. In all of these ways, she constructs a situation where she has no alternative but to deal with emotion in the team - almost as a victim of emotional issues. Because Ruth does not allow for any alternatives she makes normative dealing with emotive issues in the group. Robbins (1993) in her article on the dark side of team building argues that to suggest that personal issues and business have nothing to do with one another is "to imagine that people go to work and leave their feelings at home. That is nonsense. Business is personal … we cannot ignore the relationship between employees personal satisfaction and the cost of doing business" (p.20).

186. "When people said how things that had hurt them in their past like you know, if they'd been anxious or being taken for granted in a team, or always relied, you know babied you know. They could see it, and they didn't want a repeating pattern I think you know in this team. They wanted people to know what they really want, who they really are … " Ruth (S)

187. "And I think that we've come to this point in the year where we're quite open with each other. I think we know what peoples' problems are and we're not embarrassed to say 'you know I've been depressed in my life.' 'I've been anxious you know.' 'I don't feel I'm as bright as everyone else.' It's come out. So I think that's also a strength. We're able to be open with each other, and we are now quite aware of what each others needs are ..." Ruth (S)

188. "I think people trust each other more now than they did before in terms of their personal things, to say things like 'I'm anxious and I'm not having a good week' you know, those kind of things, and you know, those kind of real psychological problems which you wouldn't have wanted to share before. I think people are more trusting in that way. And ... You'll understand if, why they're not motivated or it'll make … you can help them more." Ruth (S)

189. "Trust links probably to not everybody pulling their weight or some people pulling away or maybe not getting the recognition or the kind of support you need. Then you don't really trust each other as members of a team. … skipped meetings or not done their fair share to the best, to the same standard as everybody else. And I know we need to help them and maybe they haven't asked for help or it's a sign that they've got their own personal issues ... " Ruth (S)

Quotes 186 - 189 describe how the team functions as a support group. Ruth describes (quotes 186 and 187) a process of people sharing past hurts and needs, which sets up the team as a forum in which students can share their histories as well as emotional wounds they have experienced. The purpose of this however is constructed not only to communicate with other team members, but to obtain their support and get group members to change their behaviour in accordance with these hurts, i.e. team members in this team were not to repeat the behaviours of others who inflicted these hurts, and should modify their behaviour to ensure no repetition. Ruth (quote 188) responds to this by constructing the original purpose of the team as being to help others, and sharing of issues will enable members to help more. This acknowledgement of past and/or hidden hurts also results in a fear/frustration (quote 191) that when fellow team members are not putting in enough effort or skipping meetings etc. it may be as a result of personal issues requiring sensitivity and support, rather than anger or a response to enforce performance on the part of those let down. Team members are thus required to support members rather than expect an equal contribution to the team. This clearly clashes with the machine interpretive repertoire where production is the purpose of the team, and each part is required to operate and produce according to its function, and with the educational team repertoire's focus on achieving academically, hence the intimation of frustration on Ruth's part.

Robbins (1993, p.17) notes that team building is a process in which participants and facilitators experience "increasing levels of trust, openness and willingness to explore core issues that affect excellent functioning." She goes on to note that, "If that sounds a lot like therapy, it's not accidental", in that what we do on our work lives is almost always a reflection of our own personal histories.

190. "There's a lot of openness which is funny, because a lot of the time I restrict myself in terms of talking about close friends. You know I mean where I'd say like "just", but with the group it's weird because there's a precedent that allows for it. You know what I mean? That allows you to be angry when you want to be angry and it allows you to, I think it's cos you've share so much with these people and that they, they encounter the same things as you do. And there's a lot of pressure, and there's a lot of tension so like, to blow your top is a lot more accepted in these circumstances than it would be with a close friend. ... cos you're working under such tension I suppose, you know there's room to blow." Liz (S)

191. "And there's been a lot of support. Support's been phenomenal in the group in terms of like if you're depressed or you can't handle this or you can't handle that you know, they will cover for you if you need covering. They'll share the load." Liz (S)

192. "Sometimes I would say yes [we've been a real team], and sometimes I would say no. I think it pretty much depends on the situation. Initially I think I would have said so, but as we get closer to the end of the year, I think we are. Well, particularly I think it was during the second term I would have started saying yes, because we've been quite flexible with each other. Everyone's sort of carried one or two members through difficult times, tried to be more understanding, be flexible, accommodating differences or co-operating. But the thing is, we get to the end point quite well together." Moira (S)

193. "It's [conflict] been dealt with well at times, and at times it's been dealt with poorly. It's got to the point where it has to be dealt with, which is why poorly. After our first group project, there was complete and utter dissent in the group. It was terrible. ... but now the conflict has taken on a different role, it's like not because no-one's pulling their weight, it's because they're worried that we're over-exerting ourselves. You know, that Ruth and I did too much, why didn't we call them to help us out? … It's more of a concern or it's based on concern of almost like a hurt that they weren't called in when we needed them type thing." Liz (S)

In quote 190 Liz sets up the team as an environment in which extreme emotional reactions are acceptable, not necessarily on the basis of friendships, but on what is constructed almost as a non-judgmental counseling space in the team. Furthermore, such reactions are ascribed to all members of the group, i.e. all members of the team react and thus support each other as seen in quotes 191 and 192. Boundaries are thus stretched beyond those of a friendship, to greater empathy, understanding and acceptance, protectiveness and assistance with emotional problems. This support is regarded as defining the group as a real team (Moira, quote 192). Liz (quote 193) highlights concerns of team members as to how they are each coping with work, which does not only construct the team as caring, supportive, and concerned for team members' health, but also as unwilling to be left out of a process of the work and willing to be called in whenever "needed" implying an availability to assist at all times. The team is thus meeting needs of its members, focusing inwards rather than focusing on outward production and its relationship with the external world.

### 3.2 CONSTRUCTIONS OF SUPPORT FAILING

194. "[describing the team] ... Makes me bleak. Didn't enjoy. I don't like being cloned ... I'm not this person who strives to be different and an individual, but I enjoy being myself. ... I need like, just respect that this is what I am about and this is where I am coming from, and these are the issues that are important for me. ... So the group as such, I found them incredibly selfish, complete lack of respect and even concern or worry. So, even at a social level I wouldn't have anything to do with them. I know that's harsh, but that's how I felt." Rory (S)

Where the majority of team members describe the team as supportive and caring Rory highlights their lack of concern and disrespect in his case. This raises questions as to whether support is in fact a reward for something offered by individuals to the team that perhaps Rory wasn't offering, or if lack of support is imposed as a sanction for behaviour the team does not approve of. Rory himself (quote 194) implies that his treatment was as a result of not conforming in the group. The reaction of the team that Rory describes is in contrast to Ruth's talk (quotes186 and 187) about interpreting a lack of performance as perhaps a sign that personal issues need attendance and support.

195. "My hopes would be that everybody does pull their weight and contribute equally. The fears, that not being fulfilled, just being very frustrating to be in a team where you feel like you're holding other members of the team." Fiona (S)

Fiona appears to subscribe less to the support group, and overall psychologised team interpretive repertoire than other members. In quote 195 she describes a dislike for "holding" team members, suggesting that all members should be able to cope themselves. This is in complete contrast to Ruth's perspective in quotes 190 and 191, and highlights potential conflict as the teams role with respect to support is constructed differently by different team members.

### 4. PSYCHOLOGISED LABELLING OF BEHAVIOUR

A further way in which the psychologised team is constructed, is by the use of various psychological terms and labels for group processes or individual actions as can be seen in the quotes to follow. The application of these terms almost always serves to empower the speaker, attributing an expert status and unique insight into problems. In addition, these labels and terms allow speakers to construct a multiplicity of explanations for the events, experiences, feelings, or behaviours described/analysed. This is also the interpretive repertoire within which the educational context provides speakers with terms to apply where they feel fit, terms that are set up institutionally (and in the discipline) as valid and useful. This makes it easier to apply labels as defined by others (rather than a personal judgement that is not necessarily endorsed by a profession), and awards speakers with some power on this basis.

196. "I think more so than any other group this group has challenged the lecturers much more in the sense of 'We don't like this. We don't want this. We're not happy with this mark. We think we've got too much work.' And that has been quite difficult to deal with. And at one stage there was quite a lot of **antagonism**, kind of a sense of **anger** towards us. I think particularly with the group project. It's almost as though instead of trying to deal with their anger amongst themselves, they were **projecting** it onto the lecturers. And I found that quite difficult. I mean from an intellectual point of view they have been very challenging which has been wonderful. But also at an interpersonal level, there are people that are quite **insecure** in some ways, and quite **anxious**. Anything that's kind of got to do with **self awareness** stuff, you've kind of got to really tread very, very carefully ... I think there is a lot of **vulnerability**. It seems that this group in particular, there was a **self confidence** issue for a lot of them. It kind of came out of the team building issue ... So we've also had to negotiate the self confidence issue you know, and try and build people up and it had to be, there has been a sense of trying to tip toe around this group. You know, and just crossing your fingers and saying 'Well, let's hope it goes smoothly now' ... And for some reason this group's also said that they've been quite **stressed out**. I don't know whether that's a South African phenomenon that everyone feels stressed out, or the scenario and life we live." Helen (L)

In quote 196, Helen uses a variety of terms to describe the Honours class using "projection" as a way of justifying students' anger and avoiding their blame.

She also labels members of the group “insecure ... and quite anxious” thereby citing a potential source of their interpersonal problems and anger. Helen continues by pointing out “vulnerability” in the group based on other problems of a psychological nature (confidence issues) and stress. In describing these problems she constructs their implications for the lecturers, and thereby sets up the role of the lecturers as being to support and protect the group, and impart confidence to the group. By using all these psychological terms, Helen is able to construct the lecturers as caring, and also to divert blame from the lecturers for students’ “interpersonal” problems.

197. “I think that in general conflict was suppressed ... There’s a vulnerability about people in this group and, and you make yourself vulnerable when you address conflict ... people are scared of being vulnerable in this group.” Helen (L)

198. “Is there a suppression of individual needs for the good of the group? I would say yes. But it’s a point that you say ‘How much am I prepared to sacrifice of myself to the good of the group. And what will I get in return?’ And I think that’s what teams are about. And it’s drawing that boundary and saying ‘I’m not prepared to go beyond this’ So I might feel uncomfortable, but how uncomfortable will I feel? Is it because I feel lazy and I’ve had a big lunch, or is that I genuinely am scared and I think that my ego is going to disintegrate?’ There are different points.” Helen (L)

In quote 197 Helen talks about suppression of conflict, which, (as a conveniently invisible psychological condition) allows for a number of things to be explained and blamed on hidden conflict. Helen establishes the legitimacy of conflict being suppressed by blaming it on the “vulnerability” of the group which she regards as overt. In quote 198, Helen refers to “boundaries” and a “disintegration of the ego”. By doing this she introduces psychological reasons to justify decisions to favour the (in this case) group over the individual, and also constructs the students as having some agency in decisions of this nature.

Quotes 196 – 198 illustrate the application of psychologised terms to the team, which when used by a lecturer become more powerful and legitimate / unchallengeable in their diagnosis because of the already expert status occupied by lecturers. These quotes are also of interest in that Helen clearly subscribes to the notion of the psychologised team as she concerns herself with emotional aspects of the team and explains behaviour on the basis of this rather than on, for example, differing academic ability which Nick uses to justify events and conflicts in the group. This suggests use of different interpretive repertoires which is potentially confusing and disorienting to students following their lead. This tension is returned to in the next session.

199. “You know people bring a lot of their own personal baggage to the team and I think all of us do have a lot of our own personal baggage. ... a lot of us were battling with balance you know just coming into Honours, trying to find our feet, where we lie. And Ruth’s a very high achiever ... I was trying to balance myself, trying not to be like that, so that normally drives me mad and is very self destructive. And I was trying to bring myself down from that place to a place where I could be healthy. But then I was being pulled up by Ruth you know to a place where I did not want to be. ... You know it’s just trying to find boundaries.” Susan (S)

In quote 199, Susan introduces the role of psychological health as hinging on work styles in the team. In addition she describes the team as made up of a lot of "personal baggage". This sets the team up as being an inevitable forum for dealing with that baggage. By establishing the team as being potentially psychologically unhealthy, she draws the experience in the team into a realm of psychological issues way beyond production and output concerns, for example.

200. "I think we were aware that there was something clinical there." Ruth (S)

Ruth (quote 200) uses the term "clinical" to explain Alice's reason for leaving the Honours course. This psychological label functions as a justification for Alice's departure that does not implicate anyone else (except Alice) in the process. It again illustrates the ability of psychological labeling to justify and excuse behaviour, and to some extent present itself as a proven truth because of the labels being universally subscribed to. Levin (1991) highlights the importance of acknowledging that psychological "taxonomies" are "merely heuristic" and represent "only the temporarily prevailing judgements of a self-certified professional majority, and … do not refer to an absolutely independent reality" (p.255).

## 5. THE TEAM BUILDING WEEKEND AS CATHARSIS

The team building weekend is constructed as a psychologised team, and clear differences emerge between lecturers apparent throughout the psychologised team. Clearly Helen supports the notion of team building facilitating personal growth and the role the team plays in supporting members, where Nick questions the appropriateness of this construction and its effectiveness, with students located between constructions. Quotes 201 and 202 are further examples of the mixed messages communicated by Nick and Helen with respect to the role the team plays in forming identity.

201. "[team building is about] Self awareness, and I think an appreciation of oneself within a group in terms of 'Well, what do I have to offer a group?', and "What are my strengths?', and 'What are the things I want to tell people to look for?' Helen (L)

In addition to endorsing the notion of self awareness (quote 201), Helen notes that building a team reveals <u>within</u> a group context, personal individual strengths rather than these being a prior personal knowledge. She does however acknowledge some sense of agency in defining ones self / parts of oneself, or at least some knowledge of self in being able to inform others of what "to look for", but awards the team some power of definition. Nicks perspective follows.

202. "[team building] is about something different around group principles or effective behaviour in groups, not about knowing yourself. It's about knowing yourself in a group context. And the group context is also very limited. These aren't people you spend your whole life with. These are people who only know you in a particular way. They only know you 9 - 12 maybe in an organisational context. It isn't a family, it isn't. If you forget that, then it blurs this other kind of therapeutic stuff in I think." Nick (L)

Nick (quote 202) raises particular concerns with the group playing too big a role, or at least with placing too much emphasis on group knowledge of self in such a "limited" context. This constructs the group as reflecting only a part of self almost like a rearview or wing mirror which affords a partial view of a bigger picture, and that part being "knowing yourself in a group context", not an unqualified "knowing yourself". Nick raises concerns about "therapeutic stuff" indicating that the team constructed as a support group / therapy group is a problematic and inappropriate notion. Yarks (2000) in a context of action learning (which team building can be), points out that it is important to clarify what kind of learning is being sought: personal development or developing participants in such a way that parallels the direction of the organisation. Yark's (2000) comment highlights the difficulty Nick experiences between the psychologised team interpretive repertoire (self awareness, support etc.), and the educational team interpretive repertoire (comparable to the direction of the organisation in that learning is the overall aim of an educational institution).

What no-one denies, however, is the role of the team building weekend in raising emotional issues as can be seen below in quotes 203 and 204, as well as perhaps in setting up the team as an appropriate forum for dealing with these issues.

203. "Ultimately I feel my role is to make sure that these students come away from the weekend whole. And that they don't come away and fall apart. And that there is a sense of growth and development. And a sense of achieving what we set out to achieve. And that it's I suppose a pleasurable weekend." Helen (L)

204. "It's been a really emotionally draining weekend because it's different from just participating in it. You've got to have a sense of always being on the ball and coordinating, and running the process. And I think with that comes greater responsibility for where everyone stands. And you don't want anyone to leave the team building weekend feeling more vulnerable or weaker or more freaked out than when they started it. And it's quite a responsibility to take. Cause you know no-one is a trained therapist or counsellor in that way. And no-one's going to take responsibility for peoples' psychic wounds that might recur. You don't know what's going to happen. And I think it is a fear that, it's not a fear, it's more, it's a responsibility that, that's quite a draining one." Nick (L)

Nick (quote 204) and Helen (quote 203) construct the team building as an emotional and challenging weekend psychologically. They construct their role as being responsible for the students' psychological health, allocating themselves powerful roles as guardians of the team emotionally. The expectation that people might have "psychic wounds" or not leave the weekend "whole" highlights further the 'depth' focus of the weekend. Where Helen positions this as contributing to the "growth and development" of students, Nick questions its relevance and applicability as can be seen below in quote 205. Helen's construction is borne out in literature, and Solomon (1993) notes interviewees commenting on the importance of self awareness and how it is enhanced by team building. The premise put forward is that understanding themselves better results in individuals functioning more "fully" as team members.

205. "What's beneficial for the group? So what do the group have to do together? They have to interact in class and you know do you have to know each other like incredibly well, like weaknesses? No, not really. … What is Industrial Psychology about? A lot of it is very simple kind of human relations skills, how to be assertive instead of aggressive, ... how to communicate effectively. It's basically living skills, not this hectic, in-depth understanding of other people. I don't know if they need to know that. And maybe that's something about the team building. It's not necessary. It kind of depends on what the aim of the whole thing was. Whether it's kind of group therapy or a cathartic process or whether it's just transferring basic group interaction skills" Nick (L)

Nick (quote 205) both questions the purpose for the team building weekend and highlights that the way it is set up contributes towards it being considered "group therapy or cathartic process" as opposed to a practical transference of "living skills". These are positioned as more appropriate and relevant not only to the team, but within the discipline of Industrial Psychology.

206. "Our team building weekend I also got a little too emotional. I cried and cried and I cried. And I can't stop it for some bizarre reason. And hey, by this stage your team members know you so well that it's just like part of the course." Fiona (S)

In quote 206, Fiona links the emotion expressed on the weekend with what is now considered normative in the group, constructing the team building as setting the stage for that level of interaction in the group. This confirms Nick's concern in quote 205 as the weekend setting up the team as group therapy.

## 7. SUPPORT FALTERS AGAIN – ALICE'S EXIT

Accounts of the departure of one team member (Alice) from the group pertain to one of the most definitive experiences of the team, and most clearly highlight the use of this repertoire. Documented below are both student and lecturer accounts of the event and its effects on the team. Ruth's account below highlights the viewpoints of the majority of students. The extract is considered in almost its entirety because of its articulateness, and the shifts which become apparent as her account unfolds sequentially.

207. "...there's this real, I don't know, these unresolved feelings. Feeling like we didn't do our best to help her, and maybe the lecturers and maybe the Department didn't do their best to support her and make, get her through this ... but she did struggle and we could see it. You know in the year no one really knew what to do about it. She wasn't showing open signs. ... I was shocked. No-one had expected it. I mean some knew more, those who were closer to her. But no-one knew how bad her anxiety was. And the sad thing that I think hurts everyone is that she came for an extra year. She did a bridging year just to get into Honours. There's like that whole determination and, that, I don't know, people worried that because she cracked up, it could happen to us you know. And, sometimes I think other people would say 'I wish I could do it too. I wish I could just leave' you know. She opened a door. She's opened a lot of wounds you know, that are there from our stress and the fact that we don't feel a lot of support from the Department. And I think people feel very bitter ...

> there's this feeling of like disillusionment and helplessness that everyone had to grapple with, and I think people are very angry ... angry at the lecturers. At the whole set up, the whole bureaucracy, the whole structure. That there are deadlines, that there are these things that you have to pass, there's your DP. You can't get two days off if you need it. And those kind of things. That it doesn't seem, in a Psychology Department, it doesn't seem to be tailored towards the person. If she's got an anxiety disorder, surely who would know best how to handle it? Not an English Department, you know, but a Psychology Department. So there's this real frustration and this fear that maybe it could happen to us if someone so bright, who seemed so together ... And no-one even knew she was leaving. I mean I'd heard and we sort of twittered amongst ourselves, but she came in and said goodbye, and she left. And we were, just went on with our seminar. No-one spoke about this like big thing that had happened. Like there were seven of us you know. It's small. I think there's this feeling that it wasn't dealt with. And because Helen was her supervisor and those kind of issues, I think people feel a sense of 'What did Helen do?' Even if she did, why didn't she tell us? If she would just tell us that she tried her very best for Alice ... But I think people wanted, and maybe all the way up wonder what anyone did for her. Because we weren't aware of it. And maybe it's a sense of guilt, like why didn't we see it? We're her class. Why didn't we see what was happening to her? And why didn't we help? Even me you know. I knew she was going to be here over grad. I knew she was here you know. Why didn't I go and invite her to my house and? We were all so self involved in our own lives that we don't actually see you know, what happens to other people. Maybe that's it, that we could have let it happen in such a small group. ... I think we were aware that there's something clinical there. Something we, none of us could have done anything about you know. So there's also this idea that we shouldn't beat ourselves up, and maybe we shouldn't always hold the Department responsible for everything that happened. Because maybe it's something she couldn't deal and didn't want to deal with right now ... It's left like, I don't know when people get sick or just, just flu, gastro, whatever, there's always this awareness that you've got to be sensitive to the personal issues. And I know I said before that I get frustrated when people don't have motivation or when people aren't pulling their weight. But there's always this idea that in the back of our minds, or of my mind, 'Why aren't people? What's wrong? What's going on?' Will we you know push them and push them until something happens to them like what happened to Alice, or when it becomes a pattern? ... You know some people have anxiety problems, and you never know that. And how are you pushing them? And what are you doing? And you could be doing something wrong. And you don't want it to end up like Alice. But then how do you handle it? ... You don't expect that in this like elite Honours class. You don't expect there to be people with weaknesses that aren't dealt with, that are going to affect their work when it's such a stressful year." Ruth (S)

Ruth (quote 209) presents a highly emotive account of Alice's departure. Throughout her account it is clear that she is not sure where to put the blame for the unresolved feelings in the team that she describes. She shifts blame through her account between the following sources:

- the team itself
- the lecturers
- "the Department"
- the academic setting (pressure and rigidity with respect to accommodating people problems)
- Ruth, myself
- Alice herself

Ruth further notes her expectations of a Psychology Department to be sensitive to personal problems, describing it as lacking humanity, and questions how much was done for Alice. Of interest in light of this construction of the Department as a source of blame however, is Ruth's later standpoint that maybe the team itself was to blame. She questions whether in fact all the frustration experienced in the group is based on guilt. This idea suggests a failure to meet a responsibility for Alice extending beyond work related issues to support for personal problems. Ruth's later claim of "awareness" of "something clinical" is in direct contrast to the earlier position of unawareness. What this suggests, is an attempted justification for the guilt Ruth mentioned as being a prevalent emotion. It allows Ruth to protect the team from admitting failure in this respect which might be particularly disappointing given the primacy of caring relationship in both the psychologised and family interpretive repertoires.

Ruth's shifting of blame between the institution (educational team interpretive repertoire), the team itself, the lecturers, displays a certain amount of discomfort with all these repertoires. There is a complex slippage between interpretive repertoires to explain Alice's departure e.g "Why didn't I invite her to my house" constructing a failure in the family interpretive repertoire; "there are deadlines, there are these things you have to pass … you can't get two days off" constructing a rigid educational team interpretive repertoire in terms of institutional rules, or perhaps a too one-sided production focus of the machine interpretive repertoire; "And maybe it's a sense of guilt, like why didn't we see it?" implying a failure in the support group of the psychologised team interpretive repertoire. Further crossover between interpretive repertoires is evident in the account with respect to academic performance, psychologised labelling, and more. This slippage between interpretive repertoires results in Ruth being unclear which one to employ in order to save face in the situation.

In terms of effects on the group, Ruth cites several reactions: sadness, fear of it happening to other team members, guilt, anger and bitterness, helplessness in terms of the system, and being tempted to possibly leave the course. This constructs the team members as victims of the RU Industrial Psychology Honours programme aspiring to survivor status – an interpretive repertoire explored earlier in a previous section. Ruth in describing the stress of being in an academic institution conflates her own frustrations and fears with the reasons Alice left, i.e. she describes her own fears as actually the reasons for Alice leaving. In addition to these emotions, Ruth describes the unresolved status of emotions in the team, which although not directly blamed on the lecturers, is implied to be their responsibility because of their power to direct the activities of the team.

Ruth ends off her account with another effect of Alice leaving. She describes a fear and pressure to be aware of peoples' personal issues, extending the responsibility of the group to care for one another. In essence this reinforces the psychologised team repertoire and relevance of the team as support group. Ruth however experiences this as a frustration in terms of dealing with lower work performance of team members, and so expresses resentment toward the Department for selection of Honours candidates with weaknesses. In this instance personal problems represent a hindrance to reaching her academic goals.

Quotes 208 - 210 highlight a less emotive and less responsible view of Alice's departure, from Fiona's perspective.

208. "it's not a good working technique to go overboard. You don't do a fourteen page document for something that's 4 pages long. ... I think she [Alice] overworked herself. And at the same time I think she needed a lot more direction and help ... It was a bit disturbing when she left. I mean I know Helen tried to the best of her abilities to bring, to have closure I think. I mean I think we're unfair on the lecturers at times. ...We were at the Spur that day, and she came to the Spur, and she was embarrassed I think. I don't think she wanted to see any of us to tell you the truth. I think she felt embarrassed because she, in a way she was saying, 'I can't deal with it'. … And in 7 of us when you have a drop out of one it makes quite an impact really. ... And the term before as far as I knew she was just going to soldier on like the rest of us. But I think every team member has a different attitude towards Honours." Fiona (S)

209. "I feel that there should have been a little bit more closure on it, but I ultimately think it was Alice's problem. I don't think it had anything to do with the lecturers ... If she wanted to get a first and it's either all or nothing, then it's nothing, but then the Department mustn't get the blame for her leaving ... But then I haven't talked to the others about this … it feels like, maybe it would be me saying, 'I'm blaming Alice for Alice's leaving' where everybody else was sort of blaming the Department and the lecturers. And I don't want to say to Susan, 'Look Sue, I actually think it was Alice's problem, not the fact that she wasn't given the support', because I don't think Susan would take that too well. ... I didn't know she was considering backing out." Fiona (S)

210. "Helen gave her [Alice] a whole lot of options ... she could have taken a few courses this year and do her project next year. I mean it wouldn't have been terribly demanding on her to do it. But the thing is, if she can't cope with the stress and everything, then she's not getting an Honours degree. She's not going through that amount of, you know, that is what the degree is about and you have to do it within those parameters, otherwise it's not the same thing." Fiona (S)

In quotes 208, 209 and 210, Fiona utilises several interpretive repertoires to explain and judge Alice for her departure. She describes Alice as creating problems for herself, and thus exonerates the Department from blame, constructing Alice's leaving as her own choice of attitude, and as a shameful choice. Fiona also constructs Alice's decision not to conform and persevere in the team (family interpretive repertoire) as having let the team down. Fiona refers to Alice "backing out" of the course, using talk reminiscent of the family interpretive repertoire wherein Honours is constructed as a rite of passage. In quote 210, Fiona constructs Alice's decline of the options offered her to complete her degree over a two year period as a lack of ability, judging Alice through the use of an educational team repertoire. She however notes that had Alice accepted this offer she would not be getting an equivalent, genuine Honours degree, thereby attempting to maintain the exclusivity of the Honours degree, a distinction enhancing cohesion in the team evident in the family interpretive repertoire (again subscribing to Honours as a rite of passage).

Fiona reveals her position as subscribing to educational and family team interpretive reprtoires which clash with the emphasis places on the psychologised team interpretive repertoire used by other students to talk about Alice's departure. By accounting for Alice's departure as a choice revolving around academic performance rather than a psychological, "clinical" problem, she takes a consistent position with her construction (in the machine interpretive repertoire) as to what the "real work" of a team is (quote 56).

Fiona (quote 209) admits her reluctance to admit to other team members her opinion about Alice, and is quite open about the "blaming" process that students are engaged in. She does not describe her viewpoint as neutral either but acknowledges it as "blaming Alice". This reluctance to disagree with the team is indicative of a need for acceptance by and harmony in the team on Fiona's part displaying her subscription to the importance of conformity highlighted in the family interpretive repertoire.

A variety of contrasting explanations for Alice's departure are offered by the lecturers. The lecturers, as seen in the quotes to follow, describe their versions of why Alice left, quite differently to the students' constructions utilizing different interpretive repertoires not only from the pscychologised construction used by the majority of the students (represented here through Ruth's account), but also from each other.

211. "I think there are a variety of reasons [why Alice left] ... I think it was a comment about the group. I don't think there has been a great sense of community perhaps that could have been there without it being false. I think it's changed a little bit, but I don't think they subscribe to that kind of notion too strongly anyway. ... I think there was the support probably from one or two of the individuals that she had directly related to and got on with, but I don't think as a whole group that there was much support. ... I thought it was very sad that somebody was lost. And I'm surprised that they didn't speak about it sooner. ... they spoke about it, but I think within the whole ethos of blaming the Department, and not necessarily looking at themselves as a group. And perhaps how they could have done something differently. ... The weaknesses [of the team], ja I think is that perhaps the lack of a sense of community or responsibility to each other. ... there's an expectation that each one can do it on their own, and so should do it on their own. They don't know that people have other support structures, and perhaps that's what happened with Alice. ..." Natalie (L)

212. "She just wasn't coping ... well this is my interpretation, is that she had personal issues that she had to deal with. ... And we tried to be as accommodating as possible ... I know that the students, the kind of vibe that I've had is that the Department (and we're not quite sure who 'the Department' is) dealt with the whole matter in a very insensitive way. There was a general feeling that there wasn't support for her ... we've tried to sort of deconstruct who 'the Department' is ... And I personally think that we've tried to be as supportive as we can ... And I felt very sore that she had to leave you know. It's difficult to know where the students come with this perception. I mean maybe they don't realise what the discussions were that went on. … Maybe it's a sense again of this kind of you know 'We don't want to deal with the emotion, so we just flake them onto someone else' I don't know where, why, maybe they do feel they have cause to kind of get angry. I also think there's this kind of institutional rhetoric you know ... about how bad ... [things] are. Again, I think it's a rhetoric that we buy in to. ...

You know people saw Alice [as] the one that had to be nurtured. And she was the one that had to be looked after ... I remember one individual saying to me 'I felt quite jealous of Alice, because, you know coming out of the team building weekend, she was the one that was nurtured. Where was the support for me?' ... I mean quite ironically she was the one that was showing such tremendous growth ... there was a sense of her just coming out and, and starting to flower I suppose ... so there was a sense of loss and, 'Phew you know. What's happened?' And because it's such a small group, having one person come out, is definitely felt. It's quite sore for them." Helen (L)

213. "I think the class has … not really properly mourned her, or her loss. And it keeps on kind of coming up in lots of ways. There's a whole lot of kind of 'What could we have done differently that she would have stayed? Is it something? What makes us good enough to stay and carry on, and she wasn't good enough? Or something that we might have done differently and she might have still been here with us?" A whole lot of that kind of survivor guilt, 'Why am I so special? Why can I complete this and Alice couldn't? You know she was so good and intelligent and hard working.' And I think that they really still feel her loss. They've expressed a sense of not having, wanting to have spoken about it, about what happened. The way that they expressed it felt that maybe we as lecturers should have set up some kind of forum for them discussing it, which maybe should have happened. In retrospect, maybe it would have been useful to speak about these feelings. And then again, maybe it's up to them as a group to decide what they want. I think that's always the tension as an outsider. As a lecturer, aren't you interfering in the group process by saying, 'Here. Here's a date where we are going to meet and speak about Alice'? Maybe they don't want to. Maybe they deal with it in their own way. For us to set that kind of agenda I think would be too invasive, too imposing. But either way I think they feel like they haven't properly mourned her. And they still feel a lot of guilt about her leaving. I think it's misplaced. I think it's overpsychologised, and you know in another Department would this be, would you feel, think like that. But it's there. And I think they haven't spoken about it properly. But it comes back also to the issue of boundaries and how much they take responsibility for others in the group, and as a class in fact they do take quite a bit of responsibility for each other. So those boundaries aren't clear ... They're very enmeshed in each other ... And I think they still aren't clear themselves on what they could have done, how they should have responded to Alice and her departure. … I think it's strange that they take that responsibility for someone else which was something which was blatantly a personal issue with Alice. ... And whether the honours group should and can take responsibility for that is debatable. But then I think they do feel all that. They feel in another way I mean they lost something. ... But there's guilt on two levels I think. Whether I could have done something differently that would make Alice stay, and, 'Why do I deserve to get through this year seeing as Alice couldn't? Am I better than her? Cause she was also bright and intelligent and hard working.' And there was also guilt for that I think. ... I think it's something that they're still grieving. I don't think it's properly resolved as a group." Nick (L)

Lecturers clearly draw on different interpretive repertoires to explain Alice's departure and the RU Industrial Psychology Honours team's reaction to this. Natalie (quote 211) constructs Alice's leaving as a result of poor relationships in the group, exonerating the lecturers from all blame. She constructs the students' blaming of the Department as a distraction from considering themselves, suggesting that this blaming was a cover for the team and its part in Alice leaving.

Natalie draws on the family interpretive repertoire in this regard to validate the failure of students to develop close and supportive relationships to care for one another. Natalie also uses the psychologised team interpretive repertoire, specifically the team as support group, to construct the failure of group members to take emotional responsibility for one another, through acting as a support structure. This construction functions to nominate students rather than lecturers as the primary support for one another. It removes lecturers from messy interpersonal relationships and problems, and in so doing absolves them from related responsibility.

Helen (quote 212) draws on an educational team interpretive repertoire to explain Alice's departure and the blaming engaged in by the students, by referring to "institutional rhetoric", and "the Department", but also draws on the psychologised team interpretive repertoire by suggesting projection, "flake emotion onto someone else" and the existence of "personal issues". Helen also makes a comment about Alice needing to be "nurtured" drawing on a family repertoire. Helen describes this as invoking some jealousy implying a subscription to the notion of being nurtured, supported and looked after across the group. This need highlighted on the team building weekend perhaps set up the expectations against which Natalie (quote 211) judged Alice's departure as a failure on the part of students – i.e. because Alice's need for nurturing was made known and still not met by the group.

Nick's position (quote 213) is not surprisingly in contrast to the majority of students and the other lecturers. Where Helen (quote 212) constructs the experience of Alice leaving as "sore" for students, Nick positions the guilt of the students as "misplaced" and "overpsychologised", resulting from being "enmeshed" in terms of taking responsibility for others in the group. He therefore blames this misplaced emotion on the notion of the team as a support group, again revealing his rejection of the psychologised team interpretive repertoire in terms of the team as a support group and the use of psychologised terminology. Nick constructs Alice's leaving as her personal issue that students are erroneously attempting to take the blame for. He clearly supports a lack of lecturer involvement in personal issues such as setting up a discussion forum, maintaining his initial position of constructing the role of the lecturers in terms of the educational team interpretive repertoire. His version of the events surrounding Alice's departure functions to discredit the notion of the psychologised team, but ironically makes use of some labelling by describing the students as "enmeshed" and referring to "survivor guilt". In other words Nick resorts to psychological terminology to discredit the very same type of action of students.

Accounts of Alice's leaving across the team thus highlight the multiple usage and variation of interpretive repertoires to construct the team – each functioning for specific purposes. In the case of these accounts, the majority of constructions functioned to find a source to attribute blame for the departure of Alice to, however functions of particular interpretive repertoires are highly diverse and often unknown even to speakers themselves (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) as no doubt may have been the case in many instances of this research.

# CHAPTER EIGHT - CONCLUSION

There seems no way to "conclude" a discourse analytic study bearing in mind the experience if analyzing discourse seems to be a process that could yield endless interpretive repertoires given enough time and space to present these. Banister et al. (1994) refer to the notion of inconcludability that highlights the possibility of other readings of the accounts revealing more information, new repertoires etc. It important to acknowledge that part of the dilemma of any research is the "might-have-beens" (Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996), and as this study draws to a close, as a part of a reflexive approach I would be amiss not to bring an awareness of missing pieces to the center of the research. Not only with the application of another methodology, but even in repeating the application of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to the data, new repertoires would emerge. It is with this in mind that this chapter highlights some of the achievements and limitations of the research, and suggestions for how this work may be "applied" in the future.

## 1. ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

This research attempted to consider notions of teams in a team building context. By obtaining interview material from interviews conducted with the RU Industrial Psychogy Honours class, constructions of teams, their variation and functions of constructions could be examined through analyzing the talk of participants. This is of particular relevance given the social constructionist view that there is nothing outside of language. The research aimed to problematise the notion of "the team" by highlighting that meaning is contextual, shifting and manifold. In doing this, it hopes to contribute to emerging postmodern research in Organisational Theory.

Four interpretive repertoires that emerged from the research have been outlined in the analytic chapters. Students and lecturers make use of all of these repertoires to construct the team in different contexts for different functions.

The educational team repertoire is one that is closely related to the institutional context of this research. It can be drawn upon to construct a hierarchy in the team based on academic ability, and to justify an individual focus in the team (which the family interpretive repertoire does not support). It also makes use of theoretical terms to position those who draw on it as experts, and to give expression to academic learning. Because it is fairly task related, it can also function to produce a distance from messy interpersonal aspects of teamwork. The educational team interpretive repertoire overlaps in this regard with the team as machine. This interpretive repertoire (machine) also focuses on task, and therefore functions not only to create a divide between work related and personal issues (relegating relationships to the background), but to regulate productivity in the team. The machine repertoire also enhances productivity through constructing the team in terms of roles. Not only does this define what each member should do in the team, but it satisfies an individual need to "fit" somewhere in the team. When this becomes problematic however, is when either the team changes (in terms of membership / structure or even task), or an individual changes, and roles allocated to individuals remain static, denying adaptation – both intrapersonally and interpersonally. In other words the machine interpretive repertoire cannot accommodate personal growth or a change to the overall structure of the team. In addition the question as to how roles are allocated becomes of concern.

The family team interpretive repertoire constructs the emotive aspects of the team that cannot be voiced by using the educational and machine team repertoires. It functions to construct the team as caring and supportive, and is drawn on to maintain cohesion of the team i.e. the team is constructed as a cohesive entity. This cohesion is maintained by avoiding conflict through constructions of conformity, and leaderlessness, as well as by maintaining a distinct and separate group identity through constructing difference to others, and shared hardships that have been overcome. Where this interpretive repertoire breaks down, is in making distinctions between work related and personal roles and relationships. Furthermore, conflict and superficiality threaten the family interpretive repertoire and are therefore constructed as externally based problems.

The psychologised team interpretive repertoire extends on the caring and supportive aspects of the family team interpretive repertoire to construct the team as a therapeutic entity that processes problems, and supports members through difficulties. The team is also constructed in this repertoire as providing reflections of who members are and playing some part in "revealing" their identities. The team thereby facilitates the personal growth inhibited by the machine interpretive repertoire. Team building within this repertoire is constructed as facilitating personal growth as opposed to building relationships (family) or work processes (machine) or reflective learning (educational). Interestingly, similar to the educational team interpretive repertoire, the psychologised team interpretive repertoire also functions to set up the expertise of those who draw on it through the use of psychological labels that are already defined by the discipline of Psychology. The psychologised team interpretive repertoire breaks down, however, when team members are unhappy with the image of themselves that the group projects, and when support fails in the team.

In addition to the way in which these interpretive repertoires are used by RU Industrial Psychology Honours students, further layers of functions and power relations are introduced to construct the role of lecturers in each one.

The usefulness of highlighting and examining different interpretive repertoires is largely in noting the variation between them and complexities of multiplicity. These are made evident through the overlaps, contradictions and clashes of the interpretive repertoires highlighted above, and the slippages between the four. It is clear that the interpretive repertoires of machine and educational team are frequently in opposition to ways of constructing the team in the family or psychologised team interpretive repertoires. This complexity has critical implications for notions of shared understanding and common purpose in the team, and translates into potential misunderstandings and different expectations, resulting from different notions of what a team is.

## 2. TENSIONS TO BE NEGOTIATED

### 2.1. CRITIQUE OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS USED IN THE RESEARCH

**The inescapability of discourse**

It is important to note that although the research attempts to critique the literature (that participants may or may not subscribe to) through and by participant constructions, this has been done by setting out discourse alongside commentary from the literature. As constructions vary and perhaps seem to contradict one another, some literature is pitted against other literature in accompanying extracts. The difficulty with this is that the interview extracts and literature chosen represent my own constructions of participants' and authors' constructions. As a researcher, I am subscribing to the very same literature that the research hopes to add to and critique in its essentialism. In addition, literature used is often situated within a positivist paradigm. It is therefore important to state that the literary commentary does not purport to set up a standard against which accounts can be evaluated, but rather demonstrates what has been published that pertains to the issues raised, (and perhaps is a linguistic resource used in accounts).

Potter and Wetherell (1987) mention that analysts' accounts of how peoples' language use is constructed are themselves constructions. They claim, however, that it is possible to acknowledge that one's own language is constructing a version of the world, while proceeding with analyzing discourse and the implications of this discourse. What is important in the process is to recognize that one's own work is not unaffected by social psychological processes being studied, and in this respect "discourse analysts are simply more honest than other researchers" (p.182). The goal of this reflexive critique is thus to remind readers that this thesis is not a pure record of events / facts, but is a "complex, multifaceted social achievement" (p.183). Burman and Parker (1993) maintain that reflexivity is important because discourses are not there awaiting discovery, but are actually produced through analysis, and are therefore as much our creations as they are "objects" independent of us. We (and objects) are affected by history, but our subjectivity as historically produced is then an important research tool for the decoding of forms of language.

Parker (1992) refers to questions around how discourse can be escaped if discourses frame the way we think about the objects they construct, and the way we are positioned as subjects. Parker (1992) makes four points to support the "tactic" of not answering the question, three of which are outlined here as relevant to this research. Firstly, attempts to escape discourse invite a regression to exactly those conceptions of individual culpability for social practices that [Parkerian] discourse analysis attempts to avoid, "reflexivity is necessary and useful, but does not dissolve discourse" (p.21). Secondly, although systematising when researching discourse is inescapable, discourse analysis should bring about an understanding of the way things were, not the way things are - by maintaining a critical distance from a discourse, it is in a sense, consigned to the past. Thirdly, both reflexivity and discourse analysis are historically and culturally bound.

**Critique of Potter and Wetherell's Approach**

Although Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis was deemed most suitable for this research in terms of its largely "descriptive", and non-political (non-confrontational) stance, as well as its position on agency of speakers, it is criticized in both these respects by other writers.

Fairclough (1992) refers to Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis as impoverished. First he notes the limitations of what Potter and Wetherell (1987) refer to as content, highlighting that it amounts to limited aspects of the conceptual meaning of discourse, leaving untouched other dimensions of meaning and associated aspects of form. He notes that one needs a richer analytical apparatus than Potter and Wetherell's (1987) to describe constructions that they may be operationalised. Fairclough (1992) is suggesting that considering interpretive repertoires in terms of their variation and functions is too limited an approach to consider the operations and effects of discourse. He suggests considering the form of interpretive repertoires e.g. grammar, vocabulary, genre, close linguistic analysis. With respect to this research, it was felt that analysis of form would not have added substantially given that the study intended to explore diversity of meaning and its impact – sufficiently addressed through the variation between and functioning of constructions.

Fairclough (1992) also asserts that Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach is insufficiently developed in its social orientation to discourse in that it has an individualistic emphasis on the rhetorical strategies of speakers, rather than emphasising ideology and social forces. Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach amongst others is referred to as merely descriptive and not critical because it does not investigate ideology and power, nor take a stance advocating one interpretive repertoire above another (Burman & Parker, 1993; Fairclough, 1992). This may be a valid criticism of Potter and Wetherell's approach, and it may have been revealing and perhaps important to consider how organisational theorists, management consultants and team building facilitators (as well as educational institutions and 'big business'), wield power and utilize their expert status through discourse to define what constitutes team and organisational health and success (concepts that hold a lot of weight in the changing workplace and impact on how performance of teams and individuals is assessed, how organisations are structured etc.). However, this was not deemed viable in research of this limited scale or scope, although it provides useful pathways for later extension of the research.

The limitations imposed (to the content of interpretive repertoires, and to the exploration of power) were enacted out of ethical concerns for anonymity for and accountability to participants. It was not deemed suitable to investigate how language functions in terms of power and ideologies in particular because of the implications of this primarily for lecturer participants. Having interviewed the entire lecturing staff of the RU Industrial Psychology Honours course, participants would be recognizable as individuals, i.e. it was not a random selection of lecturers, but a complete sample of the lecturing group. And further, because this research is being presented back into the Psychology Department and participants are known individuals with whom I had some relationship, it was far more sensitive to position them as powerful than it might be for a distanced and collective discipline of people, e.g. ascribing power to psychiatrists in general. Within an accountability step, I was uncomfortable with pitting participants against one another on a more political level.

Also, by referring to interpretive repertoires and their functioning at a more local, practical level and not at an ideological, abstract level, examining discourse and how it might be effectively leveraged in team building becomes a potentially viable option to consider. In other words, if individuals have some agency in terms of their choice of repertoires, they might be able to apply research of this nature through making different choices of language. Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996) refer to a discourse being "enacted", e.g. a participative discourse being enacted into a particular new form of decision making structure, suggesting that language can be acted upon in a very practical manner suited to the applied nature of Organisational / Industrial Psychological theory.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) are also criticized from a critical realist perspective for their relativism. Parker (1992) maintains that in order to analyse institutions, power and ideology, the slide into relativism (that Potter and Wetherell amongst other discourse analysts encourage), needs to be halted, because a sense of the 'real' is needed to ground an understanding of the dynamics of discourse. Wetherell and Potter (1992) do however note the possibility that one account may be preferable to another. This acknowledgement allows a particular viewpoint (and possibly action) to develop in response to a discourse analytic study wherein multiple perspectives (perhaps contradictory) are presented. If all these perspectives were deemed as valid as one another, no action could be taken because of opposing viewpoints also presented as part of a study as equally valid. In this research, all interpretive repertoires are explored critically as each has particular limitations and particular strengths in different contexts of use.

## 2.2 APPROACHES TO SAMPLING

The way in which I collected material and sampled participants to look at what is positioned as being a *process* of team development did have certain limitations. This is because material was collected via sets of interviews literally weeks apart at the end of the programme, thus producing a 'snap shot' or cross-sectional approach. This sampling / collection strategy did facilitate a reflection process, where participants had the whole year's team development experience to draw on. However, collecting material at various points during the year might have produced an "unfolding" narrative showing the development of interpretive repertoires over time.

Why this shortcoming is of particular interest, is that the research was conducted within a context of team *development* implying change / a progression in the team over time. Interpretive repertoires utilized then may have (if examined at different times, or even through a different theoretical and philosophical lens such as Grounded Theory) changed over time in a manner related to team events. For example, the notions of teams could be constructed only to be (re)constructed into some kind of pattern of interpretive repertoires. This might reveal interpretive repertoires that develop and change from an initial point of unity where all participants define teams in the same way, by constructing them in terms directly sourced from literature (as part of an educational repertoire). Interpretive repertoires then might change according to a historical spiral, developing through interactions in the team, with literature etc. at different points. These varying constructions would also inform how participants see the team, resulting in constantly changing repertoires relative to their contexts of use and varying functions (rather than being linked back in a closed hermeneutic way).

Continuing along a historical spiral, events such as the departure of Alice may have affected or splintered the unity in the team resulting in still more and different interpretive repertoires.

Thatchenkery and Upadhyaya (1996, p. 314-315) identify four "dynamics" of discourses that accommodate more than constructions, but refer rather to changes in the use of discourses over time. These dynamics were identified through considering discourse from multiple sources over several years. The dynamics of four types of discourses are explained: a continuous discourse, an introduced discourse, a cyclical discourse, and a transformed discourse. Of interest in this research is the notion of an *introduced* discourse that they propose comes into use as a result of some reconceptualisation of the core activity of the team. In the case of this research this might refer to a construction of the team as parts of a machine following participation in the "car exercise" on the team building weekend that possibly introduced the interpretive repertoire of the team as a machine.

Considering the dynamic nature of team interpretive repertoires is an opportunity for future research into team building and development. It was however deemed beyond the focus of this study, and the scope of a study of this size bearing in mind the complexity of the analytic task to examine talk-material spanning several interviews. The richness of exploration that is possible in researching a complex transformative organisation / team is inexhaustible (Thatchenkery & Upadhyaya, 1996).

## 2.2 CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Aside from the inescapability of discourse, criticisms of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach to discourse analysis, and the research limitations of not mapping the potential sequential development of the team through interpretive repertoires, there is the issue of the context of this research to consider. Potter and Wetherell (1987) pay particularly close attention to context and how meaning is closely tied to context. The institutional context of this research is certainly somewhat different from most of the organisations that the literature consulted is based on. In other words, the application of organisational theory into an educational environment did not always result in a perfect fit. Educational institutional contexts have their own peculiar politics, for example those pertaining to academic competition, which is reproduced through a highly visible process of evaluation and judgement (through the marking process). Also as noted in the psychologised team repertoire, the context of a *Psychology* Department resulted in constructions of it as a place of support and care for students (cf. therapeutic or personal growth groups) with respect to personal issues that are not apparent in most organisational literature.

In addition, because lecturers provide an educational service students expectations are high and constructions of their environment anticipatory of receiving this from the Department rather than being "employed by" the Department. Further to these issues, where teams in organisations might interact with several other teams within the same organisation, the Rhodes University Industrial Psychology Honours team in this research did not interact with any other teams in the Department with respect to tasks or other collaborative activities resulting in limited talk about potential competitor or related teams. Reward systems are also different in organisations and at universities, making it difficult for lecturers to reward team members in a meaningful way if taking their cues from organisational theory, because of the individual nature of rewards in an academic system.

Because of the focus of organisational theory on improving processes etc. to increase profitability in organisations, and the different foci in the RU Industrial Psychology Honours class in terms of development of students, the team literature may inadequately consider these "peripheral" issues. Where the Honours group was clearly constructed as a psychologised and educational team (as well as machine and familial), the literature focuses in on machine and family repertoires predominantly because of the focus on relating team building back to the ultimate productivity of organisations. Organisational theory does not clearly address issues such as blurring of work and personal lives and personal and professional "selves." In addition, literature assumes an ignorance of teams amongst potential members whereas in an educational context, the RU Industrial Psychology Honours class was au fait with some literature pertaining to teams and organisations. Certainly there is slippage between organisational theory and the context of this research, however in the attempts of the team to subscribe to Organisational / Industrial Psychological theory, repertoires in the literature were clearly utilized.

Banister et al (1994) differentiate between two types of reflexivity – functional and personal. Functional reflexivity involves critical examination of the practice / process of the research to reveal its assumptions, values and biases, whereas personal reflexivity involves the acknowledgement of the researcher of levels of personal involvement in work and emphasizes the impact of the researcher's life experience on the research. The literal research context of the Psychology Department obviously has implications for my own position as a researcher being embedded in the context as a Psychology student myself. Ribbens (1989, p.589) adds that acknowledgement must be made of the wider institutional constraints research takes place in, such as who it is written for, "who the audience is going to be must exert an influence on the whole nature of the research project because it relates so strongly to the basic reasons or purposes we have for doing the research." The most obvious implication of my own position in the Psychology Department, and that this research is being produced within and "for" the same Department, is that participants may have felt inhibited in the interview situation for fear of exposure. Certainly, some level of posturing was inevitable. Assumptions were made about me "siding" with the students by the students, which aided openness, and as being a more senior student moving on in life by lecturers, which distinguished me from the Honours students. The extent of the effects of my relationship with the Psychology Department as a post-graduate student cannot be known exactly, however it is important to point this out as having impacted on the research.

### 2.3 ISSUES UNATTENDED TO – RACE AND GENDER

There were both gender and race dynamics at play in the RU Industrial Psychology Honours class that were not addressed in the analysis of the discourse. Some interesting but complex issues were hinted at that would require further investigation to unpack. For example, Rory as the only male in the group was positioned as lazy and needing chiding from others in the group for not producing academically (see quote 203 below), alongside positioning him as the glue in a group of stressed girls (see quotes 201, 202 below). These constructions need further exploration in the context of the research as a whole.

201. "It's a nice thing to have a guy. It breaks down the female cattiness. If you put a whole lot of females together it can get quite catty. So he's often the male presence and quite often when the girls get catty amongst themselves the whole thing will be projected onto Rory and everybody hates Rory for the week you know, cause he's just a stupid male. I don't think I would have liked an all female group." Susan (S)

202. "I think it would have been easier if there'd been more guys cause there would have been more of a balance. I don't think we had problems in terms of bitchiness and all that type of thing. Cause that's normally what the problem is when you've got a bunch of girls together." Fiona (S)

203. "He's very different to us, to the women. He's like a joker, and I think we're a lot more serious about our work than he is. … He makes us aware that it's him against us. Especially when you talk about affirmative action and the white male in South Africa, and about finding jobs and how it's been so unfair for so long. And when we get into those discussions it's us against him." Ruth (S)

The issue of "racial" difference in the group was one that was largely side stepped, and even more so by the one team member of a different "racial" positioning to the rest of the members. Evident however was an attempt to construct conformity unaffected by racial differences as evident in quote 204 below.

204. "She's not dark enough to be black. She is very western, westernized. You know she has a very western life, more than her family does. She's not very traditional. I would have liked to have people form other race groups in our class. It opens your eyes to a lot of things that you never thought of before." Susan (S)

205. "We've got Moira who's Indian and I think we're more sensitive. But she's very Westernised, so we're not really even aware of when we speak or if we are racist or if we do say things that offend her. … [When] we speak about stereotypes that exist I wonder if Moira feels included. Because you know apartheid, I don't know what her experiences are, but from what I understand of her life, you know she's been well off and she's been to a good school. …I don't know if people see her as disadvantaged, or somebody who needs [you] to be politically correct around." Ruth (S)

Although Moira does not describe herself as "Westernised" she evaded the probes around racial issues claiming that it was not an issue. We might interpret the function of this liberal construction as "impression management" i.e. wanting to appear meritorious of her place in the class (rather than being awarded it based on race) and above racial marginalisation arguments. This does, however, require further investigation.

A further possibility for future research, would be to analyse overarching organisational discourses / interpretive repertoires as well as interpretive repertoires used within a learning / classroom / teaching environment. These might provide a broader context within which to situate some of this research, and provide an opportunity to explore ideology and power and how it is advanced in business through organisational literature. There appears to be a dearth of literature with respect to discourse analytic approaches to anything team related. Future research of this nature on teams or any other organisational issue would be of great interest.

Potter, Edwards and Wetherell (1993) did note that they would be looking more closely at areas such as classrooms, and this might provide insight into gender and "racial" issues in the educational environment.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.149) have a practical focus to their approach to discourse analysis, and point out that

> "it is not sufficient for analysis to simply identify different forms of language in the abstract – we need to know the uses and functions of different repertoires and second, the problems thrown up by their existence."

Clear contradictions between the four repertoires analysed in this research were identified in the analytical chapters with implications for even the fundamentals of team building, such as what the purposes of a team are: to learn (educational team repertoire), to produce (machine repertoire), to bond (family repertoire), or to support (psychologised team repertoire). If these ways of talking about and constructing the team go unnoticed or uncommunicated, or are used in a contradictory way the probability of frustration to collaborative work is high. If facilitators, trainers and teachers / lecturers could consider the diverse meanings and construction of phenomenon that might complicate collaborative work and be associated with different expectations etc., teamwork might be enhanced. Isaacs (1993) suggests one way of exploring meaning making in the workplace that is somewhat unorthodox, but he claims has effective results is "dialogue". Although seeming to refer to talk and language, the concept is not discourse analytic, and originates in a different paradigm altogether. However, it is interesting to consider. Of course I am not suggesting an escape from language, but rather that attention be paid to it and its effects. Although this makes teamwork somewhat more complicated, this is clearly an area of some complexity.

### MEANING MAKING AND DIALOGUE IN THE WORK PLACE

Isaacs (1993, p.25), when writing about dialogue, notes that humans operate most often within "shared, living fields of assumptions and constructed embodied meaning, and that these fields tend to be unstable, fragmented, and incoherent", but that everywhere humans are being forced to develop their capacity to think together - to develop collaborative thought and coordinated action. He goes on to say that perception of and inquiry into these fields and allowing the transformation of these fields and the patterns of individual thinking and acting that inform them can result in the discovery of whole new levels of insight affecting changes in behaviour. From this, new possibilities for co-ordinated action (vital for team work) can emerge. Isaacs (1993) notes that some of the most powerful forms of coordination may come through participation in unfolding meaning, which again might be perceived differently by different people. He refers to the importance of conversation in this regard, noting that conversation is the means by which people share and often develop what they know, and maintains that, "during a single conversation, a management team may navigate through a variety of forms of group talk, each with its own effects on the quality of the teams results" (1993, p.24).

Situating this in an organisational context, Isaacs (1993) notes that all organisations are full of a rich source of meaning. This is what produces the commonality of behaviours across any complex organisation and what gives communities the power to torment and stifle their members. That meaning is however often incoherent, full of fragmented interpretations that guide behaviour but are untested and unexplored.

Isaacs (1993) proposes dialogue as a solution to this, which involves reflecting on ways of knowing, on language and on the embodied experience of meaning, which can have powerful applications within organisations. Dialogue can be defined as, "a sustained collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions and certainties that compose everyday experience" (Isaacs, 1993, p.25). This is based on the proposition that if people can be brought into a setting where they, voluntarily, can become conscious of the processes by which they form tacit assumptions and solidify beliefs (and be rewarded by each other for doing so), then they can develop a common strength and capability for working and creating things together (Isaacs, 1993). This through suspending opinions to listen more closely to others. Dialogue aims to consider the impact one speaker has on the whole system, and unveil how patterns of collective thinking and feeling unfold - both as "conditioned, mechanistic reflexes, and potentially as fluid, dynamically creative exchanges" (p.26). Dialogue can thus produce an environment where people are consciously participating in the creation of shared meaning, and producing insights into collective challenges that can alter people's ways of thinking and acting. Perceptions about how common direction and results are produced can be surfaced to enhance collaboration essential for teamwork.

Dialogue might be an essential component of team building approaches, that unique constructions of teams might be explored at the outset of team development. This would not pretend to “expose” all the repertoires that team members might utilize, but would certainly generate thought into the possibility of members subscribing to many different ways of talking about teams for different effects. And the realization of this might facilitate later discussion amongst members when issues arise. Furthermore, by considering different ways of talking about teams might empower participants to consider literature and team building packages that are offered more critically.

Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.104) claim that perhaps the “first step in successful discourse analysis, is the suspension of belief in what one normally takes for granted, as we begin to think about how a practice is constructed and what it assumes rather than seeing it as a mere reflection of an unproblematic reality.” This practice of suspension of belief in unproblematic reality would seem to complement the idea of a “meta-conversation” about teams with view to awakening awareness, reflexivity and choice.

In summary this research has attempted to problematise the notion of a team as some sort of unitary entity. In doing so it has raised a need to acknowledge the constructive nature of language within organisations to critically reflect on what it is achieving. It is also hoped that the repertoires highlighted will generate thought into other alternative constructions of teams that can be considered perhaps using the idea of dialogue as a means to do this.

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# APPENDIX A

# SEMINAR 6: TUES. 5/5/1998
# FOCUS: TEAMS AND TEAM BUILDING

☐ Format of Seminar
9.00 – 10:30: Groups and teams in organisations
10:30 – 11:00: TEA
11:00 –12:30: Team –building

☐ *Preparation for 5/5/1998:*
Please read the allocated readings and make notes to contribute to a discussion around the following issues:

TEAMS AND GROUPS IN ORGANISATIONS

☆ What kind of development occurs for a group to become a team?

☆ What are the difficulties faced by a group?

☆ What are the characteristics of an effective group?

☆ What can be done to facilitate the effectiveness of groups?

TEAM –BUILDING

☆ Using Solomon's descriptions of team roles (shaper, innovator, monitor/evaluator), identify which role you tend to occupy within the Honours group.

☆ What are the benefits of team building as identified by the readings? Did you experience these on the week-end? Did you experience any benefits from the week-end that are not described in the readings?

☆ What is your opinion of simulations as the training methodology for team – building? Use the readings and your own experience to support your argument.

☆ Using the descriptions of Personal Growth Training in Conger's reading, did you think that the team-building weekend was concerned with personal growth training?

☆ What is the relationship between team–building and personal growth training?

# COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- ❒ To be aware of the changing context of Human Resource Management & Personnel Psychology and to understand how HR is changing in response to our changing environment.

- ❒ To understand the critical issues inherent in some of the debates taking place in this area of Industrial Psychology namely, affirmative action, worker participation , job evaluation and managing diversity.

- ❒ To explore the dynamics of critical HR processes such as strategic human resource management, training and development, team-building performance appraisals and industrial relations.

- ❒ To develop both a theoretical and practical understanding of these key areas of Personnel Psychology.

- ❒ To encourage students to reflect on the current development of their own skills in this area of Industrial Psychology.

# COURSE EVALUATION:

This course will be evaluated in two ways:

1. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT - 50%

2. GROUP PROJECT - 50%

## INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT:

DUE DATE: Monday, 25 May 1998

TOPIC:
Write a critical discussion on groups, teams and team-building.

REQUIREMENTS:

In terms of content:

- The topic provided is quite broad such that you can focus on a particular issue should you wish to.
- Your discussion should draw on your experiences of the team-building week-end and the last 2 weeks whilst you have been working with your Honours' colleagues on the group project. As such, it is a bit like a prac report.

In terms of length:

- The essay should be between 8 - 10 pages long. It must be typed.

In terms of referencing:

- Strict adherence to APA please!
- You are not expected to access an exhaustive list of books. Your ability to reflect on your group in light of theory will be more important than how many books you accessed or the scope of your literature.

# GROUP ASSIGNMENT:

DUE DATES:
DATE TO BE PRESENTED: Thurs. 21 MAY 1998
DATE TO BE SUBMITTED: Mon. 25 MAY 1998

## TASK

Your Honours group is a consultancy which has been approached by Gutenbergs' management to assist them in the setting up of a Personnel Department within their organisation. As a management team, they recognise that they do not have the relevant experience or expertise in Human Resource Management to take this necessary step within Gutenbergs.

The Management Team consists of:
Managing Director -
Financial Director -
Production Director -

The Management have given you a brief (see attached document) to indicate what kind of assistance they need and what needs to be done. This brief also includes background information on Gutenbergs.

The Management request that your proposals be presented in a board meeting to them on Thursday, 21 May 1998 from 9am till 12.30am. The meeting will take place in the Gutenbergs' board Room (Room 112 of the Psychology Department). At this meeting, you are requested to supply documentation for each Director regarding your proposals. This may take the form of a management summary. During this meeting, discussion about your proposals will take place allowing the management to provide feedback on your submissions. Based on the issues raised in this discussion, your proposals will be amended before final submission to Gutenbergs on Monday, 25 May 1998.

In addition, the management have requested that you make time to see each of them in that they have particular issues of concern that you need to be aware of.

If you require any further information about Gutenbergs, you are welcome to approach the Managing Director in this regard.

# APPENDIX B

*RHODES UNIVERSITY*
*INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS*
*TEAM-BUILDING WEEK-END*
*AGENDA*

## THURSDAY - 30/4/1998

Arrive at about 4pm.
Free time to unpack, go for walk, relax etc
Start supper at 6.00pm
Session starts at 7.30pm.

## SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome to group

Talk a little about the week-end
- what is the rationale for having this week-end?
- why are teams important?
- what the week-end will achieve.
- what the week-end won't achieve.

Get people to share their expectations of the week-end

Tonight: going to have some fun and help us to get to know each other a little better

Exercise 1: Hurricane
Put out chairs for 9 people (1 less than the no in the group)
1 person stands in the middle who calls out "When the wind blows for ... and says something that would apply to people e.g. people wearing black socks, jeans, who like fudge, who never drink coffee etc. If the statement refers to anyone sitting, they have to get up and move chairs but they must move at least 2 chairs away from their current chair. The person in the middle dives for a chair and someone else (hopefully) is left standing. The process starts again. At the end, say that each person has one hurricane that they can use during the course of the week-end when energies are starting to get low and the group needs a pick-me-up.

Exercise 2: Musical Instrument
Post pictures of musical instruments on the walls. Ask participants to choose the instrument that is most like them and to go stand near that picture. When participants are in those positions, ask them to explain why they have chosen that picture. After each person in the group has explained why, get the group to do play music but with each person getting a chance for a solo.

Exercise 3: Game of Actionary
Introduce as last exercise of the evening and that we will see where this goes. But before start, remind that 9am is starting time.
Use pictionary but do actions to cards.
Divide into two teams.

## FRIDAY 1/5/1998

9.00am: Welcome

Setting group norms - what groundrules are needed to make this week-end successful as well make future group work effective?
what do you need from the group?
what are you prepared to give the group?

Put group norms on meta-wall.

9.45am: Individual Activity: Why are you doing Honours?

Reflect on what you want out of Honours. Be as specific as you can be.
Write this on a piece of newsprint. You have 20 minutes to do this.

When you have finished, put your piece of newsprint on the wall.

10.05am: Everybody gets a chance to walk around and read what other people have written.
If people want to clarify anything or make comments, they can.

10.20am: Comments?
Going to come back to this later in the week-end.
Any comments at this point. Was this useful for people to consider what they want out of Honours?

10.30am: Introduce next exercise before tea, allow time for tea - students can think about issues

TEA TIME

Individual Activity: Attitudes towards groups (see Appendix 1)

You have 25 minutes to reflect on your attitude towards groups and group work.
Students will be given a list of questions that they need to think about. They must answer the questions in the order that they are listed.

Get each person to discuss their attitude and experiences. 10 minutes each.

From points raised, put good group behaviours on one list and bad group behaviours on another for each person. At end, can draw up a list of what the group sees as acceptable.

Discussion about:
why are we doing this exercise? belief systems?

1.15pm: LUNCH

2.15pm: Group Activity: Your role in groups

In your group, you have to draw a vehicle that represents your group and signify which part of the vehicle each member represents.
Given them 20-30 minutes to chat and draw.

Discussion:

what was the purpose of this exercise?
what issues were raised by this exercise?
what roles are there in your academic working groups?
which one do you typically occupy (or look at what came out of earlier session)?

3.30pm: TEA

4.00pm: Group Activity: Construct the octagon blindfolded

Each member of the group is blindfolded. The group is told that they will have to construct a hectagon with a piece of string provided. One person is given a piece of string.
Activity takes about 15 minutes.

Discussion:

what did people experience? get students to talk about experience, explore feelings about the exercise

Focus on group maintenance activities: how much of this was there? (See Appendix 2 for list of group maintenance activities)

How important are these activities in group work?

Do you (ask individual students) evidence these behaviours in group work?

5.00pm: END FOR THE DAY

People free to go for walk. Braai for supper. Start fire at about 6.30pm

## SATURDAY 2/5/1998

9.00am: Start. Brief recap of yesterday.
What did we learn about group behaviour and working in teams?

9.15am: Communication
Introduce: communication is a critical part of any team.

Communication balls:
Throw ball into circle, tell student to throw to someone in group, all people need to have the ball thrown at them. Start a pattern.

The essence of good communication:
Ask one student to volunteer. They have to throw 3 pieces of paper over their head (one at a time) into a box behind them at the instruction of the other group members.
Activity lasts for 10 minutes.

Discussion:
what do these exercises tell us about communication?
what can one learn from these about communication in groups?
What hinders communication in your Honours group?

9.45am: Group Activity: Trust and Support in groups

A spider mesh made out of string is constructed. Group members all have to pass through the mesh without touching it. The mesh is constructed so that group members can only really pass through the middle by being raised off the ground by the other group members.
Activity takes 15 -25 minutes.

Discussion along Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional framework:
(some ideas -please add)

| | |
|---|---|
| Objective: | what happened? who said what? what did you observe? |
| Reflective: | what was your first response to this exercise? how did other members of the group react? how did you feel when you were lifted? how did you feel when you were lifting others? |
| Interpretive: | what was this exercise about? what does this tell you about your trust levels? how would you compare this situation to what might occur in your Honours group? |
| Decisional: | what have you learnt about group work from this exercise? how will this impact on your group work in the future? what is the resolve of the group? |

11.00am: TEA

11.15am: Group Activity: Content versus Process

Students do the Zen Obelisk exercise (See Appendix 3).
Activity takes 30 minutes.

Student have to answer questions on own (see Appendix 4).

Group Discussion on issues:

Decision-making:
* how were decisions made?
- by lack of response, by authority rule, by minority, by consensus, by unanimous consent?

Communication:
* who talks to whom?
* does everyone participate or are there some who are more talkative?
* what is the quality of communication? Does everyone speak the same "language"?
* what is the quality of listening?
* are messages given and received clearly?

Conflict Resolution:
* is conflict hidden or accepted and dealt with?
* how is conflict dealt with?
* what are the quality of conflict resolution skills - negotiation, compromise?

Leadership:
* who took the leadership role? how was this decided? did the leadership rotate?
* what methods were used to influence the group (not just by "leader")?

Task Oriented Behaviours
* who is the initiator?
* who is the information processor?
* who is the summarizer?
* the evaluator?

Maintenance Oriented
* who is the encourager?
* the harmonizer?
* compromiser?
* gate-keeper?

Process:
* How did the group deal with:
floundering
dominating or reluctant participants
digressions or tangents
getting stuck
rushing to get job done
competition
ignoring or ridiculing others

1.00pm: LUNCH
(Time to nap, walk, relax, horse-riding)

3.00pm: ICU UCI ICUCI
Introduce: Johari's window (see Appendix 5)
Materials for exercise in Appendix 6

This exercise involves each person thinking about and writing down:
- their own strengths and weaknesses
- how they believe others see them
- the strengths and areas of development of each of the other group members including staff

All this info is then compared. This takes about 1 hour.

Each person then shares this in the group. 10 minutes per person.

6.00pm: SUPPER

## SUNDAY 3/5/1998:

9.00am: Start. Brief recap of yesterday.
What did we learn about group behaviour and working in teams?

9.10am: Tying it all together
Attitudes towards groups - belief systems
Personal commitment of each person to Honours and group
Commitment to certain behaviours recognised as critical.

10.30am: WALK

12.00am: LUNCH

Pack-up
Leave by 1.30pm

# APPENDIX 2: GROUP MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Give out to students after discussion.

These activities focus on the relationships among members of a group. They help the group maintain itself in order that work on its task can proceed without it becoming immobilized by inappropriate social behaviour. Maintainance activities help to bring individuals effectively into the emotional sphere of the group's life and help the group to work together and to maintain itself so that members will contribute ideas and be willing to continue toward progress on the group's task.

The group maintenance roles are summarized into eight different types of behaviour. They are encouraging, expressing feelings, harmonizing, compromising, facilitating communication, setting standards, testing agreement and following.

## 1. Encouraging :

Is friendly, warm, and responsive to others; accepts others and their contributions; is giving to others.

## 2. Expressing feelings :

Expresses feelings present in the group; calls attention of the group to its reactions to ideas and suggestions; expresses own feelings or reactions in the group.

## 3. Harmonizing :

Attempts to reconcile disagreements; reduces tension through joking, relaxing comments; gets people to explore their differences.

## 4. Compromising :

When own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offers compromise, yields status, admits error; disciplines self to maintain group cohesion.

## 5. Facilitating communication :

Attempts to keep communication channels open; facilitates participation of others; suggests procedures for discussing group problems.

## 6. Setting standards or goals :

Expresses standards or goals for group to achieve; helps the group become aware of direction and progress.

## 7. Testing agreement :

Asks for opinions to find out if the group is nearing a decision; sends up a trial balloon to see how near agreement the group is; rewards progress.

## 8. Following :

Goes along with movement of the group; accepts ideas of others; listens to and serves as an interested audience for others in the group.

APPENDIX 3: Zen Obelisk Exercise

## GROUP INSTRUCTION SHEET

In the ancient city of Atlantis a solid, rectangular obelisk called a Zin was built in honour of the Goddess Tina. The structure took less than two weeks to complete and your task as a group is to determine on which day of the week it was completed. Each person is to take one envelope. In this envelope, there is specific information on pieces of paper. You may not show these pieces of paper to other members of your team but you may share the information with them.

*The Zin obelisk*

## ANSWER AND RATIONALE SHEET

The answer is Neptiminus.

*Rationale*

1. The dimensions of the Zin mean that it contains 1500 $m^3$ of material.
2. Blocks are 300 $mm^3$ each, therefore 50 000 blocks are required.
3. There are 7 working Schlibs in a day.
4. Each worker lays 150 blocks per Schlib, therefore each worker lays 1050 blocks per day.
5. There are 8 workers per day meaning that 8400 blocks are laid per working day.
6. The 50 000th block is therefore laid on the sixth working day.
7. As work does not take place on Daydoldrum the sixth working day is Neptiminus.

The basic measurement of time in Atlantis is a day.

An Atlantian day is divided into Schlibs and Ponks.

The length of the Zin is 50 feet.

The height of the Zin is 100 feet.

The depth of the Zin is 10 feet.

The Zin is built of stone blocks.

Each block is 1 cubic foot.

Day 1 in the Atlantian week is Aquaday.

Day 2 in the Atlantian week is Neptiminus.

Day 3 in the Atlantian week is Sharkday.

Day 4 in the Atlantian week is Mermaidday.

Day 5 in the Atlantian week is Daydoldrum.

There are 5 days in an Atlantian week.

The working day has 9 Schlibs.

Each worker takes rest periods during the working day, totalling 16 Ponks.

There are 8 Ponks in a Schlib.

Workers each lay 150 blocks per Schlib.

At any time when work is taking place, there is a gang of 9 people on site.

One member of each gang has religious duties and does not lay blocks.

No work takes place on Daydoldrum.

What is a Cubitt?

A Cubitt is a cube, all sides which measure 1 Megalithic Yard.

One metre equals a Megalithic Yard.

Does work take place on Sunday?

What is a Zin?

Which way up does the Zin stand?

The Zin is made of green blocks.

Green has special religious significance on Mermaidday.

Each gang includes two women.

Work starts on the first day of the Atlantian week.

Only one gang is working on the construction of the Zin.

## APPENDIX 4: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS IN GROUPS

Any action that helps a group complete its task is a TASK LEADERSHIP ACTION. Any action that helps a group maintain good working relationships among members is a MAINTENANCE LEADERSHIP ACTION. Looking back on the Zen Obelisk exercise look at your typical leadership actions and the group's patterns of leadership.

Helping you to reflect on your and the group's leadership behaviours, answer the questions below by indicating the frequency of each behaviour:

5 - always behave that way
4 - frequently behave that way
3 - occasionally behave that way
2 - seldom behave that way
1 - never behave that way

*When I am a member of this group.....*

..... 1. I offer facts, give my opinions, ideas, feelings and information to help the group discussion.

..... 2. In a friendly way, I help the other members take part in the discussion. I am open to their ideas, I let them know I value their contribution to the group's discussion.

..... 3. I ask for facts, information, opinions, ideas and feelings in order to reduce tension in the group and increase the fun we have working together.

..... 4. I tell jokes and suggest fun ways of doing the work in order to reduce tension in the group and increase the fun we have working together.

..... 5. I give direction to the group be planning how to go on with the group work and by calling attention to the tasks to be done.

..... 6. I help communication among group members by using good communication skills. I make sure that all group members understand what other members say.

..... 7. I pull together related ideas or suggestions made by group members and restate and summarise the major points discussed by the group.

..... 8. I ask members how they are feeling about the way the group is working. I share my own feelings about the group work and the way members are interacting.

..... 9. I pull together group work by putting different ideas and suggestions in the proper order. I also make sure the actions of different members are co-ordinated.

..... 10. I observe the way the group is working. I use my observations to help discuss how the group can work together better.

..... 11. I give the group energy. I encourage group members to work hard to achieve our goals.

..... 12. I listen to and serve as an interested audience for other group members. I restate their ideas to make sure I understand them.

Now insert the scores from the questionnaire and then total each list.

*TASK ACTION*

..... 1. Information and Opinion giver

..... 3. Information and Opinion seeker

..... 5. Direction Giver

..... 7. Summarizer

..... 9. Co-ordinator

..... 11. Energizer

..... TOTAL FOR TASK ACTIONS

Highest possible score for each category = 30

*MAINTENANCE ACTIONS*

..... 2. Encourager of participation

..... 4. Tension Reliever

..... 6. Communication Helper

..... 8. Evaluator of emotional climate

..... 10. Process Observer

..... 12. Active Listener

..... TOTAL FOR MAINTENANCE ACTIONS

Lowest possible score for each category = 0

## APPENDIX 5: Johari's Window

JOHARI'S WINDOW

(First used by Joe Luft and Harry Ingram in 1955)

| | Known to self | Unknown to self |
|---|---|---|
| Known to others | FREE | BLIND (Feedback) |
| Unknown to others | HIDDEN (Disclosure) | UNKNOWN (Revelation) |

The four panels represent the whole self.

FREE - CONSCIOUS - My attitudes, my behaviour, my values. Available to others. In it I am free / know myself and am known.

HIDDEN - Cannot be know to others unless I choose to disclose it. I retain it because of fear. This area is enlarged through self-disclosure.

BLIND - Known about me by others but unknown to me. Others can in a supportive, responsible way, help me to get to know it, if I am able to hear it.

UNKNOWN - I am more rich (hopefully) and complex than both I and others know. Sometimes it is felt, read, dreamt or something happens and my unconscious is revealed to me and I know what I have not known before. As the BLIND and HIDDEN panels are opened up and become enlarged, one begins to open up the totally UNKNOWN area. This experience is a revelation and is sometimes referred to as the "Aha" experience.

APPENDIX 6: ICI UCI ICU

This exercise can be divided into three parts:

*PART ONE: Self-Reflection and Consideration of others*
*This part requires that you work on your own considering the following issues:*

1. ICI - how do I see MYSELF
   Here you are asked to reflect on how you see yourself, what is unique about you, what do you like about yourself, see as your strengths and weaknesses.

2. UCI - how do I believe that YOU see ME
   Here you are asked to consider how you believe other people see you: what aspects of who you are do they focus on, what do you think they like, admire, respect about you, what aspects of you do you believe they find difficult to deal with.

3. ICU - how do I see YOU
   Here you are asked to give written feedback to each person in the group (9 other people) of what you regard as their strengths (the things that you like, admire, respect about them) and things that you find difficult to deal with in them or areas that you feel they could develop further (not necessarily something that you find difficult to deal with).

*PART TWO: Analysis*
*You will now have received all the information that others in the group have written about you. Look at this information and look for common themes or contradictions. How does the information received from others compare to what you said about yourself (ICI) and what you thought others would say (UCI) about you. Are there any points that need clarifying? Note these as you can ask what was meant.*

*You will be asked to talk about what has been written, so decide on what you are prepared to share with the group.*

*PART THREE: Feedback*
*Each person in the group will have an opportunity to share what they found out in this exercise.*

# ICI

**On this page, reflect on how you see yourself, warts and all.**

# UCI

**On this page, reflect on how you believe others see you, warts and all.**

ICU

Dear

I admire, respect and like the following aspects about you (try and list at least 3):

... .....

.....

.....

I believe that the following is an area of development that you could focus on:

.....

Regards,

.....
(your name)

ICU

Dear

I admire, respect and like the following aspects about you (try and list at least 3):

.....

.....

.....

I believe that the following is an area of development that you could focus on:

.....

Regards,

.....
(your name)

# APPENDIX C

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE

- How was your team building weekend?
- What were your expectations of it? Why?
- How was the weekend in relation to these expectations?
- What were your best and worst experiences of the weekend?
- What did you learn on the weekend, if anything?
- Would you say that the team building weekend was effective? Why / why not?
- Could you talk a little about your experience as part of the Honours group
- What would you call your group? When you describe this collection of people to others what do you call them?
- Who is your team? Are there alliances in this group?
- Are the facilitators part of the team? Why / why not? What is their role?
- How would you describe your team and how it works?
- What does a team mean to you?
- What are your expectations, hopes and fears associated with teams?
- What does it mean to build a team?
- What is team building?
- What was your role in the weekend? And now?
- Did you enjoy the team building weekend?
- What if anything, was personally challenging about the weekend?
- Was the weekend necessary? Why / why not?
- What, if anything did the team building weekend achieve (short and long-term)?
- What was the aim of the weekend? Was it agreed upon and appropriate?
- Please describe your team – is it a real team? Why / why not?
- What is important to your group?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your team?
- How did team building aid / hinder your group?
- Please describe the group dynamics
- Do you see eye to eye on issues? How do you deal with this / achieve this?
- How do you work together? Please describe the project / group work that you have engaged in. How were tasks approached? Personal frustrations – what did / did not work
- What do you work together for?
- What are the lecturers' expectations of your performance as a group?
- What really happened with Alice and her leaving?

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TWO

- You mentioned that there are differences between the lecturers and yourselves. How so? How is their position different from yours, and how do you know this?
- You mentioned that Nick seemed to transcend the barriers between yourselves and the lecturers, how so? Why?
- Who actually is in charge of your team?
- Is an us / them divide an inevitable aspect in a team?
- How did students exert their influence (power), if at all?
- How did you feel about self-disclosure in the team and on the weekend?
- What, if any difference is there between general and industrial psychology students?
- How close are you, if at all to other members of your team? Why? How? Explore presence and importance of friendship versus task orientation.
- How could lecturers have become part of the in-group?
- What about the gender mix? Please tell me a little more how you thought that worked
- And the racial mix / dynamics?
- With respect to Alice leaving, was there any impact on your group? If so, please describe it.
- How do you think that Alice leaving should have been handled?
- Is honesty a good or bad thing in a team? Why?
- In other groups you have been a part of, did you ever take on a leadership role. Why? Why not? And as part of this group?
- Have you changed since the team building? If so, how?
- Do people see you differently now? Do you? How so?
- Do people in the group see you how you are?
- (What is your role/s?) Has it changed?
- How has your group measured up to your expectations? Why / why not?
- If you could change anything about the team building, what would you change?
- How, if at all has your experience as part of this group changed your perceptions of teams?

# APPENDIX D

## EXAMPLE OF CODING PROCEDURES

The following material is an extract from a transcript of an interview with one of the student participants. It reflects the detailed phases of coding undertaken in the research. The bolded codes in square brackets were originally marked on the text and later indexed as part of a process of open coding. Similar and different codes (in the context of their use) were grouped together as part of axial coding, and printed copies of the relevant parts of transcripts / relevant accounts placed together to identify interpretive repertoires, a process of selective coding. Below this extract examples of what would comprise open, axial and selective coding are listed. Of course, this extract may not have been used for all of the interpretive repertoires that it forms a part of, but perhaps used as linguistic evidence for one or two interpretive repertoires that are most apparent.

Q: "Why do you think all of those interpersonal clashes happened?"

A: "I think it came from peoples' personal feelings, their characteristics, how they see themselves. **[identity]** And that impacts on how they are in a group. Somebody felt insecure and unhappy and needed praise for example, **[interpersonal – emotions]** that she wasn't getting that from other people. **[support, needs met by group]** So it made her feel taken for granted and unhappy. **[frustration – group not reflecting back desired image]** And she would walk out of the room and no-one would understand. **[interpersonal – conflict]** Or she would direct her, I don't know, her – it wasn't really anger because I don't think she was. She was just upset or hurt towards other people and I think that's an example. There was somebody else who felt they weren't academically the same as everybody else, **[academic ranking]** **[need to be the same]** felt insecure **[team exposing weakness]** and then I saw that this person would belittle other people or possibly shirk their own work **[need to produce equally]** because they wouldn't feel up to scratch and they needed a lot of help. So it was all the way we perceive ourselves ... **[self perception / identity]**"

OPEN CODING: [identity], [support, needs met by group], [self perception / identity] =
AXIAL CODING: Identity / Support =
SELECTIVE CODING – INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRE: PSYCHOLOGISED TEAM

OPEN CODING: [interpersonal – emotions], [interpersonal – conflict], [team exposing weakness], [need to be the same] =
AXIAL CODING = relationships =
SELECTIVE CODING – INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRE: TEAM AS A FAMILY

OPEN CODING:[academic ranking] =
AXIAL CODING: academics, standards =
SELECTIVE CODING – INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRE: EDUCATIONAL TEAM

OPEN CODING: [need to produce equally] =
AXIAL CODING: production =
SELECTIVE CODING – INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRE: TEAM AS MACHINE