Professional practice stories of facilitating organisational change

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Certificate of Authorship

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## Table of contents

Certificate of Authorship ............................................................................ ii
Ethics Approval ......................................................................................... vi
Abstract ...................................................................................................... vii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................. x

Chapter 1: Introduction ............................................................................. 1
1.1 Overview and objectives ...................................................................... 1
1.2 The context of the research ............................................................... 1
1.3 Purpose and rationale ......................................................................... 3
1.4 Research aim and questions ............................................................... 4
1.5 Research approach: three articulated projects ................................... 4
1.6 Structure of the exegesis ..................................................................... 7
1.7 Contributions of this study .................................................................. 10
  1.7.1 Using autoethnography, performing and practising the professional body ................................................................. 10
  1.7.2 Living narrative analysis ................................................................ 10
  1.7.3 New ways of using storytelling to evaluate practice ................. 11
  1.7.4 Facilitating organisational change from an internal and political perspective ................................................................. 12
1.8 Summary .............................................................................................. 13

Chapter 2. Literature review ................................................................... 14
2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 14
2.2 The role of the facilitator ..................................................................... 14
2.3 History of group facilitation and organisational change ................... 19
2.4 The facilitator’s role in organisational change .................................... 23
  2.4.1 Political and self-awareness .......................................................... 24
  2.4.2 Learning facilitator role – action learning .................................... 25
  2.4.3 Critical facilitator role .................................................................. 27
2.5 Conclusion ............................................................................................. 29

Chapter 3. A qualitative research design .................................................. 31
3.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 31
3.2 Research aim and questions ................................................................ 31
3.3 Research design .................................................................................... 31
  3.3.1 Social constructionism and constructivist .................................... 34
  3.3.2 Ethnography and autoethnography: methodology ..................... 35
  3.3.3 Praxis-orientation .......................................................................... 37
3.4 Project 1: Practitioner stories: defining practice .................................. 38
  3.4.1 Rationale for the project ................................................................. 38
  3.4.2 Data collection .............................................................................. 38
  3.4.3 Analysis of data ............................................................................. 44
3.5 Project 2: Evaluation of a cultural change program – Practice stories: evaluating practice ............................................................. 50
  3.5.1 Rationale for the project and for using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique ......................................................... 50
  3.5.2 Data collection using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique ................................................................. 52
Figure 1. Flowchart of process for collecting stories and selecting for the most significant change (MSC) story…………………………..53
Ethics Approval

Three separate ethics approvals were obtained:

Protocol number 112/2011/12
Protocol number 112/2011/14
Protocol number 2011/031
Abstract

This exegesis has provided a critical analysis of the role and effectiveness of an internal organisational change facilitator or practitioner. The aim was to identify the ways of knowing in competent practice. To achieve this, the study addressed the following questions (1) How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice? (2) How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective? The study is ethnographic and autoethnographic as it is a study of the culture and practice of my profession. The methodology was based on narrative and employed a number of diverse narrative analyses. The literature review covered the history of group facilitation and the evolving and increasingly important role of the facilitator and of facilitation in organisational change; and then focussed on the political awareness of the facilitator and the learning facilitator and critical facilitator roles. These roles were a focus of this study as they provided a means of exploring the role of the facilitator in praxis.

Three separate projects were undertaken to satisfy the requirements of the Doctor of Communication. Each project was nested in and informed the other studies with the focus on the role and effectiveness of the internal practitioner. In the first study I interviewed four practitioners and myself, who have all worked in medium to large public sector organisations for over three years. The aim of this project was to understand how practitioners define their practice and know that they are effective. In this project I used a living narrative analysis which was a collection of a number of methods, including narrative styles, thematic antenarrative analysis and collective autoethnographic storytelling. This produced three practice stories one of which was an autoethnographic story of my practice while undertaking the professional doctorate. The main findings were that internal practitioners (change facilitators) (1) are not neutral because of their organisational knowledge and ability to contextualise which often makes them more effective than external consultants; (2) become institutionalised, often do not see things, are impacted by the politics and are often not recognised by senior management which all impacts their effectiveness; (3) will tell professional
and personal stories to demonstrate their effectiveness more often than relating formal metrics. Further research on facilitator neutrality, which is a professional competency of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), is required and could be conducted as collaborative action research by Certified Professional Facilitators (IAF).

The second project was undertaken in my organisation and involved the evaluation of a cultural change program using the Most Significant Change (MSC) Storytelling Technique, a participatory evaluation and monitoring approach. The aim of this project was to investigate how practitioners evaluate their practice. In this project I provide an extended critique of the MSC which has been under-researched in the organisational context. I provide advice to practitioners on how the technique may be modified to foster organisational learning and reflection, participant and senior management ownership, and overcome ethical dilemmas. To further evaluate the program / practice I use story deconstruction analysis to deconstruct and restory one of the MSC stories. My main finding was that a modified version of the MSC when used with deconstruction forms a complementary duo with the potential to provide depth to cultural diagnosis and evaluation of practice. Further research is required on more formal measures of evaluation that enhance storytelling approaches.

In the third project I developed a workshop for practitioners to train project and change teams in their organisations in the critical facilitator approach so that they may be able to ‘pass the baton’ on to create sustainable organisational change and organisational competence in facilitation. This workshop was developed through co-operative inquiry over three international facilitator conferences. I critique the critical facilitator approach from reflections with co-facilitators and participant facilitators and an exploration of the literature on power, empowerment and power relations. To strengthen the approach I assume a performative-I disposition whereby data is presented as poetic narrative. The Shapeshifter is an alternative writing form that offers new ways to present and discuss research as shared experience in academic and professional forms. Finally, I recommend that
practitioners practice the critical facilitator role and performativity as a way of knowing self, and others, of bringing the body into professional practice or ‘becoming in practice’. While there is an expectation that this will assist them to sustain practice and create sustainable organisational change, further exploration and practice is required with these two approaches.
Acknowledgements

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I would also like to acknowledge my former supervisors Professor Lyn Gorman, who retired, Professor Jane Mills, who left the university and provided me with the greatest kick start on academic writing, and Professor John Carroll, who sadly passed away just after he passed the baton on to Melanie. John’s notations on my proposal, which he scratched at my colloquium, provided clear insight into the direction of my project and are still pinned to the notice board in front of me.

While I was undertaking the professional doctorate I was supported by a number of senior managers who I will not name due to the autoethnographic nature of this work. You know who you are and I thank you very much for trusting me to undertake research within our university. I only hope that this has enhanced the important cultural change work that I continue to practice.

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Finally, I wish to thank my adult children, Alana and Kieran Bryant, in particular, Kieran who lived with me through most of this journey including graduating high school. Sorry for not helping you more with your studies. I thank you both for your belief in me and for giving me such honest feedback.

This exegesis is dedicated to my dad, Asquith (Paddy) Mulligan who passed away at almost 93 years in the first year of my study. Dad, you always believed in my abilities and I got the strength to go on from you. You never gave up.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview and objectives
The principal aim of this research was to contribute to the understanding of facilitator professional practice as a means of creating sustainable organisational change. To achieve this, the research projects studied practitioners who were considered to have expertise as internal change facilitators in their organisations, together with the stories of participants in an organisational change program. In particular, the research is focused on how facilitator practitioners develop themselves, maintain or sustain their practice and how they know that they are effective. It is important to note that this is a study of facilitating organisational change rather than a study of change management, and as such, the study focuses on facilitator competencies of the International Association of Facilitators as compared with competencies such as those associated with the Change Management Institute.

1.2 The context of the research
Emerging global trends and patterns, which include increasing business, social and environmental complexity, are creating huge challenges for corporate, public and community organisations. These challenges are increasingly being addressed by organisations using collaborative, change and transformational practices that recognise the importance of people in the change process (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Synnot & Fitzgerald, 2007) by using participatory processes (Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk, & Berger, 2007; Spencer, 1989; Wong, 2005). Group facilitation, the practice by which a facilitator assists groups to discuss their diverse perspectives and to guide them to reach a shared purpose, is central to this organisational practice (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Raelin, 2006; Stewart, 2006; Wardale, 2008).

Hogan (2002, p. 55) citing various other authors postulates that the “new profession of facilitation is rapidly taking its unique place alongside those of the consultant, coach, and trainer in organizational and community development”. The role of the ‘change facilitator’ was described by M. Higgs
and Rowland (2000, p. 124) as someone who has the “ability to help others, through effective facilitation, to gain insight into the human dynamics of change and to develop the confidence to achieve the change goals”. Stewart (2006, p. 420) interpreted this role “as someone responsible for helping others, through effective facilitation, to achieve change goals” while Conner (2013, p. 5) goes further to describe the role as one that requires “character” and “presence” – “the foundational elements of who we are”. This is recognition of a deeper role beyond just what we do. Hogan (2002, p. 50) provides further clarity to the role describing facilitators as “catalysts for change, but not necessarily the instigators of change”. Change is also recognised as an important learning process in itself (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Raelin, 2006). As such, recent research on facilitation in organisational settings has extended the role of the facilitator beyond competency-based approaches (Stewart, 2006; Thomas, 2008a). Two roles have been identified which are underpinned by this orientation to learning - the learning facilitator (MacKenzie, 2011; Raelin, 2006; Wagenaar, Hulsebosch, & Schuman, 2008) and the critical facilitator (Gregory & Romm, 2001; Thomas, 2008a). These two roles are not mutually exclusive.

For the past thirteen years I have been practicing as an organisational change practitioner in a regional Australian university. In this role I am engaged to facilitate small and large-scale change projects and programs, which include a strong element of professional and leadership development. For the ten years before this I facilitated and trained natural resource management groups in the government and community sectors. In 2007 I became accredited as a Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF) with the International Association of Facilitators. One of the core competencies of the CPF is to ‘build and maintain professional knowledge’ (https://www.iaf-world.org/site/professional/core-competencies). The evolving nature of the facilitation profession has caused me to question the theories underpinning my practice, importantly the processes, beliefs and values that I have assumed to work. I was therefore personally and professionally motivated to undertake this professional doctorate to inform and improve my own practice and professional knowledge while developing theories and strategies that may support other
facilitators and change practitioners.

The questions that guided me to undertake this discovery of the dimensions of my professional practice are:

What do we know about professional practice knowledge, and how do we respond to what we know? (J. Higgs & Andresen, 2001)
What is the kind of knowing in which competent practitioners engage? (Schön, 1983)

1.3 Purpose and rationale
In the context of enhancing and understanding professional practice, this study explores the theory underpinning the practice of using group facilitation to increase the effectiveness of initiatives to create sustainable organisational change. While facilitation is used in organisational and community change interventions, such as visioning, strategic planning, change management workshops, meetings etcetera, there is a lack of clarity or critical analysis in the facilitation or organisational change literature about:

- The value facilitation contributes to improving or achieving the outcomes of a change process or program, specifically in terms of cultural change; and
- The professional practice knowledge of an effective, organisational change facilitator.

Further, the political nature of the role has been identified by a number of authors (Gregory & Romm, 2001; Kirk & Broussine, 2000; Raelin, 2006; Thomas, 2008a). Although these authors offer the critical facilitator approach as a means of providing a forum for shifting power relations, this approach requires further investigation as a means of sustaining organisational change.

While this study seeks to address these gaps in knowledge I am also seeking to understand what kinds of knowing are embedded in competent practice. At the nexus of this study and of the Doctor of Communication is this quest for understanding how practitioners integrate practice wisdom and practice artistry (J. Higgs & Titchen, 2001) and knowing-in-action (Schön, 1995a) which are embodied as knowing-in-practice or habitus (Bourdieu &
Wacquant, 1992), with theory or propositional knowledge. This is the work of the reflective practitioner which is the cornerstone of my practice and of this study.

1.4 Research aim and questions
This study addresses the following research questions:

- How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice? This question seeks to provide further definition about the profession.
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective? This question seeks to provide approaches to evaluation of practice.
- What are the implications of these findings for the theory and practice of group facilitation in organisational change?

The aim of this research is to explore the role and effectiveness of the internal organisational change facilitator or practitioner from an ethnographic and autoethnographic perspective. Using ethnography I was seeking to understand the other using the core questions:

> What is the culture of this group of practitioners?
> How does culture explain their perspectives and behaviours? (Patton, 2015, p. 100)

However, being part of that culture and increasingly interested in my reactions to that culture and to the competency-based professionalisation of our practice, I have also used autoethnography as a way of disrupting that discourse (Hall, 2015). The core question is:

> How does my own experience of my culture offer insights about this culture, situation, event and way of life?

In other words, through my story, interwoven with the stories of other practitioners, I am aiming to more deeply engage my peers and other researchers to change and inform practice.

1.5 Research approach: three articulated projects
To satisfy the requirements of the Doctor of Communication, which is a professional doctorate, three separate, articulated studies were conducted
which form this exegesis. This is an ethnographic and part autoethnographic, constructivist study which predominantly uses storytelling with a number of qualitative analytical approaches. Interviews with expert practitioners were used to develop an understanding of facilitator practice and re-presented as practitioner stories. These qualitative ‘findings’ were enhanced by qualitative analysis of stories used to evaluate a change program, and finally by focusing on the reflective practitioner and the embodiment of practice as a means of sustaining practice. A framework for the research process that identifies the epistemological and theoretical paradigms and perspectives and the research methodology and methods is provided below in Table 1.

Table 1. Research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of research design</th>
<th>My approach¹</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Social constructionism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Constructivism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Ethnography and autoethnography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods of data collection: three projects were conducted</td>
<td>Project 1: Defining practice - semi-structured interviews of practitioners and self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project 2: Evaluating practice - evaluation of a change program using participant stories; panel discussion and feedback; participant observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project 3: Embodying practice - co-operative inquiry with co-facilitators and facilitator participants at a conference workshop together with data from first two projects and the literature review</td>
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Project 1. Practitioner stories: defining practice

In this project I sought to interview up to six practitioners, including myself, who had been facilitating change projects or programs in their organisations for at least three years. I was seeking to understand how practitioners, who had been successfully practicing for some time, defined themselves and the facilitation profession, and how they knew that they were effective. The focus

¹ These terms are explicated in the research methodology (Chapter 3)
of the research project was on personal and professional practice stories, and on re-storying and creating living stories of our shared practice.

**Project 2. Evaluation of a cultural change program – Practice stories: evaluating practice**

When I undertook this research study I was responsible for managing a university-wide cultural change project in a regional Australian University. A component of this project was the implementation of a six-month action learning cultural change program. This program was conducted over four years, 2010 to 2013, with a new cohort each year. The research study was conducted with the 2010 and 2011 cohort. The change program was evaluated and revised at the end of each course using a number of approaches, including the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (MSC) (Davies & Dart, 2005). The focus of this research project was on the MSC Technique as a participatory evaluation and storytelling approach for practitioners to use to evaluate their practice.

**Project 3. The reflective practitioner: embodying practice**

In this final project I wished to investigate the critical facilitator role as a means of sustaining organisational change. This approach was identified in the literature as an effective stance for practitioners to provide a *forum to shift power relations* (Gregory & Romm, 2001). I do this through designing a training workshop, underpinned by the critical facilitator approach, that can be used by change facilitators to *pass the baton* on to the project or change teams in their organisation (Looney, Shaw, & Crabtree, 2011). In other words, building facilitation capability in staff to sustain organisational change after the facilitator leaves. I also review this approach and the three projects to develop a performative text that performs my practice. The focus of this research project is on the reflective practitioner and on the embodiment of practice as a means of sustaining practice so that as practitioners we may create sustainable organisational change.
1.6 Structure of the exegesis

This exegesis is organised into seven chapters. After this introduction chapter there is a literature review followed by a research methodology chapter. These chapters set the context for the analysis and findings of the three research projects which are presented in three separate chapters. The final chapter is a conclusion which returns to address the project aim and objectives in the context of implications for practice and research.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter has been to orient the reader to the key areas of focus of the project and the researcher/practitioner, set the context for the research, and identifies the flow of the exegesis. The objectives of the research, the research approach for the three articulated projects, and the structure of the exegesis are presented. Finally, I outline the contributions that this study seeks to make to the academy and to practice.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to this exegesis. The literature review examines the role of the group facilitator, the recent history of facilitation and its significance in organisational change management. The structure of the literature review is from the broader, well-charted role of the facilitator and the history of facilitation in organisational change, to the increasingly investigated area about the role of the facilitator in organisational change. I identify this role as an organisational change facilitator and focus on the two roles of the learning facilitator and critical facilitator and the political awareness and neutral position of the facilitator. As such the role and competencies of the change facilitator not of a change manager are reviewed.

Chapter 3. A qualitative research design

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research design and methods used to investigate my professional practice, the practice of an internal organisational change facilitator. The chapter begins with a set of research questions and an overview of the research design. This is followed by the
theoretical perspectives and methodology used to address the research questions. My orientation is social constructionism, ethnographic and autoethnographic. The methods and analyses for each study are then identified separately under each of the three projects. They are however not mutually exclusive, converging and springing into life through a *living narrative analysis* and writing in the form of stories and performative text. Finally, I provide a conclusion on the key insights on the research process.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 I present the findings of each of the three projects. The discussion and inquiry in each chapter is aimed at providing practical advice and insights, but not definitive techniques, to other practitioners so that they may improve their practice, and addresses the following research questions:

- How do practitioners define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do practitioners know they are effective?

Chapter 4. Practitioner stories: defining practice
In this chapter I present the findings of Project 1 in which I interviewed five Australian practitioners (internal organisational change facilitators) including myself. I interviewed myself because this provided me with insights into my practice so that I could ethically connect with respondents and so that I could refine the methodology. The focus of this project is on investigating the practice lives and the day-to-day practice experiences of the practitioners. Profiles and narrative styles, of four practitioners, are presented along with the findings of a living narrative analysis of our story conversations. This analysis is presented in autobiographical form, firstly as two practitioner stories that illustrate some of the tensions, traces and key dimensions of our practice lives; and finally as a collective autoethnography. The aim here is to further examine these in the moment interactions between people in organisational change. This collage text is not a substitute for a written experience, but adds layers to my own sharing of practice stories.
Chapter 5. Practice stories: evaluating practice
In this chapter I present the findings of Project 2 in which I evaluate a cultural change program using a storytelling technique. My aim in this chapter is to further explore the effectiveness of practitioners through the use of storytelling using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (MSC) as one of several measures to evaluate a cultural change program that was conducted in my organisation, a regional university in Australia. I reflect on the usefulness and limitations of the MSC as an evaluation technique and further explore this through the use of story deconstruction analysis that also exposes the cultural context of the organisation. I provide strategies and advice to practitioners for evaluating practice so that they may enhance their effectiveness.

Chapter 6. The reflective practitioner: embodying practice
In this chapter I present the findings of the final project, Project 3. My aim in this chapter is to firstly investigate and expand the critical facilitator role as a potent approach for organisational change facilitators to provide a forum for shifting power relations and to pass the baton on to their project and change teams. Secondly, I investigate the body in professional practice by producing a co-performed text that enacts organisational change reality. In other words this final project encourages practitioners to engage with the work through critical conversation about our practice.

Chapter 7. Conclusion and implications for practice
In this final chapter I reflect back on the research aim and questions and critique the appropriateness of the research methodology in answering these questions. I then provide a summary of the main findings that enhance understanding of the practice of facilitating organisational change, specifically from an internal practitioner perspective, as well as creating sustainable organisational change. I then identify the possible limitations of this study. Finally I discuss the implications for further research.
1.7  Contributions of this study
This section outlines the original contributions that the study seeks to make in terms of understanding the practice of facilitating organisational change, specifically the use of autoethnography and performative autoethnography as a methodology for facilitators to embody and transform and as a methodology for research into professional practice; the use of living narrative analysis as a methodology for research into professional practice; the application of storytelling techniques as a cultural diagnostic and evaluation tool for practitioners; and finally from an internal and political perspective through the use of stories and performance.

1.7.1 Using autoethnography, performing and practising the professional body
This study is significant from a methodological perspective as well as from a professional practice perspective. Firstly, from a methodological perspective I sought to use autoethnography to understand how I and other practitioners’ experience and respond to what we know about our culture, while also aiming to engage the reader as a critical site for discourse. Christine Hogan also used this approach in a doctoral study of her facilitation practice (Hogan, 2000b). However, I have extended this approach through interviewing other practitioners and interweaving their stories with mine into what I call a collective autoethnography. In the final project I further extend the approach to produce a performative text, a poem about my reactions during my practice life, which is performative autoethnography (Spry, 2001). In doing this I am practising the professional body as a methodology for research and for practice. I offer the practice of writing and performing performative text as a means of bringing our bodies into professional practice and as a catalyst for transforming or changing practice. In other words, performance enhances our ability to change, to connect the personal with the political, to move beyond the use of autoethnography as writing which might not contribute on its own.

1.7.2 Living narrative analysis
Narrative underpinned this study. As discussed above and in the next point, I produced stories as a way of analysing our practice. The living narrative
analysis that I used in my first project produced a long autoethnography and shorter practice stories. I named this living narrative analysis because there is no endpoint or generalisable theory that emanates from the analysis. Rather the practitioner stories in this study are living and continue to evolve depending on their context and the learning and development of the practitioner / the storyteller. They are mostly stitched up stories or a collage of our collective insights and experiences that are drawn from the traces and spaces between the stories that we told, the antenarrative (Boje, 2011). They are living stories that are used to provide insight into our practice lives and into our ways of knowing that are embedded in competent practice. This is a unique and significant contribution to the methodology for researching professional practice.

1.7.3 New ways of using storytelling to evaluate practice
The third contribution was also concerned with storytelling from a methodological and practice perspective. I sought to use the Most Significant Change (MSC) Storytelling Technique to evaluate a change program in my organisation (Davies & Dart, 2005). This is a well-known technique used across a number of government organisations in Australia. Whilst Dart (2000) researched this approach in depth with dairy farmers in Australia, Willetts and Crawford (2007, p. 378) provide an in depth critique of the method in the context of two development projects in Laos identifying that while the technique appears to be simple that this “hides a deeper complexity”. In the context of organisational change, this area remains under-researched and in this study I extend the critique of Willetts and Crawford (2007). The contribution that I have made is through extending the analysis to deconstruct the MSC stories using a story/textual deconstruction analysis with the aim of re-storying the cultural diagnosis of the organisation (Boje, 2001). Thus, story and/or textual deconstruction analysis can be used by the practitioner as a cultural diagnostic tool to evaluate practice and to change strategies. Story deconstruction is also an effective methodological approach to critique and evaluate organisational storytelling practices, such as the MSC Technique. In other words, using the two approaches together – MSC and deconstruction analysis as a complementary duo offers a potent cultural diagnostic approach.
for the practitioner. In doing so I have identified that while the MSC is an effective evaluation approach, there are a number of limitations of which the practitioner needs to be aware and consider in planning their evaluation. I offer a modified model of the MSC Technique together with advice to practitioners that could improve its implementation.

1.7.4 Facilitating organisational change from an internal and political perspective

Recent research on group facilitation in organisational change has identified that the practice is far from neutral. Put another way, organisations are political, facilitation is political, and facilitators are political (Kirk & Broussine, 2000). In this study I sought to understand the perspective of the internal practitioner as a neutral and/or political practice. Similar to my findings in the literature review I found for most of my respondent practitioners facilitation is not a neutral practice and that, more specifically the internal politics affect us. I further extend the research into the critical facilitator role as an approach for facilitating and sustaining organisational change in the context of power relations. As well as discussing the neutral aspect of our practice with my peer respondents I also explored the political nature of facilitation again through story – autoethnography, living story analysis, story deconstruction analysis and performative text, as discussed above; and through the development of a workshop to train internal facilitators, project and change teams in the critical facilitator approach. The stories and poem that are performed in this exegesis show new insights into the political nature of the role, and in the context of this study, involve post performance feedback, specifically for internal practitioners, while the workshop provides a basis for sustaining change practice. Rather than just disrupting the dominant narrative of facilitator neutrality and challenging the competencies set down for our professional practice by the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), this provides another lens through which practitioners can identify the power relations in their organisations and make the choice to remain neutral, as did one of my respondents, or to choose to provide a forum to shift power relations (Gregory & Romm, 2001). This offers practitioners moments of rediscovery about our bodies, power and
politics and how writing and performing can sustain practice. Sustaining practice facilitates effective change practice.

1.8 Summary
In this chapter I have provided an overview of my research orientation, topic and context, aims and questions, together with the theoretical and methodological perspectives. I then provide an overview of each chapter and the structure of the exegesis which is determined by the conditions for the professional doctorate, the Doctor of Communication. I conclude with the significant contributions that this study will make to the methodology of researching professional practice and to practice. This is a study that seeks to understand the ways of knowing that are embedded in the competent practice of an internal organisational change facilitator or practitioner so that this knowing-in-practice may enhance and transform the practice of others through becoming-in-practice.

In the next chapter I undertake a literature review of group facilitation in the context of organisational change. This is oriented to exploring the two roles of the learning and critical facilitator together with the neutral stance of the facilitator which is espoused as a core competency by the profession.
Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction
This literature review examines the role of the group facilitator, the recent history of facilitation and its significance in organisational change management. The structure of the literature review is from the broader, well-charted role of the facilitator and the history of facilitation in organisational change, to the increasingly investigated area about the facilitator’s role in organisational change. I identify this role as an organisational change facilitator or practitioner and then concentrate on the two roles of the learning facilitator and critical facilitator which are a key focus of this research study. This review specifically focusses on the core competencies of a change facilitator not a change manager. As such I have reviewed the competencies of the International Association of Facilitators. A review of the competencies of the Change Management Institute and Association of Change Management Professionals is beyond the scope of this study.

2.2 The role of the facilitator
Group facilitation is the practice by which a facilitator uses processes to assist a group to discuss their diverse perspectives and to guide them to reach a shared purpose or goal (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Raelin, 2006; Stewart, 2006; Wardale, 2008). The word facilitate means to make things easy and so a facilitator is “a person who makes a group’s work easier by structuring and guiding the participation of group members” (Rees, 2005, p. 2).

Much has been written about the role of the group facilitator and despite the burgeoning literature “the fascinating aspect of facilitation is that there are few prescribed rules or ways of doing things” (Hogan, 2002, p. 52). The variety of definitions and metaphors indicate that the role is a complex one. From a detailed review of the literature Sheehan (2000) suggests that the role expectations of a facilitator are also diverse. Hunter (2007, pp. 27-30), in the second edition of her seminal book The art of facilitation, provides an extensive list of quotes on the facilitator role from facilitation books dating
from 1967 by a wide variety of well-known facilitators and educators, including Carl Rogers, Norman Maier, Sam Kaner, David Straus and Roger Schwarz. An analysis of these authors’ descriptions identifies the following common, but not restrictive, facilitator traits and positions: an acceptance by and accountability to the group; a commitment to collaborative and participatory processes, collective wisdom and consensus decision-making with outcomes or goals owned by the group; attention to individual emotions, and an awareness of group dynamics; and being non-judgmental, substantively neutral or impartial, which fits with process guidance and not control.

Group acceptance of the facilitator is the key to the effectiveness of facilitation and to the group’s experience and learning. Ball (2004); Heron (1999); Hogan (2002); and Raelin (2006) all identify experiential learning as an important outcome and focus of facilitation. Heron (1999, p. 1) in *The complete facilitator’s handbook* states “a facilitator is a person who has the role of empowering participants to learn in an experiential group”. Hogan (2002, p. 50) refutes this position believing that facilitators only “aim to provide some of the conditions for empowerment to occur by encouraging cooperative and autonomous modes in the workshop (Heron, 1999) and using legitimized authority and charismatic effect”. This is premised on the fundamental right of individuals to a “free will and right of ‘choice’” on how to act, which she takes up in another book (Hogan, 2000a, p. 50). *The skilled facilitator* approach (Schwarz, 2002) to facilitator development is similarly based on the core values of an individual’s right to free and informed choice, and internal commitment to the choice together with valid information and compassion. Schwarz names this the mutual learning model which he bases on Argyris & Schön’s (1978) theories-in-use that allows facilitators and the group, to identify their values and assumptions so they may work in a mutual learning environment for more effective outcomes.

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Facilitator Competencies provide further clarity on the role expectations of the profession, particularly in relation to the use of participatory process. The IAF is a professional
association responsible for certifying professional facilitators and collaborating on a set of facilitator competencies, values and ethics (Hunter, 2007). These competencies were developed in 2003 through collaborations between practitioners worldwide and include *Guide group to consensus and desired outcomes* and *Create and sustain a participatory environment* (https://www.iaf-world.org/site/professional/core-competencies). A study of organisational facilitators in Western Australia found that facilitators placed more emphasis than managers “on aligning group members’ thinking, enabling them to think in collaborative ways” (Jay, 2007, p. 167). Wardale (2008, p. 51) cites various well-known authors in the facilitation literature who identify the facilitator skills required to be competent in developing a participatory environment which include “effective communication, creating a climate of safety and trust, managing and mediating conflict, articulating clear goals and objectives, creating clear focus questions, establishing and maintaining group norms, clear procedures and instructions, keeping the group moving and recognizing tangents and redirecting the task”. The importance of facilitation and participatory processes is discussed further in the next section in the context of organisational change.

Facilitators are guided by an understanding of group dynamics. Central to the facilitator’s ability to work with the group dynamic is an attention to individual emotions. Jenkins and Jenkins (2006) recognise this trait as the facilitator being in tune with the cultural differences of the group and with the differences in the group and individuals’ comfort with their emotions being made public. de Lichtenberg and London (2008, p. 41) developed a basic systems model of group dynamics to assist facilitators to design appropriate “interventions which include tools, tactics, and processes that help a group accomplish its tasks and expand the group’s capacity”. These authors present a detailed review of the literature on the elements of group dynamics, which consist of the characteristics of the members, leader and the group, the task and the organisation, together with the group processes used and the feedback loop. McDermott (2002) also proposes five perspectives for understanding group work: as a power base, as a system, a container of individuals, and a container of properties and a site of meaning construction. All the above
authors’ perspectives indicate the complexity of working with group dynamics. An understanding of this complexity, importantly the power relations of organisational groups is at the core of the critical facilitator role discussed later in this chapter and a key focus of this research project.

The neutral position of the facilitator, that is, being responsible for guiding the process and not the content, is one of the most contested roles in the literature. Over 40 years ago Edgar Schein (Schein, 1969) defined the facilitator’s role in organisational development as a process consultant. Process is “how” a task is to be carried out whereas content is the “what, where, when and who” will carry out the task (Plowman, 2009, p. 1). This set the direction for facilitator professional competencies, skills development and practice to be focused on the process and not the content. Accordingly, many authors hold the view that a facilitator must be substantively neutral and not get into the content (Hunter, 2007; Pierce, Cheesebrow, & Braun, 2000; Schwarz, 2002; Wong, 2005). One of the IAF Facilitator Competencies’ Trust group’s potential and model neutrality, originated from this view (https://www.iaf-world.org/site/professional/core-competencies).

This neutral position is contested by various authors, including Stewart (2006, pp. 422,423), who recognises that there are situations where the facilitator would not allow the group to make a decision that they “knew was wrong, based on previous experience with the group, organisation or a similar situation with another group” and further as “the group’s process is the content, and therefore, the facilitator is neither neutral nor impartial to the content”. Hogan (2002, p. 51) supports this view, proposing that it is “desirable for the facilitator to have some knowledge of the content under discussion and an understanding of the work, internal language and key concepts of the group members”. Two recent studies that evaluated the critical contingency factors and effectiveness of group facilitation in Australian organisations also support this view (Jay, 2007; Wardale, 2008). Jay’s (2007, p. 154) research “suggests that such an understanding... [of facilitator neutrality]... appears to be either naïve, unrealistically optimistic, or both, when compared to the practicalities associated with operationalising neutral
facilitation”. Similarly, Wardale (2008, p. 53) found that many organisational facilitators moved into “a confronting, training or coaching role” and that when this happens “they move out of a traditional neutral and non-evaluating facilitative role”.

Schwarz (2002) defines different facilitator roles, which he identifies as having varying responsibilities for content and process as: facilitator, facilitative consultant, facilitative coach, facilitative trainer and facilitative leader. This sorting further reveals a blurring of the boundaries between being *substantively neutral*, using process only, and content expertise. Schwarz makes a clear distinction between the facilitator and the leader while Hogan (2002) is alarmed that many leaders and managers take on the facilitator role without any training and knowledge of the role, which she argues is potentially dangerous for the group and its outcomes. Schwarz’s definitions make a distinction between the roles of facilitator and leader which, is another area of difference of opinion in the literature of particular importance to facilitation in organisations. In reviewing the facilitator’s role Spencer (1989, p. 13) identifies the facilitator as a leader as “people want to be led, not managed”. Hunter, Taylor, and Bailey (1994) also consider that the facilitator is a leadership role, while Stanfield (2000b) in *The courage to lead* and Jenkins and Jenkins (2006) in *The 9 disciplines of a facilitator* blend the definitions between the facilitator and the facilitative leader with both books written to guide both facilitators and facilitative leaders’ practice. Jenkins and Jenkins (2006, p. 1) “use the term *facilitative leader* to include both facilitators who find themselves in leadership roles and leaders who are more facilitative than directive”.

The difference between a facilitator, a facilitative leader and facilitative leadership is an important one in the context of facilitating organisational change and transformation. Wilson, Harnish, and Wright (2003, p. 7), make a clear distinction between the shift from facilitator to facilitative leadership - with the “first wave”, the facilitator, being an assigned, separate role to manage the group process; the “second wave” moving beyond this separate facilitator role to one where individuals in the group take on the role and learn
to be facilitative; to the current “transformational wave” beginning to “sweep the workplace” of facilitative leadership which is distributed throughout an organisation and “combines being facilitative with being strategic”. This aligns with the evolution of the role of the facilitator from process consultant to learning facilitator where facilitation is becomes a shared organisational competence. This perspective is discussed in the section on the facilitator’s role in organisational change and leads into the next section on the history of facilitation and the increasing professionalisation of the practice.

2.3 History of group facilitation and organisational change
The increasing importance and professionalisation of facilitation across disciplines, community, social and corporate sectors is reflected in the abundance of literature including, ‘how to’ books, training programs, professional and informal international, national and regional networks, online forums, conferences, and workshops, including to name a few, Heron (1999); Hogan (2000a); Hogan (2002); Hogan (2003); Hunter (2007); the International Association of Facilitators publications and journals (https://www.iaf-world.org/site/publications/find/iaf/covers) and the Institute of Cultural Affairs publications (http://www.icab.be/recommended/). Hogan (2002, p. 9) provides a comprehensive account of the reasons for the rise of facilitation in the second half of the twentieth century and cites the increase in importance of participatory processes in response to increasing globalisation, community development, mediation practices, facilitative teaching practices and emerging collaborative, action research approaches that began with Kurt Lewin’s experiments using focus groups in the 1930s (Lewin, 1947).

While the changing business environment precipitated an increase in the importance of facilitation in management and organisational change, which is the focus of this literature review, concurrent movements towards facilitation were also occurring in the fields of education, psychology and community development. Facilitation can be viewed as emerging from, and as a main confluence between these disciplines. A timeline developed by MGR Consulting (2008) charts the history of the events that shaped
facilitation in a number of arenas including the *business and organisational influence*. It is in this arena that Kurt Lewin (1947) was at the frontier, studying and inventing the term group dynamics and the use of groups in participatory research, while Carl Rogers’ (Rogers, 1967) work in the *people and psychology* arena can be directly attributed to the rise of the role of the facilitator and the facilitation profession.

The process consultant, discussed above, was one of the earliest descriptions of a facilitator in the organisational context (Schein, 1969). Also during the 1960s the role of the learning facilitator who ran learning and encounter groups was emerging (Rogers, 1970) and evolved into the meeting facilitator in the 1980’s (Kaner et al., 2007). Similarly Maier (1967) describes the group leader as an impartial leader who led self-help groups. Participative management and group dialoguing processes were introduced during this time, specifically quality circles by Joseph Juran, Phillip Crosby and Kaoru Ishikawa in 1961, effective decision-making by Chris Argyris in 1966, and the dialog process by David Bohm in 1970 (MGR Consulting, 2008). Stewart (2006, p. 410) reported that these earlier “quality facilitators… failed” due to a lack of facilitator training and skills and understanding by management of the practice of facilitation.

It is apparent from MGR Consulting’s (2008) timeline and the historical accounts of others, importantly Hogan (2002); Hunter (2007); Stewart (2006) that the organisational processes that influenced the facilitation profession exponentially increased during the 1960’s to 1980’s. These reflected and aligned with an increase in the use of small groups and teams in organisational decision making (Katzenbach & Smith, 1998; Tuckman, 1965) together with the emergence of consensus-based, participatory cultures that required facilitation as a key competence of managers (Hogan, 2002) and organisational consultants (Schein, 1988). Hunter (2007) traces consensus decision making as a central process of the Quakers and as an important role in the women’s movement since the 1960s. Jenkins and Jenkins (2006) conceive this cultural change as a paradigm shift between the duality paradigm, which encompassed a control and command, and mechanistic view
of organisations to a paradigm of self-organising, participatory teams and, since the 1990s, to networked organisations and organisations as communities, concurrently with the move to communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Jenkins & Jenkins believe that we are in transition between these two paradigms, which has implications for facilitators and leaders. This can also be viewed as a move from a unilateral control model to a mutual learning model with facilitators being *learning facilitators* who facilitate learning in their groups while learning themselves (MacKenzie, 2011; Schwarz, 2002).

In the late 1960s through the 1980s large corporations were introducing workshops guided by facilitators to manage systems development, project and strategic planning (Spencer, 1989; Stewart, 2006). During this time facilitation was emerging “as a central process in many industrial organizations undergoing transition and transformation” (Berry, 1993, p. 23) and in response to the increasing enthusiasm for participatory processes. According to Pierce et al. (2000, p. 25) “The shift to participative governance in the workplace is both inevitable and necessary” due to the complexity of issues that cannot be solved by autocratic processes that involve only a few people. The value of participation to people and organisations is also supported by Spencer (1989, p. xvi):

> Participation – getting employees involved in the company’s planning and problem-solving tasks – can animate and inspire a project team, a department, even an entire corporation.

At the same time as the above developments the (then North American-based) Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) metamorphosed from the Ecumenical Institute (founded in 1954) along with the evolution of its Technology of Participation (ToP™) participatory facilitation methods (Spencer, 1989; Stanfield, 2000b). Many organisations around the world have used the ToP strategic planning and leadership methods to create major change, align business processes, develop their leaders, consult their staff and implement new programs. These organisations include large corporations such as McDonald’s, Coca Cola, IBM, 3M, manufacturing companies, hospitals, insurance companies, religious groups, government, private, and not-for-
profit organisations. This development of participatory facilitation methods coincided with the embedding of strategic planning processes throughout organisations in the 1980s (MGR Consulting, 2008) and so their timing was perfect. The ICA was also an important founding member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) in 1994. As previously discussed the IAF is a professional association responsible for certifying professional facilitators and collaborating on a set of facilitator competencies, values and ethics.

The increasing use of facilitation in strategic and project planning in organisations in the 1980s was accompanied by its increased used in organisation and learning development which are important approaches to change management (Hunter, 2007). The “new profession of facilitation is (was) rapidly taking its unique place alongside those of the consultant, coach, and trainer in organizational and community development” (Hogan, 2002, p. 55). Peter Senge’s seminal book, The fifth discipline, about systems thinking and the “learning organisation” precipitated a significant shift in focus to organisations “where people are continually learning how to learn together” (Senge, 2006, p. 3). This concept of the learning organisation and the five disciplines that are the basis for the learning organisation: vision, teamwork, personal development, mental models, and systems thinking, are important approaches used by competent facilitators (Hunter, 2007). Certainly, facilitation creates “effective collaborative thinking” which “is the ‘engine room’ for the modern ‘knowledge organisation’, and the ‘learning organisation’” (Ringer, 2007, p. 131).

Since the 1990s the emphasis on facilitation in organisation and learning development has expanded from small group processes and workshops to large group interventions, including Future Search, the World Café, the ICA Strategic Planning Process and Open Space Technology (Bunker & Alban, 2006; Owen, 2008) also referred to as change methods, whole system change, large group methods, change processes and enterprise-wide change (Holman & Devane, 1999). These have arisen in a world of increasing complexity and emerging global trends and patterns that are creating huge challenges for organisations.
While online facilitation is not the focus of this research I acknowledge its increasing use. In the last decade online facilitation has become increasingly important with a variety of media being used including, electronic meeting support systems, forums, email discussion groups, chat rooms, blogs, videoconferencing and free software like Skype, webinars and other emerging and new forms of communication technology (Thorpe, 2007). The online facilitator role comes with specific challenges mostly related to the lack of visual and audio cues and technical literacy (Jenkins & Jenkins, 2006; Thorpe, 2007). Thorpe provides a thorough review of online facilitation including its benefits and drawbacks.

2.4 The facilitator’s role in organisational change

The discussion in this chapter so far illustrates that the role of the facilitator and of group facilitation in organisational change is evolving, diverse and seldom neutral. Ghais (2005) and Stewart (2006) tell stories of their experiences facilitating in organisations which illustrate “how different facilitation can be from one situation to the next” (Ghais, 2005, p. 31). The role of the change facilitator was described by M. Higgs and Rowland (2000) and Conner (2013). Stewart (2006, p. 420) interpreted this role “as someone responsible for helping others, through effective facilitation, to achieve change goals” while Conner (2013, p. 5) goes further to describe the role as one that requires character and presence – “the foundational elements of who we are”. This is recognition of a deeper role beyond just what we do. Hogan (2002, p. 50) describes facilitators as “catalysts for change, but not necessarily the instigators of change”. Several authors recognise change as an important learning process in itself (Ball, 2004; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Raelin, 2006; Sheehan, 2000).

There are two roles identified from recent research on facilitation practice in organisational settings: the learning facilitator and the critical facilitator (Raelin, 2006). These roles are not mutually exclusive. Both require a political awareness of self and of the organisation within which they are working together with an ability to facilitate the learning of their
organisational groups and themselves and to pass these facilitative skills onto their project or change teams thus enhancing organisational competence. As the aim of my research is to explore how practitioners develop themselves and know they are effective, an investigation of the political dimensions of the role is also important. These roles and concepts are discussed in the following sections.

2.4.1 Political and self-awareness

Change practitioners require an awareness of the political nature of the organisation and the role that they are playing in the organisational dynamic, change process and politics (Jay, 2007; Kirk & Broussine, 2000; Raelin, 2006; Sheehan, 2000) together with an awareness of how they behave when subjected to change processes so that they may be able to assist others in coping with change (Sheehan, 2000). The power relations in organisations, and the political awareness, values and ethics of a facilitator are therefore important aspects that require consideration for facilitation in organisational contexts (Gregory & Romm, 2001; Hunter, 2007; Kirk & Broussine, 2000; Thomas, 2008a). Such awareness by facilitators, together with the skills to bring this awareness into their group work, will “enable all parties to be more reflexive and transparent about the role and function of facilitation as an organizational intervention” (Jay, 2007, p. 181). It will also assist change practitioners to be more effective. It is this awareness of self within the context of organisational practice that intrigued me the most and caused me to question my values and assumptions which is the practice at the core of the critical and learning facilitator roles.

Kirk and Broussine (2000, pp. 13,20) offer three propositions: “that organizations are political, facilitation is political and facilitators are political” and propose a framework that shows four positions about the politics of facilitation with the fourth position “partial awareness – open” offering “facilitators the best opportunity to operate effectively in their role”. They also concur with others cited previously (Hogan, 2002; Jay, 2007; Stewart, 2006; Wardale, 2008) that facilitation is never neutral and that
“protestations of neutrality show either naïveté or cleverness” (Kirk & Broussine, 2000, p. 21).

Organisational dynamics, culture and structure all play a role in the effectiveness of facilitation. Hunter (2003, p. 70) is concerned with the conflicting interests between “the organization, the owners or shareholders, the manager, the group and the facilitator, and the use of consensus decision-making in a hierarchical organization”, in particular that the use of these processes have been used to “manufacture consent and to manipulate people to agree to management goals”. This has particular significance to this research study as I am a practitioner in a university which is hierarchical by its very nature. Jay (2007, p. ii), who interviewed managers and facilitators in organisations in Western Australia, has similar concerns, finding that managers often used group facilitation when they “perceive that it is likely to be an appropriate intervention which will enable the achievement of certain desired organizational goals”. A parallel finding of Jay’s was that external facilitators often perceived the goal of their facilitation was to achieve the client’s or organisation’s intended outcomes whereas internal facilitators were more concerned with the group owning its outcomes. Wardale (2008) found similar discrepancies between the effectiveness and role of internal and external facilitators and proposed that effective facilitation requires involvement in the implementation phase and an awareness of the organisational culture. This is supported by Hackman’s (1990) model of group effectiveness, which illustrates the importance of the facilitator taking into account the group structure, and organisational context within which the culture is implicit. I argue that internal facilitators would be well-placed to have this ability and awareness and focus on this in more detail in the following section and in the research.

2.4.2 Learning facilitator role – action learning
Research conducted on the learning facilitator role in the Queensland (Australia) public service identified this role to be important in organisational change (Sheehan, 2000). The learning facilitator transferred facilitative competence to team members thus improving the change process through
improving the capability of team members to facilitate and sustain change (Sheehan, 2000). Ringer (2007, p. 131) supports this devolution of learning and responsibility suggesting that “the responsibility for building and maintaining a thinking space in the team needs to be shared by members of the team and not left to the formal leader or facilitator”. Similarly, Looney et al. (2011) recommended that facilitators need to build facilitative competence in their change and project teams and ‘pass the baton’ on. This facilitation takes groups and projects beyond task accomplishment to organisational learning or emancipatory learning (Raelin, 2006) where adults “make sense of, and give meaning to, their learning experience” (Sheehan, 2000, p. 10). In other words, learning facilitators are different from facilitators of learning as they “are additionally engaged in a reflexive activity, which entails facilitating the learning of others, whilst themselves learning to change and develop their own practice” (MacKenzie, 2011, p. 81). Investigating this role is therefore at the crux of this research study and of the professional doctorate.

Schwarz’s (2002) distinction between basic facilitation where the facilitator is responsible for the process, and developmental facilitation where the facilitator transfers these skills so that in the long term, group members would become capable of taking on the facilitation role, also supports the learning facilitator role. Similarly Raelin (2006, pp. 2,3) perceives facilitation as a “means of bringing out learning for both self and others within team settings” within the context of “praxis”. Stewart (2006) indicates that while this is a worthy aspiration, it is her belief that it would not work in many organisations particularly those undergoing significant changes where the composition and longevity of groups may often change.

The literature reveals, however, that facilitated communities of practice (CoPs) (Wenger, 1998) and action learning teams (Ball, 2004; Raelin, 2006) are emerging as important means of learning and decision making in organisations. Facilitators of CoPs are viewed as learning facilitator-practitioners by Wagenaar et al. (2008) who do not consider this a neutral facilitator role, as the facilitator is part of the community and integrally involved with the content. Similarly, Ball (2004) and Raelin’s (2006) research
found the role of the facilitator in organisational action learning groups was not a neutral activity. Ball (2004, p. 263) proposes it to be a “contextualising” role whereby the facilitator locates “the project within the broader framework of the organization and the” [discipline] “system”. She also hypothesised that, in terms of their content and organisational knowledge, the internal facilitator was better placed to assist the group in the action learning process and to resolve the problem. This is supported by the research findings of Jay (2007) and Wardale (2008) as discussed in the previous section, and by Hogan (2002) who compared internal and external facilitators and proposed one benefit of being internal (of only two benefits compared with eight for external facilitators) was their organisational knowledge. As I am an internal practitioner investigating the role of the internal facilitator is therefore an important component of this research.

2.4.3 Critical facilitator role

Thomas (2008a) developed a framework for facilitator education and development that comprises four dimensions each nested in each other. The most highly evolved dimension is critical facilitation which he based on the approaches and philosophies of others, including Giddens’ (1984) levels of consciousness – importantly the highest level of discursive consciousness whereby one is aware and responsible for what one says; Ghais’ (2005) Extreme facilitator approach which provides guidance to facilitators to assist dysfunctional and extremely difficult groups to reach consensus; and Kirk & Broussine’s (2000) facilitator political awareness framework which has as its premise an underlying ability of partial awareness and openness to the politics of the organisation, the group and self. From their research and experience facilitating cross-organisational groups Gregory and Romm (2001) and Raelin (2006) also extend the role of the organisational facilitator to encompass critical facilitation. Gregory and Romm (2001, p. 464) use a “pragmatised version” of Habermas’ validity checking\(^2\) of the theories-in-use

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\(^2\) Validity checking is central to Habermas’ theory of communicative action in which all communication is open to being tested with the understanding that each speaker’s real needs may be identified and that consensus can be reached that considers everyone’s needs, and that everyone is heard and is allowed to question the ideas and justification of others without fear of intimidation or being coerced. (Murphy & Fleming, 2010, pp. 7-8)
of the facilitator and participants, together with reflection on practice and emancipatory discourse. They offer this approach so that facilitators may engage in the dialogue of the group to “build a forum for open exchange and mutual learning” (Raelin, p. 15) and “a forum for shifting power relations” (Gregory & Romm, p. 457). This emancipatory level of discourse as distinct from practical discourse allows participants to not only question each other’s actions but to also question and reframe the entire system or organisational practice.

Gregory and Romm (2001) suggest that the value of critical facilitation over a neutral facilitator stance is that participants benefit from the facilitator’s challenging input, which creates a space to consider bad news and different positions of the facilitator and participants. They do not concur with Habermas’ (1984) view that the goal of the discourse should be to reach consensus (see previous footnote), proposing that forgoing this requirement frees up participants to contribute openly without being held accountable to reaching consensus. This view may require a critical reappraisal of the purpose of achieving “consensual organizational change” (Gregory & Romm, 2001, p. 455) which is the espoused purpose of facilitation (Hunter, 2007).

Raelin (2006) identified the critical facilitator role as one of “action learning that embraces the critical praxis orientation” which he refers to as action science. Action science, also referred to as action research and double-loop learning, calls for intentional questioning of differing perspectives, values and beliefs to expose the disparity between practitioners theories-in-use and espoused values (Argyris & Schön, 1978). This requires reflective discourse and critical self-reflection by the facilitator and participants that probes to a deeper level, bringing to the surface and questioning underlying values and assumptions, to create long-term behavioural change. This practice also requires transparency so that participants do not feel manipulated and become process aware (Hogan, 2002) so that they are able to take on the facilitator role and/or be able to challenge others underlying assumptions and values. This is also the work of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1995b).
A review of the literature on the elements of the critical facilitator approach and of organisational power and power relations is undertaken further in Chapter 6 in the context of the findings and analysis of Project 3. This is interwoven into the findings and analysis to form advice to practitioners.

2.5 Conclusion
In this chapter I have introduced the role of the facilitator from a number of perspectives, importantly the role of the change facilitator or practitioner which is the focus of this research. There is a burgeoning literature on the evolving and dynamic nature of facilitation and of the facilitator role. Arising from a number of different arenas and being used across diverse areas including education; corporations and businesses – organisational change management; psychology; and community development; it is a complex role with diverse and often conflicting expectations. There is also often blurring of the boundaries between the roles of facilitator, facilitative coach, facilitative leader and facilitative trainer with the emergence of facilitative leadership as a core competency required of organisations undergoing change and transformation. In tandem with this emergence or third wave is a transition from a paradigm of control and command to self-organising, participatory teams, networked organisations and communities of practice. This is a move from facilitating from a position of unilateral control to mutual learning and change with the facilitator. At the core of this is the intent for sustaining participatory and collaborative environments and organisational practice.

Much has been written about the competencies and knowledge of the facilitator role with a set of professional competencies, values and ethics defined by the International Association of Facilitators over a decade ago. Implicit in these competencies is an expectation of process guidance not control with the facilitator required to be neutral or impartial. Recent research into the role, specifically in the context of practitioners facilitating organisational change, has indicated a move away from the process consultant who practices neutrality, to a learning facilitator or critical facilitator role. Certainly, the neutral position is one of the most hotly
contested roles in the recent literature. In these latter roles open exchange and mutual learning are fostered and the facilitator’s role is to build a *forum for shifting power relations*. Recent research has also identified differences between the effectiveness of the external and internal change practitioner. Integral to this change practice is political awareness of the organisation dynamics, of facilitation and of the facilitator together with an awareness and understanding of self in practice. These roles and attributes, as a means of sustaining organisational change and practice, are the focus of this research.

In summary, in this chapter I have demonstrated that the role of the change practitioner or facilitator, the focus of this research, is evolving, diverse and seldom neutral. In the next chapter I present the research design and methodology used to investigate the practice of an internal organisational change facilitator or practitioner. To satisfy the requirements of the Doctor of Communication I present three different projects that are underpinned by storytelling, performativity, ethnography and autoethnography.
Chapter 3. A qualitative research design

3.1 Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to describe the research design and methods used to investigate my research questions about the practice of an internal organisational change facilitator. To satisfy the requirements of the Doctor of Communication, three projects were undertaken and are dealt with separately. The first project was a study of five practitioners, including myself. The second project was a case study of a participatory evaluation of a cultural change program in my organisation. In the final project I developed a practitioner workshop through co-operative inquiry with other practitioners and undertook a study of my experiences while undertaking the three research projects. The chapter begins with the research questions and an overview of the research design followed by the overall theoretical and methodological approaches that were used. The research methods and analysis for each project are then dealt with separately. Finally, I provide a conclusion on the key insights on the research process.

3.2 Research aim and questions
This study seeks to address the following questions:
- How do organisational change facilitators (referred to as practitioners) define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?
- What are the implications of these findings for the theory and practice of group facilitation in organisational change?

3.3 Research design
In this exegesis I seek to understand how facilitator practitioners - including myself - view how our practice is constructed, and how we reflect on and perceive the effectiveness of our practice. Therefore, I chose a qualitative research design as it provided me with the opportunity “to be creative and critical in participating in research and engage…..with research participants in the exploration of lived phenomena” (J. Higgs, Titchen, Horsfall, &
Armstrong, 2007, p. ix). Qualitative research also allowed multiple constructed realities to occur which suited my ontological and epistemological orientation as a constructivist.

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry … They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a, p. 8)

My ontological and epistemological orientation were underpinned by ethnographic and autoethnographic methodological approaches. In other words I was concerned with identifying how practitioners both individually and collectively socially constructed the reality of our cultural practice, which differed between contexts and was forever evolving. The framework for this research process and orientation is outlined in Table 2.

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<tr>
<th>Element of research design</th>
<th>My approach</th>
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<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Social constructionism</td>
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| “(What kind of being is the human being? What is the nature of reality?)” | • Reality is constructed both individually and socially  
• What is the hold our culture has on us: the way we see and feel things, our view on the world? |
| Epistemology                | Constructivist |
| “(What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?)” | • What is the meaning that is co-created?  
• How does this illuminate the life and culture of our practice? |
| Methodology: strategies of inquiry | Ethnography and autoethnography: |
| “(How do we know the world, or gain knowledge of it?)” | • Seeks to understand the organisational change facilitator, which includes an element of autoethnography  
• How do people make sense of their everyday activities so as to behave in socially acceptable ways?  
• How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event, and/or way of life? (Patton, 2015, p. 101) |

3 Denzin and Lincoln (2011c, p. 12)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of research design</th>
<th>My approach</th>
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| Methods of data collection | **Project 1**: Semi-structured interviews of other practitioners and self  
**Project 2**: Case study using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (Davies & Dart, 2005) – participants’ stories, panel discussion and feedback, participant observation  
**Project 3**: Co-operative inquiry with co-facilitators and facilitator participants at three conference workshops together with data from first two projects and the literature review |
| Methods of data analysis: data analysis was emergent with each project nested in the one before | Reflective journaling and ‘creative analytical writing’ throughout the study (Adams & Ellis, 2012; Ellis, 2004; Richardson, 2000)  
**Project 1**: Living narrative analysis (Boje, 2001; Grbich, 2013; Riessman, 2008) and autoethnography as a method of analysis and writing (Adams & Ellis, 2012; Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2004; Hogan, 2000b; Richardson, 1997, 2000)  
- The construction of narrative profiles and identification of narrative styles from each participant’s data (Beech, 2000; Boje, 2001)  
- Thematic narrative analysis and constant comparison, looking for *antenarrative* (Boje, 2001; Grbich, 2013)  
- The construction and re-presentation of stories and sequences to represent main themes and trace stories (Boje, 2001)  
- The construction of an *autoethnographic* story  
**Project 2**: Story deconstruction analysis (Boje, 2001)  
**Project 3**: Feedback from self (critical reflection); co-operative inquiry with participants and co-facilitators (Reason & Bradbury, 2006); emergent findings from the first two projects and literature review using *performative autoethnography* and a *performative-I disposition* (Spry, 2011a) to produce:  
- An autoethnographic performative text /poem |
3.3.1 Social constructionism and constructivist

The ontological and epistemological positions I am taking to address the research questions are social constructionism and constructivist, that is, meaning is co-constructed both individually and socially, not discovered, through engagement with multiple realities in our world and there is no objective truth. Patton (2015, pp. 121-127) provides a critique of the differences, debates and similarities between social constructionism and constructivism. A social constructionist ontological position is concerned with the knowledge that we create about reality which is contextually embedded and varies depending on our worldview, such that “two people can live in the same empirical world” (p. 122) and that world may be totally different for each person. Acknowledging the more recent research and work of David Boje (Boje, 2014; Boje & Henderson, 2014; Boje, 2015) in which he argues for an ontology of storytelling, I have used storytelling from a constructionist perspective as a lens for constructing and analysing my/our way of being-in-the-world, that is an ontological approach as well as the epistemic (way-of-knowing). Beech, MacPhail, & Coupland (2009, p.344) who also used a constructionist approach and storytelling to research organisational change stories, agree with Cunliffe (2002) that researchers “exercise a degree of reflexivity in which we question how we have written and edited the stories of others for our purposes”. The aim of the qualitative inquiry from a constructionist perspective is therefore to “capture diverse understandings and multiple realities” and to understand that these will change in different relationships. In other words there is no one truth or explanation about our culture. Further, a constructivist epistemological perspective “means we are shaped by our lived experiences, and these will always come out in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 104). Using this approach as the research proceeded assumes that we, the researcher and participants, co-created our culture and experiences of facilitating organisational change. This linked directly back to the research questions and enabled me to investigate how practitioners, including myself, experienced their practice and how we created meaning about our culture from these experiences. Three separate projects were undertaken and while they may
appear to come from different theoretical positions, they are all underpinned by a social constructionism approach that guided the choice of methods which will be explained under each project. Social constructionism is an accepted approach to communications based research, as it is for studying organisational change using storytelling (Badham, Garrety, Morrigan, Zanko, & Dawson, 2003; Bryant & Higgins, 2010; Beech, McPhail, & Coupland, 2009).

Through understanding/reconstruction of meaning of lived experience “constructivism connects action with praxis and builds on antifoundational arguments, while encouraging experimental and multivoiced texts” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b, p. 92). The research questions asked practitioners how they defined their practice and viewed their effectiveness from their perspective, thus I was seeking to honour each person’s unique experience while also identifying how we constructed our culture.

3.3.2 Ethnography and autoethnography: methodology

This is an ethnographic study that seeks to explore the practice, my practice, of an internal organisational change facilitator. “Ethnography as an enterprise consists of the examination, reflection, and shaping of human experience” (Tedlock, 2011, p. 334). However,

Ethnography is more than a record of human experience. The ethnographer writes tiny moral tales, tales that do more than celebrate cultural difference or bring another culture alive. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011c, p. xiii)

Using ethnography I was seeking to understand the other by asking myself the questions: What is the culture of this group of practitioners? and How does culture explain their perspectives and behaviours? (Patton, 2015, p. 100)

In this research I go beyond the traditional view of the ethnographer as a detached observer studying one’s own people (Van Maanen, 1988). More recently there has been a turning of the traditional ethnographic gaze inward on the self (autoethnography) while maintaining an outward gaze of
ethnography, looking at the larger context in which experiences occur (Ellis, 2004).

Autoethnography is research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical to the cultural, social, and political through the study of culture or phenomenon of which one is part, integrated with relational and personal experiences. (Ellingson, 2011, p. 599)

Using autoethnography is therefore a way of me connecting my story with the story of other practitioners so that we may reflexively engage with each other to change and inform our practice. As an insider to the culture and increasingly interested in my reactions to that culture and to the competency-based professionalisation of our practice, for example the International Association of Facilitators facilitator competencies, I also use autoethnography as a way of disrupting that discourse on professionalisation (Hall, 2015). In using autoethnography I am asking myself the question: How does my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event, and/or way of life? (Patton, 2015, p. 101) In other words, autoethnography provides a deeper insight into how we define and construct our culture and profession.

To further enhance this approach and critically engage with my story and the stories of other practitioners I also use performative autoethnography as a method of inquiry and writing in which the audience or participants co-perform the text and the writer, as narrator, functions as a guide, a commentator on what is occurring. This approach also assists me to bring my body into professional practice, to recognise how I am reacting while practising (Green & Hopwood, 2015), to connect the personal with the political, which is a focus of the third study.

Performative autoethnography is a critically reflexive methodology resulting in a narrative of the researcher’s engagement with others in particular sociocultural contexts. (Spry, 2011b, p. 498)

As this is an autoethnographic study I acknowledge that the self-identity literature and approach could have relevance to the overall topic being researched. However for the scope of this research, I have taken the self-other interaction together with the critical self-reflection (Spry, 2011a) approach,
which differ epistemologically from the focus of the literature on self-identity construction. This approach is explicated on pages 60-62.

These autoethnographic approaches are grounded in thorough research and fieldwork which is transformed by creative writing which is a form of inquiry and analysis which Richardson (2000, p. 923) refers to as “a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic”. The final stories as performative texts are also a means of thickly describing and co-constructing the practice and culture of practitioners from multiple perspectives.

3.3.3 Praxis-orientation
This research is praxis-oriented and focused on the practical knowledge of a change facilitator. I am therefore seeking to connect theory with practice and to connect action with the research. This suits a constructivist perspective in which I use qualitative research that is “informed by attention to praxis and reflexivity, that is, understanding how one’s own experiences and background affect what one understands and how one acts in the world, including acts of inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 546). I am not aiming at generating generalisable and valid knowledge about our practice, for example techniques or proven methods that may be transferred by other practitioners into their practice. In other words, unlike the scientific tradition of research related practice, there is not one single objective or complete view of practice knowledge, nor is it transferable from one context to another. In this orientation I am focused on assisting “practitioners as they engage in their own deliberations about the means and ends of their practices and to help them cultivate their own wise judgment” (Schwandt, 2005, p. 329). I am also not assuming that this research, that I, am the expert and that the knowledge generated by this research is “necessary because practitioners who are involved in their practice on an everyday basis are incapable of routinely making objective assessments of how well it works” (Schwandt, p. 319). Rather this research is oriented toward understanding how we constitute ourselves within our community through connection of our lived experiences or practice stories. This leads to the next sections in which I present the rationale, methods of data collection
and analysis for each project/study separately. While the studies are independent they reinforce each other.

3.4 Project 1: Practitioner stories: defining practice

3.4.1 Rationale for the project
I considered the best way to inquire about the practice of facilitating organisational change was to ask the experts, practitioners who had been successfully practising for some time, so that we may co-construct our practice. I therefore chose to conduct practitioner interviews using the first two research questions:

- How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?

This method fits with my ontological position of social constructionism which posits that reality is individually and collectively socially constructed. It also suits the production of stories and narratives which underpin this study. “Narratives are socially constrained forms of action, socially situated performances, ways of acting in and making sense of the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011c, p. 415). I also wanted to use a reflexive approach that created mutual learning and development between myself and my respondents.

3.4.2 Data collection
Semi-structured interviews using the Focused Conversation Method
I used Fontana and Frey (2008) and Minichiello, Aroni, and Hays (2008) to guide the development of my interview process. The interviews were semi-structured as I used a moderator’s guide with a predetermined set of questioned that flowed as a focused conversation but also allowed for in-depth responses which were often told as practice stories. I chose to use this method because it aligns with the use of strategic and focused questioning and dialogue (Hunter, 2007; Peavey, 2000; Senge, 2006; Stanfield, 2000a) and storytelling (Hogan, 2002; Hunter, 2007) which are practices used by skilled facilitators to assist participants to tell their own stories. I was also
seeking to elicit stories that I could use in the data analysis and that could inform our practice. Minichiello et al. (2008) provide a rationale for the use of the in-depth interview through the positions of Bourdieu and Giddens. Both these theorists regard the in-depth interview “as a useful way to learn about” the knowledge held by individual practitioners about the “use of ‘rules’ (the tacit conventions of everyday life)” that informs their actions and practice (Minichiello et al., 2008, p. 6).

As identified above one of the core practices, if not the most essential skill of a facilitator practitioner is the use of questions. I was therefore comfortable with using open-ended questions using an intentional approach, the Focused Conversation or Discussion Method, a well-known facilitation method, to structure the interviews and extract in-depth responses (Stanfield, 2000a). In these interviews I considered the respondent and I as participating as equals (Fontana & Frey, 2000). This discussion method, also referred to as ORID, is based on four levels of questions that are asked in the following order which is understood to be closely aligned to the natural flow of the human mind. This assisted the interview to flow. ORID provides a framework for groups and individuals to move from facts or their own reality - Objective level questions; through reflection (R) (reflective questions) on how they feel about or react to the situation; to making sense of the situation and their reactions or feelings to it – Interpretation (interpretive questions); and finally to making decisions about how to change or improve the situation (Decisional questions). The guiding questions that were used to structure the interview were:

1. (O) Tell me about your experiences as an internal change facilitator? I am just seeking the facts at this stage, we will move on to discuss your feelings and reactions later e.g. How long have you been in your role, what are the main duties or projects that you work on, with whom do you work? - let the conversation flow for at least 10-15 minutes
   Offer opt out option

2. (R) Thinking back to your experiences and journey as a change facilitator, what have been the highlights and the low points? What stories
do you remember that stand out for you about this experience? – up to 20 minutes
Offer opt out option
3. (I) Reflecting on these stories about the highs and lows of your work practice, how do you perceive your effectiveness? Firstly, how would you define effectiveness? Note: there are no right or wrong answers. What is it that you do or have done that makes you effective? How do you go about measuring effectiveness? – up to 20 minutes
Offer opt out option
4. (D) Considering your experiences and insights into effective practice what would you do differently in the future? What advice would you offer other practitioner facilitators? – up to 20 minutes
Offer opt out option
5. Briefly recap what’s been discussed. Are there any other insights or missing pieces that you wish to share? – up to 10 minutes.

The questions were structured to elicit the stories of our development including the turning points or epiphanies, the challenges that face us, the highlights, the approaches that work, the ways that we know we are being effective, including in relation to external facilitators, and advice to others and for the profession. In eliciting the “biographical memory” (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 134) of other facilitators I was not seeking to replicate their biographies, I was interested in the “sociological representation of lives” (Richardson, 1997, p. 148).

I conducted two interviews with four internal practitioners and with myself between October 2011 and February 2012. I first interviewed myself and recorded my responses because this provided me with insights into my practice so that I could ethically connect with respondents and so that I could verify that the questions were appropriate and flowed. A second interview was conducted with the four practitioners with the purpose of clarifying the first interview and to explore further some of the themes that arose between each of the interviewees. The time spent on each of the first interviews varied from between 60 to 90 minutes and 10 to 50 minutes for the second interview.
While I conducted member checking after each of the interviews and gave participants the opportunity to amend their stories, I chose not to give my analysis to participants to read before publication. I chose to do this after reading Ellis’ (2004) account of a sociologist, Susan Chase, who also made this choice. Her reason was that she wanted to communicate “how culture shapes narrative process” whereas “her participants wanted to communicate in their narrations – their life experiences” (Ellis, 2004, p. 152). As indicated above I wanted to communicate in my analysis - how facilitation of organisational change works in practice – not replicate the diverse, individual life stories of practitioners.

Fontana and Frey (2008) provided a pivotal insight for me when they challenged the stance of the interviewer as a neutral role. They suggest an empathetic (or empathic), ethical stance for the interviewer who, rather than being neutral, engages in active interviewing where the interviewer’s and the interviewees’ stories become shared and intertwined. Taking this stance recognises that the interviewer, like the facilitator, is human and therefore comes with their unique historical and cultural backgrounds, that shape their underlying biases and assumptions, political and worldviews – “hardly a neutral tool” (Fontana & Frey, p. 664). This resonated with the initial findings in the literature review (Chapter 2), that is, that the facilitator role is political and seldom neutral, and therefore assisted me with my stance as an interviewer.

Recruitment of participants
I used purposeful recruitment, which was deliberate and flexible (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling was suitable as I was concerned with specific characteristics and experiences of practitioners, with “information-rich cases…that by their very nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 265). The selection/exclusion criteria for participants included: firstly, internal to their organisation; secondly, working in organisational change for more than three years; thirdly, employed in a medium to large organisation (more than 100 people); fourthly, gender balance between female and male; finally, no one with whom I had
shared practice. The first three criteria were aligned with my practice history/experience and also ensured that the facilitator had considerable experience in long-term change. Maximum variation ensures diversity in the sample selected and for this project I aimed for variation in gender and organisation type. I was not able to achieve a gender balance and interviewed four females (including myself) and one male. An analysis by the Australasian Facilitators Network (AFN) list moderator, Bob Dick on 25th July 2011, found that the gender balance on the list was about 60% females and 40% males which supported the interviewing of more females than males. I did not recruit more than four other facilitators, as I was not concerned with finding out a definitive model of our practice. Rather I was interested in undertaking a living narrative analysis of my story and the stories of other practitioners (Boje, 2011). A sample of this size is appropriate for conducting a living narrative analysis as the focus is on how each participant interprets, socially constructs, and lives their experiences rather than seeking to generalise findings across a broader group (McMullen, 2008).

The decision to recruit internal facilitators rather than external, or consultant facilitators, or a mix of both, emerged from a conversation with a colleague who stressed the importance of considering the difference between these two positions. The rationale for selecting internal facilitators is three-fold. Firstly, three recent research studies in Australia found the intended outcomes and practice of external and internal facilitators to differ significantly (Ball, 2004; Jay, 2007; Wardale, 2008). Secondly, internal facilitators are well placed to coordinate long-term change programs and projects in their organisation. Thirdly, interviewing only internal facilitators assists close comparison with my practice as an internal facilitator.

I made the decision to recruit participants from Australia because I could recruit from the Australasian Facilitators Network (AFN) of which I was a member; I could share results with participants at AFN and IAF (International Association of Facilitators) conferences and in their online networks; and finally, being an Australian and active in the AFN and IAF networks I was aware of the cultural nuances and language of Australians and of Australian
facilitators. To illustrate the importance of this decision, when I co-facilitated a conference workshop in North America with a New Zealand colleague (reported in Project 3), the mainly American participants found it difficult to understand our vernacular.

While I made the decision to undertake face-to-face interviews so that I would be able to establish a rapport with participants and to read the interviewee’s body language to take the interview in the appropriate direction, this was only feasible for two interviews as the last two participants were interstate. All of the second interviews were held by phone. All participants chose the interview location. Three participants were interviewed away from their workplace and while I did not ask them for their reason, the male participant indicated that he was more comfortable talking to me away from his workplace. While the openness of their responses could have indicated that they were more comfortable talking about issues in their organisations away from their workplace, the participant who I interviewed in her open plan workspace was possibly more open than others regarding her struggles with lack of recognition:

This week I went for a promotion and didn’t get an interview within this internal HR group that I work and that is a low point. They don’t appreciate the subtle things that I do. [Interview transcript, Diana\(^4\), 8\(^{th}\) December 2011].

**Critical incidents and epiphanies**

The first three subjects for the Doctor of Communication required formal assessment. One assessment required me to give an extended account of my practice “as viewed through a critical incident demonstrating key features and practice dilemmas” of my work (COM710 Approaches to Inquiry in Communication, p.17). I used this method to recall a number of critical incidents in my practice over the past ten years. As I recalled these incidents I became aware of my “eruptions, or reactions, to events that have been going on for a long period of time” in my practice and personal life, which Denzin

\(^4\) Pseudonym
(1989, p. 129) refers to as *cumulative epiphanies*. These cumulative epiphanies were also collected and used in this project and in Project 3.

3.4.3 Analysis of data

Living narrative analysis

Narratives, stories and storytelling are increasingly used in organisational change management (Boje, 2001, 2011). Using narrative as an analytical tool and storytelling in this research also aligns with their use as an effective facilitation method in organisation development as “They (stories) are the ‘glue’ that holds the culture of an organization together” and how participants make sense of themselves and others (Hogan, 2002, p. 112).

Many authors spend a great deal of time explaining the difference between narrative and story. For the purposes of this study I take Boje’s (2001, p. 136) explanation that refers to Culler who distinguishes between story as “a sequence of events of actions” (Culler, 2981, 169-70) and “narrative as the presentation of the interpretative plot and cohesive structure to the storied bits and pieces of chronology”. The coherence of narrative appears to be the crux of the difference. Taking up this difference in my analysis and writing I sometimes retell (or re-story) the story and other times I develop a narrative that reflects the storied fragments.

I made the decision to name the analysis of the interviews and of my critical practice incidents *living narrative analysis*. I chose this terminology and approach because the story and stories of my (our) practice are evolving, dynamic and changing as a result of the context, the expertise and the interplay between the researcher and the participants into a story to live and live with. I use the term ‘narrative analysis’ rather than ‘story analysis’ as I was interested in producing a narrative plot and structure. This differs from the story analysis approach, which focuses in-depth on the fragmentation and movement of the story, through analysis of how the story folds, unfolds and re-folds. The analysis is also multi-layered and its interpretation is living and will change dependent on the reader, their experience as a practitioner and/or researcher. This approach was informed by David Boje’s use of antenarrative
that is, finding the trace stories, and creating or constructing a re-story that reflects a living story (Boje, 2001).

The living story is in-between dead and alive, between forgotten fragments and revitalizing those into one’s own life. Living story is collective ongoing, simultaneous, fragmented, and distributive storytelling and restorying by all the storytellers reshaping, rehistoricizing, and contemporalizing. The living story fabric is a complex collective-weave of many storytellers and listeners who together are co-constructing (along with researchers) the dynamics that reduce living story opposed by antenarrative forces of more amplifying-transformation. (Boje, 2008, pp. 239-240)

However, while the analysis has created living stories there is a plot and structure to the final stories in this exegesis and therefore this is a living ‘narrative analysis’ which I have based on the following definition (Vaara, Sonenshein, & Boje, 2016, p.498):

..narrative analysis in management and organization studies must also comprise fragmented narrative where elements of narrative structure such as the end or the beginning are implicit.

Summary of method and final data display

The data were analysed using a number of methods based on the use of narratives as an analytical tool. Each analytical step is described in detail in the following sections with reference to the author whose methodological approach I used. Firstly, a preliminary analysis of the transcripts was undertaken to become familiar with the data and undertake coding (Grbich, 2013). Then a thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was undertaken which looked at themes from etic or outsider/theory/profession and emic or insider/practitioner perspectives and then revealed the antenarrative or trace stories that were embedded in the participants’ stories and which provided insights into our practice. While I mostly followed Boje’s (2001) antenarrative approach to thematic analysis I also used the guidance of Grbich (2013) and Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011). Next I developed the narrative profiles of each of the participants and then identified their narrative styles using styles identified in the literature by Boje (2001) and Beech (2000). Finally, two practice stories and a collective, autoethnography in the form of creative, analytical writing were told that were the culmination of analysis of the participant interviews and of critical incidents in my practice over the past ten years. I use the word collective because I have included some narrative fragments from the participants’ interviews to reinforce my account. The data is therefore displayed in three ways: as themes (etic and emic) developed from the thematic antenarrative analysis presented as longer
sentences and sequences (Table 5, p.76); as two practice stories that reflect the core themes displayed in the table; and finally as an autoethnography. This form of data display in which detailed coding is resisted aligns with both the antenarrative approach which goes beyond the “neatly packaged” themes, to step “outside containment to engage fragmentation, becoming and undoing” (Boje, 2001, pp. 125, 122); and the autoethnographic approach in which data is displayed in the form of critical analytical writing whereby the primary text is kept as readable as possible by limiting the use of citations and endnotes which can “interrupt and clutter the narrative” (Adams, Holman-Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p.2). Grbich (2007, p.130) provides further justification identifying that the “sociocultural approach” to analysis of narratives where “segmentation of data into themes and other forms of fragmentation such as coding is avoided….. as the stories that are told are completed entities in themselves and resist such processes”.

Preliminary analysis

Firstly, I conducted a preliminary analysis of all of the transcripts following the advice of Grbich (2013) and Hennink et al. (2011). Hennink et al. (2011) recommend reading and rereading, constantly going between interviews, seeing it through the eyes of the participant and whether it is raised as important by the participant, which was identified as the emic or insider perspective by Boje (2001) and Hennink et al. (2011). I did this with the transcripts. I initially took out the questions and just read through the transcripts and I also listened to the tapes several times, while driving, walking and sitting at my desk. I did this to listen to the flow of the stories between questions and to pick up nuances and emphases on particular aspects of practice. In essence I had the stories and voices of each participant alive in my memory. As well as hearing what was being said I paid particular attention to what was not being said or was absent, to the tensions, to any epiphanies or aha moments, to the passion and to turning points. Each transcript was coded to include this information. While doing this I paid particular attention to metaphors, stories and extended sequences and prose that I could use to re-present the data in the later data display of themes and stories. From this preliminary analysis I identified the more explicit themes whereas the subtler or underlying themes, which were beginning to emerge, were identified in the thematic analysis which I next undertook using Boje’s (2001, pp. 122-137)
theme analysis explained below. These preliminary themes were recorded in a number of tables with extensive extracts from transcripts.

Both in the preliminary and antenarrative theme analysis (below) I was not concerned with relating how the story was told, unfolded or my role in constituting the conversations. Riessman (2008, p. 62) identified that researchers “who use thematic narrative analysis, are not generally interested in the form of the narrative, only its thematic meanings and “point” or telos. In other words the “focus is on the act the narrative reports and the moral of the story”. Riessman (2008, p. 53) also cautions that “students looking for a set of rules [for thematic narrative analysis] will be disappointed” due to the multiplicity of approaches. Another reason why I have used this *Living narrative analysis*.

**Antenarrative theme analysis**

I next undertook a *thematic analysis* using Boje (2001, pp. 122-137) with some guidance from Grbich (2013) on how to develop themes. Boje uses an approach which he has named antenarrative theme analysis. I followed his steps which were firstly to undertake a deductive approach using etic or outsider categories, that is those that were drawn from the literature, from the profession, from existing theory and practice, “from grand theory and imposed from the outsider viewpoint onto” the practitioner’s world (Boje, 2001, p. 122). I next undertook an *inductive* approach whereby I identified the emic or insider categories, that is the ones that emerged from the interview responses of the facilitator practitioners.

A table was developed that identified the main etic perspectives and how they related to the emic perspectives of each of the participants as well as “their component contrasts (dimensions of similarity and differences)” (Boje, 2001, p. 124). The goal of analysis was to identify the narrative themes of practitioners that reflect and illustrate the key elements of our practice selves and of our (perceived) effectiveness. This relates directly back to the research questions as well as to the differences between internal and external facilitators’ practice and effectiveness. I then used a “block and file”
approach whereby intact and often long sequences are sorted under each theme (Grbich, 2013, p. 62). In identifying the themes I was continually aware that this required “reading ‘beyond the words’ to consider the underlying context of what is said that is a deeper level, codes that are ‘deeply rooted in the data’” (Hennink et al., 2011, p. 224). The next step of the theme analysis was to move to connect the spaces in-between the etic and emic, between the stories and the themes and to connect them into living stories. In other words, the aim of the antenarrative approach to theme analysis was to go beyond the “neatly packaged” themes, to step “outside containment to engage fragmentation, becoming and undoing” (Boje, 2001, pp. 125, 122). Using an antenarrative approach in which I preserved longer sentences and sequences assisted the creation of practice or living stories as well as a longer performative text or autoethnography (Denzin, 2014).

Further justification for not undertaking detailed coding was provided by Grbich (2007, p.130) who identifies the “sociocultural approach” to analysis of narratives in which “segmentation of data into themes and other forms of fragmentation such as coding is avoided….. as the stories that are told are completed entities in themselves and resist such processes”. The underlying assumptions of this approach suited my purpose, to “provide insights into the political and historical climates impacting on the storyteller’s lives” as well as the societal and cultural contexts. Thus the focus is on “the connections between the life worlds depicted in personal narratives and larger social structure – power relations, hidden inequalities and historical contingencies” (Riessman, 2008, p. 76). Certainly, as a core skill of the critical facilitator role which, is a focus of Project 3, is to provide a forum to shift power relations, an understanding of these concepts was important.

Narrative facilitator profiles
Each of us told a unique story about our practice lives and I wished to preserve the essence of each of these self-stories and to present these as a profile so that the reader had some context for each of the participants. To do this I asked the question: What’s the point of this story? and then I identified the narrative styles or plots for each facilitator after Boje (2001, pp. 108-109) and
Grbich (2013, p. 218). Both Boje and Grbich identify the four conventional narrative styles or generic plots: romance, satire (irony), comedy and tragedy. Boje’s interpretation draws on Paul Ricoeur’s emplotment analysis (Ricoeur, 1984). In comparison, Beech (2000) identified four styles that are more relevant to organisational culture change than the traditional heroic leader model, the epic/heroic, the romantic, the tragic and the ironic. The epic or heroic style differed from Boje’s romantic which was also a heroic plot, in that the epic hero is separated from the group or exits the situation while there is an integrated group of others who remain. In other words the organisational group or team are liberated unlike the romantic plot where the hero is liberated. I therefore decided to look at each of the transcripts from a number of perspectives: the four conventional styles and the epic/heroic; the epiphanies that were told; and the relevance to practicing in organisational change. In doing this I was reminded by “Paul Ricoeur….that life as lived does not have coherence, it is essentially prenarrative” (Riessman, 2008, p. 190). And so the resulting profiles are also only stitched up lives, which do not necessarily have coherence or closure.

Autoethnographic approach to analysis
Using an autoethnographic approach to analysis and writing is about “stringing discovered gems together”, which is a “shift from sifting through masses of fragmented details” (Chang, 2008, p. 139). The analysis is undertaken through creative writing which is a form of inquiry and analysis, which Richardson (2000, p. 923) refers to as “a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your topic”. Autoethnography combines characteristics of autobiography and ethnography through analysing and writing about retrospective experiences and epiphanies and assembling them using hindsight, certainly “writing is just as important as findings” (Adams & Ellis, 2012, p. 201). Before I wrote my autoethnographic, collective story I read Laurel Richardson’s “Fields of Play” (Richardson, 1997); Tami Spry’s “Body, Paper, Stage” (Spry, 2011a); and Carolyn Ellis’ “Ethnographic-I” (Ellis, 2004). Each of these texts provides detailed information about the theory, the ethics, the orientation, fine examples of styles of writing, the
methodology and above all the liberating reasons for doing and writing autoethnography.

I used participant observation, interviews with other facilitators and self, critical incidents and epiphanies, dialogue with peers and senior leaders in and outside of my organisation, and I used my academic training to interrogate the meaning of my personal experiences and to reference these back to existing research and literature, and to the interviews with others with similar experiences and epiphanies. Adams and Ellis (2012, pp. 200-201) provide clear guidance on the process which includes all of the above as well as following conventions of storytelling such as character, scene and plot development; showing and telling - showing by bringing “‘readers into the scene’ (Ellis, 2004, p.142) – into thoughts, emotions, and actions – in order to ‘experience an experience’ (Ellis, 1993 p.711)”; and writing “an artful and evocative thick description of personal and interpersonal experience” that is “accessible” to a wider audience. The final texts are aggregate stories that are “fictional, but based on themes developed systematically and rigorously from expert practitioners’ stories” (Titchen & Ersser 2001, p.54).

3.5 Project 2: Evaluation of a cultural change program – Practice stories: evaluating practice

3.5.1 Rationale for the project and for using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique

The focus of this project is on evaluating practice and seeks to answer the research question: How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective? Long term cultural change programs and projects are core work of change practitioners, and therefore “as practitioners, researchers and clients we can get smarter from systematic evaluation, building a synthesis of what we know what works and what doesn’t work” (Zouwen, 2010, p. 45). I chose to undertake a case study of a long term (six months) cultural change program in my organisation to investigate a participatory evaluation approach called the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (MSC) (Davies & Dart, 2005). This provided an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of a facilitated
program using stories, which I frequently use in my facilitation practice and which were used as a means of analysis and writing throughout this research. It also provided an opportunity to critique and refine this well-known technique (MSC) which, apart from Dart’s (2000) study of Australian dairy farmers and a critique of it use in two development projects in Laos (Willettts & Crawford, 2007), appears to be an area that is under-researched, particularly in the context of organisational change. This is despite its use in many government and community institutions across Australia (Hill, 2010). Willettts and Crawford (2007, p. 368) provide a strong case for the future use and development of the MSC technique:

It is imperative that the technique’s apparent simplicity does not result in blind application of what is in fact a delicate, multi-faceted process of interpretative research.

The MSC is a participatory monitoring and evaluation technique which involves the collection of significant stories from participants in learning, development or change programs (Davies & Dart, 2005). These stories are sorted into pre-determined domains of change which align with the expected outcomes for the program. The selection of the most significant stories is undertaken by panels of stakeholders and/or program coordinators or staff that read the stories aloud and discuss the program’s impact.

There are a number of reasons why this technique suited this study. Firstly, using this technique I could investigate behavioural change in participants while sharing organisational knowledge between participants, facilitators, and managers leading to organisational change. Secondly, identifying the main areas of significant change provided a source of evaluation for organisational stakeholders, senior management. Thirdly, the MSC is a developmental evaluation tool, an action learning and reflective practice approach, which aligned with the purpose of the change program, to foster organisational, individual and collective learning.

PM&E approaches are largely qualitative, participatory approaches with a focus on organisational learning and empowering beneficiaries of the project (Dart, 2000, p. 26)
Fourthly, the MSC was being widely used by a number of government and community organisations in Australia (Hill, 2010). Finally, it involved storytelling which, as previously discussed, is increasingly being used in organisations to facilitate change and organisational development. The use of stories also aligned with the first project which aimed to elicit practitioner stories. Similar to interviewing (Project 1), the MSC technique uses thick description (Geertz, 1973) to provide a rich picture of the social and organisational context within which the participant is situated. An added benefit of the MSC is that the stories are complemented by their reviewers’ (the managers) interpretations of program impact which strengthens the evaluation process (Dart, 2000).

3.5.2 Data collection using the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique

Recruitment of program participants – the storytellers

Program participants were recruited to the cultural change program through an expression of interest and selection by program facilitators. As shown on the flowchart below (Figure 1.) program participants were asked to submit their most significant change story (MSC) as part of the final assessment process. It was made very clear through an ethics approval process that each participant had the choice of voluntarily submitting his or her story separately to me, as part of my doctoral research study. Ten stories were submitted from the 2010 cohort and 13 from the 2011, which represented (30%) of the total number participating on the program in each year. Participants were asked to tell their most significant change stories in their final peer learning activity. This was voluntary. Storytelling in groups or panels is an important part of the MSC technique, however, this did not occur in either of the cohorts (Davies & Dart, 2005). Two participants did choose to present their stories at the final graduation for each cohort. One of my co-facilitators indicated to me that he viewed this as a very powerful part of the process (personal communication).
Most Significant Change (MSC) Story
Collection and Evaluation

1. Change program participants
   Collecting and sharing stories

2. Pool of stories
   FLW = Leader

3. Prioritise stories into domains of change

4. Select MSC Story from each domain

5. Select most significant change story for the Cultural Change Program

Recruit participants through program part of learning module & assessment (voluntary participation in research)

Recruit participants from management & supervisor list (no direct reports on the program) & send EOI form

Consent form and information flyer

FLW = Frontline Worker
EOI = Expression of Interest

Figure 1. Flowchart of process for collecting stories and selecting for the most significant change (MSC) story.
Recruitment of the panel members

I recruited middle manager and senior manager panels to sort the stories into domains of change and then select the most significant story for the program. Three middle managers - two from administrative staff and one from academic staff - were selected for the middle manager panel. I selected two administrative staff and one academic staff member as approximately two thirds of the program participants were from the administrative divisions and one third from a faculty or school. None of the middle managers had a direct reporting line or worked in the same area as any of the participants. A different panel was selected for the second cohort with one manager participating on both panels.

The senior manager panel of three members was convened by the most senior administrative manager in the university. This senior leader was the sponsor of the cultural change program. This person retired in 2011 so the second panel was convened by her successor. Panel members were divisional heads or their direct report and had no staff members participating in the program. All members were different in the second cohort.

All panel members completed informed consent and were bound by confidentiality under the ethics approval. I also blacked out names of storytellers and any reference that they made to any third party. This was to ensure the confidentiality of participants and staff and also to remove any bias that panel members may have had toward the stories.

Method for selecting the Most Significant Change Stories

I facilitated the middle manager panel using the Technology of Participation (ToP) Workshop Method (Stanfield, 2002) and a moderator’s guide. In this method participants sort like ideas into clusters and then give them a name to reflect the intent of the cluster. The workshop lasted for 90 minutes. The stories were sorted into themes or domains of change. Each domain was given a symbol and then a short name that reflected the meaning of that domain. The most significant story in each domain of change was selected (three
domains in 2010 and four domains in 2011). This process differed from Dart (2000) who used \textit{domains of change} which were pre-determined by a senior committee. The rationale for doing this is that the evaluation can be measured against these pre-determined outcomes for change that the senior stakeholders have identified. Dart concluded that while this was useful it restricted the type of story that was selected by panels. I did not wish to exclude some stories because they did not fit a pre-determined domain of change. This ensured that all stories were included in a domain. If these domains did not reflect the types of change that the organisation was seeking then this was a result in and of itself.

The most significant stories selected by the middle managers for each domain of change were given to the senior panel members. The senior manager panel selected the story from these stories that reflected the most significant change to the organisation resulting from the program. For each cohort a report was compiled that consisted of a summary of the program’s outcomes and the most significant and the second most significant story. This report was uploaded to the Registered Training Organisation’s website and advertised throughout the university community. I personally advised the teller of the most significant story that their story had been selected as the most significant story.

\textbf{3.5.3 Data analysis}

I chose story deconstruction analysis (after Boje (2001, pp. 18-34) to deconstruct the participants’ Most Significant Change (MSC) stories and the story of the manager panels’ MSC story selection process. This provided a lens through which to analyse the cultural context of the organisation and to critique the MSC Technique and thus the effectiveness of the change facilitator’s practice. Thus, story and/or textual deconstruction analysis can be used by the practitioner as a cultural diagnostic tool to evaluate practice and to change strategies. In other words, using the two approaches together – MSC and deconstruction analysis as a complementary duo offers a potent cultural diagnostic approach for the practitioner Accordingly, while the
participants’ stories would appear to be the unit of analysis, the facilitator’s practice/practitioner is again the unit of analysis.

There are eight sequential steps which are outlined in Table 3 below. In summary the method identifies underlying and competing voices and stories - the duality and hierarchy of the stories; any silent or rebel voices; the other or underside of the story; the central plot; whether there are any exceptions to the organisational rules; and what is not being said or is being filled in by the reader – so that the story can then be resituated or made into a re-story that considers the excluded voices and perspectives. I chose this method so that I could identify the dominant organisational narrative and power relations, and the cultural context within which the program was delivered. As a change practitioner this provided an opportunity to critique the efficacy of MSC technique as well as the effectiveness of the change facilitation. In doing so I became aware that the use of stories for evaluating a cultural change program with story deconstruction analysis was also a valuable cultural diagnostic tool and an effective means of destabilising the dominant organisational narrative and power relations. Both these elements will improve the expertise of the change practitioner. This is an added benefit that is explicated in Chapter 5.

Table 3. Story deconstruction steps and guidelines (after Boje (2001))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Guideline / guiding question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Duality search</td>
<td>List bipolar terms or any dichotomies that are used in the story. What’s the central vision, the utopian dream?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reinterpret the hierarchy</td>
<td>How does the story interpret the hierarchy or one hierarchy over another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rebel voices</td>
<td>What voices are not being expressed in this story? Who speaks for the trees?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other side of the story</td>
<td>What is the other side of the story? Reverse the story: the bottom on top, the marginal in control, or the back stage up front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Deny the plot</td>
<td>What is the opposite of the central plot? Move from romantic to tragic or comedic to ironic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Find the exception</td>
<td>What is the exception to the underlying rules of the story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Trace what is between the lines</td>
<td>What is it that I or the reader is filling in? What is not being said?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Resituate the story</td>
<td>From conducting steps 1 to 7, what is the new perspective, the re-story that I have uncovered,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the attributes of the MSC Technique is the selection of “extreme stories of success or failure” (Dart, 2000, p. 258). As such I decided to deconstruct only one of the stories, an extreme story and the story of its rejection. In doing so I acknowledge that I have privileged one story over the other stories, however, this story was well written, humorous and engaging. It was not selected by the senior panel and was not permitted to be told to the organisation. From my experience as a practitioner in the organisation for over ten years and backed up by the middle managers’ assessment it clearly illustrated the managerialistic and bureaucratic nature of the university. It was therefore suitable for deconstruction.

3.6 Project 3: The reflective practitioner: embodying practice

3.6.1 Rationale for the project
This third project was originally a workshop that was designed for facilitator practitioners and which I developed from similar workshops for project teams designed by Gregory and Romm (2001) and Raelin (2006). The aim of this project was firstly to design a training workshop that could be used by change facilitators to pass the baton on to the project or change teams in their organisation (Looney et al., 2011). In other words, building facilitation capability in staff to sustain organisational change after the facilitator leaves. Secondly, I wished to further investigate the critical facilitator approach as an effective stance for change facilitators to facilitate mutual learning and to organise a forum to shift power relations (Gregory & Romm, 2001). This project was chosen to address the research questions:

- How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?

As this project is part of a professional doctorate reflecting on my practice with other practitioners is important as well as undertaking critical self-
reflection. The research orientation is therefore about understanding praxis and communicative action as a co-operative inquiry (Reason & Bradbury, 2006). I therefore delivered the workshop at national and international facilitator conferences. This satisfied one of Mattson & Kemmis’ (2007, p. 30) criteria for evaluating praxis-related research – communication involving “different kinds of audiences… – not just in terms of contributions to scientific communities but also in relation to wider public debates”.

This work emanated from Thomas’ (2008a) model of facilitator education which has four dimensions. In his research and publications Thomas described each of the first three dimensions (Technical Facilitation, Intentional Facilitation and Person-Centred Facilitation) in great detail, interviewing and attending educational workshops of well-known facilitators, and producing journal articles about the second and third dimensions – Intentional (Thomas, 2004) and Person-Centred Facilitation (Thomas, 2008b). In contrast, the fourth and highest dimension of Critical Facilitation, while grounded in Habermas’ theory of communicative action, he based on research and theories of other well-known authors [Brown (2004); Drennon & Cervero (2002); Kirk & Broussine (2000); Warren (2002); White (1999)] (Thomas, 2008a, p. 6), only finding two of the facilitator educators in his study using this approach similar to [Mindell (1995) and Kirk & Broussine (2000)] (Thomas, 2008a, p. 10). This was a gap in the research that I wished to investigate in the context of the critical facilitator approach together with the learning facilitator approach being an effective means for a change facilitator to sustain organisational change and to provide a forum to foster mutual learning and to shift power relations.

3.6.2 Data Collection
After presenting the workshop to the International Association of Facilitators North America (IAFNA) Conference in 2011 I decided to include it as my third and final project. I subsequently presented it to the Australasian Facilitators Network (AFN) Conference in Perth in 2011, and IAF Oceania Conference in Melbourne in 2012. The final workshop and the main findings are discussed in Chapter 6.
Recruitment of participants
Participants were not recruited to the workshops. They were conference participants who chose to attend the workshop. This was purposive and opportunity sampling (Patton, 2015, p. 217). Purposive sampling was suitable as I was concerned with specific characteristics and experiences of practitioners and opportunity sampling meant that I would be able to obtain a diverse and varied combination of practitioners that would allow for the workshop design to be emergent. The participants were facilitators who were either internal, external or consultants to their organisations. Whilst informed consent was not sought at the first conference, participants were aware through the workshop description and an introductory email to those registered, that I was undertaking doctoral studies and wishing to explore some aspects of my research and scholarship with workshop participants. Aggregated feedback obtained at the end of the workshop and my reflections and those of my co-facilitator, Dale Hunter\(^5\), were used to further develop and refine the workshop for the next conference. Informed consent was obtained from all participants who attended the workshop at the two Australian conferences.

Co-operative inquiry and critical self-reflection
I chose to use co-operative inquiry (Reason & Bradbury, 2006) as a way of involving other practitioners who have similar concerns and interests so that I could make sense of my (our) practice life while developing “new and creative ways of looking at things” and learning how to take action to change practice and “find out how to do things better” (Heron & Reason, 2001, p. 179). It was a means of involving participants and co-facilitators in the design of the workshop that reduced the distance between myself, the researcher and co-facilitators and participant practitioners. Throughout the development of the workshop I also engaged in critical self-reflection so that I could identify the power relations that were involved, where I was situated in the structure between myself and co-facilitators and participants (Spry, 2011a), as well as

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\(^5\) Dale Hunter has given permission to include her name in this exegesis
identifying my underlying biases and assumptions which are a key element of the critical facilitator role (Raelin, 2006). Thus feedback and reflection from self, co-facilitators and participants were used to design the final workshop. In other words the design was emergent and iterative. While I did seek feedback from participants after the workshop only three took up the opportunity to provide me with feedback on the approach and we did not further the dialogue except for a continuing discussion with one of my co-facilitators.

As I struggled to identify how I would collect data about the critical facilitator approach to investigate whether it was effective I realised that my critical reflection and analytical writing for my first project; and the exposure of the power relations in my organisation in my second project, were both providing me with data and insights about the critical facilitator approach. In other words, the data used in this project is a culmination of the data, analysis, findings and writing from the first two projects, and of my experiences, in particular the critical incidents and cumulative epiphanies of my practice.

3.6.3 Data analysis

Feedback and reflection

The feedback and reflection from self, the participants and co-facilitators in the three conference workshops was firstly used to refine the workshop design; and secondly, to analyse the effectiveness of the critical facilitator approach as a stance for change facilitators to provide a forum to foster mutual learning and to shift power relations.

Methodology for composing performative autoethnography

I used a performative-I disposition to critically reflect on and analyse my experiences and the effectiveness of the critical facilitator approach (Spry, 2011a). I followed Spry’s (2011a, p. 127) methodology, “the composition elements include 1) sociocultural context, 2) critical self-reflection, 3) self-other interaction, 4) the body, and 5) ethics”. All of these elements are conflated or fused over time to create a performative text that embodies the performative-I disposition. This text brings into being the personal, the
popular (community) and the expert (disciplines of knowledge) in a string of memory that locates items significant to me (Denzin, 1997). It is a personal mythology, a public story and a story that critiques my practice and the culture of my organisation. The text is never final rather open-ended and continually evolving as the elements change and our practice lives and interactions with others change.

A storied performance draws on performance texts as a form of data presentation whereby the researchers (as cultural inquirers) reconstruct aspects of organisational events as a shared lived experience. (Taylor & Carroll, 2010, p. 36)

The following questions in Table 4. were used to guide the development of the performative text. These questions and steps also provide a very useful guide for change practitioners to critique the power relations and cultural context of their groups and organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural context</td>
<td>What are the sociocultural norms and expectations of the cultural context in which my story/experience takes place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the power systems at work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What values and beliefs are demonstrated through these norms and expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the major critiques of these systems of power and/or dominant narratives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical self-reflection</td>
<td>What are the social hierarchies and power relations involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where am I situated within these structures? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do these norms and expectations affect me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When and where do I feel agency or lack of agency? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does this critical reflection change my image, behaviour, choices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is my motivation for writing this story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-other interaction</td>
<td>What are the interactions with others that seem significant to my experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does my engagement with others make or break these norms and/or dominant cultural narratives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body</td>
<td>How is my body “read” within the sociocultural context of my experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What does my body “feel” or felt-sense in relation to interactions with others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are my physical reactions and how did these affect my perceptions/views/behaviours?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>How/why/where have I used unethical methods of representation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What ethical pitfalls may occur in my representation of, or critical self-reflection upon, self within the context? Other?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These last questions relating to ethics lead into the next section on the overarching issues of ethics and trustworthiness for the study.

### 3.7 Ethics and trustworthiness

#### 3.7.1 Ethical considerations

I obtained three separate human ethics approvals, one for each project. The confidentiality and protection of all participants was the primary ethical consideration. These participants included interviewees/practitioners in my first project; participant storytellers and manager story selection panel members in my organisation in my second project; participant practitioners and co-facilitators in my third project; and colleagues and senior managers in my organisation as well as mentors, peers and friends in my autoethnography and performative poem. All of these participants’ names and their related departments, workplaces and organisations and reported third parties are not reported in the exegesis, papers produced from the research and in any other form, discussion or dialogue. I chose to use pseudonyms for each participant after McMullen (2008), who is a work colleague with whom I discussed this approach. It fits with narrative analysis; assists to tell the different, individual stories of facilitators’ practice; and maintains anonymity and confidentiality of participants. It is also an ethical requirement in Australia. The autoethnography involved more than participants and included peers in the profession, critical friends and family. All names in the autoethnography are pseudonyms with the exceptions of my adult children, Alana and Kiaran Bryant, and Dr. Dale Hunter, who all gave permission to use their names.
The conduct of part of this study in my own organisation (Project 2) as well as the use of autoethnography posed issues of power relations between me and senior panel members, between me and storytellers, and between me and management. I continually checked and questioned the assumptions that I made, ensuring wherever possible that my political position was “partial awareness – open” offering “facilitators the best opportunity to operate effectively in their role” (Kirk & Broussine, 2000, p. 20). These authors summarise “partial awareness – open” as comprising “acknowledge partial awareness”, “reflective practice”, “reflexivity – awareness of theories-in-use”, “maintaining the task and role” and “exercising care”. Denzin (2014, p. 28) also suggests that autoethnographies “embody a communitarian ethics of care, a relational ethics that values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness, a world-making ethic that begins with the self in relation with others (Ellis, 2009, p.308; Wyatt et al, p.109)”. These behaviours, traits and values are also the embodiment of a facilitator’s practice. In addition, I note that the questions pertaining to critical self-reflection, self-other interaction and ethics (Table 4. above) were also considered. This is sound advice for all researchers.

When I decided to tell my autoethnographic story (Project 1) and performative autoethnographic poem (Project 3), layered with aspects of my interviewees’ stories and with personal and professional conversations from colleagues and family, I was aware of heightened ethical questions and likely criticism. I was opening myself up to criticism about being self-indulgent (Hogan, 2000b). I realise that there is a fine balance between being self-aware, undertaking self-analysis and including self in an analysis, and being self-indulgent and narcissistic. Apart from being self-indulgent autoethnography has also been criticised for being “nonanalytic, irreverent, sentimental, and romantic”, the sub-text being unethical (Denzin, 2014, p. 69). In undertaking autoethnographic study Ellis (2004); Richardson (1997) and Hogan (2000b) all had similar concerns and questions. Although Hogan’s (2000b, p. 51) study is different from this study as it focused mainly on herself and her experiences - her development as a facilitator, issues of confidentiality (by concealing the names of people) and acknowledgement that “interpretation is
contestable” are all important to this study. The key question that challenges self-narrative writers to consider that their stories are not created in a vacuum and that others’ lives are interwoven in their stories is “Do they own a story because they tell it?” (Chang, 2008, p. 69). Both Hogan (2000b, p. 51) and Richardson (1997, p. 157) ask that if the reader sees themselves in the script that they feel “gratified” and “heard”. I ask for a similar response. To address some of the ethical issues I have also considered and used some of Hogan’s (2000b, p. 52) rules for going public in my story:

- Seek not to harm or embarrass anyone
- Be honest about your past successes, failures, joys and sadness (this point fits with narrative analysis and performative autoethnography)
- Change names of close family members, friends and colleagues unless they request otherwise

In Chapter 5, as part of the findings, I discuss some difficulties in gaining ethics approval for the investigation into the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique. I conclude that the experience and influence of change facilitators in evaluation processes and in input to the review of ethics approval processes would assist our organisations to embrace these practices.

3.7.2 Trustworthiness

Taking an autoethnographic approach to inquiry in this study recognises that as a practitioner and researcher, I am flawed, and my stories and the stories of my participants are flawed memories. They are retrospective and autobiographical. I was not seeking the truth nor was I concerned with reliability or validity. I was not seeking to reach a “single, integrative conclusion” or truth, rather I was seeking to report on the multiple voices and stories of our experiences (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p. 1028). Mattsson and Kemmis (2007, p. 33) argue that in praxis-related research:

established understandings of validity, reliability and rigour will be replaced by searching for meaning in a deeper sense… and that questions of trust and meaningfulness may be at least as important to participants as are questions of validity, reliability and rigour within the communities of practice of conventional science.
Further, objectivity is replaced with a desire to be “balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, multiple interests, and multiple realities”; “truth with a concern for practical utility”; and generalizations with extrapolations that can be used in similar contexts to inform action by practitioners “rather than generation and verification of universal theories” (Patton, 1990, p. 481;483;491). Not seeking a single truth but to thickly describe our practice, in my analysis and writing I was influenced by Ellingson’s (2011) postmodern approach to triangulation which she calls crystallization which “deploys multiple forms of analysis, reflexively embeds the researcher’s self in the inquiry process, and eschews positivist claims to objectivity” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011c, p. 565).

3.8 Conclusion
This is a complex and multi-layered chapter, which presents the methodological approaches used to investigate the practice of facilitating organisational change as an internal practitioner. I have presented three separate research projects. While these are independent they are not discrete, each reinforcing the approach of the other. In each project I sought to illustrate the practitioners’ effectiveness and practice by using a number of different methods. Grounded in a social constructionism orientation I used qualitative research methods that include interviews; critical self-reflection; co-operative inquiry; living narrative analysis; autoethnographic and performative analysis and writing; and collective storytelling. This was an emergent, continuous and cyclical process. I am therefore pragmatic about the final texts/findings as I agree with Denzin (1997, p. 287) “No text can do everything at once. The perfect ethnography cannot be written”.

In the next three chapters, Chapter 4, 5 and 6, I present the findings and analyses of each of the three projects. The discussion and inquiry in each chapter is aimed at providing practical advice and insights, but not definitive techniques, to other practitioners so that they may enhance their practice. In the next chapter I present the findings and analysis of the interviews that I held with five Australian internal practitioners, which included me. These are presented as practice stories that define our practice and our effectiveness.
Chapter 4. Practitioner stories: defining practice

4.1 Introduction
In this chapter I present the findings of Project 1. The focus of this project is on investigating the practice lives, the day-to-day practice experiences, as shared by five Australian practitioners. In other words, how we define our practice through our practice stories. Profiles and narrative styles, of four practitioners, are presented along with the findings of a living narrative analysis of our story conversations. This analysis is presented in autobiographical form, firstly as two practitioner stories that illustrate some of the tensions, traces and key dimensions of our practice lives; and finally as a collective autoethnography. The aim here is to further examine these in the moment interactions between people in organisational change. This collage text is not a substitute for a written experience, but adds layers to my own sharing of practice stories. It connects the personal, the political and the professional.

The discussion and inquiry is aimed at providing practical advice and insights, but not definitive techniques, to other practitioners so that they may enhance their practice, and it addresses the following research questions:

- How do practitioners define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do practitioners know they are effective?

4.2 Participant facilitators
In this section I present a profile of each of the four facilitators as a condensed story, which is a compilation of their interview responses. These stories were selected because they reflected how these facilitators defined themselves in terms of their development, learning and knowledge and their practice thus addressing the research questions above. In these profile stories I was also seeking to portray how we understand our culture and practice through a constructivist and ethnographic perspective. In other words I was seeking to answer the questions: how do change facilitators construct their reality; what
does this story reveal about the person and the cultural context of their practice; and what are the everyday activities of our practice? I then identify the differing narrative styles of facilitators as another frame through which practitioners may reflect on their situation and reflexively change practice so that we may facilitate effective organisational change. This recognition is further expanded in the autoethnographic story later in the chapter and in Chapter 6 where I expand the concept of the body in professional practice.

4.2.1 Participant profiles
Pseudonyms were used for each respondent and were consistent with a connotation with the participant, with either their name or an aspect of their story. The names chosen were – Philip, Jean, Lisa, and Diana. I have not included my story from my interview because I present my story as an autoethnographic collective story later in this chapter.

A brief description of each of the interviewees follows using their words which reflect their personal qualities and diverse practices. It must be noted that all of the participants were older than 45 years. While this was not intentional it would have influenced the data in regard to the length of time that each facilitator had spent on their personal and professional development thus contributing to their expertise. After each story I identify the central facilitation approach which the facilitator uses. These approaches are technical; intentional; person-centred; and critical facilitator (Thomas, 2008a). The last dimension, critical facilitation, is the focus of the research and findings in Chapter 6 (Project 3).

Philip’s is a helping role and his story goes something like this…..

Facilitators are not appointed, facilitators can’t help themselves
I have been a facilitator for 11 years. I started out of my own insight into organisational life….I googled facilitation…..I googled it and found the IAF on the web and then I found they had a conference in Perth. Then I found the Sydney Facilitators Network. I went along to that and honestly….. I thought “I think I found my family” ….and once I found Technology of Participation it was like finding gold. It filled a lot of gaps…. What I do mainly is I operate at different levels of the
“movement”. I work at a local level which for us means ………. a local expression of …social services and I work into the hierarchy or senior level as I am invited. I operate by invitation. I resist becoming the servant of the organisation and I try to operate in a space where I am a servant of the “mission” of the organisation, so my agenda is not the organisation but my agenda is to help whoever has asked for my help to resolve their issues without any hidden agenda from my point of view [Interview transcript, Philip 17th October 2011] 

Philip is also a Certified Professional Facilitator (International Association of Facilitators). Philip mainly uses intentional approaches to facilitation, for example Technology of Participation (Spencer, 1989) which is a group facilitation method for strategic and action planning; and Team Management Systems (http://www.tmsworldwide.com/) which is an approach for assessing and improving individuals and organisational teams.

Jean’s story is one of caring…

I don’t particularly have a lot of facilitation skills as such in a formal sense. I started off in a law enforcement role in the organisation and then I went over into learning and development where I was a training manager and where I started to develop some facilitation skills but I wasn’t a trainer……. I am more of a facilitator than a trainer. ……. I am starting to do a lot more facilitation and I find that is a good way to initiate change…. [I use the organisation’s change management framework and other tools such as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross with a little bit of Prosci in it]. I have done facilitation in my job over the last 10 years or so.

I spend a lot of time on my own self-development. I have studied a lot of things around spirituality for most of my life. I listen to other people and generally care about them. That is what I think it is all about, connecting with the heart and the mind. This stuff is very intuitive for me, I have great interpersonal skills, am very direct and passionate about what I do, I am very tenacious and I deliver on my promises. I don’t give up. I have a lot of influence over people, because of my credibility. I have had visible executive sponsorship and support. [Interview transcript, Jean 25th October 2011]

While Jean uses Prosci (a registered change management tool) underpinned by a project management and intentional approach to change management, she predominantly believes in connecting with people’s hearts using person-
centred approaches, such as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (Kübler-Ross, 1969), to facilitate change.

Lisa’s story spans nearly 25 years…

[In the 1990s] I did an early, very well run Org Psych Graduate Diploma which is still very relevant, and I loved it. [Early in my career] I was mentored by a really different way out guy. Everything he taught me back then, transformational stuff about behavioural and cultural change interventions that ensured people could speak with equal power, keeps coming back. It was ‘How do you communicate your ideas in an effective manner right up the line?’ So the impact of the hierarchy is minimised.

I have been in my current role for nearly two years and the role is a change agent type one so I get in projects of change, I do process reviews ....My role as doing facilitation is not just workshopping it is a lot off line and there is that work to make sure it is working. It’s the following up, the surveying, the data analysis........Another important aspect of what I do is, we do implement the Human Synergistic model, I am accredited, so I do coaching one on one and I also do cultural development facilitation [workshops] using the empowerment model........I run sessions to improve .....behaviours and styles ....We look at process, structure and style. ..... I had done some facilitation previously as well, it was more techniques than the underlying stuff. I am very interested now in transformational facilitation techniques. [Interview transcript, Lisa 9th December 2011].

Lisa uses intentional approaches to facilitating change, in particular business process improvement (Attong & Metz, 2012) and the Human Synergistics 360 degree feedback instrument for organisational culture assessment and leadership development (Mihai, Rodney, & Jason, 2013). She is a process consultant who is now looking for more person-centred approaches so that she can achieve the transformational change that she has been seeking. Similar to Diana below, Lisa has been training and facilitating since the early 1990’s.

Diana’s story is a long one…

I feel like I have been doing this type of work forever. In early 90’s I started to move into facilitation and learning and development and from there I have morphed into doing change stuff along the way....Early on I had some really fabulous offers and learning experiences. In ’91 I got accredited in Myers Briggs\(^8\) and did ...Neuro Linguistic Programming\(^9\). So I had a boss that invested in my professional development, which gave me a curiosity in learning about myself. I am

\(^8\) This is an indicator that measures personality type (Myers & McCaulley, 1985)
\(^9\) Is a method of facilitating knowledge and learning capabilities (Kong & Farrell, 2012)
a learner, if I am not learning then it’s not useful for me. I read a lot…. am part of the Australasian Facilitators Network and the blogs. It is part of my continuous development. There is also an ARI one, Harvard Business Review, I am on LinkedIn.....use Lifestyles Inventory [Human Synergistics or LSI\(^\text{10}\)]. In ’92 I had the fabulous experience in doing a yearlong management program... I have had an amazing apprenticeship... part of the apprenticeship .... I got in that period of ’90 to ’92 where I was working with these people and I also got introduced to Psychodrama\(^\text{11}\) which I am beginning to use more and more again in my practice....I worked with Bob Dick [well-known Australian facilitator].I was introduced to the [Peter] Senge stuff, [Margaret] Wheatley. ...Now I am in a role in a large State Government public service department ... I am in the Corporate HR area facilitating a yearlong leaders’ program, an online change program and organisational restructures. [Interview transcript, Diana 8\(^{\text{th}}\) December 2011].

Diana uses the most diverse array of approaches of any of us and appeared to have the most extensive range of qualifications. Most of her approaches are person-centred, focussed on personal change through personal development while she also models this through her own continual personal and professional development. Certainly, all of the participants were lifelong learners focussed on their personal and professional development.

4.2.2 Participant narrative styles
Beech (2000) undertook a study to explore the narrative styles of organisational leaders and staff undergoing change. Beech identified that the four styles offered by Jeffcutt (1994) are more relevant to organisational culture change than the traditional heroic leader model. These styles are the epic/heroic, the romantic, the tragic and the ironic (Beech, 2000, pp. 212-213). Boje (2001) also used these last three styles as well as comedy for analysing narrative plots in complex organisations. Boje’s interpretation draws on Paul Ricoeur’s emplotment analysis (Ricoeur, 1984). As discussed in Chapter 3 Beech’s epic or heroic style differed from Boje’s romantic, also a heroic plot, in that the epic hero is separate from the group who become integrated or liberated in the change process whereas in the romantic plot the

\(^{10}\) Refer to Lisa’s story above

\(^{11}\) Is an action, group facilitation method that may include role playing and dramatic self-presentation (Moreno & Moreno, 1975)
hero is liberated. Beech’s (p. 216) epic heroic style did not resonate with any of my respondents’ stories. The essence of this heroic style is “central, active, dynamic, and inspirational” as well as being directive, aggressive and separate from his or her “followers”. This is at odds with a facilitative approach, which is collaborative and inclusive, “acknowledging divergent or even critical views of the organization and the change process” (Beech, 2000, p. 226). As such none of us reflected the epic heroic style.

As demonstrated by the facilitator profiles above and the stories that follow, as well as my (our collective) autoethnographic story later in this chapter, the complexity of organisational culture, means that the change facilitator’s style will be a mix of romantic, tragic and ironic depending on the change, the facilitator’s organisational position, the stage of the journey of the facilitator and the tensions and contradictions of the internal role. The reader is urged to notice these different narrative styles while reading the following stories. In making these styles explicit it is hoped that practitioners will be able to respond to their current situation and be able to maintain the efficacy of their practice, to “keep on pushing. (Things will get better).” (Beech, 2000, p. 217). This self-awareness is further explored in relation to the body in professional practice in Chapter 6, specifically in the performative text The Shapeshifter.

4.3 Points of practice connection and shared learning
Another key outcome or experience of the interaction in the interviews with the other facilitators was our shared and co-learning, enriching “the “development” of self- reconfiguration, reconstruction, or transformation of self” and of the others (Chang, 2008, p. 140). As we reflected on the stories of our practice journeys we learnt of the other’s practice and had insights into our own practice and effectiveness thus further developing ourselves. "But we need to guard against any implicit assumption that self- transformation is the main outcome of such research [autoethnographic] processes” (Anderson, 2006, p. 403). In other words, the interviews which have elicited the narrative of my professional experiences and the narratives of the ‘others’ have created a better understanding of our profession through developing ourselves and developing the view of what we do and how we practice rather than reaching
Reflecting on the selection of participants and our shared journey as I conducted second interviews by phone, I sensed that the greatest shared learning occurred with Philip who I had known for five years. He made comments that demonstrated that the process had provided him the space to reflect on his practice and, importantly, to realise how effective he was as a facilitator. The interview process in itself was a developmental journey for him as well as it was for me.

I am underestimating my effectiveness aren’t I? Happy to make time for this. This talking to you about it helps me to understand the dynamics and I will be better at what I do this from talking to you about it [Interview transcript, Philip 27th January 2012].

The face-to-face interview with Jean gave me goose bumps when she recounted her spiritual journey [Journal entry, 25th October 2011]. I felt an instant connection with her because of my similar experiences. I could also relate this to her person-centred approach to facilitation, which I had begun to also practice. While the interview with Diana was over the phone, not face-to-face, I had a similar goose bumps experience when she talked about how she measured her effectiveness through her two teenage sons’ behaviour [Journal entry, 8th December 2011]. Both had never stopped talking to her and had not become a “grunting caveman” [Interview transcript, Diana 8th December 2011]. My teenage son and I have a similar relationship. This is an important aspect of our personal stance, understanding our effectiveness in our personal lives and using this as a measure of our professional effectiveness, and is discussed further in Diana’s story: From glory days... told later in the chapter. So when I reflect on my response to both these goose bump experiences I gave them a stronger meaning because of my personal lived experience. In other words we bring our personal and inner selves into our practice, and it is this embodied and reflexive self that enhances our practice. These concepts are the focus of the findings and discussion in Chapter 6.
With both the phone participants (Lisa and Diana), one of whom I had met at a conference, I also felt a strong connection, as they both used a 360 degree leadership models (Life Styles Inventory™ (LSI) - Human Synergists (Mihai et al., 2013)) to facilitate change practice. I use a model based on John Kotter’s leadership change framework (Kotter, 1996) and am accredited to use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2002). The phone interview may also have made it easier to listen to their stories without reacting to body language. It was also easier to take notes. I work in a multi-campus, regional university and am accustomed to doing most of our meetings by teleconference. I am therefore not inhibited by this medium.

### 4.4 Living narrative analysis: key findings
The aim of the analysis was to find the trace stories and antenarrative, and to re-story into living stories of our practice (Boje, 2008). These living stories are the interwoven fabric of all of the interviewees’ stories, the practitioners who co-constructed their stories with me. There were a number of steps in the analysis. Once I was in tune with the data through listening to, reading and re-reading the transcripts I then conducted a thematic analysis following Boje’s (2001, pp. 122-137) antenarrative theme analysis methodology which is described in detail in Chapter 3. In this analysis I was looking for the antenarrative, the spaces and traces between the main stories while resisting detailed coding as I did not wish to “entrap [the] stories” (Boje, 2001, p. 122). I was not seeking to develop a theory rather to identify stories and performances that were “tentative, inconclusive and questioning” (Creswell, 2007, p. 154). Finally, these stories are presented as two practice or living stories that illustrate the dimensions and tensions of our practice lives. Later in the chapter I present my living story which is a collective re-story, a revitalisation of a practice journey.

The main domains for analysis (Spradley, 1980) identified were: facilitator neutrality; internal versus external facilitator effectiveness; facilitator political awareness; measures of facilitator effectiveness. These etic (outsider) categories are not mutually exclusive and are intertwined. I then examined the emic (insider/participant’s) experience of each of these etic
“fabrications” (Boje, 2011, p. 14) as well as the tensions between and within each of the etic and emic categories. This step identified the component contrasts within the themes. While doing so, like Boje (2001, p. 14), I also looked at “the antenarrative ebb and flow of stories outside and between these types”. In looking at the flow of storytelling and the spaces and traces between the story fragments, I was trying to make sense of the struggles between the insider and outsider, of the ongoing events that were not concluded but still being explored beyond the theme analysis.

The outcome of this detailed analysis is presented in Table 5. below. The analysis shows that the most important impacts were related to the internal role and the ongoing tension in attempting to enact the cultural norm of facilitator neutrality while maintaining effectiveness, influence and political skill. Our knowledge of the organisational culture, strategic direction and underlying story, which in some ways negates our neutrality, also assists us to be effective. These concepts are further explored in the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 and further discussed later in the chapter.
Table 5. Thematic analysis showing etic and emic perspectives of facilitator practitioners
Note: none of the themes are mutually exclusive

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<td>1. Neutrality: A professional facilitator is content neutral (International Association of Facilitators competency F3)</td>
<td>This is Philip’s goal: “I am hesitant to go outside the facilitator role... Ideally it is a neutral role” Jean agrees with Philip, neutrality means “not to try and influence the outcome and being internal I know the importance of having to stand back and not try and influence the outcome in any way” ; Lisa agrees with content neutrality however this is situational (see next point)</td>
<td>If Philip does not “operate neutrally I get involved in the content, I get emotionally involved, I get passionate, I get diverted, the room is affected”; Philip accepts a “lesser result than I would like myself because I have had to maintain the neutrality of the position”; Jean’s biggest challenge, like Philip in staying in the neutral role is “about removing your own emotional responses” to things that she feels passionate about</td>
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<td>2. Neutrality: An (internal) practitioner operating neutrally is “either naïve, unrealistic and optimistic, or both” (Jay, 2007, p. 154)</td>
<td>Diana and Lisa are realistic about the role, relating it to their internal role and their expertise: “You can’t be neutral because you are filtering and analysing and compartmentalizing through your own system... Human Synergistics... psychodrama... Myer Briggs” (Diana), Diana’s emic is like Lisa’s because of the processes that they use and they know the underlying dynamics and goals of the organisation “I don’t even create any angst for myself because I know I am not” (Diana); Lisa philosophises that “maybe content neutral is not as important as the processes that ensure equal power. Even a facilitator’s biases are null and void because of the processes that you use”</td>
<td>Lisa’s overall belief is to be content neutral but there are tensions, on one hand she is “not interested in the content because I am not an engineer” whereas she is “not neutral... If I could see it was going to affect our objectives” especially regarding process maps which she has developed, where a change to the map will make it “dysfunctional” – that is when she “will argue and try and get them to shift” because she knows “what the ramifications will be”;</td>
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<td>decision that they “knew was wrong, based on previous experience with the group, organization or a similar situation with another group” (Stewart, 2006, p. 422) Note: the emic has become etic. In other words there is a tension between the professional standard and the lived practice</td>
<td>Jean feels similarly “I don’t agree with being totally neutral” as “you really got to do a bit of research” to understand the objective and to ensure that you create a “safe space” for the group</td>
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<td>All of us indicated that we “carry the confidence of people because I [we] understand the culture, the story and that stuff that is sitting underneath” (Philip) so that we “can develop trust amongst people and maybe get some outcomes that if you were an external person you may not be able to. They [we] also have access to people” so we “can go out and talk to them and understand the decisions which means that I [we] can be more strategic” (Jean), undertake “behind the scenes facilitation”, change things “on the run” aligned with “values or the overall business objectives or strategy” (Lisa);</td>
<td>While the recent studies (etic) point to internal facilitator effectiveness this is not Philip’s experience: “They don’t engage me. I don’t feel like my insights in the stuff are investigated”; whereas in an external role in Queensland he feels valued “They assume I am professional” and able “to carry out a high level function”. Note also that there is tension here between the external role being perceived as neutral</td>
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3. **Internal versus external facilitator effectiveness:** Recent Australian studies have found that the internal facilitator is more effective in long-term organisation change and learning because of their knowledge of the
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<td>organisation culture and involvement in the implementati on phase (Ball, 2004; Jay, 2007; Wardale, 2008); whereas external facilitators often perceive the goal is to achieve the client’s or organisation intended outcomes, internal facilitators are more concerned with the group owning its outcomes (Jay, 2007). Note: this also relates to the Theme 2 and Theme 5 Lisa and I (see my practice story ‘a story of interdependency’ later in the chapter) had both taken on external roles where we “missed a whole section” because we did not understand the underlying culture and were “not recipients of the work” (Lisa) – relates to the tensions in right column, in other words our emic became the etic when we were external, however our effectiveness is affected by the internal politics – see next two themes</td>
<td>Some of us take on the political role while others struggle with the politics (see tensions on the right): Lisa and Jean have great political and influencing skills “you need to understand the politics and the change. You really need to have done all the pre-work…you have to talk to the right people, make sure they are on board..Make sure the opportunity is right” …although we are not in a position of authority “we find ways around but also not having a vested interest: “we are paying this person thousands of dollars and they are generally only there to do a little piece of work…not there for the long term” (Jean); “external… has a product to sell and will tell you what they think you want” (Diana); Lisa found tension when she raised her voice against an external consultant whose style was “bullying”, at odds with the organisation’s aim for a constructive culture. Another tension is that we “are in the system so we cannot see stuff, but …you also do see stuff” and so we have a blind spot and our internal clients assume that we understand what they want (Diana).</td>
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4. *Facilitators are political*: Kirk and Broussine (2000, p. 13) propose “that organisations are political, facilitation is political and facilitators are political” while Although our central role is to ‘provide a forum to shift power relations’ and therefore to act politically and understand the politics, for all of us apart from Jean our greatest tension is speaking up or being “acknowledged or appreciated” (Diana) to undertake this role
Gregory and Romm (2001, p. 457) propose that a facilitator’s central role is to provide “a forum for shifting power relations”. Note: this relates to all of the etic themes above and to the next theme.

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<td>to get things done. We work with relationships, they are very important. We do a lot of collaborating..” to get heard about the confrontational external facilitator (see above) “I did it in a politically appropriate way” (Lisa); “you need to work at every level” “I have a lot of influence over people and I think it is because of my credibility”.. “I have very visible sponsorship from our Chief Executive” (Jean)</td>
<td>which impacts on our effectiveness; “I don’t know how I ignored it [politics] so blissfully for so long…I was naïve about the layers of politics…so it has an impact on my efficiency and my effectiveness” (Diana) (also see next theme). Philip resists acting politically as “they want to roll out and do things by spin, but I am against organisational spin….I am more about honouring the local situation.”, “The higher up the bureaucracy the more difficult it is to stay in a space that is…..productive and forward moving….they give….limitations, roadblocks,…regulations and constraints”; “I was shut down and sidelined about six weeks ago and now they are starting to invite me back in and I don’t know if I want to go back in there”. (Also see Diana’s story: ‘From glory days.’; emic at left; my autoethnographic story later in the chapter; and the Shapeshifter poem in Chapter 6)</td>
<td>5. Facilitator effectiveness All of us told stories either about our personal measures of</td>
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<td><em>can be measured:</em> Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) identified the importance of personal attitude and behavioural change in organisation change. Therefore an internal facilitator’s long term effectiveness may be measured by participant and organisation behavioural and cultural change; “as practitioners, researchers and clients we can get smarter from systematic evaluation, building a synthesis of what we know works and what doesn’t work” (Zouwen, 2010, p. 45). In Project 2 I discuss evaluation of participatory programs as effectiveness or about our participants’ learning, growth and feedback. In other words all of us except Lisa told stories of personal and behavioural change rather than relating formal measures: “The individual stories stand out for me, I am quite attracted to the fact that you throw a pebble in the pond and you change an individual and the ripples can expand” (Diana, first interview); while Diana, like Lisa, uses LSI and 360 degree feedback as measures of improvement she offers many stories from the workplace as well as her ‘layers of effectiveness’ (‘From glory days.’) “A lot of what I do doesn’t run to stated outcomes and sometimes wonder how it all went but how do I know? I get stories years later..” and feedback at the end of sessions (Philip) Although Jean has put performance measures in place she realises “it is about empowering people and we have some really good stories coming out”, for example the two men from non-English speaking backgrounds who went back to TAFE to study English. Lisa is the most explicit about using data – the Australian Business Excellence Framework, safety surveys, process reviews, and the LSI instrument to gauge whether they are “growing the blue”.</td>
<td>we told stories of behavioural change, reputation and repeat business, and participant feedback, we also need to be able to demonstrate organisational impact to senior leaders using evaluation measures such as 360 degree feedback instruments (LSI), climate/culture and safety surveys, risk registers, process reviews and participant surveys; and while Project 2 attempts to measure effectiveness to senior managers through a story telling technique because of the politics and power imbalance <em>rebel stories</em> cannot be told (Chapter 5). Philip saw tension working to the organisation’s KPIs when he was asked to “put pressure on the people to get their KPIs” and he said to the manager “you are asking me to be the pawn of the organisation rolling out your agenda rather than rolling out a good process” As indicated above and in her story (Diana’s story) Diana struggles to have her effectiveness recognised because of</td>
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<td>these are the programs that we facilitate. There are a vast array of formal measures that change facilitators use (see right hand column) In Chapter 5 I critique the use of the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique together with story deconstruction analysis as methods of evaluating long term change programs. I conclude that these methods and other participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&amp;E) approaches (Dart, 2000) will assist facilitators to evaluate the efficacy of their practice and the impact of their</td>
<td>the “subtle things” she does. Lisa is a skilled process consultant focused on total quality management through process mapping and LSI, which is in tension with the “more transformational approaches” that she is now seeking because the culture is not changing as much as she had expected</td>
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<td>programs; however involving senior management in the process may inhibit staff participation and facilitator practice (see Theme 4) – the etic and emic are in circularity.</td>
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Discovering these cultural themes provided a preliminary outline of the tensions, contradictions, and efficacy of our practice. From this analysis emerged the two ‘living stories’ below which, outline the cultural context within which we practice, both from the etic (the outsider, the profession) and the emic (the insider, our organisational practice):

- **Facilitator neutrality and the internal versus external facilitator role: a story of interdependency** – this is an aggregate story constructed from my practice and informed by my respondents’ practice; and

- **From glory days to being stuck in the ‘system’: storying our effectiveness and political awareness** – this is Diana’s story which is lightly ‘stitched’ together from her two interviews.

I would not have been able to assemble these stories if I had not undertaken the interviews of others and the thematic analysis. The central narrative of both stories is that the internal role impacts our effectiveness, both positively and negatively, and impacts our neutrality. Our knowledge of the organisational culture, relationships, strategic direction and underlying story assists us to be more effective in our interventions. This is further explicated in stories and discussion below. However, we are also part of the culture, of the institutional story and this impacts our political skills, both positively and negatively.

### 4.4.1 Facilitator neutrality and the internal versus external facilitator role: a story of interdependency

In this section I tell a recent story (November 2014) of my practice and then relate it to the participants’ stories of being an internal versus an external facilitator and practising, or attempting to, practice neutrality. In doing so the etic and emic perspectives of facilitator neutrality and internal versus external facilitator practice will be discussed as these are intrinsically interrelated.

The following is my practice story [Journal entry, November 2014]:

This past month I have been facilitating workplace culture workshops both within my organisation and as an external consultant. It has been good to get back into my practice. It has enhanced my reflexivity and provided clarity to the current impasse in my analysis of our stories.
“It was a shame that it ended on a negative note because my staff were really positive about the chance to work together as a team to identify the culture that they want. Otherwise they were all very happy and working more as a team after the workshop. I could see the difference”, said Maureen, the CEO.

“Yes, I was unaware of the dynamic between the two teams. I played right into that one believing that team X was communicating really well because that’s what they said they were doing”, I (Hedy) said.

“Actually they have communication issues and they would not have been able to mention them because of their team leader. Comparing team X with team Y because team Y identified communication issues really finished on a negative note. There is great tension between these two teams”, Maureen explained.

“Yes, I realised that and it only surfaced right at the end when we had run out of time”, I (Hedy) said.

The story above is about an external facilitation that I conducted with a not for profit community development organisation. It illustrates how, as an external consultant, I “missed a whole section. Because (I) just didn’t understand it” [Interview transcript, Lisa 3rd February 2012]. This is in sharp contrast with the two workshops that I co-facilitated in my Department this month:

“We’ll take a break and when we come back I invite you to divide up into your work teams. In this session we will identify the team culture that we want and the actions that will assist us to maintain what’s working and to create momentum towards our desired culture”, I (Hedy) also identified examples of some of the work teams who could make up a workshop group.

I was surprised when I came back from the tea break and there was one group of about twelve people. “What areas do you represent?” I (Hedy) asked.

“We are all from the one portfolio area so we’ll work together”, a long-term staff member with considerable expertise responded.

“I am thinking that there are three groups here. Firstly, the Indigenous group will need to be able to work together as one so that they may discuss their own cultural and behavioural issues and come up with their own solutions”, I (Hedy) suggested.

“But there are only three of them and they may feel excluded”, she quickly retorted.

“No, by working together they will feel much more included. How about you (the Indigenous team) work on this table?” I (Hedy) stood my ground and calmly guided the group.
In the final configuration there were three groups. The actions that came from each of these three groups were different. The Indigenous team came up with some powerful stories of how old their culture is, and how important it was for them as a team to educate the rest of the department, students and other areas of the university about these stories. I argue that this valuable insight would have been missed or been diluted in a larger, disparate group. As an external facilitator I would not have been aware of the importance of maintaining this group’s integrity.

As an internal facilitator, both as a recent member of this Department and through my previous twelve years’ experience in the university, I was aware of the organisational politics, the group dynamics, the vision and strategic intent of our executive, and the need for a change in the culture of these teams. Without this content knowledge and expertise, like Lisa I may have missed a whole section, as I did as an external consultant the previous week. It is this “contextualizing” by an internal facilitator who has “broader experience than the participants” together with an idea of the implications across other departments, that was identified by Ball (2004, p. 264) as being an important component and benefit of the internal role, particularly in “large, complex organisations”. Stewart (2006, p. 422) also recognised that there are situations where the facilitator would not allow the group to make a decision that they “knew was wrong, based on previous experience with the group, organization or a similar situation with another group”. In other words if I remained in a process consultant role which is a neutral role, and did not bring in my organisational content knowledge then the group’s ability to affect change would have been limited.

The story above and findings from the thematic analysis (Table 5.) illustrate that for four of us our emic or lived experience is not a neutral practice. As such we are able to contextualise and to challenge the group’s assumptions. In contrast when I stayed in the neutral, process consultant role as an external facilitator, it did not benefit the behavioural change that the client was seeking.

There are implications from these findings not only in terms of facilitator neutrality but also in terms of the internal and external facilitator role. Of
interest, when analysing the transcripts for the etic and our emic and the
tensions between these two, I noticed that Diana, Lisa and Jean all responded
similarly to the question about facilitator neutrality. Not only did they, for
different and similar reasons, agree that a facilitator cannot always be neutral,
they always answered this question in relation to the difference between the
internal and external facilitator role. In other words, what they were indicating
was that an internal facilitator is not a neutral role, whereas external
facilitators are often perceived by senior management to be neutral. “I get a
sense that the client is looking for somebody who is perceived as neutral and
when you are neutral you come from outside” [Interview transcript, Diana 7th
February 2012]. However, because the external facilitator is not able to
‘contextualise’ with insider organisational knowledge their effectiveness may
be constrained, which is what I experienced in the story above. These
concepts are further investigated in Chapters 5 and 6.

It is Philip however who challenged our (Hedy, Jean, Lisa and Diana) views
on facilitator neutrality. He is living out of the theoretical construct of
maintaining neutrality, that Ball (2004); (Jay, 2007); and (Wardale, 2008) and
now I have questioned, and it is his greatest struggle.

I carry the confidence of people because I understand the culture, the
language, the story and all that sort of stuff that is sitting underneath all
that is happening. So that is an advantage and does help for me to be
trusted in a way. (Philip)

So what you are saying is that you have knowledge of the organisational
politics, culture and dynamics? (Hedy)

Yeah that’s right, the underlying dynamics so that’s an advantage
provided you can maintain a distance from it. (Philip)

OK say some more about that (Hedy)

It’s so easy to get involved, to find oneself in the content if you have an
opinion or a passion around an area. (Philip) [Interview transcript,
Philip, 27th January 2012]

I am hesitant to go outside the facilitator role….Ideally it is a neutral
role [Interview transcript, Philip, 17th October 2011]
By maintaining a distance from the content Philip is attempting to maintain neutrality and not to get into the politics. I could leave the analysis here. It supports the findings of Jay (2007) who concludes that ignoring the power relations and political nature of facilitation by maintaining a detached position may be ‘naïve’ or even ‘dangerous’. However, I do not think that Philip is naïve. He is an experienced facilitator who likes working at the local level, helping people and creating “hundreds of healthy conversations” and a way forward for them [Interview Transcript, Philip 27th January 2012]. He resists becoming a servant of the organisation, being a “pawn rolling out their agenda instead of a good process” rather he is a “servant of the mission” of the organisation. He understands the underlying dynamics and culture of the organisation but will sacrifice outcomes for a “lesser result than I would like myself because I have had to maintain the neutrality of the position”. As such he is resisting taking on an internal politician role. This has come with tragic consequences because he has been sidelined and shut out of important high level strategic planning and he has taken many emotional hits.

There is one process that I was involved in, they tried to drag me into the content and I wouldn’t go there, I was shut down and sidelined and now they are starting to invite me back in and I don’t know if I want to go back in there. [Interview transcript, Philip, 27th January 2012]

Philip’s story illustrates in part why it is difficult for an internal facilitator to maintain a neutral stance. As long-term internal facilitators we are all passionate about our organisations. We carry “the culture, the language, the story” (Philip); we often “have an investment in the content” (Lisa); we are “passionate and vocal about our beliefs” (Jean); with a commitment to create a “constructive” (Lisa and Diana), “safe” (Jean and Lisa) and “healthy” (Philip and Hedy) culture. What is between the folds of our stories is our institutional story of which we are a part. We have all been in our organisations, which all have layers of bureaucracy, for so long that we have been inculcated and institutionalised. We are part of the institutional story and part of the politics. We are not neutral.
4.4.2 From glory days to being stuck in the ‘system’: storying our effectiveness and political awareness

Diana told this story, with a little help from Hedy, Lisa, Philip and Jean. Diana was the last to be interviewed.

*I feel like I have been doing this type of work forever (in public sector organisations). In the early 90’s I started to move into facilitation and learning and development and from there I have morphed into doing change stuff along the way. Early on I had some really fabulous offers and learning experiences. It was spectacular. There is nothing like it out there now. They were the glory days. I have had an amazing apprenticeship. All of my opportunities have added grist to the mill. My mantra is to develop and know myself before I can develop as an effective practitioner.*

*I (Hedy) was impressed by the amount of learning and development that Diana had achieved. It resonated with the diverse experiences and lifelong learning that defined all of us. She was confident about the difference that she was making. So I asked her: Tell me about how you know you are effective?*

*Diana responded: The individual stories stand out for me, I am quite attracted to the fact that you throw a pebble in the pond and you change an individual and the ripples can expand. I have leaders who come back after a year and others have noticed their behavioural change and they are enjoying their lives more. I get stories like that on a regular basis that make you think you are making a difference, that give you that warm inner glow.*

*I also have a number of layers of effectiveness. Layer one of my effectiveness is that I am the mother of teenage boys and I measure my effectiveness by their effectiveness. At no stage have either of them stopped talking to me. I have been able to keep the communication lines open where other parents share stories of this grunting caveman living with them for a few years.*

*I (Hedy) felt an emotional reaction to this as my teenage son and I have a similar relationship. I would never have thought of using this as a measure of my effectiveness as a facilitator. What a wonderful gift this was from Diana.*

*This was my last interview and we had all told stories to illustrate our effectiveness, however Lisa was the only one who talked about the data that she used. I was curious whether Diana used metrics and asked: So what metrics do you use to measure your effectiveness? Diana responded: I know when I get 4 out of 5 for programs that I’m doing well, however it’s the behavioural change stories that stand out for me.*

*Diana continued: That has been the interesting thing about my effectiveness, some of it is so subtle and others don’t notice it but I do.*
It is to my detriment to my corporate ladder that I am climbing here, but that is the box I am not going back into. I had a bit of a setback this week. I went for a promotion and didn’t get an interview within this internal HR group that I work and that is a low point. They don’t appreciate the subtle things that I do. Sometimes you are not acknowledged or appreciated in organisations. [I (Hedy) thought, “This is Philip’s and my story”.] I rang this particular friend and she said if I do that then I will have to let go of who I am and go back and she said, “Well you can’t go back, you have burnt the box”, and using the metaphor “you haven’t even put the box in the recycle bin, you can’t pull it out to fix it. You incinerated it”.

Another low point is where I have been asked or tasked to sell the corporate line and that is a job of a public servant, you are required to follow the government of the day and I am employed to help them implement the policies that the people of our State want implemented. They don’t appreciate the skill set that I have that I could use to work for them. [I (Hedy) remember Philip’s struggle with not feeling validated and not wishing to be a “pawn rolling out” the agenda of the organisation’s senior managers].

I wonder to myself (Hedy) if Diana (all of us) would get more recognition if she was more politically aware and more overt about her achievements? I asked her: How does being internal and the organisational politics impact upon your effectiveness and recognition?

Diana responded: Oh yes your question is spot on. I do find as an internal facilitator the internal politics does impact [on our work and our career] and as an external all of that has got to have been dealt with before you are brought in. When you are internal you are in the ‘system’ so you cannot see stuff, but you are in the system and you [also] do see stuff.

It is the most challenging bit for me personally and professionally at the moment because the…I suppose I am at that point where I didn’t know what I didn’t know and I am now aware and it’s “Oh my god how can I make a difference here because of that?” So I don’t know what made that come to the surface. I don’t know how I ignored it so blissfully for so long. I think what’s the challenge for me at the moment I was naive about the layers of politics. So there’s a level of frustration as well. I have put a body of work together and you have said, “yes you love it and you want it” but I can’t get working with it until this happens. So it has an impact on my efficiency and effectiveness.

I thought to myself “So you do a lot of work developing leaders however senior leaders don’t notice you, you find it hard to see up the layers and they cannot see down. How ironic”. [Returning to Lisa’s profile maybe working from a position of equal power we can communicate our ideas up the line more effectively?]
Postscript: Diana left her organisation to do a Masters by research in 2013 about a year after our interview. She emailed me and said “I’ve made the jump”.

This is a story that can be interpreted in many ways. There are at least two trace stories within this story. The first trace story is centred on the incident when Diana did not get an interview for a job. Although she defined her effectiveness in so many different and powerful ways, and was confident and proud of her effectiveness and abilities, the glory days were over. She realised that she was not noticed anymore. Although she had wonderful learning experiences and expertise, had been mentored and supported by inspirational leaders, she was now stuck in the system, unaware of the layers of politics and unable to make a difference. She had burnt the box. Denzin (1989, p. 129) refers to this as a “cumulative epiphany”, which represents “eruptions, or reactions, to events that have been going on for a long period of time”.

As found in the previous story and in my collective story that follows, the irony for Diana and for all of us, as practitioners we become institutionalised. This is an aspect of the culture that we are trying to change. We do not always notice things. Apart from Jean who has “great political skills”, we are all affected by the politics [Interview transcript, Jean 25th October 2011]. We are expected to facilitate change that we do not always support. We are part of our institution’s story. We get “sold the party line” [Interview transcript, Diana 8th December 2011]. While I could jump to the conclusion and interpret this as being caused by positional power and a lack of political skills, it would be naïve to rely on one cause or on one interpretation. All of these variables have come together to create Diana’s practice dilemma. And there may be many more.

Furthermore, if leaders and senior managers do not see the “subtle things” we do, how do we get recognised? This is not just recognition for promotion but
also recognition that assists us to keep going and to feel that we are effective so that we can continually improve and achieve outcomes for the people in our organisations and so that we may sustain practice. This leads to the second trace story in Diana’s story, which is concerned with our effectiveness.

Apart from Jean, and to a lesser extent Lisa, we do not get noticed and our skills are not appreciated. All of us, Diana especially, illustrated our effectiveness by telling personal stories, and stories of the behavioural change and emotional reactions of our participants (also see our collective story that follows). One among many stories stands out:

Two men that were over 60 who have lived in this country most of their lives, have gone to TAFE\(^{12}\) out of their own money to learn English so they can develop their skills because they are now inspired and motivated (as a result of the change program). That is what change is about. That is how you shift a culture. [Interview transcript, Jean, 25\(^{th}\) October 2011]

Lisa was the one practitioner who mainly measured her outcomes in hard data. However she had recently noticed that they were not getting the expected results. She was now looking for more transformational facilitation approaches. Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) identified the importance of personal attitude and behavioural change in organisational change. The point here is that behavioural change or personal change in our participants was considered by all of us the most important measure of our effectiveness and it is best measured by the stories from and about our participants rather than numerical data or facts. This finding calls into question the use of more extensive, formal and informal, evaluation data collection, analysis and reporting methods to validate our development programs and demonstrate our effectiveness. This is the focus of Chapter 5.

This analysis and storying of the interviews has revealed that there are two important recurrent themes in our practice stories. Firstly, facilitator neutrality for an internal practitioner is a difficult and unrealistic position as

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\(^{12}\) TAFE refers to the state government department of technical and further education which provides predominantly for vocational education
we are part of our institutional stories and culture, and because facilitation and organisations are political. Secondly, our effectiveness is also impacted by the politics and although we know that we are effective and we can tell stories of our participants’ behavioural change and growth, we cannot always demonstrate it in ‘hard’ metrics, mostly because it is “subtle” (Diana), “behind the scenes” (Lisa) facilitation aimed at “connecting with the heart and mind” (Jean). For all of us, apart from Jean, the internal politics impact our work and our sense of self-worth. As such if we are responsible for providing a forum to shift power relations then an understanding of power, power relations and how to work with and recognise them is important to our practice.

…the politics and timing are critical. As an external you don’t get the opportunity that an internal gets to ensure that your interventions or strategies or whatever I am taking carriage of them and objectives get, yeah, the timing of that. When people are working or busy you can see when they have a break, they are free or going for coffee. I can see I need to ask this question. So things get changed on the run…..You are more fluid, you move in a more organic way, be responsive from that perspective…I can affect things more internally than external because of ‘behind the scenes facilitation’. [Interview transcript, Lisa, 3rd February 2012]

This leads to the first unanswered questions that require further investigation. As we are expected to provide a forum to shift power relations and to be politically aware, the findings of this study raise the following questions:

- As internal practitioners is it possible or even feasible to shift power relations, importantly at the senior level?
- What is our theory of power? Would this help our political skills?

These concepts are further explored in Chapters 5 and 6 and are the focus of my poetic performance text “The Shapeshifter” in Chapter 6. An understanding of power and how to use it, shape it and shift power relations is core to our work. All of the interviews and stories demonstrated that we know how to be learning facilitators but how do we practice critical facilitation? This is the central theme of this exegesis.
While writing these stories and undertaking the analysis and research while also practicing as an internal facilitator a collective story began to unfold. This is an autoethnographic story of an internal organisational change facilitator’s, my practice and the practice of my respondents. This story is a co-performance as we are all co-performers in our own and other’s lives and so this text belongs to the reader and to other practitioners who find in this text parts of themselves and parts of others just like them (Denzin, 1997, 2014). Central to our stories was my story. The process that I used to compile the story is discussed in Afterwords, the section that follows the story. I have included it here instead of in the methodology chapter because it is part of my findings and demonstrates how writing the autoethnographic story has influenced my practice life.

4.4.3 The story of an internal change facilitator
This story is told by Hedy and for Philip, Jean, Lisa and Diana.

August 2014:  
It’s Sunday and I am studying again. Having spent all morning writing and re-writing my story I am heading off to the pool for my midday swim, which, as my 90-year-old aunt would say about her whiskey at night, punctuates my Sunday.

My head is exploding, how do I write something like Carolyn (Ellis, 2004)? While I do not really want to be ‘evocative’, like she emphasises, my story is boring and sounds terribly bureaucratic (well I am a bureaucrat) and I can’t work out whether it’s tragic or ironic, no, it’s sad because when I started out over 30 years ago, it was romantic. By romantic I mean that I felt like I was liberated, in control of my journey, my experience, my work life (Boje, 2001). I was passionate, if not a little fiery about what I did - training and facilitating diverse community groups and government agencies to prepare for an exotic animal disease, especially the ones that could be spread by feral animals. It was a very important role for Australia’s economic security. It was romantic eleven (11) years ago when I started in organisational development at the university.

I still find it amusing when I am at a party or meeting and my work with feral pigs comes up, people are intrigued how I crossed over from working with feral animal and wildlife diseases and then natural resource management to facilitating organisational change and leadership development in a university. And I always say “well before I was working with people to fix their environmental issues and now I am working with people to fix their own issues. It’s not really different.”

Back to the pool.
I run into my old friend, Bill, who has been retired for a couple of years – jaded from working on one committee after the other and discussing the same environmental issues. We worked together on the same government mandated environment committee over 15 years ago.

He says “You know I can’t believe how you have changed. You are so calm now”. What he really means is that I was loud, aggressive, bossy and always right. Bill’s always been very tactful and I’ve learned lots from him about working with diverse perspectives, the work that underpins a change facilitator’s practice (Mindell, 1995).

I laugh and reply “Well you know I have done a lot of work on myself since I became serious about being a professional facilitator. I realised that the way I had always worked wasn’t working anymore. And so I did a lot of formal facilitation training and accreditation (Technology of Participation; Zenergy; Certified Professional Facilitator with International Association of Facilitators to name a few), attended lots of conferences (Australasian Facilitators Network and International Association of Facilitators) and set up the local facilitators’ network where we get to practice every month. Oh, and being on a board for over 15 years has also helped me to become more self-aware and to value all perspectives”.

Bill replies “Yeah, I remember when you facilitated that action plan for our local environmental group in 2006. I couldn’t believe then how much more organised and grounded you were, and we got some great outcomes and a good action plan. They are still using parts of it”. Bill’s told me this several times before and it’s validating. I have since successfully facilitated a number of community groups. I find that “the more I step outside to facilitate and connect with others, the more effective I can be in my own organisation” [Hedy, Interview transcript, October 2011].

“I know I remember your surprise. That was after I had completed a few modules of the Technology of Participation, which is an intentional way of facilitating (Spencer, 1989). I’d also joined the Australasian Facilitators Network (list serve and conferences). It was the beginning of growth and development for me; I’d found my passion. That’s why I decided to do the doctorate in 2009. I was so passionate about what I was doing I just wanted to learn more”.

“How’s the doctorate going?” Bill says. I shudder, everyone keeps asking me. It’s hard to explain that I am doing an autoethnographic study and it takes time to work out what that really means and how I write about myself, without sounding introspective and self-indulgent (both Ellis (2004) and Hogan (2000b) in their autoethnographic studies also felt this), which in some way it is.

“Oh I am busy writing and hope to finish next year” and then I change the subject to something about my children. “Alana has been in San Francisco for over two years, and Kiaran finished high school last year and is heading over there in a week or so and then I am going over for a month”. Gosh, I
recall that I was supposed to finish this when he finished high school. I then think of Diana, who is a mother of teenage boys who have never stopped communicating with her – there’s no “grunting cavemen” in her house [Interview transcript, Diana, 8th December, 2011]. This is one of her measures of effectiveness, which resonates with my relationship with my family. I am pleased that she shared this with me as it’s also been reaffirming – another measure of my effectiveness.

Bill’s like my dear friend and colleague, Mike. In 2004 I first met Mike when I attended Technology of Participation (Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA)) training. He was one of the trainers and he and his co-facilitator blew me away because they were so skilled. He has continued to be an informal mentor, critical friend and grounding force, as has the community of practice of the ICA and the International Association of Facilitators. Having mentors and being part of learning communities has been a key ingredient in my growth and the growth of my interviewees:

I was mentored by a really different way out boss who invested in my professional development, which gave me a curiosity in learning about myself. [Interview transcript, Lisa, 9th December 2011]

I commenced my doctorate in 2009 and in this year there were a number of critical incidents and turning points that helped me to view and change my practice and the values that I take into a facilitated intervention – workshop, meeting, learning program etcetera. Two events stand out in that year.

My first critical incident in 2009:
I was asked to facilitate a School (academic department) planning retreat. I declined because the organisers had set the agenda and the facilitation approach (ORID or Focused Conversation (Stanfield, 2000a)) with no intention for the participants’ learning and growth nor was there any consideration for my process expertise (Schein, 1988). The goal of the learning facilitator is mutual learning and development (MacKenzie, 2011; Schwarz, 2002). As a learning/change facilitator I, like Joe Raelin (2006) could see the importance of the role of the facilitator in praxis whose orientation is toward individual and group learning, more than just organisational outcomes. Spending time with the client in contracting for what the participants and the client wants are also very important and I was not given the opportunity to do this...”because you are internal the client assumes that you know what they want” [Interview transcript, Diana, 7th February 2012]. Roger Schwarz (2002) stresses that this is an important phase which when short-circuited often results in problems in the facilitation process. So I recommended Mike and he took the job as an external consultant. Unlike me he was given the opportunity to spend time with the client identifying what was required and how to plan the workshop to get the best outcomes. I laughed afterwards when I asked one of the participants how it went. She said “Well I don’t know really why we got a facilitator because he didn’t really look like he was doing anything. We did the work and got a really good plan”. “Wow” I thought “Mike was really successful because he was invisible”. Facilitation means “to make things easy” and that’s what Mike had done (Rees, 2005, p. 11).
My second critical incident in 2009:
“How was the leadership course?” I asked John, my Director who had been on an external retreat for senior managers in the sector. “It was fantastic. I learned so much about myself and was really challenged by the facilitator who was really skilled and asked excellent questions”. Up until this point John had not really understood the depth of skill required to facilitate. This was my opportunity to have a “learning conversation” about the key aspects of her practice and their relevance to my practice and to unpack the tensions and misunderstanding that John had about my role as an internal facilitator (MacKenzie, 2011, p. 85).

“Oh, was she? What did she do that was so good and what did she do that was different from what I do?” I inquired, genuinely curious. “She was a passionate facilitator with a psychology degree as an added bonus who seamlessly (not overtly) facilitated us - a difficult group of senior university managers, by creating a safe space and ways of working together. She trusted us to stray from the set path and shared discussion techniques – deflection being key, processes for change and vision statements. She counseled me and told me to “put my solution gun away”- sometimes you need someone else to tell you”. I’d been telling John this for the past 18 months!

“I now appreciate the tools and techniques inside the role” he said, “however, I prefer invisible or seamless to overt facilitation”. He was implying that my facilitation was more overt. “Your agendas have too much information in them.” I replied “That’s because you always want to plan everything to the last minute and I have tried to tell you that things don’t always go to pre-determined agendas or outcomes. I feel like “I don’t have the freedom or power of an external facilitator, and I can’t say what an external facilitator can say – the risks are greater than I can take” (Schwarz, 2005, p. 30)” I also reflected that I am an extravert and can often be ‘overt’ instead of subtle. This was a great learning experience for me.

I then asked him “I am pleased that we had this conversation. Thank you. What can we do differently as a result of it?” “I will have more trust in you as you do get the outcomes” said John. “I will be conscious of stepping back and letting the group discussion and event flow more without needing to intervene as much” I promised.

This was a great stepping off point to my next turning point – taking on a more person-centred approach to facilitation:
Later that year (2009) the International Association of Facilitators matched me with a formal mentor, Dale Hunter, who is well-known internationally for her person-centred approach to facilitation through her person-centred training, Zenergy, and books (Hunter, 2007).

“Have you looked at Glyn Thomas’ model (Thomas, 2008a)? I think it is very relevant to what you are doing in your doctorate?” This and other advice from Dale about my research was invaluable together with the experience of undertaking her training in 2010 and 2011. I realised that facilitator
education and practice was layered. I could just use technical, formulaic tools; or I could be more intentional in my approach using theory-based approaches such as Technology of Participation; or I could become more self-aware and facilitate others to go deeper themselves using a person-centred approach, such as Zenergy; or I could really challenge my assumptions and biases and those of my participants and groups by using critical or learning facilitation.

“Hedy, can you please try not to make any comments about anyone or anything during the next three days (of the Facilitation Masterclass). This is your ‘leading/learning edge’” instructed Dale before the masterclass had even commenced and she said this in front of others. “Oh, OK” I said, I was fuming and went outside for a walk. This was in late 2010.

In 2011 Dale and I co-facilitated a masterclass at the North American International Association of Facilitators Network Conference as well as my first “Critical Facilitation” workshop (Project 3, Chapter 6). “How about you consider adding the value of ‘equal worth’ to the validity checking model for participants? This is the premise for my work with groups” suggested Dale. (This was added to the Workshop, see Chapter 6). “Yes, this is the reason why you asked me not to talk about people in that masterclass last year. In judging others I was not treating them with ‘equal worth’ and I was being ‘attentionally violent’ which is what you said Otto Scharmer identified (http://www.blog.ottoscharmer.com/?p=18) as not honouring our authentic self or highest potential or that of others”. I had to change my values and the way I treated others before I could become an effective facilitator, let alone a learning facilitator.

September 2014:
In the midst of writing my ‘collective’ story of my life as a change facilitator I attended a workshop in North America, which was for experienced change facilitators. The focus was on working on the change facilitator’s character (or true nature) and presence because, beyond the tools and techniques that we use, it is our authentic self (as displayed in our character and presence) that underpins our facilitation practice. This was deep inner work, similar to the person-centred approach to facilitation. It also offered an additional dimension to the critical facilitator approach because it stripped bare my “bark” and allowed me to identify my “sapling” or true nature (Conner, 2013, p. 8) which assisted me to identify my biases and assumptions – the critical facilitator approach (Chapter 6).

What did I discover was my true nature and presence? I asked my daughter before I attended the workshop “What do you think are the main aspects of my character?” She quickly replied “You are bossy but if I was in an emergency I’d want you in the lead”. So what did I hear? - “bossy”. I have always been told and believe that I am a direct and bossy person so I was pleased when the lead facilitator called me a “no-nonsense person”. It is a lot softer and resonates for me as part of my character and presence. It had been a long journey illustrated by my romantic story above. In the final reflection with my learning partner on the program the description of my core
did not surprise me and resonates with my core role as a change facilitator. It also aligns with the ‘service ideal’ of disciplines [(Goldstein, 1994)] on Foucault. I wrote:

I am in service to others so that they can develop themselves. This is my central core and always has been. I have always wanted to develop myself and am on a journey of lifelong learning. And now I want to share this with others (September, 2014).

My learning partner described my presence:
“I really like the way you are very thoughtful and insightful, and deliberate in what you say”. We discussed this and agreed that my presence was also “inquisitive” (Personal Communication, anonymous, 20th September, 2014).

Fast forward to November 2014 and reflecting back over some of the incidents of the past four years:
I have been a change manager for the past twelve (12) months. That’s my title - I am managing change not facilitating change. I haven’t facilitated a workshop or a learning program for the past 12 months (this was before I wrote my practice story of being an internal and external facilitator this month). I am facilitating change from the edges, building capability in our managers by getting them into leadership and professional development programs – it’s “behind the scenes facilitation” [Interview transcript, Lisa 9th December, 2011]. And so I am still a learning facilitator using professional development as a lynch pin for behavioural change which is fundamental for cultural change.

“We’ll have to change the service culture of the university to survive” senior management stated at their strategy review last month. My senior manager is surprised when I show her what progress I had made on service culture in the three (3) years I was in the role.

“It’s as if they have just found out how important service culture is and are not interested in anything that happened before, all the work and development that you did?” says John, my former Director. I reply “Oh well, it’s OK, they don’t notice the “subtle things I do” [Interview transcript, Diana 8th December 2011]. They don’t ask the staff who have undertaken professional development and created service standards whether things have improved. They’re not interested in staff success stories. They didn’t want to publish most of the participants’ Most Significant Change stories from the <X> Culture Program because they didn’t paint the university in a favourable light (see Chapter 5). We just need to be more intentional and planned in evaluating our programs and interventions. We’re in a KPI driven world. I am here for the people while trying to implement the vision of senior management – it’s a no win situation and a lonely place to be sometimes. At the same time I do not wish to be a “pawn rolling out their agenda” [Interview transcript, Philip 17th October 2011]

“I remember when you facilitated the Vice Chancellor’s Forum – was that in 2010?” says John. “Yes I think so” I say. “That was so successful, I
remember the stories that you told to get them walking in the students’ shoes. You really scared me because I thought we were going to have to do a role play (the Vice-Chancellor also gave this feedback on the day – selecting appropriate interventions for senior managers is another skill required of an organisational change facilitator). You stood your ground and had a great presence on that day. That workshop and the one you held for the orientation working party really stand out for me as we got terrific outcomes. Everyone was in the ‘zone’.

“Thanks John. Yes I remember the Vice Chancellor and one of the Deans coming up after the workshop and thanking me. They said “you really nailed it”. At least I was effective in that forum although I haven’t really had many other chances to work at that senior management level”. I reflect that the main reason I was effective was that I did not give up my power by playing the ‘I am at a lower level card’ (positional power) nor did I think “I am less effective because I am an internal consultant”. I share my insights with John “Like other organisations, including the Board that I was on, senior management view external consultants as coming with more expertise and objectivity than internal facilitators (see Diana’s ‘Glory days’ story above). I know that you got so much out of that external consultant on the leadership program. Maybe they are right?” I sigh.

I think about these successes as being part of my skilled facilitator, sincere and romantic self. Then I think about my failures as my ironic self, sometimes feeling like I am “never able to overcome the darkness” (Boje, 2001, p. 109).

“I’ve had a few failures too. When I reflect on them, especially the one with the School (academic department) in 2011 (within the Faculty in which I am studying) I realise that they were caused by my awareness of my lack of power and I was afraid of being judged because my former research supervisors were in the group – I really shouldn’t have taken the role as it was not ethical. Being internal I think that there are some jobs that I shouldn’t do because of the power differential, ethics or where I need to be more courageous and not play into that. Does that make sense?” I ask John. “Yes, I have the same situation because I work with and facilitate more senior managers and I have had to gain credibility and to make sure that I pick my times to speak up and when to let them take the lead” says John.

I think being effective is a lot about influencing and about having credibility and earning people’s trust (Jean’s response to whether internal facilitators are more or less effective than external facilitators – [Interview transcript, 7th February 2012]).

“How are you liking your new role? What does a change manager do?” asks Lucy, a middle manager in the university. “Well, it is very different from what I have been used to. I think I am still making a difference however it seems slower, I still view myself as facilitating learning but I feel like I don’t have much influence any more. I am undertaking impact and risk assessments, which are OK, but I’m not really passionate about that. I am more than ever aware of my position in the organisation and that I really don’t have much
authority” (Diana’s story earlier in the chapter illustrates and interprets this issue for us).

I also think to myself “in this position I am unable to ‘shift power relations’ which is core to my role of facilitating organisational change. That’s why I wrote the ‘Shapeshifter poem’ (Chapter 6) to explain how I was feeling”.

“That’s interesting. I never thought of it like that. So what can you do to change that?” asks Lucy. “I can suck it up and play the political game allowing senior managers to have power over than power with me; I can remain calm and influence where I can (a key role of a change facilitator is to be an ‘influencer’ (Conner, 2013)); I can act more like a critical facilitator - challenging their assumptions and biases (but I’ve tried that a few times and didn’t get a great response from senior management – so I now reframe discussions and influence where I can); or I can leave (like Diana has done, email January 2013)”. I say.

“Oh, that sounds tragic!” exclaims Lucy. I laugh at the irony of my situation, and think of Beech’s (2000) ‘romantic ward manager’ and reply “Although I feel like I have been “slapped in the face” I “(Cheerfully)” …believe… “You have to keep on pushing. (Things will get better)”. (Beech, 2000, p. 217).

Final reflection and epilogue June 2015:
I am now facilitating a leadership development program for women and I feel very effective. One of the senior female participants gave me great feedback “I love the subtle facilitation techniques you used especially the Socratic questioning. It was so enjoyable”. I realise that all of this has added “grist to the mill” [Interview transcript, Diana 8th December, 2011]: the dialogue with the interview participants in 2011 and 2012 and with my mentor, supervisors and critical friends; critical self-reflection; and the analysis of each of the three (3) projects and writing, especially this story and my performative poem (Chapter 6) have all contributed to my development and to this exegesis. I finally realise that being an internal organisational change facilitator can still be ‘romantic’.

Autoethnography is place and space and time.
It is personal, political and palpable.

……..
It is critical reflexive, performative, and often forgiving.
It is the string theories of pain and privilege
forever woven into fabrics of power/lessness. (Spry, 2011a, p. 15)

And that is why I have chosen it. I could not have written an autoethnographic story if I had not experienced despair and pain being a change manager instead of a change facilitator through 2013 and 2014. As an autoethnographer I have become “acutely aware of the power dynamics involved in representation”; to “be able to engage in reflexive critique of (my) own social positioning” (Spry, 2011a, p. 37). This awareness and engagement has informed my practice and my research and heightened my awareness of the importance of my political self.
Afterwords (after Richardson (1997): writing a collective story)

I wrote this story after analysing the interview data in detail, inductively and deductively (etic and emic) and coming up with a plethora of codes and themes. My voice and the voice of my interviewees were lost in a sea of codes and we had become sanitized, the transcripts stripped bare of their meaning. What was the essence of our practice, of our stories, the learning and growth, the challenges and successes? I made a moral decision to write my story with some generalizations from my interviewees’ responses, after Richardson (1990, p. 58):

All generalizations are based on the dominant pattern or the clear majority of respondents. When I quote from a particular interview, it represents a common interview theme. ..I do not discuss themes or processes that are not general.

The moral decision was influenced by my intention to surface the political and ethical dimensions of our practice into social consciousness.

My story is a narrative of my practice life compiled from the transcripts of the interviews with myself and the four other practitioners; from notes in my reflective journals; from critical incidents that occurred with peers and leaders, some submitted as coursework in the professional doctorate; and discussions with my mentors and professional colleagues. It is therefore a “collective story” with me as the central character (Richardson, 1990, p. 25). My family has been included in the story because they are not separate from my professional life and have contributed and continue to contribute to how I practice. My adult children give me the most critical and honest feedback.

My intent in writing this story is to provide an interpretive framework and cultural context for the professional practice of a change facilitator, one that is reflexive and that reveals the “lived, interactional context in which the text was co-produced, as well as the handprint of the sociologist [myself] who produced the final written text” (Richardson, 1997, p. 40). Laurel Richardson’s production of the Louisa May poem from transcripts, her reasoning for doing so, the development of herself in the process and the
contribution of the work both to postmodernist sociology and academic practice provided me with a lens through which to analyse and display (write) my research. I made the decision to take a conversational and autobiographical stance with minimal quotes to facilitate the telling of the story.

Most of the participants, with the exception of my two children, have been given pseudonyms and a couple of participants from my organisation are a compilation of two or more characters. Most of the conversations occurred although the words are made up to reflect the essence of what I recalled. Whereas Richardson used poetry to tell Louisa May’s story I have used a story first with a poetic performance text The Shapeshifter presented in Chapter 6. In doing this I have tried not to suppress the story and I have also used what I call living narrative analysis to interpret our practice lives into living stories.

The use of a collective story “steps outside the normative constraints for social science writing” and “allows us to uncover the hidden assumptions and life-denying repressions of sociology” (Richardson, 1997, p. 167).

As this study is part autoethnographic I was also influenced by Carolyn Ellis’ (2004) and Tami Spry’s (2001, 2011a, 2011b) writing styles. My work essentially fits into the category of “reflexive/narrative ethnography” with some performativity, as I have used my practice life story alongside other facilitators’ practice stories to throw light on our culture (Ellis, 2004, p. 46). In writing in this way I wanted the reader, other practitioners to be moved emotionally and intellectually so that they may learn more about the dimensions of our practice.

How has it changed my practice life?
The other important reason for writing a collective story is that it reflects how doing this research/study has changed my practice, which is one of the grounds for doing doctoral research. Through understanding others I have come to understand myself and the autoethnographic focus of the story helped me gain a better understanding of who I am as a practitioner and the cultural
and organisational context within which we practice. The deconstruction analysis of a participant’s change story on a change program in my organisation in Chapter 5 (Project 2) further enhances this understanding of the sociocultural context within which I (we) work; as does my performative poem and the discussion of the body in professional practice in Chapter 6 (Project 3). Rather than claiming “authoritative truth” the dualisms – “mind-body,” “intellect-emotion,” “self-other,” “researcher-research,” “literary writing-science writing” – are collapsed. The researcher is embodied, reflexive, self-consciously partial. (Richardson, 1997, p. 168)

As demonstrated by these findings, these are key attributes of an effective practitioner and so the research method resonates and enhances my practice. Writing this story and undertaking the living narrative analysis of our stories “has affected my willingness to know myself and others in different ways” (Richardson, 1997, p. 152). This willingness and acceptance of self and diversity underpin the learning facilitator and critical facilitator role, which is the essence of a change facilitator’s practice, and one of the key findings of this exegesis further explored in Chapter 6.

There are more questions that remain unanswered. This is not the end of the story. Analysis of participants’ stories through collective storytelling, attempting to retain their essence rather than fragment them into distinct themes is messy. I have used stories as a way of thickly describing our practice and as such I have not attempted “to force the vagaries of the real world into hard-and-fast conclusions or categories” (Patton, 2002, p. 437). Finding an authentic voice in this part autoethnographic inquiry also took a long time as I was writing about my practice not only through my experiences but also from my respondents’ experiences. There were many similarities but also many differences and new insights. Patton (2002, p. 89) whose autoethnographic writing about a 10-day period with his son coming of age on a hike in the Grand Canyon, so aptly describes this as a “struggle to find an authentic voice – authentic to me, then to others who know me, and finally to those who do not know me – turned what I thought would be a one-year
effort into seven years of often painful, discouraging writing”. It has taken me three years and it has been painful but liberating.

4.5 Conclusion
There does not always need to be a conclusion. The stories told in this chapter are messy and do not have one conclusion. This has been a complex and multi-layered writing and analysis that has involved a living narrative analysis made up of themes and stories that have sprung to life though collective storytelling and re-storying and through personal reflexivity and struggle. The findings, while not definitive, reveal that facilitator neutrality for an internal practitioner is a difficult and unrealistic position as we are part of our institutional stories and culture. It is our understanding of the underlying dynamics and culture of the organisation that negates our neutrality and assists us to contextualise, which benefits the group and organisational outcomes. In other words, an understanding of the politics, power relations and how to work with and recognise them is central to our practice. Thus a reframing of the profession’s focus on the process consultant role being a neutral one is required, especially where the facilitator is internal. A further consideration of the internal facilitator’s institutionalisation and subsequent inability to notice things and be noticed or validated by senior leaders is also necessary in respect of our organisational effectiveness. For all of us, apart from one respondent, the internal politics impact our work, our sense of self-worth and ultimately our effectiveness. However our individual and collective stories about our participants and ourselves also reveal the reflexivity of our practice, which is “personal, political, and palpable” (Spry, 2011a, p. 15). They also reveal the three narrative styles within which we practice and which change with our situation – romantic, ironic and tragic, but never heroic.

Referring back to my original research questions and reflecting back over my story and the stories of my participants, is there enough here to answer the research questions?
• how do practitioners define themselves, their knowledge and their practice? The stories told throughout this chapter provide a powerful and multi-layered picture of how we define our practice;
• how do practitioners know they are effective? The stories that respondents told about themselves and their participants answered this question but also revealed the impact that our internal position had on our effectiveness. While the stories were numerous and powerful the use of more extensive, formal and informal, evaluation data collection, analysis and reporting methods to validate our change programs and our effectiveness is required.

The second question regarding effectiveness and evaluation is investigated in the next Chapter 5 (Project 2). I also identified the following questions, which are revisited in Chapters 5 and 6:

• As internal practitioners is it possible or even feasible to shift power relations, importantly at the senior level?
• What is our theory of power? Would this help our political skills?

In the next chapter I present the findings and analysis of Project 2. In this project I evaluate a cultural change program using a participatory evaluation process called the Most Significant Change Storytelling (MSC) Technique. I critique and refine the MSC together with a story deconstruction analysis, both as useful evaluation approaches and cultural diagnostic tools for change practitioners.
Chapter 5. Practice stories: evaluating practice

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings of Project 2. The focus is on evaluation of practice. In this project I used the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (MSC) as one of several measures to evaluate a cultural change program that was conducted in my organisation, a regional university in Australia. The MSC involves the collection of participant stories of significant change and then the selection from these stories by managers/stakeholders of the most significant story that demonstrates the program impact (Davies & Dart, 2005). I used a modified version of Davies and Dart’s approach which I presented as a flowchart (Figure 1. in Chapter 3).

In this chapter I first reflect on the implementation of the MSC in the context of its usefulness and limitations in evaluating the cultural change program and as an evaluation approach for change practitioners. I next undertake a story deconstruction analysis. I do this to illustrate the cultural context of the organisation, the efficacy of the cultural change program and to further critique the MSC technique as a facilitated evaluation practice. I then critique the MSC with story deconstruction analysis as a cultural diagnostic and evaluation tool. Finally, I provide strategies and advice to practitioners for evaluating practice so that they may enhance their effectiveness. As this is a professional doctorate the discussion and inquiry in this chapter is aimed at contributing to the practice of facilitating organisational change.

In Project 1 (Chapter 4) I interviewed change facilitators including myself, and found that we show our effectiveness through the stories that we tell about our participants’ and our own behavioural change, learning and growth. Few of us used formal evaluation approaches to measure long term cultural change. And yet “as practitioners, researchers and clients we can get smarter from systematic evaluation, building a synthesis of what we know works and what doesn’t work” (Zouwen, p. 45). My aim in this chapter is to further explore the effectiveness of change practitioners through the use of a
participatory evaluation process such as storytelling – the MSC, and also through the use of story deconstruction analysis. Both techniques provide an insight into the effectiveness of practice and further explore the research question:

- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?

5.2 The Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique (MSC)
In Box 1. below I present an internal report to the organisation on the evaluation of the cultural change program in 2011. In this report I provide an overview of the use of the MSC to evaluate the change program in my university and the results of the story selection process for 2011. This report provides context for the evaluation and research process and the findings in this study. A flowchart of the story selection process is also provided in Figure 1. in Chapter 3. In summary, participants submitted their significant change stories which were de-identified and sent to a panel of middle managers. I facilitated a workshop in which the panel sorted the stories into clusters of like themes called domains of change. Each domain was given a name. One story was selected as the most significant story from each domain. These stories (3 in 2010 and 4 in 2011) were then sent to a panel of senior managers. From these stories this panel then selected the most significant story and the second most significant story for the change program for that year. In essence, one story was voted over the others by the senior managers. These stories are presented in the internal report for 2011 (Box 1). I kept field notes of the deliberations and discussions undertaken by the management panels. These field notes are used in discussions on the selection process.
The Context
X University has always been committed to improving its students’ experience. The University Culture Program is aimed at taking this commitment further to ensure there is a focus on enhancing customer service for our students through improved service quality. The inaugural Culture Program (SC Program) commenced in 2010 with front line workers and leaders from various divisions and campuses of the University. The Program was evaluated in 2010 and 2011 using the Most Significant Change Technique outlined below. This evaluation was used to identify the intangible benefits and the organisational changes that have resulted from the program as well as promoting organisational learning within the University. SC Program participants told their “Most Significant Change” story identifying the changes that resulted for them and their team as a result of participating in the Program. Evaluation of these benefits and of other aspects of the program is important for continually improving our programs. Including staff in the evaluation process empowers them to be able to adopt and sustain organisational and workplace change. Finally, evaluation is important to justify the program to senior management for ongoing funding.

The Most Significant Change Technique
People have always used stories as a means of capturing events, essential truths and ideas and for raising questions and providing explanations. Story telling is a natural way of dealing with complex issues and for setting a context for reflection, learning and discussion. Stories are readily told, remembered and retold. However, it is only recently that stories have begun to be used in a systematic way in monitoring and evaluating (M&E) programs using the most significant change (MSC) technique, importantly in organisational learning and change.
A flow chart of the technique is provided in Figure 1. Stories were voluntarily submitted under an Ethics Approval so that the confidentiality of all parties, the storyteller, their team, third parties and the panel of managers who selected the stories, was maintained. A panel of middle managers sorted the stories into domains of change and then selected the most significant story for each domain. A panel of senior managers led by the DVC (Y) and two others, who did not have any direct reports on the program, then selected the most significant story for the program.

Results
The stories selected (see Attachment)
MSC No. 6, a story that reflected both self and team change, was selected as the Most Significant Change Story for the SC program 2011 by the senior managers’ panel. It was selected as it identified gaps; was strategic; demonstrated continuous improvement, personal and team development and morale.
The panel liked the sense of the team as well as of all individuals participating in their development as a team. A sense of shared purpose was created from a perceived disparate group of people, who developed customer service standards and set the tone for their own workplace culture.

MSC No. 13, a story that reflected a change in team, was selected as a close second. The middle managers selected this story as it highlighted some of the problems at the School level and how cross-campus teams can become ‘communities of practice’. They considered it a story about the impact of the program, told in steps and providing insight to one of the panel members, a new staff member, about the University’s processes. The senior managers selected it as it demonstrated positive results of the program in the development of leadership qualities and confidence of the storyteller. It provides a positive message to others about the program, elaborating on the steps in the program and the value of the program in assisting the development of cross campus, customer focused teams. The latter is an important outcome for the university. This story gave the panel hope that this is a journey that others could follow.

Selection of domains of change and prioritising stories by panel of middle managers

Thirteen stories were submitted to be part of the process. One of these stories was removed as it was a story of a staff member who had been made redundant during the program. This was disappointing as it represented only about 30% of the participants. This is a similar result to 2010. The stories came from a mix of leaders and frontline workers from five campuses.

The panel was selected from middle managers in Z Campus who did not have any direct reports in the program. The panel sorted the stories into four (4) domains of change:

- No significant change in self
- Change in self
- Change in team
- Change in self and team

What’s Next

These stories and the deliberations of each of the panels will be used as one evaluation measure of the program. From 2012 we have decided to change the process and ask participants to reflect on and tell a story about how their team customer service changed as a result of their participation on the program, that is, what did it look like before the program and what does it look like now? We will not use manager panels to select stories, rather the learning facilitators will assess the stories and refine the program accordingly. It is hoped that this will give participants confidence to tell their stories and to learn from their experiences.
Attachment: Most Significant Change Stories – X Culture Program 2011
MSC No. 6 – the story selected by senior managers as the story reflecting the effectiveness of the cultural change program. This story was published to the university community.

This is a story about a team who had no real sense of direction and no-one really pointing them in the right direction. There was no documentation in place as far as policy and procedure manuals, no mission/vision and no customer service standards, all this with a massive workload. This aside, they were employed to deliver a new service to students and patients. They would robotically come to work, complete their daily tasks to the best of their ability and leave at the end of the day. This team got along okay and managed to stumble through or sidestep any problems that arose.

This story is about a team, “MY TEAM”!

Significant changes came along one day as I had decided I would like to enhance my skills and learn to be a better “Front Line Worker”. The University was offering a program that I felt was beneficial in us moving forward as a team. So I approached my Manager asking “Can I please be included in this program?” I had myself prepared that I would need to beg and plead to be given permission to complete the program. To my delight the reply was “I not only think this would be good, I think it would be beneficial for you to complete the Frontline Leaders program.” As my manager explained he was about to commence a program himself to upgrade his management skills and that the program I was interested in will be offered to some of the other members of our team. ‘I was excited’, not only was I able to learn new skills but there were my peers from our off-site team that would up-skilling and working toward developing some long overdue policies and standards that we needed to help us benchmark our service.

When I commenced with the program I had underestimated the amount of growth our team would gain. Once I attended my first team meeting it was evident that my team and I would be able to move ahead in leaps and bounds. I was gaining the hold required to lead us to work together as a team. We began to build bonds between each other. As a team we were often going to extreme lengths to succeed once we knew that we could rely on each other for support and encouragement. I am still astounded at the significance of this in achieving results. Initially there was some resistance in my immediate work environment, however that soon was overcome by continually communicating with everyone about the benefit we would gain as a team. We were once individuals, trying to survive and do our best, in becoming an amazing team working together to achieve a common goal and continually developing. As each team member interacted with one another more energy and enthusiasm was created.

My team began gathering evidence to create a set of Customer Service Standards. We also gathered information to compile an environmental scan. This was one of the most valuable pieces of information as it aided in the foundations for us to set the tone in our workplace culture. Everyone had different skills, knowledge and personal attributes. By utilising all of these different aspects in our team, more ideas were generated. As more ideas were generated, more creative solutions were generated, leading to fantastic service standards and results.
MSC No. 13 – the story selected as the second most significant change story and was also published to the university community.

My significant change story begins with receiving an email from the Dean suggesting/advising that we join the Y Culture Program. After some thought and discussion with my then manager, I decided to join the leaders program. Unfortunately others in my school, including my manager, who had business degrees thought that this program was not for them. I then discussed this with Joan Blogg (pseudonym) and she advised me that two of my colleagues would be also doing the program, one in the leaders and the other in the workers, so I could form a team with them. I then signed up and went to the orientation meeting with my manager. At this meeting I was inspired to do well in the program as I know it would assist me in finding a higher position.

We were then assigned our teams who consisted of one of my colleagues from the Faculty and two from another faculty. We met twice and then everything fell apart; my colleague decided to leave the program as she didn’t get the position that she had been acting in and the two from the other faculty were ‘no shows’. I then continued to do the program on my own which at times has been very difficult. We then all headed to ‘Smithtown’ for our first workshop; this was a great experience as we were able to network and talk to others about our experiences at the university. At this time I was thinking of applying for a Level 6 secondment that had come up in another School in my Faculty, so I was able to speak to others who had been recently appointed to Level 6 and who gave me valuable advice on how to proceed with my interview. I returned from ‘Smithtown’ very confident with the knowledge I had gained from completing my first assignment and through networking. The next week I had my interview and was successful in gaining the secondment position. I then had to move to a new team which then put a different light on my service culture program, as I was leading new staff and dealing with totally different processes, even though we were in the same Faculty. My previous admin team was working as ‘a community of practice’ and this was a very effective cross campus team. My new team worked as separate silos, each campus was a different silo, which didn’t seem to communicate very much with each other and followed different processes.

Prior to this course I did not have a great understanding of how to lead an effective and efficient team. I am grateful to the Y Culture Program as I have created ‘a community of practice’ who have been able to work through a very difficult few months. We have had to face and deal with many barriers: introduction of three session calendar; ongoing change with further restructure (discipline realignment); University timelines; cross campus school – some staff working for three schools; new programs – ‘grade book’.

I have a team that has increased their motivation and productivity, and this has been reinforced by my current Head of School who congratulated me for bringing the team across all the campuses together. This change has been significant for me as it has given me the knowledge and ability to lead my new team and has opened opportunities for me at the university.
5.2.1 Usefulness of the MSC for evaluating practice

There are numerous reasons and benefits for using the MSC, most importantly as a technique for evaluating individual, team and organisational change and program impact. The rationale for using the MSC is provided in Chapter 3. In the context of this study the technique was used to evaluate practice. The MSC is a developmental evaluation tool, an action learning and reflective practice approach, which aligned with the purpose of the change program and with the focus of my research. In other words I was not seeking a definitive answer about the effectiveness of the change program.

Developmental evaluation is a process “in which the purpose of the evaluation is ongoing learning, internal improvement, and program development rather than generating reports and summative judgments for external audiences or accountability”. (Patton, 2002, p. 180)

The MSC caters for a storytelling organisation that consists of a “multiplicity of stories, storytellers, and story performance events” that are different dependent on the context within which they were created (Boje, 1995, p. 1000). Its value is the ability to surface these different and “extreme stories” from diverse participants, giving them an opportunity to tell their stories together with the ability to encourage reflective practice and action learning by and with participants (Dart, 2000, p. 258). Participants also have a right to have their story told and valued by the organisation, and to have a say in the evaluation. The MSC is a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation approach (PM&E):

Good evaluation under PM&E approaches would be based on the worldview of the people it is aiming to serve, and would encourage participants to take self-directed action to improve their own or collective social conditions. (Dart, p. 25)

The MSC model aims to facilitate learning between the ‘layers’ of a large project. (Dart, p. 127)

These reasons discussed above are why I chose this technique and how it proved to be useful as a measure of evaluation. Many of the stories from the
cultural change program, including the *Wheelie bin*\(^{13}\) story (the one story that I deconstruct later in the chapter) and the two other stories selected as the most significant in 2011 (refer to Box 1), demonstrated this collective self-agency, specifically enhanced team cohesion. This aspect is further expanded as part of the story deconstruction analysis later in the chapter.

Everyone had different skills, knowledge and personal attributes. By utilising all of these different aspects in our team, more ideas were generated. As more ideas were generated, more creative solutions were generated, leading to fantastic service standards and results. (MSC No.6 – Box 1)

Learning also occurred when the participants’ stories were read and evaluated by middle managers who creatively engaged with the process to develop domains of change. However that is not what happened when the senior managers evaluated and selected the most significant story for the cohort. For senior leaders the “stakes are higher” and the senior managers are representing the organisation as a whole [Philip, Interview transcript 17th October 2011]. One of the attributes of the MSC Technique is the selection of “extreme stories of success or failure” (Dart, 2000, p. 258). However, these extreme stories do not fit the official account. This is discussed in the next section under limitations and in the findings of the story deconstruction analysis later in the chapter. So while the MSC is a useful approach for evaluating the impact of a program, fostering individual and team learning and evaluating practice at the frontline level, it does not appear to be as effective in identifying the organisational impact to senior management or program sponsors. Certainly, in 2011 the senior manager panel identified that the program appeared to be more effective at providing “networking opportunities” for staff rather than enhancing our service culture (field notes). This leads to the limitations of the technique.

### 5.2.2 Limitations of the MSC technique

While I found the technique to be a useful developmental evaluation approach that fostered participant learning I also identified in the previous section a

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\(^{13}\) A wheelie bin is a residential waste disposal receptacle on wheels
limitation of using a senior manager panel as the stories selected did not fit the official account. The MSC technique also involved managers voting one story to be more representative than the others thus privileging one person’s story over the others. For participants, the knowledge that senior managers were assessing and ranking stories would have shaped the way they told their stories and frightened others from submitting a story. Only 30% of participants submitted their stories in 2010 and 2011. How could I have been so naïve? Providing senior managers with the most significant stories about how participants created their service standards and worked with their teams to create a service culture also plays into the Foucauldian view of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1979). Foucault’s view of power is that it is everywhere and that it is exercised through people assuming responsibility for their own surveillance, each individual supervising themselves and groups are made orderly through assessment and surveillance (Cooper, Ezzamel, & Willmott, 2008). The MSC could be viewed as a form of assessment and surveillance that makes power visible to the senior managers and exposes individuals to having their behaviour regulated by management. In light of these findings I question whether senior management selection of the stories is a step that needs reconsidering. It may be more appropriate not to include this step, rather to publish all of the stories that demonstrate a domain of change; and/or facilitate storytelling amongst participants and program facilitators; and/or collect the stories and evaluate the personal, group and organisational learning by program facilitators only.

Dart (2000) and Willetts and Crawford (2007) also outline a number of limitations of the MSC technique which are applicable to this study. Firstly, in some contexts the information produced by the process does not satisfy the evaluation client’s needs. The Wheelie Bin story which I used in story deconstruction analysis later in the chapter did not provide information to the senior managers that demonstrated to them the effectiveness of the program. Secondly, under a realist epistemology the approach could be criticised for presenting a biased representation of reality as the method is designed to elicit extreme stories, as previously discussed. The deconstruction of the Wheelie bin story in the next section demonstrates that there are many views that
inform reality. Thirdly, aspects of the process are overly biased towards the view of project staff and the views of antagonists of the project are not deliberately sought. Another criticism of this model (“as levelled on all methods that strive for consensus”) that Dart (2000, p. 133) raised is that particularly “harsh or unpopular views may be silenced by the majority vote”. This last criticism occurred in the program under study. While middle managers creatively engaged with the process and were observed to enjoy it senior managers confirmed the fears of the reluctant storytellers and sought to dismiss the views of those storytellers who challenged the status quo or submitted “unpopular views” (Dart, 2000, p. 133). In 2011 senior managers did not select the Wheelie bin story because it exposed an unpopular view of the university being bureaucratic by wasting time and resources and urged workers to go around processes in the interests of good customer service. Support and commitment by senior management to the program and the implementation of the MSC technique together with a willingness to respond to unpopular views or unexpected changes, was advocated as a critical success factor by Willetts and Crawford (2007). This is expanded later in the chapter where I present the findings of the deconstruction of this story.

Dart (2000, p. 230) also identifies that a limitation of “participatory action research is that often staff do not understand the process fully, or that they construct the process differently”. Despite detailed instructions some participants did not submit significant change stories as a result of the program, instead stories of their personal journey. The words most significant change connoted impact on the individual rather than the most significant change for the program as well as the organisational impact. As program participants viewed the program from a personal, and sometimes team learning approach, they also did not share their stories with their peer learning groups. The focus on organisational learning and impact was not made explicit. This is an important outcome for the change practitioner so that they may demonstrate sustainable change and to secure funding support and sponsorship for ongoing and long term programs. In subsequent change and leadership development programs that I have facilitated I have made the organisational outcomes and expectations explicit which has improved the
support from senior management. Willetts and Crawford (2007) also argue that as the MSC technique only measures significant change stories that this method is inconsistent with measuring organisational impact. Rather the average experience of participants is required for this purpose. Similarly to my findings they recommend a focus on the method as a “reflective learning process, rather than making claims about attribution and project effectiveness” (Willetts & Crawford, 2007, p. 378). Later in the chapter I recommend the technique in conjunction with story deconstruction analysis as a cultural diagnostic tool for change practitioners and a reflective learning approach for program facilitators so that they may change their strategies.

There were other limitations identified during the program which were related to participants’ reluctance to submit their stories because 1) they were fearful that there would be consequences if their managers identified them; 2) they lacked confidence and competence in storytelling; 3) they viewed storytelling as a soft skill that was not a rational workplace practice and therefore not something that they wished to do (field notes - information from informal discussions and email correspondence with participants and co-facilitators); and perhaps because this was a competition to find the most significant story (Dart, 2000). The final step in the creation of the stories, telling them in their peer learning groups, did not occur due to the reluctance of storytellers outlined above and because they “do not understand the process fully” (Dart, 2000, p. 230). The small number of stories, due to the reasons given above, may also have reduced the effectiveness of the evaluation of the program. However, the diversity of stories, the panel selection process, and the deconstruction analysis of one story (the Wheelie bin story - later in the chapter), provided a lens through which to interpret the usefulness of the MSC technique and the effectiveness of the program.

5.3 Story deconstruction analysis and findings: a re-story
In this section I present the findings of the deconstruction analysis of the MSC stories told by participants in the cultural change program at my university in 2010 and 2011. These stories were reviewed, sorted into domains of change and selected as reflecting the most significant change resulting from the
cultural change program, by middle and senior manager panels. I also deconstruct the MSC story selection process to provide a critique of this process as a useful storytelling approach for change facilitators and as an additional lens to identify the central and controlling organisational narrative.

In deconstructing the stories I followed the eight steps and guidelines of Boje (2001, p. 21) as identified in Table 3. Chapter 3. I used this method because I wished to identify competing perspectives and excluded voices, within the cultural context, to highlight how every story legitimates a centred point of view, an ideology among alternatives (Boje, 2001, p. 18). This work is central to evaluating and enhancing a change facilitator’s practice. Thus the method of textual deconstruction is another cultural diagnostic tool.

I now introduce the Wheelie bin story which was the third story selected by the middle manager panel in 2011. Refer to Box 1. which is the final internal report provided to the university community that included the two other stories that were selected as the most significant for the program. It did not include the Wheelie bin story as it was not selected by the senior manager panel.

The Wheelie bin story, MSC No. 2, 2011– a participant on the cultural change program told this story

My manager asked me to participate in the Y Culture Program and I had no idea what it was about. I like the idea of the title “Developing a service culture” because one of the things I have been really frustrated with since joining the university is that as an organisation we seem to be process driven NOT service driven.

For example – When I first joined residences in X campus I was horrified that at the front door of every residential building there were 6 stinky, lidless, cracked wheelie bins. They stunk and were maggot filled (no joke) and this was at the entrance to every student’s “home”/residence. I met with the then cleaning supervisor and the then campus services manager and requested that we find an alternative way to store rubbish – preferably away from front doors. Much to my amusement I was advised that a consultative committee would need to be formed to
establish “bin location management”. What a ridiculous joke and waste of time this was. I attended approximately 8 meetings with the decision makers on “bin location management” over the next 18 months to achieve nothing!!!! Having come to the uni from a corporate background I was amazed at what I believed was a complete waste of resources and lack of accountability.

Cutting a long story very short – The “bin location decision makers” both left the uni and I disposed of the wheelie bins and had skip bins put in various locations (away from buildings) before their successors were employed 😊

While the above story is somewhat extreme, it is a reflection on some of the craziness I have witnessed at the uni. Customers and customer service suffer while processes can override logic.

Over the past 6 months while working through the service culture program, my team has developed a “what’s best for the customer” approach to work. Our managers (who participated in the last Y Culture Program) are now allowing us more flexibility in doing what is right for the individual rather than following processes.

In addition, our work group has been relocated to fall under the division of Z. This has resulted in some positive restructuring which will benefit our work team but most importantly our customers – the students.

On a personal note, this program has made me rethink my personal approach to work and how to satisfy the needs of my customers. I will continue to work with the Service Standards we as a team have developed.

For me, the greatest change has been that our work group are now working as one and we all understand that customers are why we are here.

I chose to deconstruct the Wheelie bin story and the story of its selection with two other stories in the Most Significant Change Storytelling process. These three stories were selected by the middle manager panel as being representative of three domains of change in the 2011 cohort. The two other stories and their selection can be found in Box 1. In choosing one story to tell and deconstruct, I have already commenced the deconstruction process, and I have privileged this story over the others (20 in total for 2010 and 2011) told in the university cultural change program. This story is a personal story which, through this analysis is turned into a performative text (Spry, 2011a). The dominant interpretation (Derrida, 1988) from my first reading and from
the middle managers’ (on the selection panel) first reading identified the university as bureaucratic and wasting resources and time, however the cultural change program had resulted in significant change to the participant’s work team who were now working as one with a common purpose. The other two stories selected in 2011 (Box 1) also point to improved teamwork and cohesion. At face value it would appear that the cultural change program had been effective, that our facilitation has been effective, however deconstructing this story and more importantly the story of the selection process gives us much more information about the culture of the organisation and the effectiveness of our practice. As cultural change agents we need this information to sustain success and to modify change strategies so that they are culturally appropriate.

I have used Boje’s (2001, pp. 18-34) method to deconstruct the story of the Wheelie bin within the story of the selection of the Most Significant Change Story by middle and senior managers in 2011, as the selection process is a story in and of itself, a story of the dominant and controlling narrative of the organisation. I do this to demonstrate the efficacy of the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique, and indeed of storytelling, for evaluating a cultural change program. In doing this I can assess whether using the MSC as an evaluation tool is appropriate to the cultural context and useful as an approach for change practitioners to measure the effectiveness of their change programs. Deconstructing the participant’s story and the selection story unmasked the organisational dynamics of my university and in doing so the appropriateness of using storytelling, importantly and the MSC which is a selective process, for evaluating cultural change in this organisation. Deconstruction therefore provided me with a lens through which to critique the sociocultural systems and structures within which I practice - the organisational (the university) and facilitation profession.

5.3.1 The eight deconstruction steps after Boje (2001, pp. 18-34)
Step 1: Duality search:

The question that guides this step is: What’s the central vision, the utopian dream?
The following table identifies the central vision of the participant, the middle managers and the senior managers against the contrasting vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Findings step 1: story deconstruction analysis – duality search</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central vision of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Participant’s <em>Wheelie bin story</em></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers/service comes first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers/students are at the centre of work/service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate decision making is timely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management is by team work and workers can make decisions and take action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Middle Managers’ selection (Field notes)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university is bureaucratic and workers feel alienated and not valued; have little power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This story is amusing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Senior Managers’ selection (Field notes)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes come first over service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes (rules) are at the centre of work/service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at lower levels have restricted power¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good story that liberates cannot be published</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Staff in universities are classified by level and level is common language when referring to the organisation of work and decision-making.

This deconstruction reveals that the senior managers’ authoritative centre was the reversal of the participant’s centre and thus reinforced the original story of the participant about the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the university. Students are at the centre of good service for the participant whereas senior managers perceive that processes (rules) are at the centre of good service. Between these two layers are the middle managers who see up and see down identifying that the university is bureaucratic and workers feel alienated and not valued and have little power. This is also described as a *managerial culture* by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008, p. 43), which often hinders a university’s ability to change structures.
The managerial culture: A culture that finds meaning primarily in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of work that is directed toward specified goals and purposes; that values fiscal responsibility and effective supervisory skills; that holds assumptions about the capacity of the institution to define and measure its goals and objectives clearly.

Step 2: Reinterpret the hierarchy

The question that guides this step: How does the story interpret the hierarchy or one hierarchy over another?

In the participant’s/worker’s story the university’s decision making processes are wasteful and slow and neglect the needs of the customer/student. In the senior managers’ story workers should not make the decisions as they are at a lower level. The middle managers see the participant’s story as accurately depicting the university’s bureaucratic processes and find it amusing. However, the story is tragic because its central message of students being at the centre of the university’s purpose, does not get through to the senior managers who continue to reinforce the status quo of bureaucratic decision making being at the centre of the university.

Boje (2001, p. 24) suggests giving each a voice as a way of reinterpreting the story. Using this approach, their voices would go like this: “The University would be a great place and have a student-centred service culture if we did not have to follow processes” says the worker (participant). “The university would be a great place and would have good customer service if we follow the processes” says the senior manager. The worker is selling customer service from the perspective of the student is always right whereas management is selling customer service from the perspective of good processes and workers toeing the line or conforming to established practices. So one term or view is privileged over the other and vice versa, however the student voice is silent, the senior managers say they want to empower staff but want them to conform to established practices, and the staff also do not see that always doing what is “right for the individual” (Wheelie bin story, MSC No. 2, 2011, the students) may be exceeding expectations and
precluding service to other students. In other words “the customer isn’t always right” (Bergeron, 2002, p. 53).

Overlaying all of this is the hierarchy of the service standards, which were one of the main outcomes expected from the program. They are the process through which staff will have their performance measured and through which students/customers can expect service. The standards may be more important than the individual student needs. The senior manager panel’s support of the development of standards in the Wheelie bin story reinforces their focus on processes:

Positively, the story does demonstrate the importance of the development of service standards so that a disparate team may work together using the same processes and standards (field notes from senior manager panel discussion on selection)

The cultural change program attempted to resituate the stories of dominance, to give the frontline workers more knowledge and skill, to become experts in customer service and therefore to develop their own service area’s service standards. This assumes that those “closest to the work would expertly know how to decide what to do” (Boje, 2001, p. 34). In other words, developing staff in customer service and giving them responsibility for developing their service standards was an attempt to empower them.

Empowerment means giving someone more power than they had previously. Transferring power to the individual by promoting self-regulating and self-motivating behaviour through innovative human resource policies and practices, such as self-managing work teams, enhanced individual autonomy, and so on. (Clegg, 1989, p. 253)

However this step has revealed that as a result of the program, both the managers and staff are now under surveillance, in a panoptic mechanism that “automatizes and disindividualizes power” (Foucault, 1979, p. 202). As panopticism is widespread in institutions, as Foucault indicates on the “underside of the law”, it is able to subversively and pervasively operate “a machinery that is both immense and minute, which supports, reinforces, multiplies the asymmetry of power and undermines the limits that are placed
around the law” (Foucault, 1979, p. 223). The new service standards can be seen as a way of empowering workers to take ownership of their team’s services; however they are also a means of surveillance at the local level, surveillance of each other or auto- and self-surveillance. As Boje (2001, p. 33) puts it the “system is put ahead of the individuals” - the students and staff. The MSC selection process has created a dialogue that has exposed these power relations but also silenced the rebel voices (next step).

Step 3: Rebel voices

The guiding question is: What voices are not being expressed in this story?

“Who speaks for the trees?” (Boje, 2001, p. 24) becomes a story about ‘who speaks for the students?’ That is, students are now placed at the centre of a story they do not get a chance to narrate. Staff are also at the centre of the change. In terms of deconstruction, the participant’s Wheelie bin story is a rebel story. The story that was selected as the Most Significant Change story in the same cohort (MSC No.6, 2011, Box 1.) was a similar story to the Wheelie Bin story about team change and working together to deliver coordinated customer service. This second story also tells about the hierarchical structures of the university, the participant’s fear in asking to participate in the program and the decision by her male supervisor to let her do the program and even suggesting that she enrol in the Leaders’ program. However, this story does not try to break down or name the existing bureaucratic structures and decision-making processes of the university, rather it tells of developing procedures and processes. In contrast, what is missing in the Wheelie bin or rebel story is the lack of recognition that some processes are necessary, although its teller does attempt to ‘speak for the students’. These two stories are in opposition to each other; however one is not more important than the other. Both are hopeful and come to the same result, team change and cohesion facilitates consistent service, and both demonstrate the fear and disempowerment of workers at the frontline.

122
The MSC story selection process selected the story that is more sanitised, less frank and more easily told to the university community (MSC NO. 6, 2011 Box 1.). Rebel stories are not selected and rebel voices remain silent.

**Step 4: Other side of the story**

The guiding question is: What is the other side of the story? Reverse the story: the bottom on top, the marginal in control, or the back stage up front.

The *Wheelie bin* story and the story of its rejection depict the bureaucratic red tape, due process and committee driven decision making processes in the university as “craziness” and a “ridiculous joke”. The story is told from the perspective of a new employee who has come from the corporate world and is used to getting things done quickly and efficiently using common sense. The middle managers’ reaction to this story, seeing it as amusing because it showed how bureaucratic the university is, but also accepting of the bureaucracy because they understand the university’s complexity, is a great counter point between the two extremes of the participant and of the senior managers. If we replace the bureaucratic centre of the organisation with worker autonomy and “flexibility in doing what is right” (*Wheelie Bin* story), that is placing the bottom on top and the students who are back stage up front at the centre of the service, then what we may create is a system of inequality in service delivery to students where students with the loudest voices get what they want over other students and where workers use methods that may not align with other services. This is teased out further in subsequent steps.

**Step 5: Deny the plot**

The guiding question is: What is the opposite of the central plot? Is this plot heroic, romantic, comedic, ironic or tragic?

The plot of the *Wheelie bin* story, while framed as a comedy, is heroic with the new staff member being the hero, conquering the bureaucratic processes to get things done efficiently for the good of the students – she eventually removes the smelly wheelie bins from outside of the student residences and replaces them with closed bins in an unobtrusive, adjacent location. The story
continues on to embrace the staff member’s managers and the whole team who are now working together using a “What’s best for the customer approach” (MSC No.2, 2011). The story ends with a “self-evident moral claim” (Boje, 2001, p. 27) that we need to work as one with a central purpose of satisfying the “needs of the customer” because they are “why we are here” (MSC No.2, 2011). The use of the word customer silences and commodifies students and denies their voice.

In this step of story deconstruction I do not have to deny the plot because the Most Significant Change Storytelling Technique, in the hierarchy of the story selection process, achieves this. The heroic plot is denied, or deconstructed, firstly by the middle managers who see this story as a satire on the bureaucratic decision making processes of the university. Finally, the senior managers who also do not see it as a heroic or a comedic story, rather as tragic and allowing staff to ‘take things into their own hands’, deny the plot by preventing its public airing to the university community. This story cannot be told at this university as it does not “fit neatly within the official account” (Boje, 1995, p. 1008). It will “live out a narrative existence in silence” (Boje, 2001, p. 125). Moreover, not only the staff member’s voice is silenced but the student voice is silenced.

One of the attributes of the MSC Technique is the selection of “extreme stories of success or failure” (Dart, 2000, p. 258). These stories assist the change practitioner to evaluate and modify the cultural change program. However this step highlights a significant limitation of the MSC as a participatory evaluation process in a large bureaucratic organisation such as a university. As discussed previously as a limitation of the technique, extreme stories do not fit the official account and senior managers deny their plot.

*Step 6: Find the exception*

The guiding question of this step is: What is the exception to the underlying rules of the story? In this step “State each exception to the story in the way that makes it extreme or absurd…break the rules to see the logic being scripted into the story” (Boje, 2001, p. 21).
Taken at surface value the underlying rule in the *Wheelie bin* story is that the *customer is always right*. Apart from this being considered a myth in corporations today because, among other things it denies the importance of the employee’s role and worth in the service delivery process (Bergeron, 2002), it also reifies consumer sovereignty. Sappey and Bamber (2007, p. no pagination) provisionally concluded that in universities…

where a customer service culture is strongly espoused but where resources are inadequate to meet customer expectations, the anomaly of customer power in the employment relationship may occur as customers seek to negotiate and secure their interests (consumer sovereignty).

I argue that it is simplistic to view this story as a *customer is always right* story. Manolis, Meamber, Winsor, and Brooks (2001) proposed that in a postmodern model of service delivery the service provider is a partial consumer and the customer is a partial employee. Sappey & Bamber’s (2007) and White’s (2007) studies of the marketisation of Australian universities reinforce the notion of the university service worker (academic in their studies) as a partial consumer and the student-customer as a partial employee. There is an underlying dynamic here, that of customer satisfaction from the perspective of the service provider as a consumer. The storyteller and her team have developed the rule “what’s best for the customer” (*Wheelie bin* story), that may not always mean that the customer is always right, it also includes them as customers in the process, and acknowledges that the experiences of both the service provider and the student are both as important in the process.

The senior managers’ rule is that “staff cannot take things into their own hands” (field notes) to get things done. Put absurdly, ‘don’t go outside the prescribed processes even if it achieves good or streamlined customer service’. This rule acts to perpetuate universities’ move to marketisation and the view that students are consumers, as well as the Weberist (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006) bureaucratic/hierarchical organisation/university where staff at lower levels cannot make up their own
minds or create processes. This is the stereotype that frontline staff do not know what is best for the organisation. It also reinforces…

the contemporary (and clearly modernistic) trend towards attempting to eliminate the inherent variability of the service experience (in order to increase predictability for the consumer) through ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer, 1993), or the extreme specialization of service employee tasks. (Manolis et al., p. 238)

White (2007, p. 595) perceived universities through a psychodynamic lens…
as sites whose processes, structure and policies serve to give defensive expression to the anxieties of their members (Jacques, 1955). Defensive processes of denial and transference become entrenched in organisational culture.

These defensive processes are apparent in the senior managers’ selection of the stories and are exposed by undertaking this deconstruction step of identifying the exception to the story. The irony is that the bureaucratic processes only serve to limit rather than enhance the service culture that was the intent of the cultural change program. Without this deconstruction I may not have made this cultural diagnosis.

Step 7: Trace what is between the lines

The guiding questions of this step are: What is it that I am filling in? What is not being said? Identify when the storyteller says “‘you know that part of the story’”. What is another way of telling the story (“trace the context, the backstage, the between, the intertext”)? (Boje, 2001, p. 21)

There are a number of traces. Firstly, forming a “bin relocation management committee” could be viewed as a way of silencing the storyteller by making her conform to university bureaucratic processes, thereby enforcing an ideology among alternatives. The storyteller reinforces the length of time it takes to implement changes and the tedious nature of the process in saying “cutting a long story short”. This is similar to her saying “you know that part of the story” (Boje, 2001, p. 28). What I filled in, reinforced by the middle managers’ insights, was that this ‘is the way we do things around here’ and I knew that this was one of our ways of doing things as I have been a cultural change agent in this university for the past thirteen years. What I also filled
in was that doing it the fast way gets results and that this way is the corporate way as this was implicit in her story. However, this is an assumption that the corporate way is better and less wasteful, which is what she has said. Backstage and silent are the students who do not seem to get a say in the ‘bin relocation management’. Another aspect of the beginning of this story is that the storyteller is new to the organisation and is seeing the institutional or cultural ways of the organisation more clearly but is also, as a new member, railing against these different ways of doing things. This is normal in the first few months of an employee’s employment.

Another trace is that the managers are now “allowing us more flexibility”. This is similar to the MSC 6 story (Box 1.) where the participant was not only “allowed” to do the program but was asked to be in the Leaders’ cohort. The hierarchical, hegemonic structure and processes of the university underlie these statements. They beg the question: has the cultural change program facilitated a change in manager’s control of their staff or is it that the staff are conditioned to being fearful to speak up or are conditioned to seeking permission to act? More positively, does this show that the cultural program was effective because participants, service workers, have been give more flexibility, implicitly more control?

Similarly, the story mentions, “positive restructuring” implying that restructuring is mostly negative. The word restructuring in and of itself implies bureaucracy and control. Also, their work group is now “working as one” which implies that they, like MSC No. 6, were a disparate group using different processes and standards. It is implied, and I have assumed, filled in the gaps, that this story and MSC. No. 6 demonstrates that the cultural change program was effective in changing the service orientation and culture of these groups as well as becoming more cohesive teams.

Finally, the storyteller continually refers to students as “customers”. This silences and de-personalises them. In addition, there is an assumption that service standards will facilitate the new student-centred approach. What is not said is that standards will also reinforce the hegemony of managers as
staff will now have another form of surveillance – through the measurement of standards which will act as performance measures.

In the story of the senior managers’ selection the students are again silenced with the senior managers more focused on this story not being the message that they wish to give their staff. What is also silent here is that the senior managers have not acknowledged that the processes we undertake are bureaucratic nor that they appear to be wasteful and ridiculous, rather what is important is that staff do not take things into their own hands. What I have assumed to be backstage here, in other words I am filling in the story with my interpretation, is that they do not trust staff to take responsibility and to undertake pragmatic approaches that may save time and resources. I have filled this in with my experience of senior management hegemony in my university. And yet, they have also recognised the problem in denying this story “what do we do to empower staff at this level?” (Field notes) However, this statement reinforces my interpretation that ‘at this level’ staff cannot be trusted because it is difficult to empower them.

Step 8: Resituate/re-story

The guiding question in this step is: What is the new perspective, the re-story that I have uncovered, the new balance that removes the hierarchy and the dualities?

The point of this step is to remove the domination of the hierarchy of the duality in the story and not to replace one centre with another. This step involved rewriting the Wheelie bin story so that students’ and workers’ voices are no longer silent; rather they work together and with senior managers in networks and action learning teams (Raelin, 2006).

Undertaking the last seven steps has assisted me to re-story the story and the story of the selection process (see below). In this re-story I have interwoven five cultures of the academy - the collegial, the managerial, the developmental, the advocacy and the virtual (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). In deconstructing and re-storying the story I have learnt that if I had taken these
stories at face value or as the dominant interpretation (Derrida, 1988) I would have missed the opportunity to shift the power relations, to destabilise the current power structures, the managerial culture and the dominant organisational narrative that processes and rules are more important than placing students and staff at the centre of university work. Certainly, I did miss this chance when I facilitated the story selection process. In other words, deconstructing change stories may offer change facilitators an effective way to identify (local contextual) power relationships rather than following the MSC hierarchical story selection process. Alternatively, undertaking this analysis before the stories go through the selection process may assist the change facilitator to reframe the discussions with the senior managers. I undertake this reframing using Marshak and Schein (2006) in the re-story of my discussion with senior managers after the re-story of the Wheelie bin below.

A re-story of the postmodern university’s service culture program from the perspective of the Wheelie bin storyteller may go like this:

When I came to the university to work in Y student service area two years ago I noticed how collegial everyone was. Teams worked together to create robust and streamlined solutions. Students were included in the decision making about where they lived and what services were provided and we developed mutual expectations that were realistic and workable. We let them know when their ideas can be implemented and when others are unrealistic. The first thing we worked on was the relocation of ‘smelly’ garbage bins outside their residences. Through collaboration with students and campus services, we quickly replaced the bins and moved them to a less obtrusive site.

My team saw the X Culture Program advertised and so we created some dialogue with our managers about what would this achieve for our team practices and how it would improve our service to students and with students. Senior management and middle management are integral to cultural change programs often participating in programs with frontline worker staff. Our team and others at the uni is self-organising (Owen, 2008) and we work in networks with others in our team across campuses and with other areas. We work together and across areas to get the best for our students while making sure that everyone is treated equally, has ‘equal worth’ (Pogge, 1994). We collaboratively developed standards for our area and then looked at the standards across the student lifecycle so that there are not any gaps in how we service them. There are some things that we just cannot do, like being
open 24/7, however we make sure that students know why this is the case.

As this is a storytelling organisation we work in dialogic circles and action learning teams to make decisions and share practice rather than taking a lot of time establishing committees that meet for the sake of meeting. When the project or issue is resolved we dissolve the team. Working in these networked teams across our university has created far better communication and we are much more responsive to the changing needs of the university and of our students.

This re-story shows that deconstructing the MSC stories is another useful tool for a change practitioner not only to identify the power relations and the organisational culture but also to identify the areas where challenges and obstacles could occur. This additional layer of diagnosis would enable the facilitator to do more work in/on or change strategies in a particular work area.

Boje (2001) argues for a move away from hierarchy and bureaucracy to adhocracy whereby the organisation of work is more flexible, creative and adaptive. Hunter (2007, p. 23) articulates her vision for a move to co-operacy or collective decision-making or interdependence. Underpinning her model of co-operacy is a set of beliefs and values that she lists as:

- All people are intrinsically of equal worth;
- Difference is to be valued, honoured and celebrated;
- It is possible for people to live and work together cooperatively;
- The best decisions are made by those people who are affected by them...

...and there is “agreement to reach agreement”.

My re-story above has elements of adhocracy but more importantly of co-operacy. I argue that when change practitioners aspire to this model and practice these beliefs and values they have an increased ability to provide a forum to shift power relations and destabilise power. Deconstructing and re-storying the story has provided clarity to reach this conclusion. In my third project I use the value of equal worth to underpin the critical facilitator approach (Chapter 6). In Chapter 6 I offer the critical facilitator /learning facilitator approaches (they are not mutually exclusive) as a way of working.
toward a model of co-operacy. Mindell (1995, p. 21) who uses worldwork or process work which is a form of deep democracy that “brings power forward and makes it clear” provides sound advice to facilitators about power and political awareness:

The facilitator’s task is not to do away with the use of rank and power, but to notice them and make their dynamics explicit for the whole group to see. (Mindell, p. 37)

Similarly, Foucault does not see power as a negative to be masked, he sees it as productive:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (Foucault, 1979, p. 194)

This provides further clarity to the questions that I posed in Chapter 4:

- As internal practitioners is it possible or even feasible to shift power relations, importantly at the senior level?
- What is our theory of power? Would this help our political skills?

These insights into power and the facilitator’s task together with the deconstruction analysis also assisted me to re-story my interaction with the senior managers as follows:

A re-story of my facilitation of the senior manager panel considering my role of identifying and shifting power relations and reframing using Marshak & Schein’s (2006) approach, may have gone like this:

Senior managers: this may not be the message that we (senior management) wish to give our staff, that is “focus on the customer and make up your own mind” what the solution is so that we may provide good customer service or “take things into your own hands”; the problem is “what do we do to empower staff at this level?”, how do we give them the opportunity to provide evaluation and to escalate issues and not go outside the process?

Hedy: Maybe it is possible that the process could be changed by this team or even that the process needs changing? Maybe this shows that the service culture program has offered this team another way of viewing the way they
view students? Aren’t students more important than our processes? Isn’t this a positive outcome of the program? Could we and other teams in the university learn something from this team’s approach by having this story told?

Senior managers: We can see your point however we don’t want our staff thinking that they can do whatever they like to provide service to students.

Hedy: How I view the story is that she (the storyteller) has worked closely with her managers and the team has reformed to work together on streamlined and shared processes while also designing and delivering these processes for the best outcome for our students. This doesn’t seem to me like she is “taking things into her own hands”?

Senior managers: Yes, we can see your point and it does show that as a team, with their manager’s support, that they have really changed their orientation toward students. However, she did take things into her own hands.

Hedy: May I suggest that after 18 months of negotiating the location of smelly garbage bins outside student residences that anyone would take action. It seemed like she also got a pretty good result.

Senior managers: Well yes we agree processes here can become frustrating and something as trivial as this should have a faster solution. We will give feedback to that team and to the storyteller that we are pleased at how they are working together and hope to hear more about the changes they have implemented. However, it would still be too risky to let this story be told as the most significant change story for the program.

Hedy: Great I will let them know that you support their new approach and are interested in following up on their progress.

As discussed in Chapter 4, I am part of the institutional story and so I see things and I do not see things and I often find it hard to speak up because of the power differential. However this approach would also assist to destabilise the power. Sinclair also offers, “stepping back from one’s own situation to theorise about rather than just react to power relations offers new possibilities for thinking and positioning oneself” (Sinclair, 2007, p. 81). In each of my projects I have been concerned with power, specifically power relations. In the interviews with others and myself and in our collective stories, it was the understanding of power and power relations that offered the greatest insight into the tensions that I/we experience being internal practitioners (Chapter 4). So, rather than reacting to power relations and over-analysing them, the ability for internal practitioners to be able to step back and reflect in and on
the moment and to reframe our view and that of those with whom we are working/facilitating offers a more effective approach, particularly with those who are at a higher rank than us. I further explore the role of the facilitator in providing a forum to shift power relations in Project 3 (discussed in Chapter 6).

5.4 Efficacy of MSC technique with story deconstruction analysis to evaluate practice

The MSC technique has provided extreme stories that, when deconstructed above show the inherent rules in the university under study, and the contradictions in attempting to create a service culture in a bureaucratic and hierarchical organisation. This is my application of textual deconstruction, whereas others when applying this process many have different outcomes. These two techniques together are therefore a valuable diagnostic tool for an internal practitioner. However, deconstruction analysis also demonstrated that the MSC Technique, in particular the selection by a senior panel and the creation of service standards, has only served to reinforce the rules, maintain surveillance and the power relations, and silence the voices of the heroic service worker, her team and students. Therefore, the MSC Technique may be more effective in facilitating change for participants/staff and middle managers, and for change practitioners to evaluate their change programs when senior management are not included in the story selection process. In other words, as an internal practitioner – Do I/we really want to shift the power relations at the senior level or do we want to facilitate effective change at the middle management and frontline staff level? Using a bricolage of evaluation approaches (Dart, 2000) and collating the evaluation data into a summary report may be more effective in gaining senior management support for cultural change programs than including them in the evaluation process. From a personal perspective this also removes the continual feeling of disillusionment and the emotional investment for the internal change facilitator (me). This embodiment of practice is re-represented as a shared lived experience and a performative text (The Shapeshifter) in Chapter 6 and discussed further below.
Further, as the MSC draws out “extreme stories” it “attempts to define the meaningful edges of experience rather than to identify the central tendencies” (Dart, 2000, p. 131). Therefore as the method does not describe the average experience of participants that may be one reason why it is less palatable for senior managers because it does “not provide sufficient information for accountability” (Dart, p. 131). However, that is the main reason why, with deconstruction analysis, it works so well for a change practitioner because we can identify dominant and sub-cultures of the organisation under examination/change. We can then adjust our change strategies to suit the culture.

The deconstructed *Wheelie bin* story destabilises the story of the University as power is co-constructed through dialogue. Using a storytelling evaluation approach and deconstruction analysis, both of which have aspects of performativity and auto-ethnography also “interrupts dominant narratives” and “remakes stories that transgress dominant power relations” (Spry, 2011a, p. 57). Being an internal practitioner can be both romantic and tragic as it can be for a service or frontline worker - so eloquently presented by participants in their MSC stories. Through using the MSC Technique and undertaking this analysis I have been able to re-represent my experience working as an internal practitioner in a university in a performative poem (Chapter 6). This re-representation also doubles back on the experiences of these frontline workers and adds depth and clarity to the interpretation of the university culture and the professional cultural norms within which I practice. Thus taken for granted understandings are deconstructed so that facilitation and cultural change practices may be evaluated and modified. The two techniques complement and reinforce each other providing an effective diagnostic and evaluation approach that will enhance an internal facilitator’s practice.

### 5.5 Advice to practitioners for evaluating and enhancing practice

#### 5.5.1 Undertaking research as an internal practitioner
From an ethical perspective, undertaking this research project in my own organisation was a consideration. This was mainly due to the power
imbances between the participants and me and between the managers and me. Despite gaining ethics approval, it was difficult to assure participants in the project that I would maintain their confidentiality but more importantly, it was more difficult for me not to bias the discussions of the panels and thus the outcomes of the evaluation process as I am part of the institutional culture. These aspects bring into focus the role of an internal practitioner, demonstrating the unrealistic expectation of maintaining facilitator neutrality and the importance of the facilitator contextualising for participants as discussed in the findings in Chapter 4. The story deconstruction analysis of the most significant story revealed and destabilised the power. I argue that this is an important tool for all change practitioners especially in a hierarchical organisation.

While this was a work-based professional doctorate being conducted in my own institution it was difficult to obtain ethics approval. As discussed above undertaking research as an internal practitioner, in particular in a university involved mediating power relations and there can be difficulty separating the purpose of research from that of program evaluation. Sappey (2006, p. 266) also had difficulty obtaining access to university workplaces for her ethnographic research.

Research in organisations is by its very nature an extremely sensitive political process as the researcher mediates power relationships, and negotiates tactical and strategic compromise (Beynon 1988; Bryman 1988). However the overlay of the National Statement adds an additional complexity to workplace ethnographies which potentially hinders exploration of the hidden processes of power and conflict in workplace relations, and brings into question the integrity of research which only reports managerial “truth”.

Without entering into a discussion about the national standards or ethics, the above statement provides clarity to the struggles that I encountered not only in gaining the ethics approval but also in obtaining consent from participants and also being able to report participants’ reality rather than the managerial truth. This is an important finding for internal practitioners to consider when designing evaluation of a change program. The experience and influence of change practitioners in evaluation processes and in input to the review of
ethics approval processes would assist our organisations to embrace these practices (Berends, 2007). Further, obtaining ethics approval before a program is implemented is important, as is a clear distinction between the outcomes of the evaluation process and the research process.

An exploration of the power and conflict that were at play emerged to be at the heart of this research and is confirmed in the findings of the deconstruction analysis. Lennie (2006) recommends a number of strategies for increasing “the effectiveness and inclusiveness” of participatory processes, specifically in the context of power and empowerment, which requires an awareness of the power relations that may arise and the potentially disempowering effects of participation for those with less knowledge and power. (Lennie, p. 31)

This aligns with the importance of the facilitator being politically aware (Kirk & Broussine, 2000) and providing a forum for shifting power relations (Gregory & Romm, 2001) through taking a critical facilitator stance. Again, this brings into focus the role and value of the internal practitioner contextualising for program evaluators rather than maintaining a neutral stance. These dimensions are further explored in the other two projects and form part of the discussion and findings in Chapters 4 and 6.

5.5.2 Refining the technique and advice to practitioners: a modified model

The flowchart in Figure 1 (Chapter 3) demonstrated the story selection process. I have added the identification of domains of change by the middle managers and also added the final selection of stories by senior managers. Sorting these stories into domains of change by an independent middle manager panel revealed the key themes of change as a result of the program. This is important information for change facilitators, and for senior management to measure the effectiveness of a change program, and importantly, to identify different change strategies that may be more effective. This method differs from Davies and Dart (2005) who pre-determine the domains of change and sort the stories into these domains. I argue that pre-determining the domains of change does not allow for the data to emerge into themes and restricts the type of change that may occur. In doing so a whole
area of change may be missed by using this prescribed process. Willetts and Crawford (2007) also found that pre-determined domains of change focused conversations on particular issues which influenced participants’ responses. Some of these domains of change did not reflect the types of change that the university (the senior managers) was seeking which was a result in and of itself. However this information is extremely useful for a program/change facilitator to refine the program and as a cultural diagnostic tool.

Another recommendation made by Willetts and Crawford (2007) which may enhance mutual learning and understanding of the significant changes, is to involve the participants and other community members in the discussion and decision making about which changes they believe are most significant. This would take out the hierarchical nature of the decision making process and encourage more involvement at the local level, enhancing the chances of the changes being adopted and fostering “an organisational culture of reflection” (Willetts & Crawford, p. 357). I identified in the previous two sections that including the senior managers in the final selection should be reconsidered due to a number of factors mostly related to power imbalances in “rank” (Mindell 1995), unrealistic expectations of and misunderstanding by senior managers of the process, and the predominance of extreme stories that do not fit the official account of the organisation. I would recommend taking out this step.

Involving participants in the discussion and decision making about the significant changes is one way of increasing the submission and value of the stories and of the selection process. A number of other practices may also assist the success of the storytelling. As discussed previously participants often told stories of their personal journey rather than a significant change as a result of participating in the program. The quality of the stories also demonstrated that storytelling was not a natural process for most staff. I had made an assumption that telling stories would be a natural and easy process for participants in a learning program. Reflecting on the above issues and the reluctance of participants to tell their stories, I refined the process between the two cohorts. I spent more time with the second cohort facilitating learning
aimed at increasing their competence to tell stories. In other words I assumed the learning facilitator role and contextualised for participants. I told management fables (McCann, Stewart, & Ward, 1997) and got the participants to tell stories to each other in rounds and to each other over dinner. While this did not increase the percentage of stories, more stories told in the second cohort were about significant change to the service area.

Similar to Dart (2000, p. 200) also consider pre-implementation activities. Facilitated storytelling learning activities and information about the steps in the MSC process and about the ethics approval process and confidentiality should be included as part of learning and assessment. This will help participants’ understanding and commitment to becoming involved in the process. In this context consider including a pre-story step whereby participants tell their current story and identify on a scale of one (1) to ten (10) where they are in their knowledge and practice. At the end of the program participants tell their most significant change story and rate themselves for knowledge and practice against their initial rating. Liam Downing, Program Evaluator (personal communication, 20th May 2015) recommended this approach as it provides pre-program information against which the final outcomes for personal and collective program impact may be benchmarked.

Preliminary activities are also recommended with program sponsors and senior management that identify the program outcomes in terms of organisational learning and impact. A Program Logic (Dart, 2000; Hurworth, 2008) approach is now being used in my university which has enhanced the ability of program evaluators and practitioners to identify medium and long term outcomes. Further discussion on this approach is beyond the scope of this research.

Create an environment of “mutual trust and open communication” through skilled facilitation and seeking continuous feedback, regular face-to-face and virtual meetings with program participants and critical reflection with co-facilitators (Lennie, 2006, p. 31). This is the role of the learning facilitator (Raelin, 2006). Use this feedback to continuously improve the processes used
and the learning resources and activities. This may be achieved through encouraging and facilitating the sharing of stories in participant discussion circles or peer learning groups, and an orientation to openness, fairplay and equal worth modelled with program participants, middle and senior managers. This is the critical facilitator approach further explored in the next chapter (Project 3, Chapter 6).

The critical facilitator stance will assist the practitioner to understand the political and stakeholder context of the evaluation and to anticipate and put in place strategies to address the power relations that may arise. Use deconstruction analysis to deconstruct stories and to re-story the organisation. This will also assist the practitioner to identify the different political contexts and cultures, which are prevalent in a large hierarchical institution such as a university, and to identify the utopian dream (through the re-story) for the change program. Use Marshak & Schein’s (2006) approach to reframe discussions with senior manager panels. Alternatively as recommended above consider not using a senior panel to select the most significant story, as this step in the process privileges one story over the others and silences unpopular stories and rebel voices.

As an internal practitioner/evaluator recognise that maintaining “objectivity and independence” will need to be balanced with “organisational imperatives and loyalties” (Markiewicz, 2008, p. 36). In other words the expectation of the practitioner maintaining neutrality needs to be balanced with their ability to contextualize for organisational benefit (also the focus of findings in Chapters 4 and 6).

Finally consider that the stories will always be open to different interpretations, however telling and also deconstructing these stories is a way of shifting the power relations. The act of telling the story by the participant and the story of its selection is an act of interrupting "the dominant narratives" and "remakes stories that transgress dominant power relations” (Spry, 2011a, p. 57). In other words the stories/story do not have to be deconstructed to draw a conclusion, however the deconstruction and the story telling provide a
powerful lens through which internal practitioners can critically reflect on, evaluate and enhance their practice.

5.5.3 **Understanding the institutional cultures**
Further insights about the institutional culture within which the cultural change program is conducted are important for the change practitioner’s evaluation strategies. Of value to my practice as a facilitator in a university is Kezar & Eckel’s (2002) research on how Higher Education institutional culture shapes that institution’s change processes and strategies and how this knowledge assists the change agent. These authors used Bergquist’s (1992) ‘institutional archetypes of culture’ or four cultures of the academy, as one of the frameworks. These cultures are *managerial, development, collegial and negotiating*. One of their clear findings was that change strategies are most likely to be successful if they are aligned with the culture. Certainly, the cultural change program in this study was intended as a *developmental* program appropriate for a *developmental culture* whereas when the senior managers selected the stories it became apparent that they were operating in a *managerial culture*. This was exposed by the act of deconstructing the *Wheelie bin* story and the story of its selection. Kezar & Eckel go on to suggest that knowledge of the institutional culture and appropriate strategies can assist change agents who can achieve this by:

…they need to attempt to become cultural outsiders, or as Heifetz (1994) suggests, they need to be able to “get on the balcony” to see the patterns on the dance floor below….Change agents’ strategies for achieving this outside perspective on campuses include working with a network of institutions, using outside consultants, presenting at and attending conferences where they publicly explore their assumptions, bringing in new leadership, and participating in exchange programs to broaden the horizons of personnel. (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 457)

These strategies for developing university change practitioners, as cultural outsiders are important and insightful for this study. In the context of my research and practice, the other projects - firstly interviewing and sharing practice with other practitioners (Chapter 4) and presenting at international facilitator conferences (Chapter 6), have added to my knowledge as a change practitioner.

140
Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) have more recently produced a book identifying the six cultures of the academy - *managerial, developmental, collegial, negotiating, and virtual and advocacy*. Dee (2011, p. 511) provided a review of the book indicating that rather than identifying one institutional culture and developing appropriate change strategies that leaders and practitioners need to understand the “paradox and interplay” which yield conflict in complex university cultures. Choosing to analyse the storytelling university through the use of the MSC and associated deconstruction analysis is one approach for understanding the paradox and interplay, the web of stories that are in a constructing and deconstructing process all around us. Another way is the production of a performative poem, *The Shapeshifter*, which performs this paradox and interplay of the storytelling university in the next chapter (Chapter 6).

### 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a critique of the Most Significant Change (MSC) Storytelling Technique that was used to evaluate a cultural change program in my university. I have extended this analysis to deconstruct the MSC stories using a story/textual deconstruction analysis to further evaluate the effectiveness of the cultural change program and of the MSC Technique. In doing so I have identified that while the MSC is an effective evaluation approach, there are a number of limitations of which the practitioner needs to be aware and consider in planning their evaluation. The most important is the consideration of whether the MSC technique is appropriate for the organisational culture and outcomes of the program, and whether senior management support and/or involvement is required in the selection process. I offer a modified model of the approach developed by Davies and Dart (2005) together with advice to practitioners that would improve its implementation.

A number of ethical dilemmas were identified in using this participatory evaluation approach. These were mostly associated with being a practitioner and researcher in my own organisation as well as the fear of participants being
identified by the stories that they told. I offer advice on how to overcome some of these pitfalls, importantly being part of the evaluation and ethics approval process in the organisation, gaining approval before the project and conducting pre-implementation evaluation and learning/storytelling activities.

In summary, there are two aspects to this project that demonstrate the effectiveness of a change practitioner’s (my) practice:

- The Most Significant Change told in the *Wheelie bin* story and other stories – extreme stories that help us to identify the dominant culture and sub-cultures of the organisation;
- Textual deconstruction analysis – that resituates and restories the MSC stories to provide even greater insight into the dominant culture and sub-cultures of the organisation and open up the power relations and power imbalances to new ways of facilitating effective and sustainable change at all levels of the organisation; which are both overlaid by
- A performative autoethnographic poem, *The Shapeshifter*, (presented in Chapter 6) which re-represents our shared lived experience and practice lives so that we know how we may act and present our effective selves.

I conclude that both techniques – the MSC technique together with story deconstruction analysis - form a complementary duo with the potential to provide depth to the evaluation of culture and practice within a hierarchical and managerial culture, specifically in a university. They do this through identifying the sub-cultures and dominant cultures, the dominant narrative and the power relations of the organisation. These findings bring into focus the role of an internal practitioner, demonstrating the unrealistic expectation of maintaining facilitator neutrality and the importance of the facilitator contextualizing for participants and taking a critical facilitator stance. In the next chapter I investigate this critical facilitator role and the notion of the body in professional practice as a means of making sense of the internal change facilitator’s practice and providing practical advice to other practitioners.
Chapter 6. The reflective practitioner: embodying practice

6.1 Introduction
In this chapter I present the findings of Project 3. The focus is on the critical or learning facilitator role and the body in professional practice. I first present a practitioner workshop designed to train facilitator practitioners in the critical facilitator approach. I then reflect on the iterative development of the workshop through co-operative inquiry with peer facilitators at three facilitator conferences. I then explore the theoretical and practical elements of the critical facilitator approach, importantly discursive validity checking, facilitator political awareness and facilitator neutrality. I do this within the context and referencing to theories of power as they relate to group facilitation. The discussion and inquiry is aimed at providing practical advice to other organisational change facilitators/practitioners.

Next I turn to an analysis of my practice experiences in my organisation, focussed specifically on the role of the change practitioner in providing a forum for shifting power relations (Gregory & Romm, 2001) and on the body in professional practice (Green & Hopwood, 2015). I do this by assuming a performative-I disposition (Spry, 2011a) to create a performative text, a poem which is a form of collage, a living story that provides a trace of the in-between spaces, the struggles and highlights, of the political and personal lives of internal practitioners. It writes our bodies into professional practice. This project addresses the following research questions:

- How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?

My aim in this chapter is to firstly investigate and expand the critical facilitator role as a potent approach for organisational change facilitators to provide a forum for shifting power relations and to pass the baton on to their project and change teams (Looney et al., 2011). Secondly, I wish to investigate the body in professional practice by producing a co-performed text.
that enacts organisational change reality. In other words this final project becomes a site for critical conversation about our practice.

6.2 Practitioner workshop - Critical Facilitation: The Role of the Organisational Change Agent

The aim of this project was firstly to design a training workshop that could be used by change facilitators to *pass the baton* on to the project or change teams in their organisation, using the critical facilitator approach (Looney et al., 2011). In other words, building facilitation capability in staff to sustain organisational change after the facilitator leaves. Secondly, I wished to further investigate the critical facilitator approach as an effective stance for change facilitators to *provide a forum to shift power relations* (Gregory & Romm, 2001).

Finally, the aim of developing and promulgating the critical facilitator approach with colleagues in a workshop was to provide a learning opportunity to assist them to reflect on and modify their practice and for me to critically reflect on and analyse this experience and development to design a practitioner workshop. From my experience in organisational development and organisational change, I argue similarly to Gaventa and Cornwall (2006, p. 79) that:

> approaches to training and dissemination must be found which also focus on changing personal values, ethics and commitments of those who are using the (participatory) tools, at all levels

This facilitated practitioner, training workshop explores the theory behind Thomas’ (2008a) model of the dimensions of facilitator education through sharing knowledge of the aspects of facilitator political awareness (Kirk & Broussine, 2000); critical facilitation using the validity checking model (Gregory & Romm, 2001; Raelin, 2006); and reflective practice (Delaney & Delaney, 2008; Schön, 1983). This is conducted in a mutual learning approach with participants (Schwarz, 2005). The final workshop - “Critical Facilitation: The Role of the Organisational Change Agent” program and participant handouts follow in Table 7.
Table 7. Workshop design and handouts for International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Oceania 2012 Conference

**Workshop facilitator guide - Critical Facilitation: The Role of an Organisational Change Agent**

Note: this program could be given to participants in an abbreviated format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Questions on flipchart</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Purpose and context</td>
<td>What is the practice of an organisational change facilitator?</td>
<td>Flipchart and sticky wall</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What is critical facilitation in the context of organisational change?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How are we as we walk into this room?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introductions – Hedy/me</td>
<td>Why am I passionate about critical facilitation and reflective practice? What is our research? Information sheets and signing consent forms</td>
<td>A wall chart of my research – 3 projects – stories – mine and others; my organisation (evaluation); reflective/critical practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>• To share our practice and stories as change facilitators</td>
<td>Put on butcher’s paper flipchart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To introduce the concept of reflective practice and the role of the critical facilitator as a potent approach for facilitators working in organisational change</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To introduce and practice the validity checking model to resolve a real life practice dilemma (note: the model underpins the critical facilitator approach)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14 A ‘sticky wall’ is normally 3 metres long and 1.5 metres wide made of lightweight nylon fabric which is attached to a wall using masking tape. The fabric is sprayed with Repositional Spray so that pieces of paper produced during the facilitation can be stuck on the wall and then repositioned as required. ([http://stickywall.uk.com/what-is-a-sticky-wall/](http://stickywall.uk.com/what-is-a-sticky-wall/) accessed 5/10/15)
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>To reflect on the learning and application of this approach in future practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td>I will be as overt as possible about the processes that I am using because this is a workshop on learning about facilitation through practice and sharing of our practice; if we get stuck you have my permission to suggest different ways of doing this; while I have run this 3 times already and refined it, group dynamics and POWER (of which we will be exploring) always mean that there is never one set way of doing things – it is about being ‘reflexive’ reflecting in and on the moment and changing as appropriate Caveat: if you do not wish to participate in any of the exercises then please just observe</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.10am</td>
<td>Introductions – participants – Sharing stories of our practice (pairs then fours)</td>
<td>1. What is your interest and experience in facilitation? pairs Find another pair 2. Think back to a positive experience of facilitation in an organisation either by you or by another facilitator. Share your story or an image of this experience? 3. What’s the essence of the facilitators’ approach that made these experiences positive? Group report back and summary</td>
<td>Participants stand up and form groups or do this at tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td>The stories of others And feedback on the ‘essence’</td>
<td>“The individual stories stand out for me, I am quite attracted to the fact that you throw a pebble in the pond and you change an individual and the ripples can expand” (Interview: Diana). Tell some of their stories…..once upon a time….</td>
<td>Participants summarise the essence of their stories</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Timing | Session | Questions on flipchart | Resources
--- | --- | --- | ---
9.40am | Reflective practice and self-facilitation | • Reflective practice is central to an effective organisational change facilitator – what does that mean?
• What is reflective practice? How do we practice reflection in-and on-the moment? After? – Get group to share what they do in their practice – What’s my reflective practice look like?
• What’s happening within me now? What am I noticing now about myself, the group? Energy levels – fingers 1 to 5
• Guided activity to balance oneself to be able to reflect – ask each person to close their eyes and breath into themselves and to be still for 2 minutes | Reflective practice with quote and Schön’s (1983) reflective practice cycle from Delaney and Delaney (2008) pinned up or posted to the sticky wall. Elgin (1993) quote “Knowing that we know” on the wall

10.00am | Dimensions of Facilitator Education Thomas (2008a) | What is the theoretical model underpinning the practice of critical facilitation? What are the power relations and political processes at play?
From toolkit → self as instrument
Doing → Knowing → Being → Becoming
Increasing reflective practice with increasing transformation | • Wall chart of Thomas’ model of the four dimensions: Technical, Intentional, Person-Centred, Critical

10.10am | Group activity | • What is it that tells me/us that I/we are in the realm of? What does it look like, sound like, feel like? Either work in 3 groups or have 3 wall charts: | Provide pens, crayons, for groups
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<th>Timing</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Questions on flipchart</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical; Intentional; Person-centred</td>
<td>- Each group works on the question or everyone walks around the wall charts and write a word, phrase, draws a picture of what they do in this arena</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Each wall chart or group displays their charts and reflect on these dimensions – how do they relate to each other? What is the importance of each dimension to our practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.40am</td>
<td>Wrap up and what’s next</td>
<td>What we have done – visual around wall and stories After the break we will be practicing in the realm of Critical Facilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00am</td>
<td>Critical facilitation – power, politics and facilitator neutrality</td>
<td>Facilitators are political Facilitation is political Organisations are political [In this context] So how can we be or practice neutrality? What does that mean? Facilitated discussion about what participants notice in their work about their own power, their neutrality – what does it look like to practice neutrality? How do we feel/what do our bodies tell us about being in a neutral stance? How do we identify and name our power, our position, our stance, or underlying assumptions? – Before, during and/or after an event or program</td>
<td>Cards on sticky wall “Facilitators are political Facilitation is political Organisations are political” (Kirk &amp; Broussine, 2000) Some of the quotes from our organisational stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
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| 11.15am | Critical Facilitation: validity checking model group activity Gregory and Romm (2001) | What beliefs and assumptions are we using in our facilitation, conversations and daily life? Noticed in others? How does this affect the choices that I make as a facilitator? - Framing questions for the activity Facilitator goes over the validity checking model in detail and provides the extra guiding questions as well as the concept of ‘equal worth’ – check for meaning and understanding Divide participants into groups of about six.  
- Each participant/individual brainstorm ‘Think about a problem or issue or practice dilemma that you wish to resolve and share this with the group’  
- Decide as a group which issue you would like to have as the ‘case’ and the presenter/casegiver for the group discussion  
- Use the validity checking model and the extra guiding questions to challenge the facilitator and each other (handouts)  
- You have 30 minutes to come up with the elements of how you could resolve this issue. Note: the outcomes do not necessarily have to be shared with the other groups | Provide handouts/instructions for the activity that explain the validity checking model: Framing questions with guiding questions and ‘equal worth’ Case clinic approach (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013) |
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<th>Timing</th>
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<th>Questions on flipchart</th>
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| 12.00-12.15pm | Reflection on workshop; feedback to leader and future applications | What surprised you about this work?  
What did you notice about your reactions, about your learning?  
What worked well? What could we do differently?  
What is the worth of the validity checking model and how will you use it in your practice?  
How will you use this model to train your project and change teams? |
Attachment to Table 7: Workshop handouts and instructions

Critical Facilitation: the validity checking model with extra guiding questions

An approach that you may use in your organisational change work to train facilitators from your project or change teams or with colleagues, groups and teams.

Gregory & Romm’s (2001) validity checking model for intervening in group discussions is outlined below. The model underpins the critical facilitator approach (Thomas, 2008a). The intent of using this model is to create an orientation to openness and a deeper level of discourse underpinned by the notion of facilitator “‘fair play’ in taking seriously others’ viewpoints” (Gregory & Romm, 2001, p. 461) and without the requirement of reaching consensus. The model has been extended to include:

1. the aspiration of achieving ‘equal worth’
2. offering the model to the participants as well as the facilitator/casegiver/speaker with the invitation for everyone in the group to challenge the facilitator and others; and
3. extra guiding questions to assist participants which appeared to be a gap in Gregory & Romm’s model (see below)

Group process (6 people in group):

1. Individual brainstorm and then share an issue, problem or practice dilemma that you are experiencing in your work
2. Decide on the dilemma or case you wish to discuss that will assist you to practice the validity checking model and assign the facilitator/casegiver to present the case and act as the facilitator
3. The facilitator and group members are asked to notice any political biases, differing values, viewpoints or underlying assumptions, sweeping statements and stereotypes that others are using and to question these firstly using the validity checks below and then to ask questions of the speaker/facilitator/casegiver using the guiding questions and/or developing their own appropriate questions.
4. Discuss the issue and identify ways to resolve it or to undertake the work/practice/facilitated intervention in another way (allow about 30 minutes for this)

Validity check questions (Gregory & Romm, 2001, p. 460)
1. ‘Do you understand what is being said?’ – by speaker, facilitator, participant
2. ‘Is the speaker being sincere?’
3. ‘Is the speaker’s point acceptable to you?’
4. ‘Do you agree with the speaker’s use of information and/or experiences?’

If the answer is ‘no’ to any of the above then you should ask for clarification. The following guiding questions are provided. This is not a definitive list and facilitators are encouraged to develop their own questions that suit their style and the group with which they are facilitating.
Guiding questions – examples

- Can you explain what is underlying that statement?
- What makes you think that?
- What makes you say that?
- There seems to be a belief x…..
- Are you assuming x?
- What are others hearing?
- How do others feel about…?
- What you are saying seems to be at odds with…..what you said before?
- Is there congruence with…..?
- Are these two statements congruent?
- Who/what positions are being disadvantaged here?
- What views may be disadvantaged here?
- What views or who/people are we marginalizing?

[Note: include the model/diagram of the dimensions of facilitator education (Thomas, 2008a) as a poster and print out and include in handouts]

6.2.1 Reflection on iterative development of the workshop
Reflecting on the development of this workshop is an important part of a professional doctorate or research into professional practice, and of reflective practice. Fox (2003) argues for practice-based evidence developed through practitioner-led research. The design was emergent, iterative and co-created from cooperative inquiry - reflection and feedback - with co-facilitators and participants. This feedback and our reflections on the critical facilitator workshop also informed our knowledge of its value to the practice of organisational facilitation.

The workshop was first conducted in North America at the International Association of Facilitators North America (IAFNA) conference in 2011. It was based on Gregory & Romm’s (2001) and Raelin’s (2006) validity checking model and expanded with additional questions to create more clarity and guidance for facilitators and participants to develop questions of each other and of the facilitator (refer to workshop design and instructions in Table 7. above). The validity checking model is fundamental to the critical facilitation approach because it assists facilitators and group participants to identify their underlying biases and assumptions in an open and transparent
way. Dr. Dale Hunter, a well-known Australasian facilitator co-facilitated and mentored me through the process of enhancing the model and development of the workshop, offering advice on aspects that I had not considered. The concept of equal worth was also added to the validity checking model. She uses this in her practice. This basic principle when added to the value of fair play, which was included by Gregory and Romm (2001), provided safe and explicit protocols for critical discourse. I suggest that facilitators add the principle of equal worth either overtly or in their own preparation to their group process work. Pogge (1994) defines equal worth as:

…An attribute of every living person, and the basis on which each person ought to constitute their relations with others (p. 89f). Each person has an equal stake in this universal ethical realm and is, accordingly, required to respect all other people’s status as a basic unit of moral interest (p. 90).

My co-facilitator, Dale, and I had both assumed that participants would understand our perspective, however the workshop in itself became a critical conversation. Similar to Gregory & Romm’s (2001) experience in conducting critical facilitation workshops with health service providers in the United Kingdom, we were challenged by participants for not being neutral and for showing our biases and prejudices. Certainly, the critical facilitator approach does not model a neutral stance or process consultant role which means that the facilitator does not become involved in the content (Schein, 1969). These concepts are discussed later in this chapter as part of the findings. It was apparent that some of our cultural norms were also not aligned with those of our American colleagues. Participant feedback was that they were extremely uncomfortable in the first half of the workshop (and so were we), however, we worked with them, allowing them to work on their own issues, not using predetermined tools or processes. As a result their verbal comments reflected that they were more satisfied with the workshop outcomes than other sessions they had attended. Participants commented that all of the other workshops at the conference had predetermined processes and agendas, however we allowed the group (them) to go where they needed to go and that the level of engagement was deeper, not skills based. This reflects Thomas’ (Thomas, 2008a) model of the Critical Facilitator approach being at the highest or fourth
level of experience and education for a facilitator. This is difficult work, but extremely rewarding, and took a courageous stance by both of us (Stanfield, 2000b, pp. 9-10).

A stance is the way we present our deepest convictions through a style of being that integrates the knowing, doing and being of our lives...........

When we talk about stance, we don’t mean social posturing – presenting ourselves as more than we are. We don’t mean charisma or chutzpah or dramatic poses to win admiration. We mean a deep inner conviction about our life that manifests itself externally.

The participants also suggested more explanation and activity around Schön’s (1983) reflective practice cycle, which was included in the final workshop design and participant handouts. I used Delaney & Delaney’s (2008) diagram of the reflective practice cycle. The participants also suggested rewording of culture in the initial group culture check, which is the name given for ground rules by my co-facilitator. The latter word to them connoted race and they were uncomfortable with this inference although it was not intentional. All of the above advice for working with culturally diverse groups is reflected in the International Association of Facilitators Core Competency for Certification C.2. Honor and recognize diversity, ensuring inclusiveness and C.2. Point 4. Cultivate cultural awareness and sensitivity (www.iaf-world.org/index/certification/CompetenciesforCertification.aspx). Basing the preparation and delivery of this workshop on these competencies is therefore sound practice.

The workshop was next conducted at the Australasian Facilitators Conference in Perth in 2011. My co-facilitator, also well-known in the Australasian facilitation community, assisted me to develop the workshop and to centre me during the event. The content and intent of the workshop requires at least three hours and unfortunately, due to the structure of the program, we only had one hour. This was insufficient time to practice the key ingredient – validity checking. In addition, we had 38 participants. The short timeframe and large number of participants meant that we could not go to the depth of experience required to understand critical facilitation through undertaking critical
discourse. The workshop is designed for a minimum of three hours to be able to cover all of the key concepts and to allow groups to use the validity checking model. The ideal participant number would be less than twenty (20).

The final workshop which was planned for three hours and was actually two and a half hours, was delivered at the inaugural International Association of Facilitators Oceania conference in 2012. I re-titled the workshop “Critical Facilitation: The Role of an Organisational Change Facilitator” which was renamed, by the organisers, “Critical Facilitation: Role of an Organisational Change Agent.” The emphasis on organisational change was intentional as my research and my practice is in organisational change and I wished to elicit participants’ organisational facilitation stories, share my practice story and passion, and share some of the stories of the other organisational change facilitators who I had interviewed (see Chapter 4).

Nine facilitators from Australia, Asia and North America attended. First we shared our facilitation experience and practice stories. Sharing my stories and the stories of my research respondents (later in the workshop) appeared to facilitate a deeper sharing from participants of their organisational stories, which collectively created a powerful picture of our practice. Weaving stories into this practitioner workshop is congruent with my research orientation (discussed in the other two projects) and practice which are based on storytelling. Storytelling is an important approach for groups working together in organisational change and as such it strengthened the sharing between participants in the workshop.

We then explored how we practice self-facilitation and reflection with self and others/colleagues. Some participants kept journals which they wrote in after workshops or daily/weekly; others checked their energy levels and/or asked themselves questions as they were facilitating – reflection-in-action (Schön, 1995a); others discussed their practice with colleagues and co-facilitators either before, during and after workshops or events, in online discussion groups such as LinkedIn, the Australasian Facilitators Network listserv, in regular online/virtual meetings (phone; Skype and online
learning/meeting rooms); and one participated in a regular Saturday morning book club. This discussion was taken forward to the conference plenary session which resulted in a LinkedIn discussion group being formed.

Next we discussed the political nature of facilitation. To provide depth to the model of validity checking and the perspective of facilitator neutrality Thomas (2008a) included a framework developed by Kirk and Broussine (2000) within which facilitators can work considering the politics and power differential between themselves and the group and the organisation. They proffer that facilitators are political, facilitation is political, and organisations are political. I used this premise as one of my concepts for the critical facilitator workshop. The political nature of facilitation is something that is rarely discussed and surprised the participants in the workshop. It is also at odds with the concept of facilitator neutrality, a core competency of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) discussed later in this chapter and in the findings of Project 1 (Chapter 4).

Next Thomas’s (2008a) diagram/model of the four dimensions of facilitator education was presented as it graphically displays the stages and nested nature of facilitator approaches. At the foundational level is technical facilitation which is skills-based and formulaic; the second level is intentional facilitation which is grounded in theory; the third level is person-centred facilitation which is based on approaches that move beyond the head to engage the heart. The highest or fourth level is critical facilitation which encompasses all of the previous approaches and has an orientation to openness and critical dialogue between the facilitator and participants. I describe this in the workshop as moving from doing (technical facilitation), to knowing (intentional facilitation), to being (person-centred facilitation), to becoming (critical facilitation). This has implications for the body in professional practice (Green & Hopwood, 2015) which is discussed later in the chapter. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to discuss this in detail or to undertake the activity identified in the workshop program (Table 7.). This was because the workshop was half an hour shorter than anticipated. However, the fourth dimension of critical facilitation in the context of the
political nature of facilitation and facilitator neutrality were explored in more detail. This all set the foundation for the final group activity in which participants practised the *discursive validity checking model* which is foundational to the critical facilitator approach (Gregory & Romm, 2001) and the learning facilitator approach (Raelin, 2006).

In the final group activity participants formed into two groups to identify an issue or practice dilemma from one participant as the *speaker* (Raelin, 2006). Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) have developed a process similar to this workshop which they call a *case clinic* and the person who identifies the issue is the *case giver*. In subsequent workshops I have adopted this terminology instead of speaker. Participation was based on *self-organisation* and participants self-selected into a group (Owen, 2008). Each group used the validity checking model to discuss the issue, to challenge each other’s views and to develop solutions that would enhance the practice outcomes for the speaker/casegiver. I used Gregory & Romm’s (2001, p. 460) validity checking questions which are designed to challenge the views of the speaker (casegiver), facilitator and the participants:

1. ‘Do you understand what is being said?’ – by speaker, facilitator, participant
2. ‘Is the speaker being sincere?’
3. ‘Is the speaker’s point acceptable to you?’
4. ‘Do you agree with the speaker’s use of information and/or experiences?’

These were enhanced by a set of guiding questions that are not an exhaustive list. These questions were developed with my co-facilitator in the first workshop in North America (refer to the workshop instructions in Table 7.). This addition with the premise of *equal worth* are important additions to the validity checking model as they provided greater clarity and capacity for participants to engage in critical and *generative* dialogue (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Generative dialogue or *presencing* (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005) means the co-creation of a solution or new approach that builds on everyone’s view.

Each group reported back on their shared solutions and reflections on the process. I also obtained feedback from two participants after the workshop.
The key insight about the approach was that it focussed the discussion in better understanding the issue/dilemma and as a result generated different ideas and solutions than those expected by the casegiver. In other words generative dialogue occurred.

everyone in the discussion really understood the issues and (therefore) really helped the speaker (casegiver) to get in touch with what some of the underlying issues were. I was very troubled about what I was being asked to do by the client as the timing of the request for my services had the potential for creating a whole additional set of problems/challenges for the organization and its leadership. I am not sure this would have surfaced had the validity checking model not been used. (Workshop participant feedback by email 01/05/12 who was the speaker for one group)

The participants identified that the aim of validity checking is not about seeking consensus rather generating a whole picture of the situation and all of the views on the issue. This is in contradiction with Habermas’ (1984) intention for validity checking, that is to obtain consensus, but similar to the position that Gregory and Romm (2001) used in their workshop. The latter authors argued that people can find ways of arguing across their differences by engaging in “communicative argument... to develop more accountable action” without the ideal of consensus (Gregory & Romm, 2001, p. 460). One participant, a facilitator colleague from Asia has included the critical facilitator approach in a number of subsequent facilitator conference workshops. All of the elements of the critical facilitator approach are discussed later in the chapter.

The facilitation approach used in this final workshop was *intentional* and I assumed the role of a facilitative trainer (Schwarz, 2005). “Facilitative trainers design workshops so that participants use the training sessions to test out and get feedback on their knowledge and skills on real issues that face them” (Schwarz, p. 31) and “as an opportunity … to learn about the content and how to teach it better” (Schwarz, p. 481). As a facilitative trainer I used the mutual learning model or learning facilitator (Raelin, 2006) approach to encourage participants to learn in a collaborative and inclusive way. In subsequent workshops in my organisation I have also tested the critical facilitator approach to challenge the group’s views. I suggest that when
training project and change teams in the critical facilitator approach that facilitators use an intentional approach to frame the learning and the critical facilitator approach when groups practice the validity checking model.

6.2.2 Organisational learning: future application of the workshop
This workshop is a useful guide for internal (and external) practitioners to train their staff in project and change teams to undertake the critical / learning facilitator role after the lead facilitator leaves or moves on to the next change project. In other words, to pass the baton on and build sustainable change facilitation practices in organisations rather than relying on one change facilitator (Looney et al., 2011). Reflections on its use and participant feedback point to its efficacy, particularly the validity checking model together with the extra guiding questions and premise of equal worth, in surfacing underlying issues and perspectives. Ideally, practitioners should establish action learning teams in their organisations to work on organisational change projects with the aim of skilling all members of the team to become critical or learning facilitators [see Dick (Undated); Gregory and Romm (2001); Raelin (2006); Sheehan (2000)]. This workshop also provides an important process and practice for change practitioners and their project/change teams so that they may be able to undertake critical discourse with their groups undergoing change to identify power relations, address underlying assumptions and biases and create personal, group and organisational transformation.

I suggest that when training facilitators or teams in the critical facilitator approach, allocate a minimum of three hours for the initial workshop and limit the number to less than 20 participants. Looney et al. (2011, p. 20)) also recommend that the the “hand-over of the facilitation role” from the lead facilitator requires “courage, skill, grace and understanding”. It also requires leadership, and a respectful openness to critical discourse with a mutual learning model or intentional approach of facilitative training (Schwarz, 2005). The on-going coaching, opportunities for practice and inquiry, and fostering of an open learning and mutually respectful culture are essential for embedding this practice in the work of organisational groups and teams. It is
not enough to run a one-off workshop and expect long term sustainable change. In other words, the real worth of this workshop will be realised when it is tested in the context of organisational change rather than the artificial construct of a conference workshop.

The elements of the critical or learning facilitator approach in organisational change practice are further discussed in the next section. An understanding of the dimensions of this role, the core skills and environment that it seeks to foster will assist change facilitators to engage in and embody this approach.

6.2.3 The elements of the critical facilitator approach and workshop

The key elements of critical facilitation, and also the learning facilitator role, which are not mutually exclusive, that were key components of the Critical Facilitation Workshop are 1) reflective practice which includes critical reflection, reflexivity, praxis and self-facilitation or inner work (Delaney & Delaney, 2008; Raelin, 2006; Schön, 1983; Spry, 2011a); 2) action learning which was not made explicit in the workshop but is necessary for embedding critical facilitation in long term practice (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Dick & Dalmau, 1991; Raelin, 2006); 3) discursive validity checking or critical dialogue based on Habermas’ (1984) theory of communicative action and critical theory, and which is based on fostering an openness to a range of views and fairplay (Gregory & Romm, 2001) and was extended to include equal worth in the workshop; 4) facilitator political awareness and facilitator neutrality in the context of a knowledge of organisational, group and facilitator power and power relations (Ball, 2004; Brookfield, 2005; Jay, 2007; Kirk & Broussine, 2000; Wardale, 2008). In other words, effective organisational change facilitators are reflective practitioners who understand the power relations of their groups and organisations and have the ability to facilitate action learning groups to engage in critical and generative dialogue while promoting a climate of openness, fairplay and equal worth. Central to the critical facilitator approach is discursive validity checking or critical dialogue. I now reflect on its value and extend its meaning through the research of others in the literature. This synopsis adds value to the findings of
the workshop and will assist other organisational change facilitators to enhance the efficacy of their practice.

**Discursive validity checking or critical dialogue – extending its value**

Gregory and Romm (2001); Raelin (2006) and Dick (Undated) all effectively used the critical facilitator validity checking approach with action learning, project teams. Dick based his model on Robinson’s (1993) framework. Robinson (1993) promotes a process of critical dialogue between researcher and practitioner to achieve a relationship of mutual inquiry and learning. There are parallels in her research and Raelin’s that add value to the critical facilitator approach. These were used by Dick (Undated) with middle manager action learning project teams to manage organisational change.

Robinson (1993) developed a model of critical dialogue for researcher practitioners that is similar to Habermas’ (1984) communicative competence and Gregory & Romm’s (2001) validity checking model. However, she expanded Habermas’ model using the work of Chris Argyris (Argyris, 1993) as a framework, as did Raelin. Their models are based on Argyris’ Model Two or *double-loop learning*, which is also referred to as a mutual learning model by Schwarz (2002) and which Robinson has labelled *critical dialogue*. Both Schwarz in his *Skilled facilitator* approach, Robinson in her *critical dialogue* model and Raelin in his *learning facilitator* model have the values (after Argyris) of *valid information, free and informed choice* to share relevant information, and *internal commitment*.

The quality of the dialogue between researchers [substitute facilitators] and practitioners [substitute group members] is judged by the translation of these values into behaviour, and not merely by participants’ philosophical commitment (Robinson, 1993, p. 56).

Robinson proposes that there are three sets of skills that are related to the conduct of critical dialogue. The first set concerns *openness to a range of views* which is also the basis of Gregory & Romm’s and Raelin’s models. The second set is *testing* and the questions in the validity checking model are designed to do this. The third set “*concerns the way power and control are exercised by participants in the dialogue*” (Robinson, 1993, p. 56). An
understanding of this last concept is essential to a facilitator’s political awareness and is discussed in the next section. Engagement with our profession in a number of forums, including IAF conferences, provides depth to this skill set and, as learning facilitators, it assists us to continually learn to change and develop our own practice (MacKenzie, 2011). Kezar and Eckel (2002, p. 457) reinforce this and add that working with outside consultants and new leaders and participating in exchange programs can also help internal practitioners to become “cultural outsiders who have an ability to step back and see things from a different perspective”.

Fostering a climate of openness will create a safe space for this critical dialogue which can be “threatening – as it has the potential to cause an entire reframing of the practice world” (Raelin, 2006, p. 18). Raelin’s (2006, p. 8) additional behaviours of “tolerance of ambiguity,….frankness, patience and suspension of judgement, empathy and unconditional positive regard” will also assist to create this safe space. Equal worth and fairplay, as used in the critical facilitator practitioner workshop (above section, Table 7.) add a further dimension that will assist to foster a climate of openness. Further, when this climate of openness has been established the facilitator will need to be alert to some of the underlying power dynamics that do not always surface through critical dialogue. Mindell (1995, p. 20) calls these “hidden messages” and names them to include “subtle and unexpressed attitudes, assumptions and dispositions, may concern competition for leadership, hierarchical privileges, race relations, issues between women and men or older and younger people, environmental abuse, spiritual issues or private agendas at odds with the group’s stated purpose”.

I now discuss the fourth element of the critical facilitator approach facilitator political awareness in the context of shifting power relations and facilitator neutrality. This then leads to my final performative text/poem which brings me into play with the culture and mediates between the three research elements that make up this exegesis portfolio. It illustrates my body in professional practice.
Facilitator political awareness and neutrality

An understanding of organisational power, personal power, empowerment – self, other, group and organisation; and of power relations has emerged as being central to this thesis and to the efficacy of practice of/for an organisational change facilitator. These concepts were discussed in the literature review and are expanded here. In Chapter 4, and again in Chapter 5, I asked the following questions:

- As internal practitioners is it possible or even feasible to shift power relations, importantly at the senior level?
- What is our theory of power? Would this help our political skills?

Throughout this research and in my practice I have struggled with the concept of power and, more importantly, what I view as the impenetrable literature on the theories on power. An understanding of power, empowerment and power relations is core to embodying critical and learning facilitation practice as a catalyst for organisational change. I now discuss these concepts in relation to the literature on organisational power in an attempt to distil the essential elements that will assist facilitators in their practice. An understanding of these concepts adds depth to the critical facilitator workshop and will assist change facilitators in their practice, in delivery of the critical facilitator approach/workshop and embedding the approach with their organisational teams.

Clegg (1989, p. 252) argues that “power should be one of the central concepts in both management practice and theory”. Certainly, “power accounts for most of the reasons why organisations embark upon programs of organisation change” (Clegg et al., 2006, p. 17). Whitley (1977, p. 174) however, in a review of organisational control and the problem of order proposes that “authority” is essential to coordinating and controlling large organisations and is bounded by, power relations. He concludes that “To comprehend processes of organisational change both of these aspects [macrostructural processes and power relations] need to be taken into account” (p. 182). He posits that changes in the patterns of authority occur when power relations are altered, “for they “rest” on the support of a particular framework of power
relations (cf. Krupp, 1961, pp. 174-175)” (p. 180). Providing a forum for shifting power relations is central to facilitating organisational change. Facilitators therefore require competence and knowledge about how to recognise and deal with power relations and thus to recognise where authority lies. In the interviews and from my critical incidents I found that two other practitioners (Diana and Philip, Chapter 4) and I found this our greatest challenge.

I don’t know how I ignored it [politics] so blissfully for so long…I was naïve about the layers of politics…so it has an impact on my efficiency and my effectiveness [Interview transcript, Diana, 7th February 2012]

I was shut down and sidelined about six weeks ago and now they are starting to invite me back in and I don’t know if I want to go back in there [Interview transcript, Philip, 27th January 2012]

They don’t engage me. I don’t feel like my insights in the stuff are investigated [Interview transcript, Philip, 27th January 2012]

An understanding of power relations and the balance of power is central to understanding and identifying organisational politics. “Politics includes both a struggle for power and a struggle to limit, resist and escape from power (Wrong (1979, p.13)” (Clegg, 1989, p. 207). I identify the struggles of a change facilitator in my final performative text (later in this chapter) as well as in my autoethnographic story (Chapter 4). The political awareness of a facilitator is enhanced in the partial awareness – open position identified by Kirk and Broussine (2000), discussed in the practitioner workshop (above) and in Project 2, Chapter 5, and offers a lens through which critical facilitators may understand power relations.

Hardy and Leiba-O’Sullivan (1998, p. 460) proposed a model that suggests that power can work at four different levels.

On the surface power is exercised, by the mobilisation of scarce, critical resources, and through the control of decision-making processes. At a deeper level, power is exercised by managing the meanings that shape others’ lives. Deeper still, is the suggestion that power is embedded in the very fabric of the system; it constrains how we see, what we see, and how we think, in ways that limit our capacity for resistance.

This description of systemic power equates to what is commonly referred to as organisational culture. Changing organisational culture is at the core of
change facilitation practice. Therefore we need to work at this systemic level by understanding how power works at these different levels and how we are “becoming in practice” by asking ourselves the questions “What is being in practice like? What does it feel like?” (Green & Hopwood, 2015, p. 26). These concepts are further discussed later in this chapter in the context of my performative text which articulates my body work in professional practice. Critical facilitation for organisational change can therefore be viewed as working with the first two levels of power – decision making processes and managing meanings through challenging and surfacing diverse views - to shift the third, deeper level – the systemic power or the organisational culture.

Further to the above discussion Brookfield (2005, p. 39) identifies two attributes of an effective teaching facilitator that could be equally applied to the change facilitator, which are “learning to uncover and counter hegemony” and “learning to unmask power”. Recognising hegemony through identifying the beliefs and assumptions and structures within which we live and act is central to the critical facilitator approach. The critical facilitator approach therefore provides a vehicle for change facilitators to learn with their group, organisational participants and clients to contest hegemony and thus to “replace it with a system of beliefs and practices that represents the interests of the majority” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 46). Hegemony is also tied to organisational power, how it flows, and how the exercise of disciplinary power (self-discipline, self-surveillance, self-censorship) by our organisational selves means that we reinforce the hegemony of the dominant groups (Foucault, 1979). This is one of the main findings of Project 2 (Chapter 5) in which I identify the hegemony of power and decision making in my organisation which reinforce the dominance of processes and surveillance systems over good student-centred and service-oriented leadership practices and effective change facilitation approaches.

The concept of a facilitator unmasking power (Brookfield, 2005) may be related to that of the skill of providing a forum for shifting power relations. In other words, when facilitators unmask power through co-creating critical dialogue and by being politically aware, they provide a forum to shift power.
relations. Brookfield’s (2005, p. 129) translation of Foucauldian concepts is very helpful in this context. “The omnipresence of power means that we have to accept that all of us, at all times, are implicated in its workings”. Certainly, facilitators are at the nexus of the “web of power relationships” in a group and are therefore responsible for either reproducing or transforming them (Drennon & Cervero, 2002, p. 193). An awareness of their position in the group’s power is central to critical facilitation. In other words, any attempt [by a facilitator] to create “a power-free zone……is, in Foucault’s eyes, naïve and misplaced” (Brookfield, p. 129). Again this has implications for a facilitator practising a neutral stance.

Further “What Foucault helps us recognize is that another more subtle form of power – disciplinary power – is often present in practices that are usually thought of as democratic and participatory” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 144). In Discipline and punish not only do we realise that we are being disciplined so that we operate in the way that our supervisors wish but also “with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one [the supervisor] determines” (Foucault, 1979, p. 138). This was one of the key findings of Project 2, that is, the cultural change program was in itself a means of disciplinary power, of surveillance of the participants by the university (Chapter 5). In reality, therefore, we need to be aware that while we are imposing so-called democratic and collaborative processes that these may not be the most ideal way of shifting power relations if they are viewed by participants as a form of surveillance or disciplinary power. Certainly, the principle purpose of critical facilitation is for a deeper, critical discourse, not for consensus which extends beyond the ideals of democracy and collaboration.

Following on from this view, while the critical facilitator/ change role is to provide a forum for shifting power relations, an important part of this role is to also share power and raise awareness of its presence in each of us so that we may have the ability to change. Mindell (1995, p. 37) proposes:

The facilitator’s task is not to do away with the use of rank and power, but to notice them and make their dynamics explicit for the whole group to see
Further, “Choosing whether or not to exercise power is, in his [Foucault’s] eyes, an illusion. In reality we are fated to exercise power” (Brookfield, 2005, p. 143). Mindell (1995, p. 45) illustrates the importance of this concept:

Social relativity predicts that if all the abusive tyrants gave up their power, and all the freedom fighters came into power, very little would change. If all the oppressed were to move forward and the oppressors were to step down, chances are the world would not change in a sustainable way. Only when all members of a community grow in awareness of power in themselves and others can true change occur.

Drennon and Cervero (2002, p. 195), like Mindell (1995), indicate that there are a web of asymmetrical relationships of power that are based on “socially-structured power” and “organisationally-structured power” or “role status” previously referred to as authority by Whitley (1977). These hierarchies are not mutually exclusive.

…the personality traits, habits, and attitudes that privilege some members of an inquiry [facilitated] group and place others at a disadvantage generally reflect dominant cultural values and norms that have continually been legitimated by society or institutions. Because it is impossible to fully disentangle one hierarchy from another, it may be more useful to envision hierarchies as the circuitry through which power flows. (Clegg, 1989, p. 196)

As discussed above these hierarchies and the power bases were made apparent in the findings of Project 2 in relation to my own organisation (Chapter 5). In a recent discussion with a facilitator colleague with whom I shared my draft writings, we realised that this flow of power was about energy. “I see the application of power as a harnessing of energy which has an effect on the world (operating at many scales and many strengths)” (Mark Butz personal communication, 17th July 2015). A facilitator’s task is to harness this energy, to tap into “group synergy” which Hunter (2007, p. 25) refers to as “the alternative fuel for the twenty-first century”.

I now consider the concept of facilitator neutrality in the context of the above discussion of power and critical facilitation as an approach to shift power relations, unmask power and uncover hegemony. As stated previously Gregory and Romm (2001) were challenged in their research by participants for not being neutral as this was the expectation, that is researchers and facilitators must maintain a neutral stance. This precipitated an extensive
search of the literature and critical reflection on this neutral role. They argue that a neutral stance may not be beneficial as it may allow hidden agendas to perpetuate and does not assist the group to engage in critical dialogue. That is why they offer that discursive validity checking between group members and of the facilitator as important to elicit and critique power relations being experienced in individuals and the group. They also recommend that the reasoning for facilitator participation in group content be made explicit so that there is not an expectation of neutrality. There are therefore two choices that a facilitator can make – they can get involved in the content but make this explicit or they can maintain a neutral position and not get involved in the content. MacKenzie (2011, p. 81) clearly articulates this choice:

- **Option A:** process + structure + transparent interventions, or
- **Option B:** process + structure + transparent interventions + content

In both options the facilitator is responsible for using process expertise to structure the facilitation and uses appropriate and transparent interventions to achieve the outcomes being sought. Schein (1969) defined the first role (Option A) as a process consultant, that is there is a focus on process rather than content. While this role is supported and reinforced by the IAF facilitator competency to ‘model neutrality’ (expanded below and discussed in the literature review), it is contested in the profession (Ball, 2004; Jay, 2007; Wardale, 2008) and in the findings of the interviews that I held with practitioners (Chapter 4). Raelin (2006, p. 11) provides support for Gregory & Romm’s (2001) and MacKenzie’s (2011) Option B approach:

Facilitators are often experienced practitioners and may know a fair amount about the norms of practice in the units affected by the project. For example, they may be able to guide participants to the best people to speak to, or they may have a good hunch of how best to obtain data in the unit, be it by survey, interview, or observation. In sum, there are different ways facilitators can share their expertise other than by providing technical direction.

As stated above, interviews with four internal organisational change facilitators support this (Project 1, Chapter 4):

…the politics and timing are critical. As an external you don’t get the opportunity that an internal gets to ensure that your interventions or
strategies or whatever I am taking carriage of them and objectives get, yeah, the timing of that. When people are working or busy you can see when they have a break, they are free or going for coffee. I can see I need to ask this question. So things get changed on the run….You are more fluid, you move in a more organic way, be responsive from that perspective…I can affect things more internally than external because of ‘behind the scenes facilitation’. [Interview transcript, Lisa 3rd February 2012]

Similarly, Shaw (2002) urges that we need to change the conversations and the way we dialogue in organisations with a paradigm shift required away from the traditional process consultant to a deeper level of engagement with groups. This engagement may be realised using the critical/learning facilitator approach which was found in the delivery of the practitioner workshop (see previous section). In other words this is not a neutral stance but a policial stance. Kirk and Broussine (2000, pp. 21-22) reinforce this:

The position of facilitators is never neutral. Protestations of neutrality show either naïveté or cleverness. There will always be tensions between those who wish to preserve the system and those who wish to change it. The exercise of power in pursuit of these conflicting wishes is part of the system dynamic. The authoritative facilitator will be aware of how she or he is positioned in the dynamic, and how this impacts on organisational development agendas.

I have named the authoritative facilitator the shapeshifter in my performative poem in the next section. From the above discussion and the findings from interviews with internal practitioners (Project 1, Chapter 4) and an evaluation of a cultural change program in my organisation (Project 2, Chapter 5) comes a key question that is central to this exegesis and to the future practice of change facilitation:

- If change practitioners maintain a neutral stance then how may they provide a forum for shifting power relations?

Or more importantly as I have found that internal practitioners are seldom neutral:

- As internal practitioners is it possible or even feasible to shift power relations, importantly at the senior level?
Put in another way: Do the critical and learning facilitator approaches offer an ability to provide a forum for shifting power relations to create sustainable organisational change?

In light of the above questions: Are the core competencies and ethics of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) as detailed below aspirational?


And the preamble to the Code of Ethics: Facilitators are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups become more effective. We act as process guides to create a balance between participation and results (http://www.iaf-world.org/AboutIAF/CodeofEthics.aspx)]

I propose that change practitioners may be more effective if we acknowledge our partiality; make explicit our biases and assumptions and the reasoning for our participation in the group’s content; and work on self and others to understand the political dimensions of our practice, our groups and organisations. This is a critical or learning facilitator role not a process guide or process consultant role. In other words, while the IAF competencies of neutrality and process guidance are aspirational they are necessary, but require contextualising. This leads to the next section in which I present my poem The Shapeshifter which was written as a performative text. It reflects my practice dilemmas and struggles together with those of the other change practitioners who I interviewed.

6.3 Performative text: The Shapeshifter
“The performative-I disposition is about living in the body of the question rather than answering it” (Spry, 2011a, p. 65). As such there are no definitive answers to the research questions which I posed to investigate my practice, rather a poem that exposes the struggles and power relations in the practice of an internal organisational change facilitator/practitioner.
The Shapeshifter

I am a shapeshifter\textsuperscript{15}, a change facilitator
I shift power relations

From dominant leaders
To empower our people
Am I on the right track?

Tami Spry says "shapeshifting is a risky business, takes a lot of energy, and is enormously affected by the surroundings"\textsuperscript{16}
How true
Karen Vella's experience working in a university echoes, "change work" is "particularly risky and perilous"\textsuperscript{17}
When surrounded by my peers - co-facilitators, middle managers
Power flows between us
creativity sparks
endless ideas
and solutions

and then
I enter the executive arena
maintaining my equanimity
Believing everyone of equal worth\textsuperscript{18}
and so am I
No game face for me
I show up as my authentic self
Through this autoethnographic "interrogation" I've worked hard
to transform my "beliefs, actions and sense of self"\textsuperscript{19}
Focused on my self-development
I've shapeshifted
Is this naïve?

My energy sapped
How can I make a difference?
Choking, voiceless
I see and hear actions, words incongruent with collegial values
This IS a university?

Must conceal my body trembles, dread, resentment
My fear
to challenge their perspectives
to shift the power relations
For staff to be heard

\textsuperscript{15} After the archetype "I am the shapeshifter, I move between worlds, I navigate the full spectrum of consciousness, I am a bridge, I am changeable" (Spears, 2013)
\textsuperscript{16} Spry (2001, p. 715)
\textsuperscript{17} Somerville and Vella (2015, p. 41)
\textsuperscript{18} Pogge (1994, pp. 89-90)
\textsuperscript{19} Anderson (2006, p. 383)
creating our future

Why don’t they see my worth?
Like Diana, "They don’t appreciate the subtle things that I do. Sometimes you are not noticed and appreciated." ²⁰

Why don’t they take me seriously?
Hugh Mackay’s words resonate "What is the thing that all of us most desire? …That is to be taken seriously." ²¹

Maybe I’ll go external...

This is a performative text that performs my body’s experience of practising as an internal change practitioner in my university while undertaking this research study into my professional practice. It is in reality a study of power in the making. It is how I have been able to describe the reactions that I have had while undertaking practice, the reactions to power and my (perceived) lack of authority. Writing and performing about my body in professional practice helps me to go on, to sustain my practice. Shapeshifting is a metaphor for this embodiment. It co-performs the personal toll and practice struggles of other internal organisational change facilitators – the four that I interviewed in Project 2 (Chapter 4) and Karen Vella who practiced as an internal change agent in another Australian University (Somerville & Vella, 2015). It therefore emerges from and narrates the reality of facilitating organisational change through an intertwining of three levels of discourse – personal, popular and expert. As such it does not recognise the conventional method of analysing culture because it is a methodological backlash grounded in shared lived experience. It sits in the eight moment of qualitative research and therefore becomes a site for critical conversations about democracy, freedom and community in the organisation and in the professions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011c).

This co-production is a way of bringing the body into practice as the essential means of our becoming. It reinforces the ever changing, unique and situated

²⁰ Interview transcript, Diana, 8th December 2011
²¹ Mackay (2014)
nature of practices which Green and Hopwood (2015, p. 18) summarise as “purposive, embodied, situated (‘emplaced’), and dialogical, or co-produced, as well as being emergent and necessarily sociomaterial”.

Karen Vella (Somerville & Vella, 2015, p. 38) whose thesis was focused on the body in professional practice through the use of fabric, supported the following definition for the process of organisational change:

The process of organisational change is defined as involving the critical analysis of the context, antecedents and history of change that helps clarify how change will be best facilitated. The implementation of change, on the other hand, focuses attention on the management of individuals through the application of preconceived models/interventions that are intended to achieve predetermined outcomes (Wilson 1992).

The first sentence of this definition aligns with my findings discussed in the section above and in Chapter 4 (Project 1) and Chapter 5 (Project 2), that is internal change practitioners are well placed to undertake this critical analysis as they have an understanding of the content and political context. With this cultural and political understanding they can facilitate change using subtle /behind the scenes approaches as well as approaches that elicit and challenge cultural norms. This is not a technical or neutral role, rather this calls for a learning/critical facilitator approach. This core role is to provide a forum to shift power relations which requires shapeshifting.

My experience and the insights from this research differ from the second part of Vella’s definition, in particular “management of individuals through the application of preconceived models/interventions”. If we are to provide a forum to shift power relations then we wish to empower individuals not to manage them. As discussed earlier in this chapter, our practice is focussed on creating an openness and deeper level of discourse underpinned by the notions of fair play and equal worth whereby we take other’s/all viewpoints seriously. This is supported by the findings in Project 2 (Chapter 5) where I identified the managerialist culture of the university and argued for the use of organisational storytelling and deconstruction analysis of stories as a means of recognising and destabilising power relations. In doing so the purpose of organisational change is to move away from hierarchy and bureaucracy to co-
operacy (Hunter, 2007). In other words, our struggle is to embrace a more “participative and ethical rather than a managerialist approach to change” (Boje, Burnes, & Hassard, 2012, p. 3). I argue that we can do this more effectively and sustainably when we bring our body into professional practice, which is about “becoming in practice” and “relational-orientational knowing – knowing how to go on” (Green & Hopwood, 2015, p. 26;29). The critical facilitator role provides a means of becoming.

6.4 Conclusion
In this chapter I have attempted to provide insight into the theoretical and practical elements of the critical or learning facilitator role as a means of facilitating organisational change. An understanding of the dimensions of this role – importantly the political nature, the core skills and environment that it seeks to foster, will assist change practitioners to engage in this approach. I investigate the concept of power in organisations in the context of group facilitation as a means of providing further insight into the role for practitioners and as a means of discussing the concept of facilitator neutrality. The maintenance of a neutral position and a process consultant role are key competencies of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF). Recent research and literature as well as findings in this exegesis point to this as being aspirational and requiring context. From the discussion I pose the following question which is a key to the future practice of internal change practitioners as they are in a position to know the political context of their organisation:

- If change practitioners maintain a neutral stance then how may they provide a forum for shifting power relations?

The critical facilitator workshop that I have developed has as its centrepiece the validity-checking model which will be a useful orientation for action learning, project and change teams in organisations, by initiating facilitative competence in holding critical conversations essential to shifting power relations and creating generative dialogue. The ongoing coaching, opportunities for practice and inquiry, and fostering of an open learning and mutually respectful culture are essential for embedding this practice in the
work of organisational groups and teams. This will create long-term and sustainable organisational change.

Finally, I write our bodies into professional practice with a performative poem, *The Shapeshifter*. Shapeshifting is a metaphor for embodiment. The co-performed poem demonstrates how practices are “purposive, embodied, situated (‘emplaced’), and dialogical, or co-produced, as well as being emergent” (Green & Hopwood, 2015, p. 18). The montage text also offers a utopian solution (Denzin, 2014) that shows the fluidity of the personal and cultural experience of facilitating change. In other words there are no definitive answers; it is about contextualising, with one experience being different from another. It is this ability to understand our bodies as we practice and how we are *becoming in practice* in these spaces that will assist change practitioners to sustain practice. I have also shown that the critical facilitator role is also about becoming in practice and therefore adds depth to achieve effective and sustainable practice.

In summary, effective change facilitators are reflective practitioners who understand the power relations of their groups and organisations and have the ability to engage in critical dialogue with these groups while promoting a climate of openness, fairplay and equal worth. In other words they have the ability to shift power relations, to pass the facilitator baton on to their project and change teams, and to bring their bodies into professional practice so that they may create sustainable organisational change through sustaining their practice. Even if this takes the role beyond neutrality and challenges the core assumptions of the profession it will maintain the service ideal that is essential to our practice.

In the next chapter I draw together the essential themes of each of the three projects which make up this exegesis portfolio into a conclusion, implications for future practice and future research projects.
Chapter 7. Conclusion and Implications for Practice

7.1 Introduction
In this final chapter I reflect back on the research aim and questions and how the research methodology was suitable for addressing the research questions. In justifying the research approach I also identify the limitations of the study. I then synthesise the main findings that address each research question and enhance understanding of the practice of facilitating organisational change, specifically from an internal practitioner perspective. I then provide recommendations for practitioners aimed at enhancing practice. Finally I discuss the implications for further research.

7.2 Research aim, questions and methodology
This exegesis has provided a critical analysis of the role and effectiveness of an internal organisational change facilitator or practitioner. To achieve this, the study addressed the following questions:

- How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?
- How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?
- What are the implications of these findings for the theory and practice of group facilitation in organisational change?

I respond to the last question within the context and conclusions of the first two questions and in the context of future research.

In three separate projects I sought to better understand how my own experience, of a culture, connects with and offers insights about that culture and my place in it. I have done this through ethnography, seeking to understand the other and through autoethnography, seeking to understand myself. This is why the project is interwoven with the stories of participants and peers as well as my own. The qualitative research methods that I used to collect these stories and analyse them came from a social constructionism and (auto) ethnographic position with the use of what I have termed living
narrative analysis in Chapter 4, story deconstruction analysis (Boje, 2001) in Chapter 5 and a performative-I disposition (Spry, 2011a) in Chapter 6. These methods were appropriate to answer the research questions because I was seeking to understand from the perspective of the practitioner how they define their practice and know that they are effective, that is situated knowledge and perspectives. I was not seeking a generalisable truth or theory rather practice stories that illustrated and deepened our understanding of the multiple realities of our practice.

Narrative scholars would generally agree that a narrative is not simply a factual report of events, but instead one articulation told from a point of view that seeks to persuade others to see the events in a similar way. (Riessman, 2008, p. 187)

The stories contain fragments and longer sequences that represent themes and antenarrative (Boje, 2001) that link the story to the whole, and “renders them meaningful and coherent theoretically” (Riessman, 2008, p. 191). At the same time I also sought to “make sense analytically of both convergence and divergence…[to]…support trustworthiness” (Riessman, 2008, p. 191). For example, Philip’s story converges with Hedy’s, Diana’s and Lisa’s stories as he struggles to gain recognition from senior management; and diverges as he steadfastly maintains a neutral stance while Hedy, Diana and Lisa recognise that in most instances this is an unrealistic position - “I don’t even create any angst for myself because I know I am not [neutral]” (Diana).

The autoethnographic approach to story writing followed Carolyn Ellis’ (2004), Laurel Richardson’s (Richardson, 1997) and Tami Spry’s (2001, 2011a, 2011b) writing styles. The spirit of the work was well served by autoethnography as my intention was surface the political and ethical dimensions of our practice into social consciousness, to open up the audience to the possibility of change and to create the possibility for change in the definition of competent practice in our profession. In writing in this way I wanted the reader, other practitioners to be moved emotionally and intellectually so that they may learn more about the dimensions of our practice, and to provide guidance on sustaining practice and creating sustainable organisational change. The performative (auto) ethnographic
writing style provides a way of moving beyond statistics and performance text becomes a way of inviting co-participants to engage with the work and thereby become part of the research process itself (Taylor, 2006, p. 197). Further the performative-I disposition (Spry, 2011a) assists me and will assist other practitioners to bring our bodies into professional practice (Green & Hopwood, 2015), to connect the personal with the political.

[Performative] Autoethnography is place and space and time.  
It is personal, political and palpable.  

……

It is critical reflexive, performative, and often forgiving.  
It is the string theories of pain and privilege  
forever woven into fabrics of power/lessness. (Spry, 2011a, p. 15)

7.3 Key findings, implications for practice and recommendations  
I now reiterate the main findings of this research study that will enhance an understanding of practice from an internal change practitioner perspective, and provide guidance on sustaining practice and creating sustainable organisational change. Under each main question I provide the key findings as well as advice and recommendations for future practice.

7.3.1 Defining practice: How do organisational change facilitators define themselves, their knowledge and their practice?  
In the first project I interviewed four practitioners and myself to find out how our ways of knowing inform and define our practice. The analysis and resulting practitioner stories revealed that most of us were impacted and defined ourselves by our practice dilemmas, development and highpoints. These were related to the internal role and the ongoing tension in attempting to enact the cultural norm and professional competency of facilitator neutrality while also maintaining effectiveness, influence and political skill. I found that while our knowledge of the organisational culture, relationships, strategic direction and underlying story, as well as our considerable knowledge and experience in facilitation practice, assist us to be more effective in our interventions than external facilitators, it also negates our neutrality.
I also found that all of us have become institutionalised. We have all been in our organisations, which have layers of bureaucracy, for so long that we have been inculcated and institutionalised. We are part of the institutional story and part of the politics. We are not neutral. Apart from one respondent, the internal politics impact our work and our sense of self-worth. We are not noticed for the ‘subtle’ things we do, we often cannot see up the ranks and senior managers often do not notice us; certainly this was how Diana, Hedy and Philip defined our internal practice role. This is not just recognition for promotion but also recognition that assists us to keep going and to feel that we are effective so that we can continually improve and achieve outcomes for the people in our organisations. So that we can sustain practice and achieve sustainable organisational change.

There are implications from these findings not only in terms of facilitator neutrality but also in terms of the internal and external facilitator role. Four out of five of the respondents indicated that an internal facilitator is not a neutral role, whereas external facilitators are often perceived by senior management to be neutral. However, because the external facilitator is not able to ‘contextualise’ (Ball, 2004) with insider organisational knowledge their effectiveness may be constrained, which is what all of us experienced at some time whether practicing in the internal or external role. In other words, as internal practitioners, if we remain in a process consultant role (Schein, 1969) which is a neutral role, and do not bring in our organisational content knowledge then the group’s ability to affect change will be limited. This has implications for sustainable organisational change.

In the third project I investigate the learning and critical facilitator roles as a means of allowing the change practitioner to provide a forum for mutual learning and for shifting power relations (Gregory & Romm, 2001; Raelin, 2006). These roles are not mutually exclusive and are not neutral. In this study I developed a practitioner workshop for training organisational project and change teams in these two roles. The purpose of the training is for change practitioners to pass the baton on to project and change teams thus enhancing organisational competence in facilitation and sustaining organisational
change. The workshop was developed through cooperative dialogue with peers over three international facilitator conferences. I conclude from the workshop reflections and from an extensive search of the literature, specifically on power, that effective organisational change facilitators are reflective practitioners who understand the power relations of their groups and organisations and have the ability to facilitate action learning groups to engage in critical and generative dialogue while promoting a climate of openness, fairplay and equal worth. Again this is not a process consultant role.

In summary, these findings while not definitive are similar to recent Australian studies (Ball, 2004; Jay, 2007; Thomas, 2008a; Wardale, 2008) which, reveal that neutrality for an internal practitioner is a difficult and unrealistic position as we are part of our institutional stories and culture. Thus a reframing of the profession’s focus on the facilitator enacting process guidance and neutrality is required, especially where the facilitator is internal. In other words, while the IAF competencies of neutrality and process guidance are aspirational they are necessary, but require contextualising. I propose that change practitioners may be more effective if we redefine our roles as learning and/or critical facilitators where we acknowledge our partiality; make explicit our biases and assumptions and the reasoning for our participation in the group’s content; and work on self and others to understand the political dimensions and the power relations of our practice, our groups and organisations. A further consideration of the internal facilitator’s institutionalisation and subsequent inability to notice things and be noticed or validated by senior leaders is also necessary in respect of our organisational effectiveness.

7.3.2 Evaluating practice: How do organisational change facilitators know they are effective?

Each of the three projects produced practice stories from the respondent practitioners and from my own professional and personal practice life. In essence, we were all storytellers, relating countless stories of our personal effectiveness and reputation, of our participant’s learning and growth, of our struggles and worth being internal and working with the organisational
politics and maintaining neutrality. I found that most of us told stories to demonstrate our effectiveness rather than how we evaluated our practice using quantitative or more formal metrics. This was mostly because our practice is “subtle” (Diana), “behind the scenes” (Lisa) facilitation aimed at “connecting with the heart and mind” (Jean). This has implications for more formal measures of evaluation.

Weaving my participants’ stories and practice incidents with mine produced a collective autoethnographic story in Chapter 4 and a performative poem in Chapter 6. These stories were written to illustrate the shared practice lives of change practitioners as a means of defining our practice and effectiveness. Similar to Karen Vella (Somerville & Vella, 2015) and Christine Hogan (2000b) I found that autoethnographic storytelling together with the performative-I disposition were important methods for change practitioners to understand and critique self in the context of our power relations, cultural and social positioning in the organisation. In other words, autoethnography and performance heightened my awareness of the importance of my political self as well as gaining a better understanding of the cultural and organisational context within which I practice. This has implications for measuring and enhancing our effectiveness.

In the second project (Chapter 5) I used the Most Significant Change (MSC) Storytelling Technique (Davies & Dart, 2005) with story deconstruction analysis (Boje, 2001) to evaluate a cultural change program in my university. These approaches, which both have aspects of performativity and autoethnography, when used together interrupt the dominant organisational narratives by producing a re-story that challenges the dominant power relations. As such both techniques form a complementary duo with the potential to provide depth to evaluation of culture and practice within a hierarchical and managerial organisation, specifically in a university. This further enhances our understanding of the sociocultural context within which I (we) work and our ability to evaluate practice and be more effective practitioners.
There has been limited critique of the MSC (Davies & Dart, 2005; Willetts & Crawford, 2007) particularly in the organisational change context. This study provides a more extensive critique of the usefulness and limitations of the MSC as a participatory evaluation approach in a large complex organisation together with suggestions for its refinement. These include firstly, undertaking pre-evaluation or pre-stories and pre-implementation activities with participants and program sponsors; secondly, not using pre-determined domains of change rather involving participants in sorting stories into domains, allowing the data to emerge and not restrict the type of change; thirdly, obtaining ethics approval before the program is implemented; and fourthly, considering not including senior managers in the final selection of stories which would take out the hierarchical nature of the decision making process and encourage more involvement and ownership of change at the local level. If a senior management panel is used I recommend using Marshak & Schein’s (2006) approach to reframe discussions, foster reflection and learning, and create generative dialogue (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Due to the difficulties faced in gaining ethics approval I also recommend that change practitioners be involved in input to the review of ethics approval processes which would assist our organisations to embrace these storied evaluation practices. These recommendations will assist change practitioners to implement the MSC in their organisations.

7.3.3 Defining and evaluating practice: How do organisational change facilitators define themselves and know they are effective?

In the third project I use a performative-I disposition (Spry, 2011a) to write our bodies into professional practice with a performative poem, The Shapeshifter. Shapeshifting is a metaphor for embodiment and it is a means of defining, enhancing and evaluating our practice. The co-performed poem demonstrates how practices are “purposive, embodied, situated (‘emplaced’), and dialogical, or co-produced, as well as being emergent” (Green & Hopwood, 2015, p. 18). The montage text also offers a ‘utopian’ solution (Denzin, 2014) that shows the fluidity of the personal and cultural experience of facilitating change. In other words there are no definitive answers from this study or about our practice, rather it is about contextualising, with one
experience being different from another.

Writing and performing texts is a vehicle for bringing our bodies into professional practice, which is about “becoming in practice” and “relational orientational knowing – knowing how to go on” (Green & Hopwood, 2015, pp. 26,29). The critical facilitator role provides a means of ‘becoming’, of embodying practice, as does the performative-I disposition (Spry, 2011a, 2011b). By enhancing our ability to understand our bodies, as we practice, we can better experience those spaces between the personal, cultural and professional. As such, I offer both of these practices together as a means of understanding the ‘kinds of knowing that are embedded in competent practice’ beyond ‘knowing-in-action’ (Schön, 1995a) and ‘knowing-in-practice’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) to ‘becoming in practice’ (Green & Hopwood, 2015). This is a significant contribution to our professional practice knowledge and to our profession. This has implications for the theory and practice of group facilitation in organisational change and therefore addresses my third research question.

In each of my projects I have been concerned with power, specifically power relations. In the interviews with others and myself and in our collective stories, it was the understanding of power and power relations that offered the greatest insight into the tensions that I/we experience being internal practitioners. So, rather than reacting to power relations and over-analysing them, the ability for internal practitioners to be able to step back and reflect in and on the moment and to reframe our view and that of those with whom we are working/facilitating offers a more effective approach, particularly with senior managers. This may be achieved by critical facilitation and bringing our bodies into professional practice.

In summary, effective change facilitators are reflective practitioners who understand the power relations of their groups and organisations and have the ability to engage in critical dialogue with these groups while promoting a climate of reflection, learning, openness, fairplay and equal worth. In other words they have the ability to shift power relations, to pass the facilitator
baton on to their project and change teams, and to bring their bodies into professional practice so that they may create sustainable organisational change through sustaining their practice. Even if this takes the role beyond neutrality and challenges the core assumptions of the profession it will maintain the service ideal that is essential to our practice.

7.4 Limitations
In the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) I identified the significant contributions that this study has made to research methodology through the use of these diverse narrative methods. I now also identify some of the limitations of the methods that were used. While this is a study of how change facilitators define and evaluate their practice, the small size of the sample (only five practitioners) and the focus on internal practitioners reflects the perspectives of individuals that may not be representative of the profession. However the findings are reinforced by those of other recent Australian studies (Ball, 2004; Jay, 2007; Thomas, 2008a, 2008b; Wardale, 2008) and provide depth through practice stories to the dimensions of our practice. The study was undertaken within an Australian context and it therefore may also not be representative of practice in other cultures, although similar studies of the role of the facilitator in praxis, the learning facilitator and critical facilitation have been undertaken in North America (Raelin, 2006) and the United Kingdom (Gregory & Romm, 2001; MacKenzie, 2011). On the basis of my ontological approach of social constructionism the study does not need to be representative, however we can take the experiences from this context to indicate what may occur in other contexts. Future collaborative action research by a community of professional practitioners across the world is recommended to broaden perspectives, expertise and understanding.

The use of a participatory action research evaluation approach such as the MSC, together with the use of stories that were performative and autoethnographic created ethical dilemmas for myself and for participants. These were related to the fear of participants being identified and of disclosing. I identify these ethical dilemmas and offer a modified approach for using the MSC as well as complementing it with story deconstruction
analysis that strengthens the technique as an evaluation method. I also undertake critical self-reflection to identify the role that I am playing in the stories and performance, including asking myself when I consider that I am being unethical. The main limitation in using these analytical approaches is that the final collective autoethnography and the performative poem may be viewed as skewed to my view about practice and not representative of the profession. However, as identified above using a social constructionism ontological approach I was not seeking representation. Patton (2015, p. 103) provides an overview of the controversial views of authors and researchers toward the use of personal writing including a blurring of the lines between sociology and literature and being too subjective, while also extolling the virtues of the method from a number of other researchers when careful research and fieldwork and creative analytical practices, such as the ones that I have used, are employed. My creative analytical writing weaves the stories of my respondents and of others from the literature into my texts. Laurel Richardson’s (2000, p. 937) criteria for judging the quality of an autoethnography may also be applied by the reader to test the quality of my work: substantive contribution; aesthetic merit; reflexivity; impact; and expression of a reality.

7.5 Future research and collaboration
There are a number of areas of further research required. Firstly, research is required on the learning /critical facilitator role within an organisational context. The practitioner workshop which I developed could be tested by internal practitioners in their organisations to see if this enhances organisational competence in facilitation and sustainable change. The central question for this study could be:

- Do the critical and learning facilitator approaches offer an ability to provide a forum for mutual learning and shifting power relations to create sustainable organisational change?

Further to this research could be a further exploration of the neutral role of the internal practitioner. A collaborative, action learning research approach by a number of Certified Professional Facilitators (International Association
of Facilitators) across the world could be supported by the profession to investigate this role and provide practical advice for its implementation.

Secondly, while the MSC Technique with story deconstruction form a complementary duo with the potential to add depth to the evaluation of a facilitated and participatory change program, further research is required on more formal measures of evaluating practice that enhance storytelling approaches.

Finally, further research and practice on performativity by internal practitioners is required. This research could be focussed on how embodying practice or ‘becoming in practice’ can create sustainable practice and change. Practitioners are urged to try using an approach that resonates with their personal and/or professional skills and experience. This could be writing and performing stories, poems, plays, artwork, textiles, film or music. And so some final words about how this study has changed my practice….

I never dreamed that the writing, reading and performing would lead to such insight. I now write for myself and for others.

When I started out on this journey seven years ago how little did I know, how little did I feel, about my practice? I have pushed forward through the fear, the power struggles, the practice changes, the learning conversations, to a place that is not the end, it is still evolving and seldom neutral. There is no end to living story as I continue and you, the reader, continue to deconstruct my/our story and the stories of the others, to find multiple realities, perspectives and understanding.

Like Van Morrisson I have emerged “From the dark end of the street To the bright side of the road”. (Morrison, 2014, pp. 75-76)
References


194


