WHY HOME SCHOOL?

AN EXPLORATION INTO THE PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION OF PARENTS WHO HOME SCHOOL IN OTAGO AND CANTERBURY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education in the University of Canterbury by Fiona McAlevey

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This work is dedicated to home schoolers everywhere...
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This thesis is the result of research carried out over a two year period between 1995 and 1997. The research, which was qualitative, was carried out in Otago and Canterbury. Five mothers were interviewed who had or who were at the time of the research, involved in home schooling their children. In addition three children and a father took part by participating in interviews, conversations or a participant observation.

The thesis focused on the philosophies of education held by the home schooling parents. These philosophies were based on beliefs of either a pedagogical or religious nature. An analysis of these philosophies revealed that the parents who participated in this research were all making overt political statements by choosing to home school. They resisted traditional notions about education by taking their children home to educate.
INTRODUCTION

Thousands of parents around the world choose to educate their children at home. Home schooling has increased at a phenomenal rate over the last decade. In Aotearoa, the number of children being home schooled has increased from over 1000 in 1990 to over 5000 in 1996 (Bathgate, 1995; Bode, 1996).

In this study, home schooling describes those parents who have made the choice to educate their children outside of registered schools. In Aotearoa it includes parents who have been granted an exemption from schooling for their children by the Ministry of Education. Parents are required to apply for an exemption after their child's sixth birthday. To be eligible for an exemption parents must satisfy the Ministry of Education that their children are being taught as regularly and as well as in a registered school, as specified in Section 21 of the Education Act (1989) (Bathgate, 1995).

This thesis is based on research that was carried out into home schooling in the South Island over a two year period. The research has been focused on why parents choose to home school their children. Very little research has been carried out into home schooling, particularly in Aotearoa. The aim of this research was to provide more information about home schooling, and to explore the reasons parents have for choosing home schooling over registered schools. What is it about home schooling that makes it a more desirable option than that provided in formal schools?

The research shows that although parents initially elect to home school their children on the basis of individual reasons, there are strong patterns
of underlying motives among them. These include a desire for improved learning environments and educational practices, and a desire for environments which provide good spiritual foundations for children.

There is a clear link between the parents' own schooling and educational experiences and conflicts over their children's schooling, acting as an impetus for making the choice to home school. The research also clearly shows that home schooling parents are acting politically by choosing to home school their children. They resist the traditional notions of learning and teaching which underpin the practices of the mainstream education system.

The study which was qualitative, was conducted between 1995 and 1997 in the Canterbury and Otago regions. These areas were chosen both for comparative reasons and in order to cover more of the South Island. Mothers from five families took part in the research, and in addition, one father and three children took part in interviews, conversations and a participant observation. Analysis of home schooling literature, research on home schooling and media publications was also undertaken.

This thesis is aimed at being accessible to academics and home schoolers alike. This is because any research which includes home schoolers should be available for them to make use of. For this reason notes are included in the thesis to explain some terms to those not familiar with them. In addition, a large number of quotes from the participants has been included throughout the text. These quotes have been used both to exemplify points made, and to provide as much as possible of the participants' voices.
The second chapter focuses on the methodology used in the thesis. It includes an explanation for the choice of qualitative research, introduces the participants and provides information about their backgrounds.

Chapter Three, the Literature Review, presents information about the historical context of home schooling in the United States and Aotearoa as well as presenting ideas put forward by home schooling researchers. By exploring the analyses of home schooling provided by these researchers, it will be shown that home schoolers generally choose to home school on either religious or pedagogical grounds.

It will also be seen that some home schooling researchers have put forward structural arguments about home schooling. They present their analyses in a 'home schoolers versus education officials' framework. The next idea presented in this chapter is that parents who home school attempt to regain some of the power that they feel has been taken off them by the education system, through bringing their children home to educate. Other examples of the way in which power imbalances are addressed by home schoolers are also included. The final idea presented in this chapter is that certain myths exist about home schooling, in particular that home schooled children are socially inept and that they receive an inferior academic education to children educated in formal schools.

In Chapter Four I discuss the home schooling process as experienced by participants in the study. Using the categories devised by Van Galen (1989), I posit that the parents can be broadly grouped as Ideologues and Pedagogues. Ideologues home school their children as a result of dissatisfaction with formal schools on spiritual grounds, whereas
Pedagogues are dissatisfied with formal schools on academic grounds. The two groups differ both in their beliefs about education and how it is practised.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents information about making the decision to home school. It discusses the experiences parents go through while weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of home schooling. A short section describing the transition from home schools to registered schools follows. The third section is focused on the actual operation of home schools, once again drawing upon the ideas and experiences of parents in the study.

Chapter Five, Philosophy, provides an analysis of the educational philosophies of the parents in this study. Using Van Galen's classifications an analysis is made of the parents' theories about learning and teaching. I compare parents who have been termed Ideologues with the ones I term Pedagogues, noting their differences and similarities, and the way that these become reflected in their home schooling practices.

Chapter Six investigates relationships and their importance to the success of home schooling. I discuss the range of relationships that home schoolers share with others, using examples from their experiences to illustrate the ways these support systems helped the home schooling process. This chapter is divided into several sections, including children's relationships with other children; the relationships of parents to family and friends; the effects of home schooling on the family and the relationship of home schoolers to other home schoolers.
This chapter provides snapshots of the journey I made as I researched home schooling. My research 'equipment' - skills, techniques and ideas - have developed along the way from something like a basic pin-box camera to a more sophisticated model with plenty of attachments. I will discuss this equipment at some point during the trip, but I will also look at where I went, why I went there and who I came into contact with along the way.

*Opening The Album: Initial Steps*

Since I was very young I have had an interest in various forms of education. I remember reading a book, *The Children On The Hill*, when I was thirteen, which looked at a family in Great Britain who were involved in home schooling. The idea fascinated me. In more recent times, I have talked about home schooling with a friend who has home schooled her children in the past. She made it sound exciting and creative. In addition, relatives of mine have home schooled their children. A combination of all these past experiences led me to choose home schooling as a topic for my Master of Arts thesis.

I was aware that although I had a great interest in the topic, I actually knew very little about home schooling. Initial forays into the subject of home schooling via the university library system produced very little information, but enough to start me off. I made the first of many interloan requests to gain copies of articles from other libraries around the country. These articles were enough to tell me some important facts about home schooling research: very little research has been carried out
into home schooling, especially in Aotearoa; a small but rapidly growing number of parents home school their children; people have many different reasons for home schooling.

I decided that I wanted my thesis to reflect what was happening for home schooling parents in this country. Specifically I was interested in the Canterbury and Otago regions, one being where I live, and the other where I was born. I wanted to know who was home schooling, how they went about it, and why they were doing it. Revisiting the home schooling literature I had access to, one article in particular caught my attention. I want to explore this article as it had a large effect on the way I undertook my data collection and analysis.

_Finding Focus: Adjusting The Lens_

'Parents' Rationales For Operating Home Schools' was written by J. Gary Knowles in 1991. This article is based on a preliminary investigation which was part of a longitudinal study of home schools begun in 1985 (Knowles, 1991). Knowles conducted his study in Utah, collecting data from twelve families. By making some initial inquiries Knowles was able to choose families which would satisfy his need for participants who came from a variety of 'family perspectives and home schools' (ibid: 207). Families were selected on the basis of diversity in a number of criteria. These included 'socio-economic status, occupational status, religious orientation, residential location, political orientation, life-style characteristics, time involved in home education, and levels of parents' education.' (ibid: 227).
The investigation focused on answering the question "Why would these parents take on what is regarded as the responsibility of public schools?" (ibid: 204). Similar questions were being asked by other home schooling researchers. The majority of research at that time was survey-based. However, as Knowles pointed out (Knowles, 1991), naturalistic studies and surveys all came to the same basic conclusions about people's motivations for home schooling. Researchers claimed that 'recent dissatisfaction and conflict with public schooling' (ibid) were the reasons parents chose to school their children at home.

Knowles's study excited me. It was different from other research that I was reading at the time that I came across it. Two aspects of this difference interested me in particular - the methods he used to carry out his research, and what he discovered. The methods Knowles used seemed closer to the kinds of methods I was interested in pursuing in my own work. It gave the participants the potential to say more than a survey would have done. In addition Knowles's findings contrasted greatly with the findings other researchers were making at that time.

As mentioned previously, most of the home schooling research that had been conducted at the time Knowles carried out his research, was based on surveys. Knowles, in contrast to other researchers, used qualitative research methods. These methods included the use of reflection topics and interviews. (ibid: 208). The reflection topics were a group of topics that participants could think about and give responses to. Knowles gave his participants the choice of responding to the reflection topics in three ways: they could record their responses on a tape recorder; they could write down their responses; or they could narrate their responses in Knowles's presence. Most of the participants, as it turned out, decided to
write their responses, and none decided to narrate their responses in Knowles's presence. Knowles then conducted interviews with his participants to clarify issues which arose from the reflection topics.

The reflection topics were constructed in a way that enabled Knowles to gain information about his participants' 'childhood, family, and school experiences and about historical and contemporary events and decisions associated with establishing home schools' (Knowles, 1991: 208). From the responses he received to the topics, Knowles attempted to reconstruct 'past events in relation to present circumstances' (ibid). Combining the use of reflection topics and interviews, Knowles created life histories for his participants.

I was impressed by the fact that Knowles offered his participants choices in how they wished to participate. He gave them the opportunity to write or speak their responses. I made a decision to do something similar in my own research. I considered that offering choices would on the one hand give the participants more ownership over the way they contributed to the study, and at the same time it would give me more potential sources of information.

On the basis of his research, Knowles suggested a four-tiered explanation for the rationales of parents making the decision to home school. The second two of these rationales were ones offered by other researchers, but the first two were completely new. The rationales 'were imbedded in:
a. family experiences as children;  
b. school and learning experiences in childhood;  
c. perceptions of conflict with public school practices, beliefs and environments;  
d. the formulation of pedagogical beliefs about homes being better places than schools for children's learning.'

(Knowles, 1991: 211)

I was excited by Knowles's findings because he offered what seemed like a more developed explanation for parents' decisions to home school their children. To state Knowles's position in a simple way, he was saying that the underlying reasons people choose to home school are rooted in their early negative experiences in their families and schools (ibid). Having personally experienced over the years a number of psychodrama and therapy sessions which saw me reconstruct 'past events in relation to present circumstances' (ibid: 208), I was sure that some deep-seated response to an early experience was the reason parents turned away from traditional schooling. I will return to Knowles in the next chapter.

Choosing Participants and Gaining Access

Like Knowles, I wanted to select a range of participants which would reflect the diversity of people who choose to home school. This was made difficult by the fact that I decided to interview a small number of parents - five in all. I chose to interview a small number because of the constraints of producing a thesis, and the fact that I was carrying out qualitative research, which tends to be very time consuming and intensive.
I made contact with two home schooling relatives and a friend who had home schooled in the past. All of them agreed to take part in the project. A fourth parent was contacted through a suggestion made by a Ministry of Education representative. She also agreed to take part. During the second year of the project, I decided to look for a fifth parent to interview. This was due to the fact that most of the parents I had interviewed home schooled their children for only a limited time, and I needed to see whether this happened in other families too. I contacted a fifth parent through a friend. She agreed to become a participant in the project. As I was restricted by time constraints, my interview with this participant was not as in-depth as the interviews with other participants. The interview did, however, yield some interesting and helpful information.

Although I in no way claim that the participants in my study are representative of all home schoolers, I believe that of the five parents who participated, a broad range of experiences is represented. The participants' experiences vary according to when and for how long they home schooled; the number of children they home schooled; the reasons for home schooling and the philosophies behind their home schooling. All of the parents were in their thirties or forties. Some of my participants were 'religious', while others were not. One participant was Maori and the rest Pakeha. There were differences in terms of cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses.

All of the parents I interviewed who carried out the home schooling were women. It tends to be mothers who are responsible for home schooling in most of the home schooling research that is conducted. I also spoke to a father during one interview, and another participant mentioned that her
husband had been very involved in the home schooling of their children. In addition I interviewed two children and spoke to another child about her home schooling experiences.

Two cities are represented in my study, as well as urban and rural locations. One family has never participated in the public schooling system, while the children from another family have recently returned to a public school after home schooling for five years. Yet another family has some children in public schools and two at home, which a fourth family had children at home who later returned to school due to financial necessity. There is a variety of ages represented in the children who range from five years to seventeen years of age.

The Participants

The Lamer Family

Hattie Lamer is a Maori woman in her forties with five children. She has a partner who is self-employed, and Hattie herself is involved in study. She home schooled three of her children in Otago for nine years beginning in 1980. At that time she was married and her husband was a manager. She said that they lived comfortably. Hattie’s previous educational experience included training at a Teacher's College.

Her interest in home schooling developed as a result of problems her daughters experienced in registered schools, in combination with her ideas about child rearing. She had been very involved with home birthing groups for a number of years.
Hattie home schooled her children herself at home and other locations, seeing it as part of the process of being a family, although her children's learning was largely self-directed. Her children returned to registered schools after her marriage had broke up, and she was forced to seek paid work.

*The Pearson Family*

Claire Pearson is a Pakeha woman in her forties living in Otago with her husband. She has ten children, and is currently home schooling two of them. She home schools Timothy who was nine in 1996, and Siobhan who was five. Her husband is self-employed, and Claire works as a mother. She began home schooling her son Timothy in 1995, after he experienced a great deal of stress in a registered school. Claire's previous educational experience included secondary schooling.

Claire has had an interest in education for a number of years, and recently discovered that home schooling was a viable educational option after reading an article about it in a New Zealand magazine.

Claire takes full responsibility for the home schooling of her children at her home. She is active member of a mainstream religion, but did not cite religion as being one of the reasons she opted for home schooling. Her son Timothy intends to return to a registered school in the future.
The Devi Family

Sarasvati Devi is a Pakeha woman in her thirties who lives in Canterbury with her husband. She has two children who are both being home schooled. Her husband is a builder and Sarasvati is a mother and teacher. Her formal education finished at secondary school.

Sarasvati began home schooling her son Bhima when he turned five. She chose to home schooling for moral reasons. Sarasvati and her husband are deeply involved in an Eastern religion. In recent years the number of parents with school-aged children in their religious community grew. As a result of not having enough children to set up a registered school (ten children), they elected to home school the children in a group.

The children are educated together in one room of a house, and in another room are older children who take correspondence lessons. The two groups of children interact regularly for sport, breaks, art and religious events.

Sarasvati home schools four children and shares the responsibility for this with another adult. The community are quite satisfied with the home schooling, and plan to continue it indefinitely.

The Bond Family

Jackie Bond is a Pakeha woman in her forties who lives in Otago. She lives with her husband who works in the service industry. Jackie works as a mother. She home schooled six of her children for six years finishing at
the end of 1995. Her formal educational experience ended at secondary school.

Jackie and her husband are Christians who belong to an alternative Christian church. They discovered home schooling through another Christian family. They elected to take up home schooling for religious reasons.

Jackie home schooled the children at home herself. She and her husband decided to return the children to public schools in 1996, as they felt the time was right and that God wished them to.

*The Dobb Family*

Michelle Dobb is a Pakeha woman in her forties living in Canterbury. Her husband's is a professional and she is also a professional. She home schooled four of her children for seven years finishing at the end of 1994. Michelle is a trained secondary teacher.

Michelle home schooled her children herself. She withdrew them from a registered school when she became dissatisfied when they were not learning in the way she hoped they would. Her children returned to registered schools as they decided they wished to.

*Ethical Considerations*

The information sheet told participants what they could expect in terms of their participation in the project. I tried to use language that was free of academic jargon in order to make it as accessible to the participants as
possible, and to other non-academics interested in home schooling. The information sheet explained that the participants would take part in two interviews of two hours duration each. They would also be invited to fill out a journal as little or as much as they liked.

The consent form helps to provide protection for the participants. It is designed to ensure that their identity is concealed through name changes and a change of any identifying features such as location. The home schooling community in Aotearoa is a small one, and this made it especially important that the participants felt as though they could give information freely without fear of being identified.

The consent form also ensures that the participants are able to withdraw at any part of the research process, and are also able to withdraw any information they have given. I consider it important to recognise that the research I have undertaken is a combined effort, and that there exists a co-ownership of information produced during the research process.

At a later stage in the project, I decided it would be advantageous to carry out some interviews with children who were being home schooled. This involved drafting out a new information sheet and a new consent form. As with the information sheet designed for parents, this sheet outlined the children's participation in the project. It was also written in language that I thought was accessible to the children involved. The consent form was written in the same style, and was designed to ensure the children's anonymity. I applied for and received approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.
Qualitative Inquiry

I elected to use qualitative research methods for this project, including both qualitative data collection and qualitative analysis. I wanted a method that would allow me to get as close to the participants' versions of their experiences as possible. Qualitative research seemed the ideal way to do that.

I had had some previous exposure to qualitative research methods in my years as an undergraduate and honours student. In addition, I had enjoyed this experience. It seemed both 'user-friendly' and elicited a great deal of information. It provided closer contact with people, and it seemed to me, let more of 'them' come through.

Inspired by the example of Knowles, I chose to carry out semi-structured interviews, one participant observation, and provided journals for the participants to write in on a number of topics relating to home schooling (see Appendices ). In addition I examined some of the materials children used in their home schooling, and several media articles on home schooling. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 24) note, participant observation, interviews and document collection are three of the main techniques qualitative researchers use to collect data.

As Wolcott (1994: 10) would say I was 'experiencing, enquiring and examining'. I 'experienced' a little of Timothy McLaren's world when I joined him during a mathematics lesson. I observed what he was doing and participated by chatting to him about his work and asking questions. As a participant observer I tried to take part in what was happening without taking notes and without being distant.
I 'enquired' about the home schooling worlds of the participants when I carried out semi-structured interviews with them. I had a number of questions I asked all of the participants in common, but I also discussed other matters as they arose in the interviews. I carried out the interviews in their own homes as I wanted the participants to feel as at ease as possible. Some of the participants found the prospect of being questioned and recorded on tape very daunting. Something which helped ease their tension was to show them the questions I would be asking before the interview began.

Only one participant decided to write in her journal which I 'examined'. I decided not to offer the participants the choice of taping their responses as Knowles had done, considering the lack of response he had received from his participants. In hindsight it may have been wise to offer them this option too considering the lack of interest in filling out journals.

Time pressures and the added pressure of having personal thoughts and ideas looked at by others probably accounted for the lack of interest in journals. As another researcher commented to me, this probably says something about the romanticised notion of 'voice' in qualitative research. That is, the idea of giving people their own voice in the research assumes that research participants are actually interested in hearing/reading their own words. Sometimes, in reading the transcripts of their interviews, participants in my project have felt embarrassed, rather than elated. I also analysed home schooling research articles, and articles produced by the media as well as some recent Ministry of Education publications dealing with home schooling. I also examined some of the texts used by the home schoolers.
Filters: Seeing The World In Different Lights

As Glesne and Peshkin have written (1992: 5-6) qualitative researchers tend to see the world as a place '...in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and everchanging'. In contrast to quantitative researchers, their work does not focus on facts which can be observed and measured (ibid). In the view of qualitative researchers there are no fixed meanings, there is no one truth. As Bogdan and Biklen (1992: 36) have commented, '...Objects, people, situations, and events do not possess their own meaning; rather, meaning is conferred on them.' In interpreting participants' words, I need to remember that how I interpret them is not complete. That it, there are multiple readings that can be made of their words. Gee et al (1992: 233) have stated that it is necessary that '...we assume that our ability to say what a text means is always partial and incomplete.'

As a researcher, it has been necessary for me to be aware of my assumptions throughout this study. As Wolcott (1992: 43) suggested '...One cannot embark upon research without preconceived ideas.' I had some assumptions about the participants and my involvement with them, and about carrying out the research. It was helpful that I knew very little about home schooling coming into the project. This meant that I did not interpret the interviews by using prior knowledge about the subject of home schooling. It was unhelpful in that I had a somewhat romanticised view of what home schooling was all about. I think I viewed home schoolers as a group that had completely broken away from mainstream society and who were 'living back on the land'. In reality, I have discovered them to be a diverse group, and that home schooling is a lot of hard work.
I have also been aware throughout the study that my knowledge and views about home schooling have developed along the way through my interactions with participants, and other people I have discussed home schooling with. I have attempted to present findings that have 'emerged' from the data, that are 'grounded' in the data. That is, the findings I have made have come from my interactions with participants. I have presented the participants' versions of their home schooling experiences.

**Developing: Some Thoughts About Data Analysis**

At the same time, I am aware that I have chosen which excerpts to present, and where I have put them. Thus I do have a large influence over the meanings I give to the participants' experiences. Some qualitative researchers criticise quantitative researchers for the way in which participants' words and experiences are nullified by the way they are presented in texts. Schratz (1993: 1), for example, has commented: 'Thus, the original voices from the field become the 'disembodied' voices in the discourse of quantitative research....'

It must be recognised however, that although qualitative researchers 'give voice' to their participants by including their words and ideas, that their voices are in fact 'constructed' voices. It is the researcher who decides what, where and how those voices are presented.

In terms of interactions with the participants, it has been helpful to reflect on the notion of audience. I have found it necessary to remember that the stories and experiences participants have shared with me have been shaped according to their views about who is hearing them (Gee et al:
1992: 235). They were telling them to me, both as an academic researcher, and in the case of my friend and relatives, as someone who knew other people in common with them. This shaped both what and how they told me about things.

The presence of potential audiences - other home schoolers, other parents at public schools for example - also played a part in what was told and how it was presented. Added to this is the fact that I have written with specific audiences in mind. Among these are the participants, other home schoolers, friends and relatives, assessors and other students. Their presence has shaped the presentation of this text.

Having an awareness of my role of researcher throughout the process of this study has been important for other reasons too. As Delamont (1992: 9) has commented 'As long as qualitative researchers are reflexive, making all their processes explicit, then issues of reliability and validity are served'. Qualitative research is often criticised for its failure to produce results which are generalisable to other situations, and which account for reliability (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992: 5-6). Qualitative researchers, however, do not see their research task in this way. Instead they focus on understanding how research participants make sense of and explain the worlds they live in (ibid: 6).

What developing process did I use? I used the time-honoured bathing technique used by many qualitative researchers: analyse and code, re-analyse and re-code, re-analyse and re-code the re-code.

Once I had completed transcribing the interviews, I analysed each transcript and coded the data according to the family codes suggested by
Bogdan and Biklen (1992). These codes allowed me to do a broad initial grouping of the data. From there I looked for 'emerging themes'. These emerging themes were found through re-visiting the family codes.

I then re-coded the emerging themes and analysed the data according to themes which kept re-appearing throughout the transcripts. Eventually I had eight themes. This process is essentially one where the data is worked through again and again until it is reduced to themes which stand out in the data. At first I had difficulty with something which looked like a theme, but which was not one in fact. I think I tried to make it a theme, instead of letting it emerge as one itself. Through re-reading the transcripts time and time again, I was able to see what I was doing. In the end I was quite satisfied with what emerged.

The themes that did emerge did so as a result of my experience with home schooling throughout the research process. As I initially knew very little about home schooling (in reality I still know very little), I needed to read what I could to inform myself about it. This reading undoubtedly affected the way I later interpreted the data. The beliefs and attitudes of others, in particular the participants in this study, also affected my beliefs and attitudes toward home schooling, and ultimately affected my interpretations. Thus, the interpretations I have brought to the data analysis have not been value-free, although I have tried to be as aware of these values as much as possible.


*Putting On The Lens Cap*

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, I have updated my research equipment during the process of my research. I have learned some valuable interviewing techniques throughout the research process. Many of these techniques related to making the participants feel as comfortable as possible. I found it useful to give the participants as much choice as possible about the location for interviews. All of the participants apart from one chose to have interviews in their homes.

Before the interviews I found it helpful to let the participants read the list questions I intended to ask. With one participant in particular this helped to make her feel more relaxed. She had never been interviewed before and did not know what to expect. Reading the questions allayed many of her fears. Throughout the interviews, it was useful to let the participants wander away from the question at hand. This often elicited information that may not otherwise have emerged. It also highlighted areas that were of concern to the participants. In essence the questions often became openers for conversation.

It was especially valuable to give the participants plenty of opportunities to ask me questions. This helped to reduce the feeling that they were on the spot. In addition I always concluded interviews by asking whether the participants thought there was anything I had forgotten to ask, or whether they had more comments to make. This too proved to be useful as it was often a time in which the participants made pertinent remarks.

The final technique I discovered was when I was interviewing one of the children. Timothy had never been interviewed before and felt nervous. I
found out that he had never heard himself on tape before. I let him operate the buttons and controls, and played back the tape to let him listen at the end. Doing this proved to be both fun and helped him to relax a little more.

I have honed and polished my data collection and analysis skills. I hope to use and improve these skills in the future. Chenail (1996: 7) said 'Qualitative research is the practice of asking simple questions and getting complex answers. The art of managing both the simplicity and the complexity is the real secret to being successful at conducting qualitative inquiries'. I am hopeful that my participants think I have been successful with my present endeavours.
In Aotearoa, as in many other countries in the western world, home schooling has become an educational option that an increasing number of parents are choosing for their children. Ministry of Education statistics in this country show a 177 % increase in home schooling numbers over the period 1989-1994 (Bathgate, 1995).

Despite the resurgent interest in home schooling, there has been very little research carried out into it, and as a result of this, only a small body of research literature has been produced. Much of this literature has emerged from the United States, with other publications coming from Great Britain and Australia. In Aotearoa there has been a distinct lack of research on home schooling. Here, as elsewhere, a dearth of research literature exists regarding this subject.

From the literature that is available regarding home schoolers, I hope to be able to provide answers to questions such as who home schools, where and why ? To begin, I will look at home schooling in its historical context in both the United States and Aotearoa. I have selected the United States as well as this country, as it seems that many of the developments which have occurred in home schooling here were preceded by similar developments in that country.
Home Schooling - An Historical Context

The United States Context

Home schooling, although experiencing a rebirth in recent years, is by no means a new phenomenon. It is a universal, cross-cultural practice which has existed for thousands of years (Knowles, Muchmore and Spaulding, 1994; Litcher and Schmidt, 1991; Pitman, 1986). 'Home schooling' is, however, somewhat of a misnomer for this educational practice. The term 'schooling' really only emerged with the introduction of formal public education in the mid to late 1800's, in western society. A broader, and perhaps more useful term, is home-based learning (Knowles, 1991). I will continue, however, to use the term home schooling, given its wide usage in both home schooling circles and the research literature. 'Home' in this sense is taken to be the community in which this education takes place.

According to many authors, it is public education, in fact, that is a relatively new phenomenon (ibid). Public education was introduced in America in the mid-1800's (Knowles et al, 1994). Education was seen as a choice at this time, 'an opportunity to which Americans were entitled...' (Pitman, 1986: 11). By the twentieth century however, education had become compulsory. The formal public schooling which resulted from the introduction of compulsory attendance legislation, was aimed at the Americanization of its citizens (Knowles et al, 1994). It was hoped to create a unified American society, in which traces of different ethnicities, and the 'ills of lower-class family structure' (ibid, 1994: 239) were removed. Pitman (1986: 11), comments that 'schools became systematised
and bureaucratic, amalgamating culturally diverse family values into an homogenised curriculum and predictable pedagogy'.

People's attitudes toward home-based learning changed in the twentieth century through the introduction of compulsory public education (Hunter, 1994; Knowles, 1991; Pitman, 1986). Whereas previously the education of children was seen as the parents' or family's responsibility, compulsory education moved that responsibility onto the government (Knowles, 1991; Knowles et al, 1994; Hunter, 1994). Hunter (1994: 29), for example, writing about the Australian experience, has commented, 'Legislation requiring compulsory attendance at government approved educational institutions has reinforced this trend away from home schooling and perceptions of it as a preferred ideal'. Education became separated from family life, with school being 'a place away from home' (Pitman, 1986: 11).

A small number of parents were choosing to educate their children at home by the end of the 1960's and early 1970's, informed by the ideas of educationalists such as John Holt and Ivan Illich (Knowles, 1991; Knowles et al, 1994; Litcher and Schmidt, 1991). Home schooling reemerged at this time in response to a growing dissatisfaction with 'society at large and public schools in particular' (Knowles, 1991:205).

Educationalists such as Holt and Illich, and others such as Kozol and Kohl, pushed for alternative forms of education, promulgating ideas 'such as community control, free schools, and deschooling' (Knowles et al, 1994: 240). In addition, Raymond and Dorothy Moore, two American educationalists, contended 'that children should be nurtured in the home and avoid institutionalised education until at least the age of eight or ten'
(Litcher and Schmidt, 1991: 239). As a result, home schooling became seen 'as a subversive activity carried out by idealists, some of them pedagogical idealists' (Knowles, 1991: 205).

Home schooling in America at this time was viewed as radical because it represented 'a radical departure from the norm' (Knowles et al, 1994: 240). Several parents were taken to court, to do battle with public schools. Surprisingly, the parents often won (Knowles, 1991). As numbers of home schoolers steadily increased by the end of the 1970's - early 1980's, parents joined together to form home schooling associations, in order 'to persuade legislators to alter state compulsory education laws and ease home schooling restrictions' (Litcher and Schmidt, 1991: 239). By 1986, every state in America 'permitted home instruction in some form' (Lines, 1987: 514). By the 1990's, home schooling had achieved a degree of acceptability (Knowles, 1991; Knowles et al, 1994).

The Aotearoa Context

Home schooling in this country, as elsewhere, has recently re-emerged as a viable option for parents. 0.7 % of the total school-age population in Aotearoa is currently home schooled (Bode, 1996: 1). This figure is close to the percentage of home schoolers in other western countries. In the United States, for example, an estimated 1 % of the school-age population are currently being home schooled (Hill, 1996: 42).

As elsewhere, educating children at home is not new in this country. Maori traditionally educated their children as part of the whanau, with lessons coming from a variety of sources.
Home schooling itself has always been a legal option for parents in this country. The Education Act, 1877, has made it possible for parents to obtain an exemption from public schools, provided they ensure '...their children are receiving instruction elsewhere...that is as regular and efficient as that provided in a registered school' (Sleek and Howie, 1985: 58).

However, the introduction of the Education Act acknowledged the growing belief in public schooling as the norm. Home schooling has taken a back seat until recent years, with a steady increase in the numbers of parents choosing to educate their children at home since 1990 (Bathgate, 1995: 1). The majority of home schoolers live in the North Island (81%), with 41% living in the Auckland Management Centre district alone (Bode, 1996: 2).

The majority of home schooled children in Aotearoa begin home schooling at six years of age, the earliest age required by law. There equal participation in home schooling by boys and girls, with 'an even distribution (around 9%) of home schoolers across the compulsory ages of schooling (6 to 15 years)' (Bathgate, M., 1995: 2). Numbers decrease sharply from the age of 16 (ibid: 3). Children most commonly leave home schooling to attend public schools or because their secondary schooling has been completed (ibid: 5).

In recent times, most new home schoolers have begun their home schooling on the basis of religion (Lines, 1987). Derek Millar, a Schools Advisor for the Ministry of Education, writing in 1993, commented that the dramatic increase in numbers of home schoolers in Aotearoa in 1985
could be accounted for by people of fundamentalist Christian beliefs discovering that they had a right to home school their children. By 1993, the majority of home schoolers in Aotearoa were pursuing 'their study with Christian curriculums' (Campbell, 1993:2).

According to Knowles this increase reflects a 'shift from liberal to conservative positions regarding education in general' (Knowles et al, 1992: 227). This shift was very gradual, and emerged in tandem with an increased presence by the conservative right during the 1980s (ibid). This shift in attitudes will be examined more closely in the section on the discourses of education.

Home Schoolers - Who and Where They Are

Home schooling is currently practised in many countries in the western world. These countries include Aotearoa, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Meighan, 1984: 285). Differences exist both between and within home schooling populations in these countries.

To the outsider, home schoolers may seem to be a unified group of radicals challenging 'the system' (Meighan, 1992: 390). Upon closer inspection, however, it can be seen that home schoolers are a diverse group running 'the full range of the societal spectrum from religious conservatism, to moderate views, to liberal humanism' (Knowles et al, 1994: 240).

Home schooling researchers differ in their views on the demographic characteristics of home schooling parents. Mayberry (1989) found that
apart from a group she called the 'New Age parents', home schoolers were very similar in regard to education, occupation and income. Lines (1987: 511) comments on the 'wide variety of characteristics of families' who home school. With the exception of educational background and gender, it would seem that there are notable differences between home schooling parents.

For instance, citing the results of a 1984-1985 survey carried out by the state of Washington, Lines (1987: 512) reported that '85 % of the parents reported incomes below $30 000'. Another researcher, Mayberry (1989: 34), in presenting the results of a study she carried out in Oregon between 1987 and 1988, gave figures showing that 60 % of Oregon home school parents earned between $20 000 and $49 999, compared to 37 % of the general Oregon population. A British home schooling researcher in describing parents who belonged to a British home schooling organisation, Education Otherwise, criticised the image of '...comfortable middle class people who do not want to use private schools ' (Meighan, 1984: 166), as a stereotype that did not fit all families who belonged to home schooling organisations. In his view, the majority of parents in Education Otherwise had financial difficulties (Meighan, 1984: 166).

Home schooling fathers come from a variety of occupational backgrounds. Meadows et al (1992), who carried out a study of home schooling parents in Mississippi reported that the fathers in their study included a 'physician, scientist, firefighter, maintenance supervisor, and others' (ibid: 15).
Mayberry (1989) also noted that fathers in her study came from a variety of occupations, for example, minister, crafts person, accountant, salesperson, owner of a family business. In her analysis, however, she made reference to three characteristics which distinguished the fathers from others in the general population. These include the 'types of occupations... characterised by having a high degree of personal control' (ibid: 33-34); locations 'in small organisations' (ibid: 34); 'having a high degree of work schedule flexibility' (ibid).

Home schooling parents are very similar in educational background. Several researchers have reported that it is mainly women who take responsibility for home schooling (Lines, 1987; Meadows et al, 1992; Pitman, 1986; Van Galen, 1987; Wright, 1988). Mothers make most of the decisions regarding home schooling, usually carry out the role of instructor and usually organise the home schooling. In addition home schooling parents tend to come from similar educational backgrounds.

In comparison to the general population of parents with school-aged children, these parents have received a higher education, with many having received a tertiary level education. In Mayberry's (1989) study for example, 19% of the participants had attended graduate school, and 62% had attended university. Ray (1988) reported that a typical profile of home school parents shows that parents had attended university. Finally, Van Galen, (1988: 54) commented that of the 16 mothers that she interviewed 'one had a master's degree and six had bachelor's degrees'. In addition many home schooling parents have had some form of teacher training (Meighan, 1984; Meadows et al, 1992; Van Galen, 1987).
Why Home School?

Much of the home schooling research that has been conducted thus far has focussed on discovering what motivates parents to home school (Wright, 1988). Researchers have used a variety of research methods to do this including both qualitative and quantitative ones (ibid). According to Wright (ibid: 97), research has been conducted in three main ways, 'the survey, the case study, and the comparison group'.

Although home schoolers are a diverse group, in general it can be said that parents opt to home school their children for one of two main reasons - religious or pedagogical. Home schooling parents believe that the home is able to provide a more desirable environment than public schools for the education of their children. Education at home provides parents with greater control over what, and how their children are learning. They are able to monitor the curriculums their children follow, the way in which work is carried out, and the people their children come into contact with (Hunter, 1994; Knowles et al, 1992; Lines, 1987; Natale, 1992; Ray, 1989).

I will explore the idea of there being two main reasons parents choose to home school in a future chapter. For now, I will discuss what I believe are the dominant discourses used by education authorities and parents in relation to home schooling.
Dominant Discourses: Education Authorities/Home Schoolers

Education authorities and home schoolers use different discourses regarding education, and home schooling. The term discourse is widely used by post-modern theorists. My understanding of it has emerged from reading various post-modern texts, and texts about post-modernism. It is informed by discussions I have had with other students and lecturers. It has also been shaped by university courses I have taken which have touched upon post-modern concepts. Discourses, according to my understanding, express sets of ideas which inform people's actions. These sets of ideas may act as rules which are implicitly or explicitly stated.¹

What can we learn by looking at the discourses which underpin the conceptions of education held by home schoolers and education authorities? What, if anything, do these discourses hold in common, and how do they differ from each other? How do these discourses affect the practices based on them?

Education Authorities - Discourses on Education

In reading the research literature it becomes clear that one of the ways that some researchers choose to present information about home schooling is to use an 'us versus them' framework, us being home schoolers and them being education authorities. Although there are a number of different kinds of education authorities who play different roles within the education system, in this view they tend to be seen as one
group. Meighan, a researcher in the home schooling field for over ten years, produces research based on this framework.

According to this structuralist framework, education authorities create and enforce policies which are based on a particular discourse of education. This discourse affects the way schools are organised, curriculums are developed and taught, teachers are trained and teach, and how children learn. According to this discourse, there are particular ideas about what schooling is for, what constitutes learning and who holds power in education.

This discourse has been shaped by wider changes in western society over the last century. The role of education has become closely linked to the labour market. That is, education has become one of the main indicators for success or failure in terms of job opportunities. The introduction of compulsory schooling gave way to the idea that attendance at an educational institution is a necessity for any kind of success in one's adult life.

Pitman (1987: 287) comments on the 'well-documented...relationship between economic development and schooling'. She continues by saying that a growth in both the '...size and complexity of industry and commerce', in combination with a large growth in population (ibid) in the years following World War 2, have seen a corresponding increase in the size and numbers of schools, with increases in both enrolments and the length of time in which students stay at school.

Schooling has become a necessity not only in order for individuals to receive an education which will provide them with employment, but it
also serves the needs of '...the owners and managers of...business' (ibid), by providing a reliable workforce. As a result of the expansion of schooling, schools themselves have become more systematic and bureaucratised. They reflect the systematic and bureaucratic nature of industry and business. Schools run according to strict schedules with carefully timed classes and activities. Children learn to be managed and to respond to the need for efficiency, producing particular types of work at particular times. They learn that there are bosses (teachers) and that they are expected to respond according to the instructions of these bosses. In this sense, children are trained to become good and efficient workers in industry and business by the time they are adults.

In the 1980s a major shift occurred in the way education as a whole was organised. This shift paralleled a change in attitudes in western society towards a more conservative, right wing view of society. Governments throughout western society have been reorganised and devolved. Education, as a result, has also been re-organised. In Aotearoa, the introduction of 'Tomorrow's Schools' in 1989 saw a major upheaval occurring '...as the administration of schools was drastically reorganised' (Bridges, 1992: 3).

Central tenets of the discourse behind this re-shuffling were accountability and competition. Parents were to be given greater responsibility for the education of their children through increased 'choice' (ibid). According to this philosophy, which is known as the 'New Right' philosophy, education has come to be seen as a private good, something which can be bought and sold. An individual, according to this discourse, wants to make the most of, or maximise, his or her educational opportunities. The state, on the basis of this discourse, needs to impose
and maintain restraints on public education spending, and should also maintain control over the curriculum (Baldwin, 1993).

Baldwin (ibid) refers to the ideas of Codd (1990), who points out that there is a contradiction in the government's education policies. On the one hand there is a '...democratic imperative...' (Baldwin, 1993: 10) for a greater involvement of the community in making decisions regarding education, and on the other there is '...an economic imperative...' for maintaining stricter control over spending. Thus the government is saying one thing, while doing something else.

In Baldwin's view, however, this makes home schooling a very attractive proposition for the government. It gives choice back to parents, and being a cheap option for the government to support, it neatly fulfils the two-fold requirements of the government's education policies. Given the very low numbers of home schoolers overall, however, and given the government's need to maintain final control over education, it would seem to me that home schooling is unlikely to figure very highly in their plans at all. Certainly home schooling would not warrant much opposition from the government in terms of costs, but it would not stand out as an option it is likely to promote.

Thus, according to the framework used by researchers such as Meighan, in the discourse of education which informs the practices of education authorities, education is something which is seen as a marketable good, which is needed both for those seeking employment and by the people providing it. What can this discourse tell us about the attitudes of education authorities toward learning?
According to this discourse, which Meighan considers (1984) is promoted through institutions such as state schools, learning ideally takes place in an institution called a school. Learning takes place within classrooms, where a teacher instructs a group of children of similar ages. The children learn by absorbing knowledge fed to them by the teacher. As Meighan (1995: 2) has written, '...schools tend to focus on ' "how to be taught", whereas homes tend to teach "how to learn". Freire calls this method of learning the banking concept of education. Children get information put into their minds, and they store up a 'bank' of facts.

Power, according to this discourse lies within the hands of both education authorities and the community. By giving parents choice, education authorities believe that power becomes shared. In reality though, as a result of the firm control the government maintains over education spending, power ultimately rests with them. Inside classrooms power generally lies with teachers. They lay down the rules they expect children to follow, and maintain order and discipline through exercising their authority.

Much evidence has been provided by a variety of academics on groups of children who miss out on learning at school (Apple, 1982; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1993). In effect, it is as though these groups do not exist at all, that they are missing from schools altogether. This happens as a result of certain '...facets of knowledge and culture' (Van Galen, 1988:52) being given precedence over other knowledge and culture. As a result children of ethnic minority groups, girls, and children with disabilities are alienated within the schooling system (ibid).
As a result many parents of children from these missing groups take their children out of traditional schools in order to provide them with alternative forms of education. In Aotearoa, for example, we have seen the growth in both Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa for Maori children as a result of the alienation they feel in traditional schools. Many parents send their daughters to girls-only schools in an attempt to redress the imbalances which occur in co-educational institutions.

We have also witnessed a growth in the number of home schooled children who are being taught at home on religious grounds. In addition, many parents in Aotearoa find that traditional schools will not always accept their children with disabilities, or that the education their children receive in such schools is inadequate. As a result, some turn to home schooling (Sleek and Howie, 19 ). This can sometimes work against the children's best interests, for example additional help available if these children were in traditional schools, is on occasion, denied those children who are educated at home.

Many educationalists working with children with disabilities believe that inclusion in a traditional school is the preferable option for a child with disabilities. One reason for this is that people with disabilities have traditionally been shut away from the rest of society. Being able to mix with other children in traditional schools helps to break down negative images of people with disabilities, and helps such children to feel more accepted.

How then does the discourse of education which informs the practices of education authorities differ from the discourses of education which inform the practices of home schoolers, according to the views of
researchers such as Meighan? As stated earlier, home schoolers, although diverse in beliefs and how they carry out home schooling, can be divided into two groups - those who choose to home school for religious reasons, and those who choose to home school for pedagogical reasons. The discourses of education on which these groups base their practices are similar in some respects yet differ in others.

Several home schooling researchers refer to the fact that both of these groups of home schooling parents bring their children home in order to escape the pressures and stresses experienced in modern society. By educating their children at home they are able to maintain their own values and belief systems through the preservation of '...the integrity and autonomy of the family' (Marlow, 1994: 441).

Such families believe that society has taken away some of the functions and roles of the family, and that by bringing their children home they are able to reclaim some of these functions and roles. Thus, family unity is an area in which most home schooling parents have similar views, and which becomes a strong motivating factor for home schooling for both groups (Hunter, 1994; Marlow, 1994; Riemer, 1994; Van Galen, 1987).

Parents who choose to home school their children for religious reasons, and parents who choose to home school their children for pedagogical reasons differ in their views of what constitutes learning. Parents who home school for religious reasons tend to have a view of learning which closely resembles that of traditional schools. In these families learning is seen as something which comes from books, with a curriculum '...supposedly free from secular and humanistic values...' (Knowles et al, 1992: 196) taking a focal point. Children in these households tend to learn
in an environment which mirrors a traditional classroom, complete with desks and workbooks. They carry out a series of progressive lessons which are generally based on the Bible, and which cover core subjects such as '...reading, writing, mathematics, science, religion studies, and history...' (Riemer, 1994: 53).

These parents believe that they are taking back some of that power by exercising the right to teach their children at home. They accept the notion that parents should bear the responsibility for educating their children. In fact, '...Biblical and religious rationales...' (Knowles et al, 1992: 227) are often used to justify their choice of home schooling.

At home, these parents hold the power. They are the teachers, or mentors, and children must direct any questions they have to them. In their role as teachers they are responsible for overseeing their children's work, and maintaining discipline.

Parents who educate their children at home for pedagogical reasons tend to have different notions about power. Like the parents who home school for religious reasons, this group of parents attempt to regain some power by bringing their children home. They recognise that they must ultimately work within the 'system' to some degree, in order to be allowed to home school in the first place. Once their children are home, however, the differences between their ideas about power and learning, and the previous group's ideas, become apparent immediately.

In their view, power in the learning environment is something which should be shared. This is achieved by creating an environment which is learner-focused. Power becomes shared between the children as learners
and the parents as facilitators. Children are able to direct their own learning to a large degree, calling for assistance from the adults as the need arises (Knowles et al, 1992). As Riemer (1994: 53) has stated '...this approach encourages learner autonomy and de-emphasises teacher pedagogic authority....' Children learn, according to this approach, by directly interacting with the environment (Meighan, 1992).

In addition to acting according to a discourse which emphasises the role of learner, in contrast to the religious parents' group, the notion of learning environment is also radically different from the previous group. Whereas the previous group believes that the four walls of home is the best place for learning, this group extends 'home' to include a variety of locations.

Meighan (1992:395) has commented on the idea '...that one of the most taken-for-granted aspects of education has been location in a special building, i.e. the school....' Parents who home school their children for pedagogical reasons find value in exploring a variety of learning locations. These locations may include almost any place, and involve any number of different people. All locations are seen as potential sites for learning, and learning does not take place only within specified hours of the day.

Home schooling is seen as challenging the discourse which affects the way education authorities operate. For some educationalists home schooling is a threat, as it questions many of the practices and beliefs they adhere to. It challenges the notion that schools are doing a good job of preparing children for their place in society. It suggests that schools are not able to meet all the requirements parents have for the education of their children.
While home schooling certainly challenges the ideas of education authorities, can it be seen as a serious threat to mainstream education? Hunter (1994: 30) quotes Wade (1988) who comments that '...home schooling movements are accelerating the erosion of control that authorities have over school attendance in general and, further, that home schools erode job opportunities and job security for teachers...'. When one considers the actual proportion of the school-age population who are schooled at home - currently only 0.7% in this country (Bode, 1996: 1) - the idea of home schooling being a realistic threat fades considerably.

In some areas of the United States, education authorities and parents of home schooled children are working together to create new discourses of education which are more inclusive of home schooled children. Meighan (1992; 1995) refers to the idea of 'flexi-schooling' when he comments on the potential for schools and parents of home schooled children to work together. As Meighan (1995) notes, some educational institutions welcome interactions with home schooled individuals. He quotes a letter from the undergraduates admissions director of Boston University where home schoolers are welcomed as students who '...possess the passion for knowledge, the independence, and self-reliance...' (ibid: 3). Boston University recognises home schoolers as people who will do well in a university setting.

There are communities in the United States where changes of attitude toward home schooling are evident in the practices carried out there. Marshall (1992) writes about his experience as an elected school board member, while simultaneously home schooling his children. He ran for the position as member of a local school as he wanted to educate other
board members about home schooling. In addition he wished to educate home schoolers about matters relating to concerns of the board and priorities of teachers. The most compelling reason, he comments was to provide '...the example of a home schooler and a public school board working in cooperation....' (ibid: 28).

In Marshall's view, the fact that his children socialise with a number of public school educated children in a variety of settings, and the fact that public schools and home schooling parents have the common goal of educating children, suggests that there may be advantages in both communities knowing more about each other, rather than standing in opposition to each other. Shepherd (1994) also writes about the advantages of home schoolers and public schools working together.

Shepherd, a public school teacher in Texas, initiated a programme using home schooled children as volunteers in his and other classes. The programme has been successful and enriching for his students, other teachers and the home schooled children alike. As Shepherd and Marshall have pointed out, there are gains to be made for both home schoolers and public schools by working together.

In another part of the United States, a good example of the co-operative relationship which can be formed between public schools and home schoolers, exists in the partnership which has been created between an entire school district and home schoolers. In 1991 the Iowa Legislature created a bill which allows home schoolers to be dually enrolled at a public school and at home. In Ames, Iowa, all public schools have home schooled students taking part in activities every school day (Terpstra, 1994).
The elementary school in Ames has been running a programme allowing home schooled children access to special activities within the school for over ten years. Though not without problems - for example, funding issues and concerns over the extra workload for teachers - the programme shows that schools and home schoolers can work together effectively as a team (ibid). As Marshall, Shepherd and Terpstra all attest to, these experiences with home schooling all show the potential for all those interested in helping children learn to walk together along new paths within education.

**Common Criticisms: success and socialisation?**

Home schooling is commonly criticised on two grounds - that it leads to social isolation for the children involved, and that it is academically inferior to public schools. It is reasonable for people to have fears about home schooling when learning about it for the first time.

However, after studying its practices, and the effects these have on children who are home schooled, what have home schooling researchers to say about its validity or invalidity? Researchers quash both claims as fears that are not realised in practice. It would seem, in fact, that home schooled children do very well both in terms of socialisation and of academic success.

**Success**

Speaking about academic success, Lines (1987:513) commented that '...some home schooled children probably suffer from negligent or
incompetent parent/tutors....' This is true of any student in any education system, but in the case of home schoolers it does not appear to be the norm. There are several examples of success.

Some researchers have reported that home schoolers perform better on average than their public schooled peers (Meighan, 1996), but other researchers doubt that this is so (Hunter, 1994). These researchers consider that home schoolers tend to do as well overall as public schooled children. Some individuals, of course, do flourish through home schooling. Lines (ibid) cites the example of the admission to Harvard University in 1986, '...a young man who had been taught entirely at home....' Meighan refers to the fact that several 13 year-olds have been admitted to British universities. In this country there is the example of the Tan family in Christchurch, whose home schooled children have excelled in various areas. In addition there are many famous individuals who were home schooled, among them Yehudi Menuhin, Agatha Christie, Thomas Edison and John Stuart Mill (Meighan, 1996).

Academic success is generally measured by the results home schooled children achieve on standardised tests used routinely in public schools. Several states in the United States now require their home schooled students to undertake such tests on a regular basis (Ray, 1988). This is part of a wider move towards excellence, with accountability for performance being given to schools, teachers and in the case of home schools, parents (Marlow, 1994).

The use of tests to gauge academic success has been widely criticised, particularly for its biases against female students and those of ethnic minority. They have also been criticised '...for narrowing and/or driving
the curriculum...' (Marlow: 1994:442), when teachers are requesting assessment that more adequately reflects their students' changing needs (ibid). As Ray (1988) notes, the use of tests may also be misleading in the case of home schooled students for other reasons. In addition to the possibility of there being biases, parents may feel the pressure to teach to tests, in order to be accepted by education authorities, especially in areas which require the submission of test scores (ibid).

Some states, in response to criticisms of standardised achievement tests, offer parents alternative assessment, with two states requiring no testing at all (Marlow: 1994). For example, in Hawaii, Vermont, Washington and Iowa, parents of home schooled students are able to administer standardised tests or carry out alternative forms of assessment. These alternatives include a written evaluation by a certified teacher, or the submission of a portfolio of children's work.

Hunter (1994: 31) comments that using test scores to study the success of home schooled students is made problematic by the fact that '...a significant proportion of home schoolers are not available....' In Aotearoa, as a result of changes made in the government's 1994 budget, reviews of home schools by the Education Review Office (ERO) decreased significantly. Thus, testing of home schooled students in this country by education authorities only occurs if a problem is reported.

Until 1994, home schools were reviewed periodically alongside public schools. About 26 reviews of parents were done in 1994-1995, compared with 768 reviews in 1993-94. As a result of these cutbacks, in combination with the continued growth in home schooling, ERO wants a law change to make it more difficult for parents to gain a licence to
educate their children at home. It considers that the criteria for gaining an exemption are not rigorous enough (Press, 12.5.1995).

Media articles on home schooling published in recent years often report the concern some educationalists have over home schooling. Concern has been expressed by school principals and the Education Review Office (ERO) in particular. These officials are worried about the budget cuts which resulted in reviews of home schoolers being dramatically reduced. This is combination with increasing numbers of home schoolers has been seen as cause for concern, as the following excerpts show:

'Dominion (2/3/93) 'Increase in home study concerns principals'. The dramatic increase in the number of children being taught at home is worrying some school principals and the ERO.

Press (3/3/93) 'Fewer home-schooling inspections likely'. Parents who home-school their children may not be inspected as often as in the past because of a lack of resources, says ERO. SPANZ said home-school checking is inadequate. President Pat Lynch said accountability should be the same as with regular schools.

Press (6/5/95) ''Concern' at rise in home schooling' Canterbury school principals are concerned at a rise in home schooling and says checks on the quality of the education are inadequate.

Press (12/5/95) 'Home-schooling concern' ERO wants a law change to make it more difficult for parents to gain a licence to
educate their children at home. Judith Aitken noted that the criteria for gaining exemptions was too loose.... Dr Aitken was concerned by the Government's decision not to fund reviews of home-schools in last year's budget. Until last year parents were reviewed periodically alongside schools, but now ERO did reviews of home schools only if concerns were raised about individual parents.

*Press (19/2/96) 'Concerns on home-schooling'*

Much of this concern, like the concern of relatives upon first hearing about a family's decision to home school, is based on a lack of knowledge and a lack of availability of information about home schooling. Many home schoolers themselves would welcome being reviewed. Jackie found the reviews were constructive:

"...Review visits...it was just nerve wracking, but it was so good. Because you knew where your children were at, even in regard to other children in school. And I didn't see any harm in knowing that. I was quite happy, as long as I knew my children weren't failing, and weren't below average...."

(J.B., 2.7.1995)

Further to this Claire had comments to make about the role she thought the Ministry of Education should have in home schooling. At the same time as believing the Ministry should once again arrange for home schoolers to be inspected, she also feared them doing this in case what she was doing was not found to be acceptable. She commented:
"But I've thought, that's fine, it's just that now that the Ministry don't come and inspect people, I actually think it's better that they do come and inspect people but I have that in the back of my mind that they'll come and say well you haven't done what you said...I think that they're really reasonable. I've heard that they're really really excellent. That's all I've heard. I haven't heard anything bad about them."

(C.M., 2.7.1995)

As Lines has commented 'Much could be gained by building cooperative relationships between public school officials and home schoolers' (1987: 516). Home schoolers and education officials are unsure of each other. As Lines comments further '...cooperative ties could enrich our understanding of child development and learning' (ibid). By trusting each other more and learning more about each other, gains could be made which would benefit children, the mutual objects of the educational endeavours of both educational officials and home schoolers.

Socialisation

Perhaps the most common criticism of home schools by education authorities and people in general is that home schooled students become isolated. As Ray (1988) has commented, in order to answer this criticism effectively longitudinal studies of home schooled students needs to be carried out. In the short term, however, the majority of home school researchers claim that it is a myth that home schooled students become isolated. Much of the research argues the opposite in fact.

In Ray's (1988) opinion, the research suggests that children who are educated at home have regular contact with their peers, and that they
adjust well in social situations. At the time Ray was writing, however, little research had actually been carried out into the area of socialisation. Lines (1987), who wrote one year earlier, noted that there was evidence that home schooled children interacted in regular group and community activities.

More recent research argues that children who are educated at home have a wide range of social contacts, with various people. In a study carried out by Meadows et al (1992), parents of home schooled children reported that they were happy with the social and emotional growth of their children after coming home to learn. The study also showed that most of the children had a number of chances to be involved in their community '...through the regular use of the public library, field trips, museum visits, mentorships, and specialised classes in dance, music and gym...' (ibid: 16).

Riemer (1994) who home schools his three children with his wife, comments that his children regularly interact with other children and adults through such activities as T-ball, gymnastics and special church programmes. He acknowledges that as a result of their home schooling they '...ask questions and are mentally engaged when they speak with adults...' (ibid: 53). Jeub (1994) a public school teacher who home schools his children, questions whether the socialisation offered by schools is, in fact, desirable.

Much of the socialisation children experience in public schools come through activities which require time and effort. They are often highly structured, in contrast to much of the socialisation which happens in everyday life. In addition, there are negative effects from some social
activities which occur in public schools. For instance, Jeub (ibid: 51) cites the examples of '...drugs, alcohol, tobacco, harassment, premarital sex, guns and violence....' In his view (ibid) children can experience much more positive side of socialisation through home schooling, '...sharing, respect, communication, getting along, and relating to others....'

Summary

Home schooling is here to stay. The endeavours and hard work of various home schooling groups around the western world have created a stable, growing, alternative form of education for parents who feel the need to opt out of the public school system. We have seen that home schooling has existed for hundreds of years, but has only existed in its current form since the 1960s. It has been shown that it is compulsory schooling that is a new idea.

The education system is not working for all the children within it. Research has highlighted the fact that there are groups of children who miss out in the system through a lack of recognition. Such groups include children of ethnic minority, girls, and children with disabilities. As a result many groups of parents take up alternative types of educational practices for their children. Home schooling is one such alternative form of education.

According to the ideas of some researchers, education authorities and home schoolers operate according to different discourses. That is, they often place different values on what education is for, and how it should be carried out. Home schoolers also have different ideas from each other about what constitutes a good education. Home schoolers who educate
their children at home for religious reasons have some beliefs and practices based on them that resemble those found in 'traditional' schools. Those parents who educate their children at home for pedagogical reasons tend to have very different practices.

As home schooling has developed over the last few decades there has been a subtle shift in some areas towards co-operative action between registered schools and home schoolers. This signifies a move towards more sharing of educational endeavours, and a move towards more creative thinking on the part of some education officials and home schoolers alike.

Something home schoolers do have in common in relation to their educational practices, is that they are all acting to take back some of their own power in relation to making educational choices. By bringing their children home they are making overt political statements about their beliefs in education. This theme will be explored more in a later chapter.

However, as will be shown in the next chapter, though parents take some of their power back by taking their children home to educate, some actually replicate a great deal of the practices carried out in mainstream education, especially in regards to the notion of hierarchy and authority.
ENDNOTES

1 Such discourses may prescribe and proscribe individuals' behaviour. That is, they describe what is acceptable or unacceptable in certain situations. These discourses are mediated or presented through texts (which may be words, pictures, books, gestures and so on). People then carry out discursive practices based on these ideas, which reinforce the discourses, or act on the basis of alternative discourses which contradict the original discourse.

For example, in western society, women are expected to conform to a discourse which presents a particular ideal of femininity. According to this discourse, women should have bodies which look slim, wear make-up and clothes which are deemed feminine, and act towards others in a sensitive, caring manner. These ideas are mediated through texts produced through the media such as magazines, films and television programmes. Women reinforce this discourse through the discursive practices of applying make-up, shaving legs, plucking eyebrows, shedding kilograms, having liposuction, speaking softly and deferentially. Other women reject this discourse through growing the hair on their legs, and acting assertively.
The Process of Home Schooling

Making the decision to home school and the actions subsequent to it are all part of the home schooling process. For some parents this is a relatively straightforward process whereas for others it is a more time consuming and difficult process. How involved the process becomes depends on a number of factors including geographical and temporal location, dealing with education officials, support systems and availability of resources. The home schooling process is itself made up of many smaller processes. This chapter will present information about two of these processes - making the decision to home school, and operating the home school.

Making The Decision To Home School

Parents who took part in this study made the decision to home school their children after much deliberation. Although their reasons for doing so were different, they all opted for home schooling after studying the various courses of action available to them.

Several questions were raised for me as I thought about the decision-making process. Why was home schooling chosen? Who decided that home schooling was the best option available? Once the decision to embark upon home schooling was made, how did parents go about applying for an exemption and was this easy to do?
Finding Out About Home Schooling

Van Galen has commented that one of the patterns that emerged from her study was that 'parents usually learned of home education incidentally' (1988: 93). She noted that less than 50 % of the families in her study knew someone who was home schooling when they began home schooling (ibid: 92-93). Only two of the mothers in this study, Sarasvati and Jackie found out about home schooling through other home schooling parents. Jackie commented that she admired the family she went to see who were home schooling. She said she heard about it initially from a family who lived near her. Interestingly she was not interested in home schooling at first:

"...They were talking about it and they had connections with another family who were home schooling. They were going to have a look, and she asked if I'd like to come along. So I went along, with about three or others to have a look at this family in who were home schooling. And I just thought wow, they were such good children. They were sitting down and just working away and they seemed to be really happy. It won't be for me, I'm not teacher trained, but it was a good concept I thought, and they were Christian home schoolers too. They weren't just using a worldly curriculum and that was the difference."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)
philosophies' (Van Galen, 1988: 94). Claire commented that she was 
"...interested in the concept of having your children at home..." twenty years ago "...but it didn't seem any kind of an option at that stage" (C.M., 2.7.1995). Hattie comments on how she began:

"...It would have been around 1980. I had friend who was interested in home schooling, I don't know how we knew about it, we just seemed to know about it. And there was a group of us who were interested. It might well have something to do with the fact that at that stage I was heavily involved in the home birth group, and I was really into doing it my way. And that was sort of a natural extension. I can't actually remember the day any one of us said oh what about home schooling? Because what did happen was that there were three of us who applied for home schooling all at the same time...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

**Why Home School?**

In reality, there is never a simple answer to the question "Why home school?" Although parents initially choose to home school for a variety of reasons, several researchers have suggested that parents make the decision to home school on the basis of underlying philosophical beliefs (Carr, 1992; Hunter, 1994; Knowles, 1991; Mayberry and Knowles, 1989; Natale, 1992; Pitman, 1987; Van Galen, 1987, 1988.) These beliefs may be expressed in different ways such as attitudes toward religion, education and family unity.
Van Galen (1988) categorises home schoolers into two groups, 'Ideologues' and 'Pedagogues', on the basis of a study she carried out over several months. It is important to be aware of these categorisations as there is a wide use of them in home schooling research. Van Galen (ibid: 54-55) acknowledges that the categories are broad and that there is 'tremendous variation within both' (ibid: 55). She adds that 'while parents explain their decision to home school in broad ideological rhetoric, the actual decision is often triggered by specific and unique circumstances that also vary widely from family to family' (ibid).

Therefore it is necessary to make the recognition that although these classifications are useful for making broad distinctions between groups of home schoolers, they are not finite, and that the unique facets of each home schooling family should be taken into comparison. As Marshall and Valle (1996) correctly point out, to narrowly define home schoolers increases the risk of home schoolers being marginalised as 'them'.

These categories of Van Galen's are useful for organising data. They are helpful for dividing home schoolers into groups which may then be compared with each other. However, they are not so useful for classifying people. As already stated, when looking at individuals it is necessary to be aware of their unique experiences and circumstances.

Ideologues choose to home school their children on the basis of their belief that public and private schools do not teach the spiritual morals and values that they wish their children to learn (ibid; Natale, 1992). A Christchurch researcher (Carr, 1992: 40) comments that several members of a fundamentalist group home schooled their children because of the "secular humanism' and 'peer pressure' within the State Schooling
system'. A basic goal of Ideologues is for their children 'to learn fundamentalist religious doctrine and a conservative political and social perspective' (Van Galen, 1988: 55).

Ideologues provide highly structured environments closely resembling traditional schools for their children to learn in. They often buy pre-packaged curriculums which promote the values and beliefs they wish to impart to their children (ibid: 58). There is an 'extrinsic motivation to learn' (Knowles et al, 1994: 241) with work which is based on textbooks and workbooks (Van Galen, 1988: 58). Knowles et al (1994: 241) call this approach to learning 'curriculum driven'.

Ideologues also wish to create closer, stronger relationships with their children. Through educating their children at home, Ideologues hope to create a strong sense of family unity (Van Galen, 1988: 55). In Australia, for example, one of the contributing factors to the rise in the number of home schooling families is 'a wish to maintain the family unit exclusively and for as long as possible' (Hunter, 1994: 31). The drive to create stronger families has come about because 'historically 'new' institutions, such as public education, compete with the family in providing educational, moral, and social guidance' (Mayberry and Knowles, 1989: 214). Thus, families 'attempt to resist the effects on the family unit of urbanisation and modernisation' (ibid: 209).

Pedagogues, in contrast to Ideologues, choose to home school because they consider that formal schools make a poor job of educating their children. They have a belief that children have a natural desire to learn, and that any form of education should reflect this desire (Van Galen, 1988: 55). Pedagogues are often critical of the structure of formal
schools. Jonathan C. Marshall (1992: 28), a home schooling parent, comments: 'My wife and I didn't think the public schools were terrible, but we believed that public education, by its very nature, would not be flexible and individualised enough to meet our children's needs'.

Pedagogues attempt to create learning environments which are very different from formal schools. A variety of materials, locations and educational methods are used in the home schooling practices of this group. Children in these families are given many opportunities to express and explore their creativity and spontaneity (Van Galen, 1988: 60). There is an 'intrinsic motivation to learn' (Knowles et al, 1994: 241). The work that is carried out by the children in these families is based on their ideas and opinions. As Knowles et al (ibid) comment it is 'learner driven'.

All of my participants have come to home schooling through different avenues. As Baldwin (1993: 3), a New Zealand researcher has found in her study, home schoolers in Aotearoa 'espouse a wide variety of educational practices and philosophies'. Nevertheless it is possible to use the broad categories defined by Van Galen to organise the data relating to the experiences of parents in this study. In saying this however, it is important to note that this is only one way, not the only way.

I consider that one parent in my study, Jackie, can be called an Ideologue, and three other parents, Claire, Hattie and Michelle, can be called Pedagogues. Sarasvati's approach is not clear cut however. It seems to be a mixture of both categories. Jackie made the decision to home school her children on the basis of her religious beliefs. She home schooled her children in order to teach them what she considers important values and ways of being in the world.
Jackie and her husband Aaron decided to home school their children in order to provide them with what they considered a sound Christian upbringing. In their opinion they wanted to give their children "...a good, solid foundation to build their life on, and that was God, and that was what we wanted" (J.B., 3.7.1995).

It is clear that this couple did not bring their children out of school because they disliked the school system. They disliked the influence of other children on their children, but their main reason was that they felt directed by God to home school their children. The following quote provides a good illustration of this:

"It wasn't like I was bringing them out because I had a grievance with the school, and I didn't like what was going on, yet the thing I didn't like was all the children coming home and all the language and the jokes...
I thought this is just shocking. How do you wipe out six hours of this rubbish and try to build in good Christian values and morals in three hours at home, then send them back out there to have it all disintegrated again?...

But the main reason was to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord. In the Bible it said we have to teach our children at home, it is our responsibility, it's not the responsibility of the State to teach your children. And with that conviction we brought our children out of school, not because we didn't like what we saw."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)
As mentioned in a previous section, Ideologues often wish to create a stronger sense of family unity through the establishment of home schools.

Jackie's family is a 'blended' family - both parents came to their marriage with children from previous relationships. In reviewing the home schooling process for her family, Jackie mentioned how beneficial it had been for uniting the family:

"It wasn't just like a normal family. But I can see now that because we home schooled, because what we needed to do was we needed to come out to be able to grow together, to knit together, because I think we would have still been, the kids would have been out there and I would have been in here, and we wouldn't have knitted together, we wouldn't have become a family unit. Like other families are who haven't had two separate families come together. We weren't one at that stage. And now I feel we are, well I don't feel like we're separate anymore, and we work together, we learn together, we make mistakes together and that would have happened in time maybe, but it would have taken a long time..."
(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Claire, Hattie and Michelle are all representative of those home schooling parents that Van Galen would label 'Pedagogues'. All three women decided to take their children out of formal schools and home school them after their children had negative experiences. They thought that formal schools were not conducive to constructive learning experiences for their children. They were critical of several aspects of the formal school system including the ratios of teachers to children, the time taken to cover lessons and the content of what was taught and the way in which it was presented.
Claire took her son Timothy home to learn after he experienced a great deal of stress at his formal school. Home schooling was something that Claire had considered for a number of years, but she had not realised until recent times "that it had become an option, a much easier option for parents to undertake" (C.M., 2.7.1995).

The organisation of classes at her son's school meant that a large number of children with a range of ages and abilities were taught together. Claire believed that most children missed out on getting adequate teaching time, as the teacher's attention was frequently taken up by discipline matters. In addition, Timothy found school very stressful. Speaking about the benefits of schooling at home Claire commented:

"...He used to cry a lot. I think he was just tired. He used to get anxious, scared to ask the teacher more than once if he didn't understand something. That's what he said to me "It's really good because I can ask you six times, whereas I'm too scared to ask the teacher too many times." Things like that. He doesn't have a battle with other kids bullying him or anything like that."

(ibid)

Home schooling parents are often critical of the large numbers of children in formal classes. Claire found this to be a major problem at her son's school. She said:

"There were thirty-four kids in the class Timothy was in! He was in Standard one, and I just couldn't see how the teacher could meet all their needs because they had the range of the really bright kids down to
children with all sorts of problems, and heaps of them.

I just didn't think it was a good environment. I don't mind the idea of mixed age classes, but when they're so large and they've got all the special needs and everything else all in it, I just think it's too much and I don't think a lot of the kids were really thriving in it."

(C.M., 2.7.1995)

Hattie also decided to school her children at home after dissatisfaction with the education they were receiving at a formal school. Hattie began to wonder why her daughter, who was in her second year at school, was not coming home with any reading or homework. Upon investigation, she discovered that Elsie had gone through all the readers available to her, and that her teacher would not give her any advanced work. Hattie explains:

"...The teacher wouldn't give her any reading because she thought the content, although she was capable of reading it, the content was too advanced for her, and she wasn't, I think she used the word emotionally ready for the content of higher readers. And I thought what a lot of bunkum. And so you had this kid who was all fired up to wanting to do all these things, to having a kid who was slowly being told no you can't do that, can't do that. Not because she couldn't do it, because she wasn't allowed to do it, because it was perceived to be beyond her age, her years, her chronological years...

And then Sue started school and it was an absolute, she didn't stay very long at school. It was absolutely such a shock, this was all going on, and then Sue had an absolutely shocking six months...It was appalling. She
didn't want to go to school at all, it was just awful for her. And Elsie was
being slowly chopped down. So that was it, quit."
(H.L., 17.8.1995)

Michelle also took her children out of school because she considered that
they were receiving an education that did not match what she hoped they
would receive. Michelle had in fact wished to home school her children
before they started going to formal schools, but, in her words she
'...didn't have the courage to do it...' (M.D., 16.10.1996). After several
years, however, she decided that home schooling was a viable and sensible
option. Of this Michelle says:

"It took a few years of seeing that school wasn't actually achieving for
my kids what I really wanted it to....Mostly I wanted them to love
learning which they always had done before they went to school. So that
was probably my biggest reason, that I loved education, which is a
lifelong process, to be one they loved. And it was really sad when they
started saying "Oh I hate this and I'm bored", and they also didn't enjoy
school particularly much, particularly the boys."
(M.D., 16.10.1996)

Sarasvati's decision to home school seems to involve a mixture of features
of the Ideologue and Pedagogue categories. On the one hand she opted to
home school her children to give them an education that was based on the
beliefs and philosophy that she considered important. That is, she had
reasons for home schooling that Van Galen would categorise as belonging
to an Ideologue. Sarasvati's children are home schooled in order to learn
about and achieve 'love of God' (S.D., 11.8.1995). Talking about the
curriculum used by her son in the home school, Sarasvati said:
"...Now he is following a curriculum and I feel happy about that...And it's slightly, you know, oriented towards our philosophy...Our goal in life is to achieve love of God, so there's just little things that have been changed towards, which are more directed towards God consciousness."
(S.D., 11.8.'95)

Commenting on why parents might choose to home school their children, Sarasvati spoke about the fact that it was one strategy for passing on her own values to her children:

"I think that what's so nice about home schooling is you can actually adjust your schooling to suit your philosophy, and hopefully those who home school do have an outlook that is conducive to their child's growth. But I couldn't see why, you know, why anyone who took the time to home school wouldn't you know, have anything other than a productive outlook on life."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

At the same time however, Sarasvati has ideas about learning which could be considered more representative of a Pedagogue than an Ideologue. These ideas will be discussed in the chapter entitled 'Philosophies of Education'.

Knowles (1991) explored the backgrounds of 12 home schooling families in Utah. He hoped to discover the relationship between their past experiences and their 'contemporary rationales for operating home schools' (ibid: 204). What Knowles theorised as a result of this study, is that parents make the decision to home schools because of their
contemporary beliefs about schools and home schooling, but that these beliefs are formulated on the basis of early, and mostly negative, family and school experiences. Knowles considers that these home schooling parents have decided to use home schooling as a compensatory 'shield' (ibid), to protect their children from the experiences they had when they themselves were young.

Applying these ideas to the participants in my study was that four out of the five mothers who took part in my research did have some very negative school experiences. The limited nature of the interview I conducted with the fifth participant, Sylvia, precluded any analysis relating to her schooling experiences. In saying this, however, it was interesting for me to learn that she was a trained secondary teacher. Several home schooling researchers have made reference to the fact that a large number of the parents who home school have had teacher training (Hayward, 1985; Jeub, 1994; Lines, 1987; Riemer, 1994). This suggests that they have a deep-rooted dissatisfaction with the education system, and the way children are taught within it. Another participant, in this study, Hattie, spent two years being trained as a teacher, until she was asked to leave her Training College because she was pregnant. Her experiences at Training College definitely affected her attitudes towards the formal education system, which will be shown later in this section.

Hattie and Sarasvati both shared stories about their schooling experiences with me during our interviews together. They spoke mainly about negative experiences, but also told me about experiences that they considered positive and which were constructive for them. In addition, Sarasvati wrote in a journal, and this writing included descriptions of and thoughts about her schooling experiences.
The initial stage of Knowles's ideas posits the idea that the early school and family experiences of home schooling parents, affect their attitudes towards the problems they experience with schools at the time that they make the decision to home school. Sarasvati wrote that her schooling 'up until High School...was at worst a painless experience' (S.D., 1995-1996). In fact, she considered that 'an unexaggerated 70% of her 'school acquired knowledge was obtained' (ibid) through being taught by a teacher in her standard 4 class. She remembers this man as having 'style, flair and a most welcomed sense of humour' (ibid). She also remembers him as also being 'volatile. His theatrical skills saved my mind from boredom. I was that year, alert' (ibid).

In Sarasvati's opinion, by the time she reached high school, her 'so called education' was finished. She writes:

"I was herded around by bells from room to room all day long for no apparent reason. Classrooms were stark and unattractive. Teachers appeared distant, aloof creatures. In the end I made a concerted effort not to learn and made a fine job of it."

(S.D., 1995-1996)

In addition, she considers that her home life was uninspiring and not challenging, with her family 'just functioning' (ibid) in her opinion. She describes her parents as being of 'low intelligence, a fact not an estimation....I believed that when you reached a certain age something happened and snap that was that you weren't capable of any interesting thoughts. This conclusion came from my observation of parents' (ibid).
In contrast today Sarasvati says that she 'thrives on sharing, nurturing and expanding my children's thinking' (ibid). She considers that she learned a valuable lesson from her standard four teacher. She comments:

'I can see in teaching my own child when his mind is dull I am knocking against a closed door. Learning is multi dimensional, but it takes a keen mind to implement this....'

(S.D., 1995-1996)

Sarasvati has learned from both her negative and positive experiences at school. Her constructive experiences with her Standard 4 teacher have led her to want to provide a stimulating environment for her children to learn in. She wants to provide her children with good role modelling and encouragement, as she considers her teacher did for her. In addition, she wants them to be well prepared for life through their education. In her opinion, because of her home environment, in combination with the majority of her schooling experiences, she was not well prepared for life herself. She writes:

"To teach by example! This is the most humbling exercise. Education is for life. We are preparing our children for life. I want my children to be better equipped than I was....Teaching by example goes on all the time. Everything depends upon the teacher. With this great pressure for teachers to live up to their ideals, and desiring to raise my children as devotees of the Lord, there is no alternative but to home school."

(S.D., 1995-1996)

Hattie spoke of her school days as being mostly negative. Much of these experiences involved racism, with Hattie feeling singled out as a result of
being one of the few Maori students in a predominantly Pakeha school. In her opinion, however, this was not a clear reason for her deciding to home school. She comments:

"...But that wasn't the reason why I home schooled. I mean, well maybe subconsciously it was. I mean, as a child I didn't recognise it, but certainly, being Maori, I look back and I understand why I was treated differently, and at the time I knew I was being treated differently, but I didn't know why. And it's only looking back that I know why. And I, put it down to straight out racism. One example was that I was really good at sports and really good at netball. But the coach of the netball team refused to have me in the team. This is one of the teachers, she refused to have me in the team. God only knows why because I was the best player. But I must have actually had really neat friends, because none of the other girls would play, unless I was in the team. So she was forced into having me in the team. But it wasn't, I didn't know why she refused to have me in the team. Because if it was on merit I would've been her first choice. So, that's a pretty obvious, overt example...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie spoke of other occasions on which she felt alienated at school on the basis of her being Maori. She spoke at length about what it was like to feel different and isolated. She said:

"...Not only was I Maori, but quite different because often I was the only Maori in the class. I mean there'd be more in the school, not so much at primary school although there was one other Maori that I can recall of in the school in the primary school I went to. And in intermediate I was the only Maori. I was also streamed in the top stream. So I wasn't confronted
with assumptions about my ability, because I was very able. Because I was the only Maori, and I have an unusual first name, I used to get singled out a lot, because if there was a new teacher, at the beginning of the year or any relievers, you could bet your bottom dollar they'd remember my name, and they could pick me out to remember the name to go with the very different face. So maybe that's one reason why I hated it because I was singled out quite a bit...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie considers that schools fail to recognise difference in any constructive sense. For her being different at school meant being alienated. There was no recognition given during her schooling to the ways in which the recognition of difference can enrich and enhance people's understandings about the society they live in. Hattie responded by resisting in her own ways. On this topic she says:

"...I must have been a right little pain in the bum in the classroom. I did do some things overtly, but a lot of the time just quietly, because I was quite quiet, and quietly extended the boundaries. I challenged the dress code all the time, and always used to get hauled over the coals for that, from the way I wore my hair, to the shoes I wore, to the boys' clothes I wore, to the army sack I took. I challenged the system in that way, and I was really good at my schoolwork, but I challenged that by only ever doing the bare minimum. I was never pushed. And I think that's a really sad indictment of the school system, that it doesn't recognise, well they do, but in a very standard, traditional way. They don't recognise difference, whether it be cultural, ethnic, particular talents or anything. They don't go out of their way to develop anyone. And so it did have an effect on what I did later on.
I can see that standing back and looking at it. But at the time I was mad as hell...."  
(H.L., 17.9.1995)

In addition to speaking about her negative experiences at school, Hattie did mention once that she had enjoyed some of her school days. Like Sarasvati this was a result of having teachers she liked and who she could respond to positively. She says that out of all her days at secondary school, she "...really liked..." her sixth form year "...but that was primarily because of the teachers...." (H.L., 17.9.1995).

Hattie also spoke in our interviews about her experiences as a Teacher's College student. Hattie was asked to leave Teacher's College in her third year of training because she was pregnant.

"...They were disgusted with pregnant women, and they wouldn't let me go out and teach. So I was given a year's leave of absence to have this baby. And then I could go back when I wasn't pregnant, when I wasn't going to corrupt anyone. The logic was absolutely ridiculous but they wouldn't take no for an answer...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

This experience, coupled with other experiences including blatant racism, added up to a very negative exposure to the education system through Teachers' College. Having such experiences within an institution that was responsible for training the people who taught her daughters, did nothing to provide Hattie with constructive, positive views of the education system. The following examples show how her lack of faith in
the education system was aggravated by her College experiences. She talked about her incredulity over an assignment by saying:

"...So I wasn't particularly fussed over what I knew of teaching and the kind of bureaucracy, the way the whole system operates. This summed it up to me, I had an assignment to do and I couldn't understand what it was all about. So I did this assignment and I got A+ for it, and I didn't understand it. And to me that kind of just threw up how ridiculous the whole system was. That I could string a few sentences together and get an A+ for something that I actually didn't understand, and other stuff which I worked at really hard and understood, but not get such a good grade. It just seemed to me to be a really stupid system which couldn't actually work out whether a person could understand what it was they were being assessed on. I just thought that was absolutely ridiculous. I had some sections where being a young adult, and going back into a school I just saw so many awful things. And experienced them myself too...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie's experiences of racism are alarming. She related some of these experiences:

"...One of the most blatant experiences of racism I had in the school system was at Teachers' College. First of all, they didn't like the way I spoke. So I had to go undergo all sorts of tests, only to find out that I speak perfectly normally. But they didn't think it was right, because I have a low soft tone, I dunno. But anyway. They didn't like it, so I was subjected to all sorts of tests, and when I went to the hospital for a physical examination.

F: What?
H: Yes, they sent me to the hospital. The doctor, he laughed and sent me away and said oh this is ridiculous, you're perfectly normal, go away. And then before they even had any record, before they even had any work from me, they decided that I needed remedial English. So they sent me to a remedial English class. And I was there the first week, and the second week we had to come back with some work that we'd done. And I presented it to the tutor, to show him what I was doing, and he said "What are you doing here? I mean you don't need any help", and he sent me away...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie's experiences of racism lead to some important questions about home schooling. How many other parents have chosen to home school their children on the basis of racism. In particular, how many Maori parents choose this option? I have heard of a group of Maori parents in Otautahi who are home schooling their children. I am not clear why however. In addition, how many parents home school their children because registered schools do not offer a desirable education for their children with disabilities?

Hattie tells about why she tolerated Teachers' College for so long:

"...But those kind of things I put up with during my Teachers' College years, and they were really hard. I hated it. If I'd hated school, I hated Teachers' College even more, and I wanted to leave on numerous occasions. But I felt I couldn't. First of all I was young and didn't think I had any right to leave, and also I had my family. It was sort of if I leave now it will reflect on my family kind of stuff. But anyway, they ended up basically kicking me out, because after my year off, I never returned...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)
Hattie summed up her thoughts about Teachers' College and the effects of it on her ideas about teaching and her home schooling practices, by saying:

"...So I have a lot of knowledge about what teaching ought not to be. I mean I was aware at the time of how ridiculous the whole system was. I guess, not that it was for this, but I guess becoming pregnant saved me. Rather a drastic way. I'm grateful for the experience really, because I became aware of the contradictions, the whole paradoxical situation, when I was at Teachers' College. And again, when you get an A+ for doing very little work and not understanding what you're supposed to be doing, it's no wonder that I spent a lot of my time in the cafe and playing pool with my friends. The standards weren't all high. So that's my experience of teaching, and I'd have to say when I was home schooling, I didn't use those, well I did use those experiences. I used them as a guide of what not to do...."

(H.L., 17.9.1985)

Contemporary school problems, as viewed through beliefs and attitudes of a secular or religious nature, also affect the development of rationales for home schooling (Knowles, 1991: 212). In Hattie's case, the problems she experienced with her daughters' schooling acted as an impetus for her decision to embark upon home schooling. Her eldest daughter was not given any more reading to do once she had reached a certain stage in her primer class because her teacher considered that she was not "...emotionally ready for the content of higher readers...." (H.L., 17.9.1995). Her second daughter had an "...absolutely shocking six
months..." once she had started school. Hattie said "...she didn't want to go to school at all, it was just awful for her. And her older sister was being slowly chopped down. So that was it, quit. So we took them out of school...." (ibid).

Hattie summed up the reasons she thinks she opted for home school by saying:

"...But those weren't consciously part of the reason why I chose to home school, those kind of experiences. But I think subconsciously, the fact that my whole underlying rationale for it was for my children to develop in the way and at the pace that they wanted to. I think much of that was sort of borne out of my own experiences although I didn't recognise that at the time. And certainly I wanted to protect them from some of the stupid things that went on in schools. And I guess that happened to me as well and I didn't realise it. But thinking back it was kind of there, helping me form, although I think probably my experiences full stop, did that. Both family and school experiences were an impetus for what I became as an adult...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

In Sarasvati's case, the combination of her school and family experiences, in combination with the beliefs she holds as part of her religion led her to develop a home schooling rationale. Sarasvati comments on her reason for home schooling by saying:
"...I would probably say that moral issues...and perhaps philosophical issues that would be major causes in keeping our children from public schools. They are very real to us and very predominant in our approach to life...."

(S.D., 25.4.1996)...."

In addition, and very importantly, the fact that Sarasvati had contact with another home schooler was instrumental in both her becoming aware of home schooling as an educational option, and making the decision to home school. She comments:

"...A friend of mine down the road took her child out of school, who was six and a half at that age. It hadn't occurred to me that I didn't have to send my children to school. And when I realised that I actually didn't have to send them to school I was really relieved, because it took that pressure off me....I think if I hadn't have known any one that home schooled, who'd taken those steps, I don't know if it would've occurred to me. I don't think that option's readily available for people. I don't know if it's more so now, but nobody I knew of ever talked of home schooling, ever. And it just wasn't an option, no one considered it. It was only ever what school, were you going to send them to...."

(S.D., 11.8.1995)

At the time that Sarasvati learned about home schooling she was taking her son to a pre-school with a highly structured programme. She felt pressured by the expectations others at the pre-school had for her concerning her children's education. She said:
"...So it just gave me a bit more breathing space. I thought well I can relax a bit more and make the right decision. I was feeling really pressured into making a move. I used to take him to a pre-school. I just felt like there was so much pressure to achieve. And I think I got caught out in that a little bit, I found it completely daunting. So once I realised I could take it slowly and didn't have to send him to school, that's when I began to feel a lot happier, a lot more peaceful about the whole situation."

(S.D., 11.8.1995)

A question which emerged for me during the research was who makes the decision for children to be home schooled? Is the responsibility for decision making shared between parents? Are children involved in the process?

Three out of the five mothers who participated in this study made the decision to home school their children. It was mothers who decided home schooling was the best available option in the McLaren, Devi and Lamer families. The mothers I interviewed from these three families were very clear about this. Speaking about taking her eldest daughter out of school, Hattie commented "So we took them out of school. Well, I took them out of school." (H.L., 17.9.1995).

Jackie and Michelle, the mothers from the Bond and Dobb families, were equally clear about where and with whom the choice of schooling had been made in their families. It was different in the two families. Although Jackie had said the final 'yes' to home schooling in her family she seemed heavily influenced by her husband and her religious community. In effect it seems that a decision had already been made by Aaron, her husband,
and that all it needed was her approval. Jackie waited for an answer from God through prayer:

"But anyway, as it happens, because I wasn't sure and I wasn't going to go anywhere without confirmation that the Lord was saying yes you are to home school. There was no way I was going to move and Aaron was really good. He was quite patient and understanding. So, he was invited to an Elders’ meeting and they were all going to pray for us so we would know where we were going. And they were very willing to support us in home schooling if we chose to do it and if this was what we felt the Lord was saying for us to do.... So we went ahead, we got the go ahead to go and home school."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Whereas Jackie sought answers from an outside 'authority', Michelle shared the decision making with her family. After being discouraged by what school was achieving for her children, Michelle decided that home schooling was a sensible alternative.

She gave her children the choice of staying in school or taking up the home schooling option. As the following passage shows not all of her children made the same choices. They were all however, supported in their decisions by their parents:

"They were all at school when I finally gathered the courage to home school. It took me a long time. And so I offered it to all of them, and our eldest daughter said that she had just moved school. She was in Form One and having a ball. And so she said if we'd asked her the year before she would have leapt at it, but not that year. So she stayed at school right
through. And the other four boys all decided that they would home 
school. So they all stayed for varying times because they all had the 
choice of when they went back to school, and they made that choice at 
different times."
(M.D., 16.10.96)

Once the decision to home school children has been made, parents must 
apply for official permission to do so. This involves applying to the 
Ministry of Education for an 'exemption'. Exemptions are the passport to 
schooling one's children at home in this country. Being granted an 
exemption for home schooling was easier for some parents in my study, 
whereas others had a more difficult time gaining one.

Unlike other countries, there is only one set of requirements for parents 
who home school their children in New Zealand. Countries such as the 
United States and Australia have regulations which vary from state to 
state (Hunter, 1994; Muchmore, 1994). There is one set of regulations 
for all home schooling parents in Aotearoa, although there may be some 
variation from region to region as far as applications are concerned.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Ministry of Education in different 
regions may require different information from parents. One parent in 
my study, who has asked for her identity to remain confidential, was 
advised by home schoolers in the North Island to not:

"...fill out the application form, but write out this other thing 
instead....Anyway, I wrote out this big thing ...and dropped it in....The 
Ministry person said "No I won't accept this", and I'd actually spent 
hours and hours and hours and weeks just going through all this stuff. I
mean it was, I don't know how many pages, all these things, but it didn't really answer all the questions in the way they wanted. Like it didn't have a timetable...."

Parents in Canterbury and Otago are required to fill out an application form. The information gained from this form needs to show that the parents will home school their children 'at least as regularly and as well as in a registered school.' (Bathgate, 1995: 1). It is difficult to ascertain exactly what constitutes 'as well as'.

At the time that Hattie decided to home school her children, the early 1980's, home schooling had a bad reputation, because not much was known about it. Hattie had to apply to her nearest school for an exemption. The first time she applied for an exemption she had no problem being granted one.

By the time she applied for an exemption for her second daughter, she had moved house, and was required to apply to a different school. It ended up being a long, hard-fought battle to gain an exemption for her. As in many bureaucratic dealings it is often the person one deals with who wields the power to say 'yes' or 'no'. In a conversation I had with Hattie about exemptions she commented:

"There were four of us who were applying for exemptions around the same time, and three of us got them. Two of them got them with ease, me I had some difficulty, and the other person was taken to Court.
F: For truancy?
Mm. So you can just see, depending on where you lived, this was in Otago, depending on where you lived in Otago, because you were, you
had the inspector of your local school, you got very different responses....In the end we threatened with our solicitor."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Fighting for her right to an exemption was a frustrating process for Hattie. She was given one reason after another as to why she would not be allowed to home school her children. The initial reason was that she wanted to home school two of her daughters. Hattie said:

"Really stupid logic, this inspector thought it was ok to home school one daughter, but I couldn't home school two, because it would be too much to do. I mean for God's sake, a teacher has thirty, thirty-five kids in a class, and I had two. So anyway, he just refused to."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

The next reason given was that her Mathematics lessons were inadequate. As Hattie went on to say, this was an irony given that the type of Mathematics her daughters were learning was a forerunner to contemporary practices. She said:

"He said my maths programme wasn't up to scratch, but in fact it's quite ironic, because the kind of Maths programme.....Well it's quite ironic that some years later when Frances and Aimee went to school, the kind of Maths that they were doing in the schools was exactly that kind of Maths, experiential Maths related to practical everyday sort of stuff."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)
The third comment made by the Inspector showed his unease with the situation, and perhaps hints at underlying reasons for Hattie being refused an exemption. Hattie remarked:

"So first it was I couldn't home school two of them, it would be too much for me. My maths programme wasn't good enough. Then he brought up, and I didn't think anything of it at the time, it was only afterwards. Then he brought up "Oh I hope you don't think I'm racist" !..."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie finally felt forced to go to the very top of her local Department of Education. This was a strategy which proved to be successful. Hattie obviously was able to act assertively. This leads me to wonder about those parents who are not so assertive. What happens when they are turned down? Hattie commented:

"So anyway, the next strategy was, we went beyond him, and went to the Senior School Inspector, and then to the then Manager of the Department of Education, who was just new in town. And we got a hearing, and the Senior School Inspector came out and we had our exemption. He was quite satisfied...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

By the late 1980's home schooling had gained greater acceptability, both in this country and overseas. This is reflected in the ease with which other parents in my study received exemptions for their children's home schooling. Also, by this stage, all of the other parents in this study had positive comments to make about their interactions with the Ministry of
Education. Jackie, who began home schooling in the late 1980's commented:

"We had to write in to the Ministry, tell them that we wanted to home school our children, and could they please exempt us?...We had forms to fill in and we had to send in a timetable of what we were going to do with our children. What format we were going to use? What subjects were we going to teach?"

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Although she had removed her children from registered schools, Jackie still felt as though she wanted to work within the traditional education system. She was compliant with the wishes of the Ministry of Education, and felt some sympathy towards them for the tasks they had to undertake. She said:

"...I think if you're going to home school your children, they have every right to know what you're going to be doing. Even though we're not using their curriculum, and they're not responsible, we've taken them out of a system. I'm not like a lot of people who don't, who believe that, I mean I do believe the parents are responsible, but I'm not anti the Ministry of Education. So we did that, and we got this really nice gentleman, who I think had been bombarded by a lot of home schoolers who didn't like him...Yeah, and I felt quite sorry for them, I really did. You know, they must have had a hang of a job. But he came after we had sent our forms in."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)
Jackie felt relieved to have the support of her husband the day that the Inspector came for the interview. She did not feel confident enough to have done it on her own. It was a straight forward process being granted an exemption. The fact that the family was using a curriculum which had been approved by the Ministry helped. Jackie commented:

"We just wrote in, they sent them back to us, we filled them in, they came for an interview and Aaron was home that day, which was a real blessing because I wouldn't have liked to have been on my own, and it went really well. The Inspector said that we would have no trouble getting an exemption. Because Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) has been approved by the Ministry of Education to be used as a curriculum, there was no problem."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Claire also had some positive things to say about the Ministry of Education, although she felt that some things they requested, in order to be granted an exemption, were a little premature. She said:

"So I sent the application form and all that in and they accepted it on the spot. So I did the timetable and what they wanted. Which in some ways I have sympathy for them, because I think they genuinely want to know the kids are getting a reasonable education. I just think things like writing out a timetable is pretty unreasonable when you're starting out."

(C.M., 2.7.1996)

Reflecting for a little longer, however, Claire did remember that she had heard a few negative comments about the Ministry of Education from members of a home schooling organisation. She continued:
"I heard that people up round Hamilton way and some other places have had real difficulty getting an exemption. They said that because now they're not inspecting all the families that they're trying to make it harder to get one in the first place. They're trying to put people off. So they're doing it that way instead of letting people do it and then inspecting to see if they're doing it properly."

(C.M., 2.7. 1995)

Sarasvati was of the opinion that the woman from her religion that acted on behalf of their home schoolers had good interactions with the Ministry and that they were "pretty obliging and quite conforming" (S.D., 11.8.1995), as far as granting exemptions was concerned. Michelle also found that it was straightforward to receive an exemption.

Once parents had received an exemption and were free to home school their children they went about setting up their home schools. The next section deals with operating home schools. It looks at the way in which this process differed from parent to parent, and how it was influenced by whether the participants belonged to the Ideologue or Pedagogue classifications.

_The Transition From Homeschooling To School_

The decision to send children back to registered schools can be equally as involved as the decision to start home schooling. The majority of children in this study have left home schooling to go to formal schools. On the whole, this seems to have been a smooth process for them. The children returned for a variety of reasons; the children returned to school because Hattie needed to find paid employment as she had become a solo parent,
and needed an income to support her children; the children returned when they themselves decided they wanted to; the children returned because their parents decided it was time for them to go back. Interestingly, many of the parents in this study told me that they took their home schooling year by year, that they did not look too far into the future with it.

There were differences in the children's experiences of returning to, or in one case, going for the first time, to school, though, as previously mentioned, it was a relatively smooth process overall. Elsie was surprised at the small amount of work she was expected to do at school, and was also surprised by the way children related to each other. Hattie described Elsie's return to school as "...one more situation she could meet the challenges of...." (H.L., 17.9.1995). Michelle describes her children's return to school:

"...I guess I was always nervous about when they slotted back into school, but I need never have been. I think there were teething problems in that I didn't push written work because I didn't feel it was particularly necessary. We did a lot of talking, if I wanted to know whether they knew something then we'd talk about it, and I think that was the hardest thing they found was going back into a situation where they had to do a lot of writing, but it really only took a couple of terms and then they were back up to speed...."

(M.D., 16.10.1996)

Finally, Jackie discusses making the decision to send her children back to school, and what it meant to her children to return:
"...It took us quite a few months to decide and we prayed about it. Just little things happened that gave me confirmation that I was meant to do it. I can't think of anything offhand but it was very positive for me. So when I felt quite good about it and I knew that yes, probably more than likely they would go, we approached the children. And they were really pleased, because they found it difficult getting into sports teams because they didn't belong to a school. The academic side was fine, but for us being the only home schoolers here, it was difficult. So they were pleased about that, pleased about being with other children...."

(J.B., 19.2.1996)

**Operating The Home Schools**

Upon receiving an exemption, parents in this study had to organise their home schools. Decisions regarding space, resources and curriculum needed to be made. These decisions were affected by the participants' ideological and pedagogical leanings. In the previous section parents were classified according to the groups set out by Van Galen (1988). Hattie, Claire and Michelle were classified as Pedagogues; Jackie was classified as an Ideologue; and Sarasvati was classified as a mixture of the two. In what ways did these classifications affect decisions regarding space, resources and curriculum?

In addition to their ideological reasons for home schooling, the way that Jackie and Aaron home schooled their children tends to place them in the Ideologue category. They schooled their children in an environment which closely resembled a formal school. The children worked at desks in one room, apart from the eldest two who were given the 'privilege' of
working in their own rooms. They followed a structured, pre-packaged curriculum called Accelerated Christian Education (ACE).

ACE originated in the United States, although the version Jackie used was brought in from Australia. It has received approval in this country from the Ministry of Education. ACE provides a comprehensive, sequential, Christian curriculum for school-aged children that the children work through by themselves (Fleming and Hunt, 1987; Lines, 1987). It 'relies heavily on Biblical passages, moral homilies, and similar religious texts' (Lines, 1987: 513). It aims to present children with information from sources that are 'pro-family, pro-life, pro-marriage, and pro-church' (Johnson, 1987: 520).

The Bond children worked independently, although their mother was present and was available for help. In Van Galen's (1988: 58) opinion, it is typical that 'the children in these families work independently on structured paper and pencil tasks, with the parents stepping in only if the child encounters some procedural difficulty.' There was a strong emphasis on discipline and order. They were expected to work quietly and diligently. Jackie commented:

"...They've learned to sit, and they've learned to not get up out of their seats without permission...When they had an academic problem, they had to raise a flag. When they wanted to score their work, they needed a scoring flag. It was two different flags. It was good, because I just had to glance and say yes you can, and if I knew an academic problem was there I would just go and help."

(J.B., 3.7.1996)
Talking about her need for the children's day to be organised and highly structured, Jackie had this to say:

"I guess for me, I'm a very structured and organised person. And I found it difficult structuring and organising the children, to sit in and fit into a routine. I didn't want it to be unorganised and them just doing anything and everything. You know, I didn't want them running around and playing. I wanted structure...."

(J.B., 3.7.1996)

According to Van Galen (1988: 58-59) Ideologues have a fear of not being good enough as teachers. They see 'teaching as a somewhat mysterious and unfamiliar enterprise' (ibid: 58). It is easier for them if days are highly structured in order to know exactly what they are doing and where they are going. The use of a pre-packaged curriculum obviates the need for them to gauge their children's need for materials and the work they will cover. In essence they take on the role of monitors who assist '...their children toward attainment of goals defined by the curriculum suppliers' (ibid).

Sarasvati started home schooling her son Bhima in a largely unstructured way. She continued activities that were already happening in her home. At first she did not organise any special learning environment - everywhere was seen as a potential site for learning. For example counting lessons might take place while pouring beans into a pot, or reading lessons might take place by reading signs during a bus trip into town. However, not following a curriculum made Sarasvati worried and lacking in confidence about the quality of the education she was providing Bhima. When she joined with other home schooling parents from her
religious community to set up a home school together, Bhima's education became much more structured. Sarasvati explains:

"Because I didn't really research it and he being my first, I felt that, if I had followed a certain curriculum, that I would have felt confident that he was at least on target. So at first we didn't, although now he is following a curriculum and I feel happy about that. It's a structured curriculum, and it's slightly, you know oriented towards our philosophy....There's just little things that have been changed towards, you know which are more directed towards God-consciousness. Just certain sentences and things like that.
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Sarasvati and the other home-schooling parents in her community set up a home-schooling environment which closely resembles a formal school. They set up a classroom in a house which looks and feels like a traditional classroom, barring the religious motifs around the room. Sarasvati calls it a 'semi-school situation' (S.D. 11.8.1995). Bhima is schooled in a class of four children of varying ages. They all work at desks and there is a parent acting as a teacher who helps them with their work and maintains discipline. As mentioned earlier, Sarasvati's approach can be considered a mixture of Ideologue and Pedagogue. This can be seen in the move she made from unstructured environments and curriculum, to a structured environment and curriculum. In the author's opinion it is indicative of a move from an approach typical of a Pedagogue to one more typical of someone of an Ideological persuasion.

The three parents that have been classified as Pedagogues, however, had distinctly different styles from the previous two participants. Hattie,
Claire and Michelle all had approaches that can clearly be seen to be those of Pedagogues.

According to Van Galen (1988) Pedagogues create environments that give primacy to the learner. Lessons are organised around subjects that interest the children, rather than subjects presented in textbooks. Learning in the homes of Pedagogues is based on experience and is often informal (Van Galen, 1988: 60-61). Pedagogues place a great emphasis on stimulating analytical and critical skills, as opposed to the 'rote' learning techniques typical of Ideologues (ibid).

Hattie's experiences as a home schooling mother provide good examples of the kinds of things Pedagogues do in terms of educating their children. In Hattie's opinion, they followed a programme that was very unstructured, yet which was structured at the same time. The structure came from making written records of activities, whether it was in the form of a poster, a diary or a scrapbook, for example.

They did not have one specific learning environment. They often went on trips around the South Island, for example. Hattie says that they "...used to really love that and we would keep records of our journeys and sort of map them all out and that kind of thing." In Meighan's (1992) view, one of the things that binds home schoolers together is their questioning of the 'locus of the school' (ibid: 395). That is, they question the need for education in a specific 'location in a special building, ie. the school' (ibid). What is suggested here is that learning can take place in a variety of settings and locations.
Activities were instigated by Hattie's daughters according to their own individual interests. Although Hattie did not direct their learning, she did have an input where she deemed it appropriate. One example of the holistic flavour of the girls' (and Hattie's) lessons comes from when Sue had an interest in gipsies. Hattie remarks:

"Sue went through a gipsy phase. So that was incorporated. She dressed like a gipsy and behaved like, well, we don't know how gipsies behave, but she imagined this is how a gipsy would behave. And so that provided her, or us, with the opportunity to learn all about gipsies, where they came from, their persecution, and all that kind of stuff. And in that one, she learned geography, she learned social studies, she learned history. She did maths, in terms of map-reading, measurement, grids, all that kind of stuff. Yeah, so that was, whatever they did was entirely from their own kind of instigation, motivation."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Michelle's experience shows that she went from a structured programme to a much more informal one. In addition, Michelle's input changed over time from being directional to allowing her youngest son to be self-directed. As Van Galen had said (1988: 60) the day-to-day activities of Pedagogues vary considerably, as they do not have the structure provided by pre-packaged curriculums and workbooks. The following excerpt shows how this can work in action:

"For awhile I was very structured and we started and we went through books and we did all the things that a school would have done. Except that if we were particularly involved in maths that day we, and everyone was enjoying it we'd just keep going. But then as time went on some days were
like that and other days we would upend and go out somewhere and spend
the day in the museum fossicking or in a library or out in the country or all
sorts of places.

So, yeah, and the last year of Jared's schooling, he's the youngest, the last
year, was totally self-directed from his point of view. I was actually
working that year, I wasn't meant to be but it ended up that I was, so he
would come to work with me. And he would organise his own day. And
probably that was the most successful year. He probably learnt the most
from it."
(M.D., 16.10.1996)

Claire provides us with a final example of a parent from this study who
can be called a Pedagogue. Her son Timothy does not follow a structured
programme, although his day could be described as semi-structured.
Claire says that every day varies quite a bit in terms of what Timothy
does. There are, however, some things that he does most days. Some of
the activities he carries out seem very unusual for a young boy. They
show that his mother is open to a variety of learning opportunities. Claire
comments:

"A typical day for Timothy is that he gets up and cooks breakfast for the
family. And quite often makes his Dad's lunch and everything and then
when they all leave, he goes and feeds all the animals. Then he comes in,
he usually wants to practise the piano before he does anything else and
sometimes he has a little bit of a play with his Lego, while I'm sort of
doing the dishes and messing round."
(C.M., 2.7.1995)
Claire, who has only begun home schooling within the last two years is still in what she terms a 'learning phase'. She has a fear that she is not doing enough. She says "It's just a bit scary doing it yourself, because you wonder if you're leaving gaps in things" (ibid). Timothy does what Claire calls "formal type stuff" (ibid), a little later in the morning. Timothy uses books and other resources suggested by another home schooler.

"Then, between half past eight and half past nine, depending how we go, it could be Maths or English or any subject really. If we have a really pushed day I try to get some Maths done, and he's got a book called Spellwell which he can fill in like a workbook so we can do some quick things like that. But generally we just work till lunch or sometimes after lunch. One day he worked from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon. Just on schoolwork, because he wanted to but on other days it's much harder to keep him at it. So really it's hard to say what a typical day is because it does vary quite a bit. We do whatever we do and try and get some more formal type writing stuff done in the morning."

( ibid)

In addition to the work Timothy does at home, he also has a number of outside learning environments. As Van Galen (1988: 60) has written, Pedagogues '...do not merely supervise their child's learning, but instead deliberately choose among alternatives....'. Timothy has lessons from people in the community in a variety of activities. He does projects with home schooling friends and goes swimming with them once a week. He also has music and art lessons.
Summary

Making the decision to home school and operating home schools together make up the home schooling process. In this chapter it has been shown that this process varies considerably from family to family. Although the issues which bring parents to home schooling may be quite different, there is nevertheless some congruence in terms of the ways in which these families carry out home schooling. For this reason it is possible to categorise the parents who have taken part in this study according the groups outlined by Van Galen (1988). Thus I have considered each parent's activities on the basis of them being an Ideologue or a Pedagogue.

Ideologues set up learning environments which resemble those in registered schools. They bring their children home in order to teach them the moral and spiritual values they consider are lacking in registered schools. They make use of structured, pre-packaged curriculums. They aim to create a greater sense of family unity through their home schooling practices. Jackie provides an example of an Ideologue. She used a highly structured programme and her classroom had an emphasis on quiet, diligent work. In her opinion, one of the main benefits for her of home schooling, was that it brought the members of her family closer together.

Pedagogues, in contrast, bring their children home to learn because they consider that registered schools do not provide a suitable academic environment for their children as a result of large classes and outdated teaching methods. They create flexible learning environments making use of a variety of locations and resources. Their children's learning is
largely self-directed. Hattie took her children home as a result of the bad experiences they were having at school. Claire took her son out of school because of the stress he was experiencing there.

What emerges from an analysis of the process of home schooling is that there seems to be a difference in approaches on the basis of authority and hierarchy. There is a division between those who choose home schooling for moral or religious reasons, and those who choose it for academic reasons. Overall, it appears that those parents who Van Galen would term Pedagogues attempt through their home schooling practices to break down the notion of ultimate authority, and eliminate practices based on a hierarchy. Ideologues, in contrast, have home schooling practices which are directly carried out on the basis of a notion of authority and hierarchy.

In terms of decision making, Pedagogues such as Hattie make decisions for themselves, recognising their own authority, while other Pedagogues such as Michelle share decision making with other members of her family including her children. Ideologues such as Jackie look to outside authorities for decisions to be made, including authorities such as her husband, or her ultimate authority, God.

Hattie was prepared to challenge the authority of the Inspector who denied her an exemption, whereas Jackie feared the Inspector who was coming to interview her. The programme followed by the children in the family of the Pedagogues directed their own learning to a large degree, but the children in the Ideologue family carried out learning that they were directed to follow by their mother. In addition, the curriculum they followed was devised by outside authorities, whose knowledge was
accepted without question. The Pedagogues' children went out to discover answers for themselves. The Ideologues' children were given facts and answers to learn.

Pedagogues' families attempted to break down any notion of a hierarchy by setting up power-sharing practices. In Hattie's case, this involved her family acting as a collective, where parents and children alike were able to challenge each other. In Jackie's family, Jackie was seen as the authority figure in the classroom, and she directed activities and made any decisions.

It seems that these divergent approaches to authority and hierarchy have emerged as a result of the philosophies which underpin them. In the case of Pedagogues these include notions about people being equal, and about having equal access to resources and power sharing. The philosophies of Ideologues seem to emerge from their religious beliefs. Such beliefs include the idea that the world is structured hierarchically, with some people holding more power than others. In Jackie's case, she acted as an obedient wife, and a submissive woman, as laid down by the teachings of her religion. As a mother she held power over her children, and was responsible for making decisions for them.

In the next chapter, we will see how the philosophies of education held by home schooling mothers in this study shaped their home schooling practices.
The decision to home school and the way that it is carried out, are based on the belief systems of the parents. These beliefs are formed in response to the life experiences of the parents, and in turn, affect, and in some cases, effect, other life experiences.

I have been interested in discovering what beliefs the participants in my study have in regard to education, and how these beliefs have affected their home schooling. I have been particularly interested in how their philosophies of education have influenced their ideas about learning and teaching, as these ideas directly affect their home schooling practices.

In studying these philosophies of education, it is necessary to remember that although parents may have ideals regarding education and the manner in which it is carried out, circumstances do not always allow these ideals to be practised in reality.

Although the participants in this study have all come to home schooling with their own individual philosophies of education, some of the elements of these philosophies have similarities to the philosophies of other participants. I have chosen, therefore, to explore the philosophies of three of the participants in this study. I have done this because there are strong links between elements of these philosophies and the philosophies of an Ideologue and a Pedagogue. In addition I will provide the example of a parent's philosophy which does not fall neatly into either category. This is to act as a reminder that these are not fixed categories, and that people change as they move through their lives, as do their beliefs.
Accordingly I will discuss the ideas about education which underpin the home schooling practices of Hattie and Jackie. The third parent whose philosophy I have elected to present is Sarasvati. I have chosen this philosophy as it provides a useful backdrop to compare the first two cases against. This is because Sarasvati's philosophy has a mixture of the elements of both a Pedagogue's and an Ideologue's philosophy of education.

**Hattie**

Hattie's philosophy of education provides an example of what educational beliefs a Pedagogue bases her home schooling practices on. The majority of the elements of her theories of learning and teaching resonate with the elements which Van Galen would describe as belonging to a Pedagogue.

Hattie opted to home school her children as a result of the problems her daughter was experiencing at school. In Hattie's opinion, Elsie's enthusiasm for learning was "...being slowly chopped down..." (H.L., 17.9.1995) by the practices of her teacher. Through bringing Elsie home to school, and subsequently home schooling another two daughters, Hattie hoped to re-kindle a love of learning within her children. She comments:

"...I wanted an education for my kids that would put the joy back into learning. I wanted an education that was not going to take things away from the kids, but that would add to their joy, their spirit. This was quite central to my philosophy of education...."

(H.L., 31.10.1995)
Hattie's home schooling philosophy emerged out of ideas she had held for a number of years concerning home birth and other child rearing practices. As Hattie has said, she home schooled "...for a variety of reasons. The time was right, the sort of lifestyle I was leading....At that time I was heavily into home birth, a do-it-yourself lifestyle....Everything sort of came together...." (H.L., 31.10.1995).

The child rearing practices of which Hattie spoke were based on the idea that any activities concerning children should make their well-being a central feature. Any such activities, according to this view, must be carried out in such a way that will ultimately contribute to the strength, freedom and growth of children.

Hattie's philosophy of education included theories about learning and education. These theories underpinned the practices Hattie carried out during her years as a home schooling parent. In Hattie's view:

**Learning**
- should be self-motivated, and learner-directed.
- takes place in a variety of settings and a variety of ways.
- should not be imposed on learners. Learners should be able to develop at their own pace.
- can occur through play.
- happens co-operatively with a variety of age groups.
- should happen in such a way that allows learners to be responsible for their actions.
- learning takes place within a community.
Teaching
- involves facilitating learning.
- can involve the use of a variety of resources.
- can involve the use of specialists from a variety of fields.
- is a reciprocal process which occurs between learners and teachers.

The first thing that strikes me when I look at Hattie's theories of learning and teaching, is that it appears as though she has a more fully developed theory of learning. In reality, however, the role that teachers have in her theory of teaching explains the apparent discrepancy. In Hattie's view, teachers act as facilitators of learning. This role is carried out in tandem with allowing learners to be self-motivated, and, very importantly, self-directed in their learning. Thus, teachers play more of a supportive rather than directive role in this theory of teaching. Hattie describes this by saying:

"...The girls a lot of the time didn't need me. They were quite capable of doing their own thing, and they did a lot of the time. I saw myself as a sort of, I used to call myself...A facilitator...that's basically how I saw myself, as a facilitator for the girls. Being their stepping stone basically...."
(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie provides an example of the kind of self-directed activities the children undertook, by describing a project on the Incas:

"...Whatever they did was entirely from their own kind of instigation, motivation. That was what we expected....For example they did an Inca one. I don't know who instigated that, I can't remember. But they both did that one. We did a lot of, because they were sun worshippers we did a lot
of experiments with the sun. So that came, I mean I had an input. It wasn't as if I just sat back. They did that, but where there was an opportunity for some kind of input from me I'd give it. So we did sun experiments with that Inca one, and we also kept an Inca calendar, which was sort of a maths oriented thing...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

According to Hattie's way of thinking, learning can take place in a variety of settings and in a variety of ways. Such learning also tends to be unstructured in her view. Speaking about the programme the girls followed she comments:

"...It was very unstructured, although there was a structure about it. When they did something, they did put it on something had some kind of written record of it. Like it might be in the form of a poster or a scrapbook, so there would be some record of it....So, yeah, it was unstructured in that we didn't have a certain amount we had to get through in a day or week, or what we did, it was from the kids. I mean a project might last a day, or it might last two weeks...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Access to a variety of settings, and the freedom to visit them, enhanced the scope for learning. Hattie and the girls did a lot of travelling during their home schooling which allowed the girls to practise other kinds of skills:

"...We used to go away quite a bit. We used to travel around....Going places. Because we weren't tied, we'd just pack up the car and go. And we used to really love that and so we would keep records of our journeys
and sort of map them all out and that kind of thing. So, at that time, we explored Otago, Central Otago, South Otago, the Coast. We did a lot of explorations all around the area, and that's the thing that probably I miss the most, is being able to get up and go. Yeah, so, we did a lot of travelling, going places, doing things. And I'd have to say I was really fortunate that I was able to do that. I mean, I'm sort of aware of that in some respects we were quite, well not privileged, but it was made easier for us. But then again, I mean there are other, we didn't live very fancily either. I mean everything sort of evolved around the family. Family activities...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Further to the idea that learning should be learner-directed, are the concepts that learners should not have learning imposed on them, that they should be able to develop at their own pace. Some of these ideas may have developed as a result of Hattie's own learning experiences. As a teenager she felt that she did not have control over making decisions about what she wanted to study at school, or what she was to do once she left school. At the time that Hattie was in secondary school, the career options for girls were very limited. They were expected to enter 'feminine' professions such as nursing, teaching or secretarial work. Hattie comments on the choices that were made for her at school:

"...Although I was streamed in the top band, at that time because I was obviously an able student, my career option was to be a teacher. I wasn't allowed, my topics, my subjects, were chosen for me by the school. Because the subjects I wanted to do weren't particularly worthy of an able student. I actually wanted to do Art. That was the big thing that I remember wanting to do. But I was firmly told that because I was going to
be a teacher, Art wasn't necessary. I had to take Science, Maths, English, History. I hated that, I really hated that. I actually hate being told what to do...."
(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie recognises that there may be a connection between her own experiences and her decision to home school, although she considers that:

"...they weren't consciously part of the reason why I chose to home school, those kind of experiences. But I think subconsciously the fact that my whole underlying rationale for it was for my children to develop in the way and the pace that they wanted to. And I think much of that was borne out of my own experiences although I didn't recognise that at the time..."
(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Learning can occur through play, and this is very constructive, according to Hattie's theory of learning. In Hattie's opinion it can develop imagination, and can lead to a great deal of learning. It can stimulate learners to investigate and expand upon their knowledge about a multitude of topics. It can lead to unexpected learning. Hattie cites an example of her children's play that developed into a beneficial learning experience for everyone involved:

"...It would be very hard to describe a typical day, but...this is a typical example of how things developed. We lived down on the flat on Seasend Beach. I gather it was below sea level, because it was in flood, the back yard was in flood. One particular Winter there were quite a few kids playing out the back in this knee-deep water. They were in various states of undress, and it was mid-Winter, bloody cold. And I was doing
something in the kitchen and they were pretending that they were in the River Ganges. This muddy water was the river Ganges, and of course the River Ganges is pretty muddy and polluted. So, they played for hours this game of being in the River Ganges and being people working in and around the water. And that lead to a sort of a group project if you like, on India. And at that time we had access to a documentary on Sir Edmund Hillary doing a trip up the River Ganges, so we watched that. And so one of these kids did something on Sir Edmund Hillary and his trip, and others did it on the caste system of India. So out of that kind of playing, that's a kind of example of how they learnt. They learnt through playing, and through interaction with others. And sometimes things didn't develop any further, but things like that River Ganges thing developed into a kind of project...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Hattie considers that learning should ideally take place within a group which includes a variety of ages. She does not feel that children need to learn with a group of the same-aged peers. Learning with a variety of other people of various ages enhances children's ability to socialise with many different sorts of individuals. This type of socialisation more closely resembles the socialisation which takes place in wider society, where people engage in social activities with a broad range of other people. In Hattie's opinion, learning is a co-operative activity, that does not occur in isolation from other people. She speaks about this by relating some thoughts about her home schooled daughter's return to a formal school:
"...When Elsie went off to high school she was amazed at how little work she had to do, how long it took to do it, and she was also amazed at the way the kids, the students, related to one another. She couldn't understand the pettiness. All the "well if you like her you can't be my friend" kind of stuff. She'd never known that in her life, and I think she found it quite stressful, because she couldn't understand how people could be like that. But for the most part, because she was is so socially adept at relating to people from all ages, from little babies right up to elderly, this was one more situation which she could meet the challenge of. Because one of the things that I didn't like, I've never liked in schooling, is this unnatural keeping in one class a group of kids the same age. I think it's really unnatural. I don't think it's conducive to learning. Because I believe learning's done on a co-operative basis, between old and young and in between. It just seems really foreign and weird to me to have thirty-odd ten-year-olds together or five-year-olds together. It's just somehow unnatural...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

In line with this idea of co-operative learning was the notion that responsibility was also a part of the learning process. By learning to be responsible for their belongings and their actions, Hattie's children learned to be responsible for themselves in other situations, both in terms of their actions toward and their interactions with other people. Hattie explains this by saying:

"...I want all my children to be free, and happy, and do the things that they want to do, not be afraid to do different things, to meet new challenges and all that kind of stuff. On the same token, all this must be played out within a family. And in that sense, no-one can be totally free because there are
other people to be mindful of. One thing that we regularly did with the kids, and in quite a structured way, was to look at this notion of freedom, and that with freedom comes responsibility, to be considerate and care for others. To be mindful that if they want to do something, for example, a collage in the middle of the living room floor which was quite possible, on the cards, and they did do on numerous occasions, that was fine, that wasn't a problem for me.

But what they also needed to do was clean up after them. They needed to recognise that by doing that, and say by leaving, when they finished by leaving it all there, that created a situation of unfreedom for the person who cleaned up after them. So they also learnt really early on, that while you did all these wonderful things, there were responsibilities attached. And they cleaned up after themselves, or if they didn't clean up entirely on their own, they certainly helped. So that also came in the way they related. Because it was a household run on a collective basis, everyone helped with everything, and had a say in everything...."

(17.9.1995)

The idea that learning happens collaboratively within a group gets extended by situating such groups within a wider community. That is, learning happens within a community that extends further than the family and the home schooling community. Learning involves using the wide variety of resources within the community, and various people within the community become resources as they use the skills within their own particular areas of expertise to teach home schooled children. Hattie comments on her notion of community:
"...I had a notion of community education. Rather than having the notion that school takes place within 4 walls - there is a whole community out there, with people, experiences, things. A wealth of resources for learning to take part in. This notion was central to our home schooling programme. It was people and experience-oriented, having to relate to a variety of people...."
(H.L., 31.10.1995)

It was Hattie, the children and other home schoolers and their children who went out and found other teachers in the community. These teachers had a breadth of experience including diverse skills such as arts and crafts, drama, Maori culture, book skills, mathematics and education. In return they often shared their skills and experiences with others in the community. For instance, Hattie had contact with a Teacher's College, where she gave talks to a variety of groups about home schooling. In addition, the Teacher's College acted as a forum where Hattie's daughters could present their work.

Hattie notes the variety of people in the community she had contact with for the girls' home schooling activities:

"...We used the community a lot in terms of people who had skills that the kids wanted to learn, to take advantage of. For example, we did a big thing on mask-making and theatre and mime. From a professional actor, or mime artist, call him what you will, clown. He did this one Winter when he was on holiday. He lived in the city. Well, he travelled around the world, but he was back in the city. And so we did that with him, and the kids really enjoyed that. We used other people for pottery, for printing, painting, horse riding, all sorts of drama, other drama. But all of that was,
it was things that we went out and initiated rather than them being there. We had to go and look for them. With my contacts, we as a group went and stayed at a local Marae. We didn’t actually do anything cultural in that sense. The kids used to go, not as a group. My kids to go to the marae every week to club. I think someone articulated the desire to go and spend time at the marae, so we did that. And that was a really good experience, well, from what I was told. So, yeah, we just used, we used the community, that was our classroom basically....

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Given Hattie's notion that the community is the classroom, it is not surprising to know that she and her daughters became very familiar with a variety of locations around the Otago region. Having the freedom to explore their surroundings without pressures such as time or finances, the Lamer family enjoyed a very relaxing and stimulating time. The added responsibilities of caring for young children added to her challenges. Hattie considers that this was made possible through the existence of a stable and strong support system. Additionally, anything became a resource to Hattie, long before recycling became popular. She says:

"...And the girls and I used to go away a lot as I said. And but we'd also do a lot of walking, tramping around Otago. We thoroughly explored all of the peninsula. We had our favourite places to go, both sides of the peninsula. And we knew places to gather shellfish, we knew all those sorts of places and we used to have a wonderful time. We had adventures aplenty. The world was our oyster. It was actually a really neat time in our lives. It was also a very busy time. Like I was still having babies. I had Frances and then I had Aimee. So it was a busy time in our lives, but it was also a very social time too, a community time. We did a lot of things
with other people. And certainly it was made easier by having a strong network of people, who might not have been home schooling, but supported us. So yeah, anything was a resource. People learnt not to throw anything away, before they asked me if I had any use for something..."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

The final, and perhaps one of the most telling aspects of Hattie's theory of teaching I wish to touch upon is her concept of a reciprocal learner/teacher relationship. This is important because it tells us that Hattie does not believe in a hierarchical learner/teacher relationship. In her view, the roles of learner and teacher are, and often become, interchangeable. By removing a hierarchical structure from this relationship, Hattie produces one with more equal power sharing. The nature of this equal relationship gives children more control over their decision-making and actions. It also leads them to develop a respect for the right of others to voice their opinions and assert their ideas. As Hattie reflected upon during an interview, this power sharing has helped her daughters to grow into healthy, well balanced, assertive young women. In her words:

"...Being part of a collective group, the kids have always been able to challenge me, what I do and what I say. Now that doesn't mean to say, to abuse me. And sometimes they have done that too, but, but they have as much a right for me to say that what I'm saying is not right, or unfair, and point out my shortcomings, as is reasonable. It's normally accepted that parents do that to their children, well to me it's a two-way process."
They have as much right to point these things out to me, as I have to help them in their development. Because I guess in that sense we're all developing. They are my teacher as much as I was their's. And I think they've all been able to do that. They do that really well. Sometimes the boundaries get a bit fudged, but for the most part, they are able to, they do what they want to do when they want to do it. They're strong, I guess. Very individual and strong, and I'm very proud of them for being who they are..."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Jackie

Jackie's philosophy of education is representative of a style of home schooling which Van Galen (1988) would term Ideologue. Jackie and her husband Aaron took their children out of school and brought them home to learn, on the basis of their religious beliefs. Jackie believes that the Bible directs parents to do this, and that by doing so she is being obedient. In her opinion "...the main reason was to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord....That's what would be good, for people to see us as a family doing for the Lord, and working and being obedient to him...." (J.D., 3.7.1995).

Achieving her aim of bringing her children up in the ways of the Lord, will eventually result in Jackie's children learning to be strong and confident adults. Jackie's philosophy of education aims to teach her children to have good self-esteem, but a particular kind of self-esteem - one which is developed in unison with 'the Lord'. Jackie has this to say:
"...That's my priority, to see my children walk with the Lord when they leave home, and be strong, and learn kindness and patience and joy, and to have long suffering, and to be able just to cope with the pressures out there and not crumble. That would be my greatest goal for my children...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Parents who home school, according to Jackie, need spiritual support to do so. She thinks that relying on oneself during home schooling would be very difficult. For her:

"...it's only the grace of God that gets you through, well for me it is....so really I just have to depend on God every day. To give me strength, to know what to do and what not to do, and yeah, just to survive really, just to get through, to encourage the children. Yeah, so that's really where my strength comes from these days...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995).

Jackie's theories of learning and teaching reflect the theories supporting the home schooling practices of Ideologues. In Jackie's view:

**Learning**
- needs to be structured.
- happens most effectively in a quiet disciplined atmosphere.
- does not occur without external motivation
- can happen at a speed which is comfortable for an individual learner.
- is based on an authorised curriculum presented through texts.
Teaching

- involves being a supervisor.
- is most helpful on a one-to-one basis.
- children are a God-given responsibility.
- children can help the learner in the teacher.
- involves doing what you are expected to by the authorities.

Home schooling has been a time-consuming, sometimes difficult, yet satisfying activity in Jackie's view. Jackie has kept the children on task and says that to home school is a "...commitment, you've got to be committed, or you're foolish...." (J.B., 3.7.1995).

Having a highly structured environment and programme helps the home schooling to run more smoothly, according to Jackie's way of thinking. Over the years the children in the Bond family have become more settled in their work. Jackie comments:

"...I guess for me, I'm a very structured and organised person. And I found it very difficult structuring and organising the children, to sit in and fit into a routine. I didn't want it to be unorganised and them just to do anything and everything. You know, I didn't want them running around and playing. I wanted structure.... I suppose now we're probably a little bit more flexible in that, because our children are older, but, they've learned to sit, and they've learned to not get up out of their seats without permission. They have a little flag that they have to raise...Yes, when they had an academic problem, they had to raise a flag. When they wanted to score their work, they needed a scoring flag. It was two different flags. It was good, because I just had to glance and say yes you can, and if I knew
an academic problem was there I would just go and help. So that was really good...."
(J.B., 3.7.1995)

The last excerpt speaks volumes about the type of atmosphere the children were expected to work in. They worked in one half of a room which was set up like a traditional classroom, with individual desks and chairs. On the walls were various religious quotes. The children were expected to work quietly and methodically, making their way through the exercises in their PACEs one after another. The children were able to pass onto the next PACE once one had been completed successfully. There was no time limit in which to complete a PACE, which meant that children could complete their work at their own individual paces. (Fleming and Hunt, (1987: 519) define PACEs as 'individual packets of self-instructional curriculum materials, which allow each student to work at his or her own speed'. These PACEs are provided as part of the ACE curriculum package.)

The type of atmosphere in which the children were expected to work also suggests various things about Jackie's role as teacher. As the children worked through materials which were self-instructional, the need for Jackie to act as someone passing on information was diminished, although her help was still required on occasions. She saw her role as being more of a supervisory one. It also involved being a disciplinarian, as the events involving flags and the maintenance of peace during classtime illustrate.

The organisation of ACE materials, supervisor training courses and classes suggests that there is a big emphasis placed on hierarchy. In terms of materials, children work through materials which are sequential, with
one booklet being above the ones which come before it. Children can only pass on to higher booklets once they achieve 80% in the tests which are taken at the end of each booklet (J.B., 3.7.1995). Jackie says that the role of supervisor is superior to that of a monitor, whose job is to monitor the children's process. Supervisors are clearly considered superior in power to learners, who have to obey the wishes of their supervisor. Finally, Jackie sends books away to be marked by an outside agency. The man who runs this agency is seen as having a superior role to Jackie. Having this outside authority has actually been a great help to Jackie. Having this level of academic support has given her more confidence in her teaching. She says:

"... You just follow his - if you find your child's working, like the work's more difficult for him, you can order books accordingly. They provide a guideline, you basically make the choices. But it's good to have someone up there who knows, who's done it and can guide you and let you know what to do. Because, I tell you, not being teacher-trained and not having any education to teach my own children, I find I don't want to play around with their lives. I want to make sure they're getting the right work, and are working according to their levels. So they keep an eye on you, yeah they're pretty good like that, which is good for me...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Prior to her involvement with the ACE programme Jackie had had little experience of teaching. To take on home schooling was a great challenge for her. On her role as teacher, Jackie comments:
"...The first thing we had to do when we were doing ACE., was do a set of 12 books ourselves. And we had to go through a course so we could actually be classed as supervisors....And that was a set of 12 books - how to educate, what kind of education, what was education. I can't even remember any of that... It was the same format as the PACE. We had a piece to read, answered the questions, had a check-up in the book, had a self-test and a test at the end. We had to pass each one again at 80%. Under 80 we had to repeat the book.

So it was very much like being back in school, that was, to use this curriculum, that was what we had to do. But other than that I didn't have any knowledge of how to teach. And the basis of all those 12 books was Christian-based teaching. And how were we going to discipline? And what would we do with the child and how were we going to teach, and what incentives were we going to give them? And all this kind of thing. That's what we had to incorporate into this system...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

In terms of being a disciplinarian, Jackie expected the classroom environment to remain quiet and calm. She worked hard at keeping the children on task, and would not allow them to be diverted from their work for any great periods of time. Commenting on the fact that home schooled families are sometimes accused of doing nothing, she says:

"...So why you'd want to home school if you weren't committed, I'll never know. I couldn't understand a family that would want to do that. But, there are people who have said they were home schooling, and they don't get their children to home school. People only have to come in and see our children sitting down, doing their work. Our children work from 9
until they finish. There's no way that our children will, well I'm not slap-happy with letting them off their school work, and they'll all tell you that I'm hard. I don't give them many opportunities not to school...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Jackie's position as teacher has been given to her by God, in her opinion. As mentioned earlier, Jackie considers that parents have been given the responsibility to home school their children, and this is verified in the Bible. As quoted elsewhere, Jackie says that in "...the Bible it said we have to teach our children at home, it is our responsibility, it's not the responsibility of the State to teach your children" (J.B., 3.7.1995).

One of the advantages of home schooling in Jackie's opinion, is the ability to have one-to-one help with work if it is required. Jackie sees this as being very important and constructive. She feels that this was remiss during her own schooling, and that she may have achieved more had it been available to her. In her opinion it can help learners to make sense of their work more quickly, and to work through problem areas more efficiently. She cites the example of one-to-one work done with her son Matthew, who was experiencing trouble with mathematics:

"...And one-to-one is a lot easier to learn by than a classful of people. Matthew was on one book for a whole year, because he would get the fractions, and then they'd move on to new types of fractions, and he would lose the first method. And he used to even cry about it here. He was really upset. "I'm getting behind Mum, I'm not going to be able to do it, Mum." And that was one of the hardest PACES that you could do. They had a video tape that actually went with the PACE, so you could watch that and try to understand it.
But because I couldn't teach him, because I didn't know how to do it, Aaron had to do it and it would have to be when he was home. So it took a while. And oh the joy and relief when we finished, and he passed the test with 100%! He was just over the moon. So now he's really getting into it. So I saw something there that I didn't have in my own schooling, and I thought one-to-one is really good when you've got a problem...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Learning, according the theory on which Jackie's home schooling practices are based, comes through reading and understanding texts. Jackie's children received 12 booklets per subject per year. They were expected to complete one booklet every three weeks. At the end of the booklet they would sit a self-test, the lowest score they were able to achieve being 80%. If they scored lower than that, they had to repeat the entire booklet. Christian messages and ideas were repeated throughout the text. Jackie liked this approach to learning, as she felt it gave them a good grounding in several subjects, and at the same time, it developed mature attitudes and Christian values were taught. She comments:

"...This is what they learn in and write in and learn from...They've got to have a good understanding of the work before they can go on any further. ...They have to be able to read well, and one thing, my children are good readers, they like to read. Which is good...They have twelve books in each section to do a year. So if you finished this earlier in the year, you've finished that for the year, you don't have to go onto any more. So the sooner you do it, the better it is for you.
A lot of this work, you have to really apply yourself and give yourself goals, make goals for yourself. And you have to be motivated, and motivation for some children is really hard. Self-motivation...And this does encourage motivation and goal-setting and determination and patience, and all those kind of things, whereas sometimes in a school, that doesn't get taught...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

The last comment I wish to make about Jackie’s philosophy of education is that she considers that home schooling has been beneficial for her as a learner. In addition to the skills she has picked up through her supervisor training course, and the Christian lessons she has learned along the way, she also recognises that she has learned much in the way of basic subjects such as English and Mathematics. She believes that she missed out on a great deal through the way her primary school was organised. I would like to finish the section on Jackie’s philosophy of education by presenting a quote which shows one of the side benefits for teachers of home schooling:

"...By the time I got to secondary school, they expected you to know everything, basic facts and fractions and division, you know just basic stuff. And when they came to me and I couldn’t do it, they wondered what had happened in my primary school days. My form teacher, she taught four classes in my primary school. So you see, it was very difficult, and the slow ones just didn't get a look in. You just had to keep up or drop out really. And so when I got to secondary school, maths was just a problem, so I didn't feel confident in that class and I sort of felt relatively confident in most of my other classes. But now that I've home schooled I've learnt more in my maths than I've ever done. Because I've
done it at a level that I could understand, I could take whatever level the
children were on. Well, I could do it with Matthew, and Matthew has got
a weak point in maths too, you see, and I'd learn alongside him...."
(J.B., 3.7.1995)

I will end this chapter by presenting the philosophy of education espoused
by Sarasvati. Given that her philosophy does not neatly fit into either
category of Pedagogue and Ideologue, it will provide a useful comparison
with the other participants' philosophies. The use of this example also acts
as a good reminder that ultimately no two home schooling families are
alike in every detail, and that treating them as the same can blind us to
important differences between them.

*Sarasvati*

At several points during the interviews I carried out with Sarasvati it
seemed very clear to me that she had particular ideas about what
constitutes education. Education is an advantage, in Sarasvati's view
because "...You've got so many more options available to you as an
educated person..." (S.D., 11.8.1995). Her philosophy of education
includes ideas about learning and teaching. On a very fundamental level,
these ideas about education are connected to her spiritual philosophy. In
line with those Ideologues who school their children at home, Sarasvati
considers home schooling a useful and constructive way to teach her
children the moral values that she and her husband see as important.
One of the main things Sarasvati thinks her son has learned from home schooling, and obviously of great importance to her, is virtues. In Sarasvati's opinion, virtues are necessary for good living. She comments:

"I think a lot of the things that he has probably gained are virtues. You know, personal virtues like respect for other people and respect for differences within a group."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Sarasvati sees home schooling as a strategic way to teach one's own values. She has said that "...What's so nice about home schooling, is you can actually adjust your schooling to suit your philosophy...." (S.D., 11.8.1995). A further indication of the intimate connection between Sarasvati's philosophy of education and her spiritual philosophy can be seen in the following excerpt about teachers:

"So apart from being an educator, I also thought you had to be, had to somehow have these skills to be able to teach children, to be able to humanise children...I saw that as being quite a necessary thing as well. I didn't see that happening a lot in schools. In, you know, state registered schools. That side of life seemed to be quite dull."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

When asked directly why she decided to home school her children, Sarasvati is very clear in her answer, and the connection to her spiritual philosophy is equally obvious:
"I would probably say that moral issues are maybe a leading factor in why I decided to keep my children out of public schools, because there's a lot of things in society that I see, the values that people have today that I don't actually appreciate. The things that children are exposed to that I don't see are of any value and are actually quite an insult to their intelligence... So there's moral issues and perhaps philosophical issues that would be major causes in keeping our children from public schools. But they are, they are really, you know, they're very real to us and very predominant in our approach to life."
(S.D., 25.4.1996)

From all of these examples we can see that Sarasvati has decided to home school on the same basis as Ideologues. In addition another aspect of her home schooling methods is similar to that of Ideologues. Sarasvati's home schooling is carried out in a room which has been transformed into a classroom. While the room reflects the spiritual philosophy Sarasvati believes in, in terms of its decorations and organisation, it also resembles a traditional classroom such as you would find in most formal schools. Classes are carried out with the children sitting at their desks completing assignments, with a teacher present who assists with the work as needed. As we shall see later, however, the children's learning is not confined to the classroom.

Sarasvati's philosophy of education has led her to develop well thought-out theories of learning and teaching. These theories have been influential in the practices Sarasvati has decided to follow while home schooling. It is these ideas which separate her from Ideologues as a group, and bring her closer to the ideas of Pedagogues. In Sarasvati's view:
**Learning**
- takes place when a learner is self-motivated.
- does not only happen in a classroom.
- for children, does not have to take place with same-aged peers.
- is a process.
- happens in different ways for different people.
- for children, ideally takes place in the presence of a mentor/teacher.

**Teaching**
- involves stimulating learners to think for themselves.
- does not only happen in a classroom.
- is most effective when there is good communication with learners.
- is a skill which is ever-expanding
- does not necessarily result from gaining a teaching degree.
- should take into account a learner's unique personality.
- does not mean solving problems for a learner.
- takes place in a two-way relationship with a learner.
- should help to develop a learner's self-esteem positively.

Several of the elements of these theories of learning and teaching followed by Sarasvati indicate differences between her philosophy of education and the one followed by an Ideologue. Such elements indicate a large degree of similarity between Sarasvati's theories of learning and teaching, and those followed by Pedagogues. Ideologues tend to believe that learning occurs best in a highly structured classroom-based environment, whereas Sarasvati believes that learning can occur in a variety of situations.
Sarasvati believes that such learning should reflect the interests of the students. In contrast, students following an Ideologue-based curriculum, carry out work which is standardised and based on certain texts. In addition, these texts tend to be based on facts which are absorbed, in contrast to the teaching style Sarasvati advocates which allows children to think for themselves and find their own information.

The teacher in an Ideologue classroom acts in a supervisory role, ensuring that discipline is maintained and that work is carried out efficiently and quietly. Sarasvati believes that communication between learner and teacher is a two-way process, involving both participants equally. Unlike the Ideologue style of learning, Sarasvati's teaching style gives more recognition to the individual learning styles of the learners.

Sarasvati's theories of learning and teaching were illustrated a number of times during our interviews. Sarasvati's philosophy of education came across as designed to impart certain kinds of knowledge to children. Included in these lessons were the three R's, but also present were lessons about making moral judgements; showing respect for oneself, other people, animals and God; and developing virtues.

Sarasvati spoke often throughout our conversations about the need for learners to be self-motivated in their learning. This means that learners try to discover answers to questions for themselves, using a variety of resources. Sometimes, in Sarasvati's view, this requires the help of a teacher. Consider the following quote as an example of this:
S: "I do think it's important to have a relationship that could be like teacher/child, teacher/pupil, I mean I think that's necessary."
F: "How do you mean? Like someone imparting knowledge?
S: "Not so much imparting knowledge, but someone who's capable of stimulating the child to think for themselves, to problem-solve for themselves, without making, you know, in a nice way so that they're not, they don't feel humiliated."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Further to this, when speaking about what she considers learning to be, Sarasvati comments:

"...When I think of learning...I think most learning begins when it's self-motivated, when that question arises within. When there's a natural curiosity to find things out and when it's presented to a child in a way that they can think about those things rather than having them just answered directly. When they can find some fun in finding things out...."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Learning, and consequently teaching, according to this view of education do not take place only within the four walls of a classroom. Learning and teaching are both a process, and almost any situation presents the opportunity for lessons. Sarasvati commented on this by saying that "...I don't think that learning is a classroom-oriented exercise. You know, I don't see learning as that at all..." (S.D., 11.8.1995). She says:
"...Well, I can see now that through home schooling, that the children have more of a propensity to look for answers outside of their environment, whether it be the home or the school, because we don't have the resources at hand. So they have to look further afield, which teaches them a lot of things....And also they're interacting on different social levels all the time."
(S.D., 8.11.1995)

There are ample opportunities for Sarasvati’s children to interact with a wide range of age groups, from a variety of places on a daily basis. They are able, as a result, to interact with people both within their spiritual community and the wider community. In addition Sarasvati says that they have regular contact with their cousins, who do not belong to their community.

Sarasvati dismisses the idea that children ought to be schooled in groups with same-aged peers. It is her belief that an ability to mix with a wide variety of age groups is more important:

"...I don't think it's necessary for children to be in a group, say Radah's age, a class of thirty five-year-olds to be well socialised. In fact I just see that as more compelling for them to act like a, just a normal five year old. I don't see that it situates them on a better platform of being socialised. It means that they can share their ideas more on that level, in that age group...Because we don't have a lot of resources, we often have to look outside of the home to find answers to many of our queries and we always encourage the children to do that themselves. You know, to ring up and make inquiries, to go and ask the librarian. Whatever it is they're looking for to go and find it themselves...I feel fortunate in our situation
we do have a greater community where people are involved of all different ages and all different skills are meeting on a daily basis...."
(S.D., 25.4.1996)

In the same way as Pedagogues, Sarasvati believes the learning/teaching relationship is a two-way process involving the learner and teacher equally, and is helped considerably by a good level of communication existing between the two. Talking about the advice she would give to anyone contemplating home schooling, she says:

"The first thing I'd recommend to them, is that they did some kind of course on communication. That's been the biggest thing that's probably helped me, and just being able to communicate with children, and leaving their dignity and my dignity intact. Because it's not always easy, and we've all been conditioned in certain ways to relate to people and sometimes that conditioning isn't always good. And to get a child to respond when you feel that they have to relate, there's a response necessary, is not always easy as well. So I think that would be a really good advantage, to have some skill in communicating."
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Sarasvati recognises that different people learn in different ways, and in her view any teaching which takes place should recognise the unique personality of each individual learner. While she did not specify in the interviews how exactly this takes place in her home schooling situation, she was very clear that it does occur. By paying attention to differences between learners, Sarasvati considers that teachers will help to raise the
self-esteem of their charges. She refers to this by saying that her son's greatest gain from home schooling has been self-confidence:

"Self-confidence I would definitely say. I see that also, I just get this feeling that as the type of child that he is, he's actually in a really, the environment that he's in is a loving environment. There is a lot of consideration taken for the type of person that he is. Not just what's expected of him to produce. You know what sort of standard of work or academic level he's supposed to be producing, but the type of person that he is. And his propensities are taken into account. So his self-confidence has improved a lot, I've seen it developing really nicely. He has quite high expectations of his own, of himself anyway and there's a lot more time that can be spent with him which I think that you wouldn't get in a classroom environment. That shows him that he can actually achieve things...."  
(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Sarasvati sees teaching as an ever-expanding skill. Teaching, according to this way of thinking, is a process which changes over time. When she began teaching her son Bhima at home, Sarasvati considers that she expected too much from him, and that through learning to let him develop at his own pace, the home schooling situation became more pleasant for the two of them. Sarasvati considers that the skills she has developed as a mother have probably been an advantage to her home schooling.

In Sarasvati's view learning to teach involves more than gaining a degree which qualifies an individual as able to teach. She commented that she has come to know this through her own school experiences, and through the
"...experiences I could see friends of mine and their children having..." (S.D., 11.8.1995). We spoke about her experiences at school for a short time. On the whole Sarasvati did not consider them to be positive years:

"...My primary school years were fairly productive and quite positive, and then once I hit high school, it was all down hill from there. I don't know why. I can't pin point exactly what it was. I don't know whether it was just the transition, or whether it was things happening at home or whatever, but it was just all over, that was it. Disaster...." (S.D., 11.8.1995)

Summary

Home schooling parents have philosophies of education which directly affect what practices they choose to carry out, and how they carry them out. These philosophies are directly related to their belief systems. Their theories of learning and teaching are articulated and illustrated in the ways they perceive their children as learners, and themselves as teachers.

These philosophies of education can be analysed according to the Pedagogue/Ideologue classifications devised by Van Galen (1988). As has been shown, however, home schoolers are a diverse group. Van Galen's categories are useful for dividing and organising data, but are less useful for describing people. The experiences of Sarasvati help us to recognise that people's lives cannot always be organised into neat categories.

Some of the experiences of Hattie and Jackie led me to classify them as a Pedagogue and an Ideologue respectively. These are not fixed categories, however certain parts of their theories of teaching and learning can be
seen as illustrations of the kinds of beliefs that underpin the philosophies of education of Pedagogues and Ideologues.

Hattie, whose home schooling practices emerged out of her child-rearing philosophy as well as the school experiences of her two eldest daughters, has expressed a number of beliefs about learning and teaching. She believes that learning should be self-directed and experienced in a variety of locations. She believes that learning should ideally take place within mixed-age groups in a community. Resources can be sought out both within this community and through other people. Learners, in her opinion, need to learn to be responsible. Learners and teachers share a reciprocal relationship with roles that are interchangeable.

Jackie's beliefs emerged out of her religious philosophy. She believes that by being a home schooler she is being obedient to Bible teachings and to God. In fact it is her God-given responsibility to educate her children at home. She believes that learning should take place within a highly structured environment, and should be based on a highly structured, sequential programme. This learning comes through authoritative texts prepared by outside authorities. In her role as teacher she acts as a supervisor and a disciplinarian.

In contrast, Sarasvati's philosophy appears to be a blend of both an Ideologue's and a Pedagogue's theories of learning and teaching. Parts of her philosophy of education emerged from her spiritual philosophy. She believes that home schooling is an ideal way for her to impart the morals to her children that she considers important. Learning, in her opinion can take place in a variety of locations and involve a variety of ages. Learning should take into account the needs of each individual learner.
and by doing this, the self-esteem of each child will be developed constructively. Learning and teaching is a two-way process which changes over time.

One of the main points of interest that has emerged out of this analysis of the philosophies of the home schoolers in this study, is the fact that the majority of them have developed on the basis of some sort of group philosophy. These group philosophies seem to be of two kinds - those based on child-rearing ideas, and those based on religious ideas.

It seems that the experiences of the participants in these groups have affected the development of their home schooling philosophies and practices. Hattie, for example, developed her ideas about home schooling with friends who had the same kind of beliefs about child-rearing that she did. Jackie and Sarasvati both developed their ideas about home schooling as a result of their religious beliefs. In Jackie’s case, she began home schooling with some like-minded friends from her church. Sarasvati home schools her children with others from her spiritual community.

What differs between the groups is the way in which these beliefs were developed and put into practice. One group believed in autonomy and self-direction, the other, hierarchies of power and direction by authorities. Hattie acted together with friends and developed notions about education. She used a programme that she allowed her children to develop and dictate. Jackie acted together with friends, but believes she was directed to by an outside authority - God. She used a structured programme developed by others she considered to be authorities. Her children were told how to behave and how to undertake their learning.
In addition, Sarasvati and Jackie both acted through home schooling, to protect their children from the world which was seen as a threatening place full of struggles. Hattie, however, sought to open up the world to her children through home schooling. In her view the world was a challenging, changing place which offered a multitude of experiences and opportunities for growth.

These philosophies remind us that there are a multitude of ways to approach education, but by exploring the differences between them, we can continue to be creative in the way we look at and experiment with education.
One of the major areas of importance which has emerged from the data is the relationships of home schooled children to other children; the relationships of parents to family and friends; the effects of home schooling on family relationships; the relationships of home schoolers to other home schoolers. This chapter will explore the relationships in each of these areas. The theme of relationships also includes the relationships of home schoolers to education authorities, but as this has been touched upon elsewhere it will not be covered in this chapter.

*Children's Relationships With Other Children*

Although this thesis has focussed on home schooling parents, issues regarding the children who have been or are being home schooled have arisen. More research needs to be carried out on children who are home schooled, particularly research which presents their points of view. Children who have gone home to learn after attending formal schools, often experience major changes in their lives. According to his mother, Timothy became a happier, more relaxed boy once he did not have to contend with bullies or a teacher who made him feel anxious, once he went home to learn (C.M., 2.7.1995). The Bond children became more tolerant of each other according to their mother Jackie.

One of the greatest fears that some parents have in bringing their children home to learn, and one that is based on one of the most pervasive myths about home schooling, is that the children will suffer socially and become isolated. Michelle expressed this by saying:
"...That was my greatest fear, was the socialisation. I wasn't really worried about the educational side because I knew they'd fill it in anyway. I got them out and realised that they were still ok, because they play a lot of sport anyway so they're mixing with other kids and I also was very aware that the type of socialisation that they were getting in school was not the socialisation that I wanted for them. I didn't actually want them to be kicked and hair pulled. I didn't actually consider that that was making a mature adult out of them. I don't see that as what socialisation's about...."
(M.D., 16.10.1996)

Several researchers have claimed that there is no lack of social interaction among home schooled children. As Jeub (1994: 51) comments: 'Critics charge that home schooled children will be socially handicapped and unable to adapt to real-life interaction when older: the fact is, however, that these children have many opportunities to interact with peers.'

Children who are home schooled may have a variety of interactions with children and adults. These may include face to face interactions such as meetings with other home schoolers, church activities, sport, lessons, neighbourhood play and drama. They may also include distant contact using communication technologies such as the world wide web and e-mail which provide links with other children. These technologies can also provide interactions with experts in some areas. Riemer comments on 'America Online':

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'America Online, for instance, currently features a home schooling forum with lesson plan resources, tutoring, legislative updates, and networking with other home schoolers for group projects. The America Online home school forum also features two 'chat' rooms that become online classrooms with subject area experts....'  
(Riener, 1994: 54)

Home schooled children have both positive and negative social experiences with other children. Some parents believe that home schooled children can have positive effects on other children. Meighan describes children who have a positive and constructive influence on neighbouring children, and take a style of play into 'peer group situations....in a non-aggressive, non-competitive way....' (1984: 171). Sarasvati's children teach other children about their religion and way of life. She comments:

"...Often we have schools come and visit us, and the children will interact with children from another school. And they do that by having various levels of interaction, whether it be cooking them food or singing them songs, or putting on a play or afterwards just talking to them...."

(S.D., 25.4.1996)

Often home schooling parents have a large influence on who their children interact with. Van Galen noted that some parents monitor their children's social contacts to ensure because they do not wish them to pick up unwanted ideas. She says:

"...These parents reveal extremes of both confidence and fear in their efforts to protect their children from competing values and beliefs. They are not afraid that their children will find other values..."
and beliefs to be superior to their own. Instead, they greatly fear that their children will be swayed by their peers to settle for less than the best before they are mature enough to make such judgements. They imagine their children uncritically absorbing any and every belief or idea to which they are exposed and growing up unable to distinguish between good and evil...."

(1987: 171)

Some of the negative experiences home children have are a consequence of the children's home schooling. By resisting the traditional education system, home schoolers separate themselves from the majority of parents with school-aged children. They often become rejected by these other parents and their children by those who attend registered schools. Hattie speaks about some of the experience her daughters had with other children in their neighbourhood:

"...It wasn't easy for them because the kids in the neighbourhood used to taunt them as being dumb because they didn't go to school. But on the other hand I think they enjoyed the privileged position that they saw they had, in terms of not having to go to school. That set them apart, made them different. I think they kind of liked that idea too. But they didn't like kids calling them dumb. I think in the long run it made them into very socially adept kids...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Jackie's children attended manual classes at a local high school. Although they enjoyed the classes, their interactions with school children, were not desirable:
"... They were quite happy to have us up there for extra activities, if there was room in the class for us of course. So that was fine, so we did that for a wee while. But our children found it really difficult going back into the school. They were different, and they were getting ridiculed. They were Christians, people know that's why they move out, you know. They found it really hard, and not that we didn't go back, they just didn't go back, after the end of the year. And they weren't really keen to do anything else at the school, because they found it too hard. Children are quite cruel, and make life really difficult. In class it wasn't so bad, but they did find they had a playtime, and that was hard going. So if you were strong you could stand up to it, but our children are not that strong. They found it hard...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Home schooling results in less or more limited social interactions for some children. As we have seen, this happens as a result of the decisions by home schooling parents to step outside of what is seen as 'normal' or 'ordinary'. This is a natural consequence of radical action. Resistance also has consequences for home schooling parents. Jackie comments on the negative reactions she had from her neighbours:

"...I think now we're accepted by our neighbours. In the beginning they thought we were very foolish. We were bizarre, you know, different, radical, you know, way out, those happy clappies. Because our church, our church is not a mainline church, and that in itself was a bit of a threat. But over the years we've bridged a gap. They've seen we're quite normal, we've got two arms, two legs, two eyes. I think they were a wee bit frightened, a wee bit threatened. That we might come down on them and
say "Why aren't you doing this to your children?" But it never happened and there's a lot more acceptance."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Home schooling is not always a smooth process for the children. As the following example shows, children with disabilities do not always fare as well as they might in a registered school. Michelle had trouble, maintaining educational help for two of her sons who had the same disability.

Michelle's sons had been at a school which specialised in teaching children with her sons' particular disability. Michelle assumed that the help available to her sons, by way of a special teacher who:

"... goes into regular schools, would be available to them if they were home schooled. And the head at the time of their school said no, if we decide to take them out of school, then we'll be taking them away from everything. So unless we were prepared to take them over to the school, no extra help would be available to us. Although we still got advisor help, but not any educational help, which I thought was going to be difficult, but it wasn't at all."

(M.D., 16.10.1996)

Another problem area for many of the children in this study, and one that was of major concern to them was their inability to be accepted into sports teams. Many children's sports teams in Aotearoa are organised through schools. As a result, many home schooled children miss out on participating in the sport of their choice if registered schools deny them access to participation in their teams. This is an area which some
registered schools and home schoolers may wish to work on, and may be an area which will help to foster good relations between them.

The Relationships of Parents To Family And Friends

As Van Galen has noted the "hidden curriculum" of home schooling 'incorporates the personal and political conflicts the families find themselves in as they face opposition from friends, family, and public officials....' (1988: 65). However the families and friends of home schoolers in this study reacted in a variety of ways upon hearing that home schooling was to take place, or that it had begun. Not all were in opposition. Some were supportive, others worried about the children's development or the mothers' wellbeing. The fears that existed were usually based on a lack of knowledge about home schooling. They were similar in some respects to fears some of the home schoolers had themselves when embarking upon home schooling. Hattie found that her family's reaction did not surprise her. She says:

"...I think that they thought I was crazy, but then I'd already been crazy because I'd breast fed my babies, for years. And then I had my babies at home, so this was just one other thing to get used to. I think they thought that the kids were missing out some to some extent. And that seems to be an argument that a lot of people use for people who home school is that socially they miss out, getting to meet all these other kids the same age and all this ra ra ra. Meet the kids in their neighbourhood ra ra ra. Well, personally I don't think they've missed out one jot. I think they are more socially, their social skills are extremely, extremely good."
And I think my parents were also concerned about their academic development. But that was soon dispelled. In terms of their emotional, psychological development there was no concern. I also think they were kind of proud, well I've been told that they were kinda proud of what I used to do. Because the path that I chose for myself was quite different to the others. And I spent a lot of time challenging the system. Both the health system and the education system. I think they probably thought we were a bit weird. But they never hassled. They never felt compelled to tell us what I ought to do, although they probably knew that that wouldn't work anyway...."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Claire has found that her mother has been very positive about her decision to home school. Her father has not talked about home schooling, and as a result Claire keeps quiet about it when around him. In terms of her husband Kevin's family, Claire was surprised to learn that a relative of Kevin's was home schooling in the North Island. This seems to have resulted in a quicker acceptance by his family of Claire and Kevin's decision to home school.

Jackie has had a variety of reactions from different people. Within her own family, she has found her parents to be very supportive, yet one of her daughters has been very negative about the home schooling. She said:

"Families are a different matter, what about you, what are you going to do, what about your time out? You deserve this, you deserve that. But my first job is to be a mother, to give my children my support. It might take sacrifice, but that's okay. You see, I'm being obedient, I know this is my job, it's what I'm to do.... My Mum and Dad were pretty good except
concerned about me, about the time. I had just come into a marriage, I had new children. Why did I want to tie myself to the home every day? I asked myself the same question before we home schooled, now what do I want to do this for?... But my daughter, she thinks I'm absolutely crazy, she just thinks the children are going to lose out and they're not going to be educated. What about School Cert and all this kind of thing, you know? All these qualifications, yeah. I'm not sure where she's coming from, whether she wanted to be home schooled? But she's been really aggressive on a couple of occasions. And it's been hard, because basically I really do have all my family's support"
(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Jackie found that her mother was particularly helpful, even to the point of participating in the home schooling when needed:

"My Mum's been really interesting. She's come to stay quite a few times. She even schooled the children while we had a holiday for a week. It was really lovely and we just had a week away. It was so good. And Mum came out and stayed and she schooled the children. Oh it was marvellous, I mean you're not meant to do that kind of thing, you know, because she didn't have any qualifications to school as such. So you see Mum was very supportive like that...."
(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Within her church community however, Jackie has found that support has wavered between very good and poor. She commented:
"I think basically we're very well accepted. And even though, within our own church we're accepted, there's probably a lot of prayer support, but unless we ask, I don't think people would know there was a need....You know, and as the children are teenagers now we have come under fire with people saying that our children should be back in school. And that's from people in our own church, and that was one of the hardest things we've ever had to deal with...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

The Effect Of Home Schooling On Family Relationships

In terms of the immediate home schooling families themselves, the participants in the study found that home schooling was beneficial for the family as a whole. In most cases it brought the family closer together. Hattie commented on the fact that it was hard to separate the 'family' from home schooling activities, that they were very closely related to each other:

"... It's really hard to separate home and school, because it was all in one. I think what was good for us as a family was good for them as learners and teachers, and vice-versa. What was good for them was good for the family, so I can't actually just separate them. Other than that, being together made us quite a strong unit. I've always been told my kids are really, they've never fought, they might squabble but they've never fought.

Generally their squabbles have been resolved in a compromise, or in a way that they're both reasonably happy with. And people have always remarked about what our family was like when they never saw them
Claire said that it was good for her family to have a happier child around, once Timothy had begun home schooling. Jackie believed home schooling was very beneficial for her family. She says:

"...I can see now that because we home schooled, what we needed to do was to come out to be able to grow together, to knit together, because I think the kids would have been out there and I would have been in here, and we wouldn't have knitted together, we wouldn't have become a family unit. Like other families are who haven't had two separate families come together. We weren't one at that stage. And now I feel we are, well I don't feel like we're separate anymore, and we work together, we learn together, we make mistakes together and that would have happened in time maybe but it would have taken a long time because our children were quite old when we started home schooling...."

(J.B., 2.7.1995)

One relationship area that has been neglected in this section, is the relationship between spouses. This has been an oversight on my part, and deserves more recognition in the future. Participants referred to their partners briefly, though on the whole they seem absent from this study, and other research as well. One participant said that her husband was concerned about his standing in the community, and was worried that being seen as 'rocking the boat' through home schooling may have a negative effect on his position. Another participant mentioned that her husband was very involved in the home schooling of her children. I
should have taken the opportunity to gather more information about this, but neglected to do so.

The connections made with other home schoolers has been important to most of the home schoolers in this study. Support, from both home schoolers and others, plays an important role in the success of home schools. Several of the women in this study have spoken of the importance of their support systems during their home schooling days. These support systems have been of value in terms of knowledge-sharing, resource-sharing, emotional support, child care and social activities.

Jackie spoke about joining with friends when she began her home schooling. Claire said that support was vital to her for her home schooling. Some of this support has come in the form of informal contacts with other home schoolers, and some from more formal, structured meetings with other home schoolers:

"...Yes, contact with other home schoolers has been really important to me. I don't think I could really cope totally isolated. So I found another family using the Steiner method and have had contact with them and I found another family with twin boys the same age as Timothy. So that's really good and we get to see them and they get to play, and we've just gone to a Christian home schoolers' meeting. Just last week so that was good, we got to know other people....Moral support is a big thing for me, because the adults can say their problems. Well, Tania especially, she's the one with the twins. She's also home schooling her 9 year old. She's great because she's been doing it for a number of years and she's got heaps of information and is really motivated and well organised and she's just so helpful to me. I just worry all the time. I'm worried about this, that and the other thing and she's also shown me all
these different parts of programmes, because she's using different parts of
different syllabuses and different things. So she's just been a great support
and it's been also really quite lovely to go down to the home using the Steiner
curriculum as well because I really like the Steiner curriculum. ..."
(C.M., 2.7.1995)

Knowles has referred to the fact that participation in groups with other
home schoolers creates '...a link which further strengthens their thinking
on the matter, and a link which finally convinces them of their ability to
take on the sometimes lonely and always time-consuming task....' of home
schooling (Knowles, 1991: 225). As Bishop notes, home schooling
support groups function to:

'...provide legislative and legal information; to provide identity...and reinforce
the state of belonging for parents and children; to provide educational group
activities and programmes; to provide information on teaching methodologies
adaptable to home schooling; to provide information to new home schooling
families concerning legalities, curriculum possibilities, and the availability of
support group functions....'
(Bishop, 1991: 3202-A)

Information gleaned from the data and the research literature suggests
that home schooling friends and home schooling groups tend to serve
different yet similar functions. Whereas both groups offer support and
information, the support offered by friends appears to be on a much
more personal, intimate level. This type of support is probably utilised on
a more frequent basis, and is reciprocated more easily than that offered
by a home schooling group. The support offered by home schooling
groups is of a more distant kind, yet coming together is also important
for home schoolers. It is important both in terms of the help which can be offered to newcomers, and in terms of building a strong unit together, which may act as a social, visible group to others in society.

**Summary**

Relationships, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, play an important role in the lives of home schoolers. Relationships are potential sources of support and information, and sometimes determine the success of a home school. Such relationships happen both informally and formally, with both types playing valid parts in the lives of home schoolers.

As has also been shown, home schoolers' acts of resistance often result in conflict with other people. As a result home schoolers and their children may become ostracised from others in their local communities and their families. In challenging the system, home schoolers may also unwittingly be challenging many of the ideas about education held by others. In reaction to this other people may turn home schoolers into 'others' themselves.

These reactions may change over time as other people become accustomed to the idea of home schooling, and perhaps learn more about it. Ostracism of people often occurs as a result of a lack of knowledge, in this case, home schooling. As more parents turn to home schooling, and as more information about it filters out into the general population, greater acceptance of it will occur.
Home schooling has grown significantly over the last decade, and continues to grow. It provides an alternative method of education to the one offered in formal schools, to thousands of parents all over the western world. This includes Aotearoa, where we have seen a growth of 5.5 % in the number of children being home schooled in the last year alone (Bode, 1996: 2).

Parents who make the decision to home school are often stereotyped as being radical movers and shakers. One of the participants in my study commented that when she was home schooling '...it was quite a political thing and they [education authorities] felt very threatened by these bad, renegade families, wanting to challenge their precious system' (H.L., 17.9.1995). Some home schooling researchers have dismissed this image by saying that home schoolers are diverse in attitudes and in backgrounds. Although home schoolers do of course have a variety of beliefs and practices, and come from many different walks of life, I consider that a label such as radical is fitting. It depends how the label is used, and what exactly it is taken to mean, that makes it useful or not of use.

Home schoolers are acting in a radical and political way by taking their children home to educate. As Marshall and Valle (1996: 9) describe them, home schoolers are 'thoughtful and important critics of public schooling who have decided to assume their responsibilities...at great personal cost and uncertainty.'

The recent growth of home schooling has occurred against a backdrop of widespread 'economic, political, and cultural developments and conflicts'
(Mayberry and Knowles, 1989: 209). Baldwin, a home schooling researcher from this country, has commented further that home schooling:

'...is more than a personal response to [home schoolers'] beliefs about learning. It can also be described as a specifically political act. These parents are united in their belief that education of the nation's children lies not with the state.'

(Baldwin, 1993: 11)

Home schoolers are skilled, active theorists who act as political agents rather than political subjects. By separating out the concepts of agent and subject, I am saying that home schooling parents are making overt political statements by doing something about their dissatisfaction with the education system, rather than just sitting, letting education happen to their children. As Davies has commented, by acting as an agent, individuals feel present, they negate their alienated position, by asserting 'the right to speak and to be heard' (1991: 51). Divoky commented over ten years ago, and this still holds true today:

'On a political level, home schooling is an act both revolutionary and reactionary: revolutionary because it flies in the face of the established social order, reactionary because it means turning one's back on the larger society and on the time-honoured assumption that parents and society share in the rearing of the young....Home schooling is a remarkably gutsy effort.'

(Divoky, 1983: 397)
Home schooling parents actively resist the discourses of the mainstream education system by acting according to new discourses of education. Part of this process of domination includes the assertion on the part of education authorities that all children belong to one homogenous group. There is no acceptance on their part of difference. As Van Galen has written '...the curriculum of formal schooling is described as legitimating only limited facets of knowledge and culture' (1989: 52). Home schoolers, who attempt to create new ways of recognising the value of different knowledge and different culture, become seen as 'them'. This marginalisation of home schoolers creates myths about them, and about 'the primacy of school as the sole educational agency....' (Marshall and Valle, 1996: 6).

As Meighan commented in 1984, such myths include the idea that schooling is compulsory. It is education which is compulsory, not schooling (Meighan, 1984, 1996). As some educationalists from this country have noted 'We are in danger of losing sight of the broad definition of what counts as education and becoming obsessed with schooling. Far too many people reduce 'education' to schooling' (Carkeek et al, 1994: 11).

Home schooling parents attempt to resist the accompanying notion that parents are powerless to challenge the inadequacies of the education system by making the decision to educate their children at home. According to Meighan, education authorities exert dominance by operating according to a discourse which demands allegiance to certain ideas about education. Parents who opt for home schooling act autonomously by resisting these ideas and operating according to different ideas from different discourses.
In some respects, home schoolers, although they reject the prescriptive elements of the discourse laid down by education authorities, accept without question the prescriptive elements of the new discourses they take up. This is particularly true of those who home school for religious reasons. The discourses underpinning these religious beliefs include messages about the nature of authority. Jackie for example, believes in the authority of the Bible, and says that it instructs parents to home school their children as it is their responsibility. Jackie commented:

"...In the Bible it said we have to teach our children at home, it is our responsibility, it's not the responsibility of the State, to teach your children. And with that conviction we brought our children out of school, not because we didn't like what we saw...."

(J.B., 3.7.1995)

Further to this example, the publishers of the pre-packaged curriculum Jackie uses, Accelerated Christian Education, require acceptance of their authority regarding philosophy, from its users. Baldwin (1993: 131) says in regard to the home schooling research she carried out in the Waikato region:

'Publishers of ACE required their client families to become familiar with and agree with their basic philosophies before they began the programmes. That philosophy then became the basis of any other comments that were made even when reference to that philosophy was not overt.'

(Baldwin, 1993: 131)
Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) see resistance as being a new concept in education. The authors put forward ideas toward what they consider is a new theory of resistance. This theory contains three central tenets - that the individuals in subordinate groups are not passive victims; power is structured according to relations of dominance and autonomy; there is a hope for radical transformation (ibid).

In the opinion of Aronowitz and Giroux, people who are members of subordinate groups are not passive victims. If we look at parents of school-aged children in this light, what we see is that parents are not totally at the mercy of educational authorities when it comes to the education of their children. In the opinion of the authors, subordinate group members are active participants in the domination process (ibid). Subordination and domination exist side by side in a two-way relationship. Thus, when parents do not like what happens in terms of their children's education in formal schools, yet do nothing to change it, they are participating in the process of domination by accepting whatever occurs.

The second tenet of Aronowitz and Giroux's theory of resistance includes the recognition that power is held unequally within relationships of domination. In regard to the education system this means that power is held by education authorities in terms of setting out requirements regarding the curriculum and what is expected to happen in the education of children, in the areas of policy development and implementation, and the area of funding. Ultimately, education authorities have the power to shape a great deal of the education of young people, yet there is still a large amount of room for parents to move within in regards to moulding their children's learning. As Aronowitz and Giroux state, 'power is never
undimensional, it can be a mode of domination as well as an act of resistance....' (ibid: 99).

Aronowitz and Giroux consider that the final part of a new theory of resistance should include an 'expressed hope for radical transformation'. Home schooling parents, through the action of taking their children home to learn, and through their home schooling practices, act on the hope that these new ways of practising education will radically transform the lives of them and their children.

Knowles's research also helps us to understand home schoolers better. It has been shown that the school experiences of many of the home schoolers in this study have affected their later decisions to home school. Many of them have had negative experiences which have, in combination with the school experiences of their children, or other conflicts with public schools, led them to choose to home school their children.

Both Ideologues and Pedagogues are acting politically by challenging the mainstream educational system in their resistance of commonly-held notions about what constitutes good educational theory and practices. Home schoolers challenge the idea that education must take place within a school in order for it to be constructive and effective. Some home schoolers also challenge the educational practices which take place in formal schools, seeing them as unconstructive and ineffective. Children who are home schooled often have access to a wider range of community resources both in terms of people and objects, than children in formal schools.
Home schoolers are supported in their decision to home school by friends, and often family members, although these family members may initially express concern over the choice of home schooling. Time is an important factor in family members developing acceptance of the home schooling. The longer a family home schools its children, the more accustomed others become to the idea of home schooling.

The majority of home schoolers in this study have carried out home schooling for a limited period of time, but consisting of a number of years in most cases. This has occurred for a number of reasons including children deciding to return to formal schools; changes in personal circumstances necessitating a return to formal schools; children needing to obtain qualifications that were not available through home schooling. Parents often spoke about taking home schooling year by year, indicating the flexibility with which they were able to operate.

Home schoolers also support each other in both a formal and informal sense. They provide support informally through social interactions, through sharing resources, and through combined educational activities. Home schoolers support each other on a formal basis through the formation of home schooling organisations. These groups provide support through meetings and the provision of legal and educational information.

Home schooling has been seen by parents in this study to be hard work, yet fun and one of the most enjoyable periods in their lives. They consider it has benefited both children and their families. It has helped families develop a greater sense of family unity. In addition it has freed some children from the pressures they felt attending a formal school, and
has helped others grow into mature young adults with well-developed social skills.

Although home schooling continues to grow at a rapid rate, little research is carried out into it. This particularly true in this country, where a dearth of home schooling research material has been produced. There is a definite need for more research to be undertaken for a variety of reasons. Those parents interested in exploring home schooling as an educational option need more information made available to them. Most of the current research on home schooling has been undertaken in the United States. While many of the findings are applicable to our home schooling situations, many also do not fit the experiences of home schooling parents here. Future research involving home schoolers, or conducted and analysed by home schoolers themselves would be especially valuable.

In addition, research carried out here would be of use for informing public educators and education officials. These people currently have little information available about home schoolers in this country. An increase in information would widen the picture they have of home schoolers. More information could also enhance the relationship between education officials, home schoolers and home schooling organisations.

There are several areas that future home schooling research could be focused on. There is a need for more information to be produced about children who are home schooled. This could take a number of forms such as long-term research focusing on children throughout their educational careers (including children who move from a formal school to home schooling or vice versa, and those who have only ever been home schooled); research exploring children's social interactions and skills;
research which presents home schooling from the children's points of view.

Another area of home schooling research which could be expanded is research which focuses on fathers. In this research, I spoke to one father who happened to be present during an interview. I interviewed mothers because it seems to be mothers in the main who carry out home schooling. This has led me to be curious about the father's influence on and presence during home schooling. Future research could focus on the role of fathers, or alternatively the apparent absence of fathers.

More research could be devoted towards analysing home schooling organisations. These groups play a major role in the dissemination of information about home schooling to new home schoolers and old home schoolers alike. In addition they provide a formal support system for home schoolers, and can act as public lobby groups on behalf of home schoolers. It would also be helpful to know more about home schoolers who home school in groups on the basis of shared philosophical beliefs who do not wish to or cannot afford to set up formal schools.

To conclude this section, I wish to present some of the changes the children of some of the home schooling participants in my study have experienced as a result of home schooling. To begin with Jackie comments that home schooling has helped her family:

"...What have they gained most? Well, they've probably gained a tolerance for living with one another. Academically, I think they've gained a whole lot more, because of the one-to-one teaching. But because we are a blended family, and because our beginnings weren't the same as a
family that had been all born of one mother and one father, we've had a lot more to come through and I think because we've home schooled, we've been able to grow closer and become a family because of that...."

(J.B. 3.7.1995)

Claire considers that home schooling has transformed her son Timothy's life in a very constructive way:

"...I think it's taken a lot of stress out of his life. He doesn't cry, he used to cry a lot. I think he was just tired. He used to get anxious, scared to ask the teacher more than once if he didn't understand something. That's what he said to me is really good because I can ask you six times, whereas I'm too scared to ask the teacher too many times. Things like that.

He doesn't have a battle with other kids bullying him or anything like that. Oh, it's just generally more relaxing and fun and he sees just as much of his friends, he still plays with the same friends he had at school...."

(C.M., 2.7.1995)

Sarasvati also considers that her son Bhima has gained a great deal through home schooling:

"...His self-confidence has improved a lot, I've seen it developing really nicely. I a lot of things that probably he has gained are virtues, you know personal virtues like respect for other people and respect for differences within a group. Because these children, they're not all the same age, the ones he's mixing with and they're aged from like thirteen down to six...He has quite high expectations of his own, of himself anyway, and
there's a lot more time that can be spent with him I think that you wouldn't
get in a classroom environment. ...."

(S.D., 11.8.1995)

Finally, Hattie says that her children have developed in ways that she is happy about:

"...I guess it depends what you want for your kids. And for me, I don't particularly want them to be anything in terms of career, I mean that's not the whole reason for home schooling. My desire for my children is for them to be healthy, well balanced, assertive young women. And, they are. Now whether that's because of home schooling, or just because of their general home environment..."

(H.L., 17.9.1995)

Home schooling will continue to grow and to provide a viable alternative method of education to those parents who do not wish to educate their children in traditional ways or institutions. It opens another window into the exciting and challenging world of the education of children, offering new insights about and methods of helping children explore their learning potentials.


Bond, J. (3.7.1995.) *Personal Interview*

Bond, J. (19.2.1996.) *Personal Interview*


Devi, S. (11.8.1995.) *Personal Interview*

Devi, S. (25.4.1995.) *Personal Interview*


Dobb, M. . (16.10.1996.) *Personal Interview*


Knopp Biklen, S. (1993). 'Feminism, Methodology And Point Of View In The Study Of Women Who Teach'. Feminism And Education. Melbourne: Melbourne Studies In Education.


APPENDIX 1  Letter from the Head of Department

APPENDIX 2  Ethics Committee Approval

APPENDIX 3  Information Sheet

APPENDIX 4  Consent Form
13 March 1995

Fiona McAlevey
26 Estuary Road
CHRISTCHURCH

Dear Fiona

Under advisement of the Departmental Research Supervision and Ethics Committee, I have reviewed your research proposal, "Why Home School? An exploration into the perspectives on education of parents who home school in Canterbury and Otago".

As of the date above, you are granted conditional approval to proceed with your research, under the supervision of:

Graham Nuthall (first supervisor), and
Alison Gilmore (second supervisor).

However, it has been determined that this research requires prior approval of the University Human Subjects Ethics Committee. Please discuss the process for obtaining approval with your supervisor.

Once the proposal is approved by the University Human Subjects Ethics Committee, final approval will be granted by the Department. You will be responsible for submitting a copy of the letter from the Human Subjects Ethics Committee to me to obtain this final approval of your research.

Guidelines and regulations regarding your research in the Education Department are set out in the booklet "A Guide for Students Doing Research in the Education Department, 1995." Your research thesis is to be submitted on the due date as described in the booklet, a copy of which I have enclosed.

The Department extends its best wishes for your successful research.

Yours sincerely

Colin McGeorge
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Encl.

cc: Departmental Research Supervision & Ethics Committee
First Supervisor
Second Supervisor
5 May 1995

Ms F McAlevey  
C/- Professor G Nuthall  
Department of Education  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Ms McAlevey

The Human Ethics Committee has considered and approved your research proposal "Why Homeschool? An Exploration into the Perspectives on Education of Parents who Homeschool in Canterbury and Otago", subject to revision of the Information Sheet to provide prospective subjects with knowledge of the sorts of topics to be raised in interviews.

Professor Stoothoff asks that the revised Information Sheet be sent directly to him.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

J A Cockle  
Secretary
INFORMATION SHEET

Fi McAlevey, a post graduate student in the Education Department at the University of Canterbury, invites you to take part in her research on home schooling. This research is aimed at exploring the perspectives on education of parents who home school in Canterbury and Otago. Home schooling has grown tremendously in recent years in New Zealand, yet there is a dearth of information available about it. This project is an attempt to add a little more.

Your participation would involve taking part in two 2-hour taped interviews, as well as writing down some of your own thoughts on themes relating to the topic. Fi is interested in finding out your views on home schooling. She will ask questions such as what made you decide to home school? Do your children have needs that cannot be met by schools? The writing will take place over a three month period. The interviews will take place at the beginning and the end of the three month period. You will receive transcripts of the interviews as soon as they are available.

Results of the research will be published, with all names and identifying features changed to protect anonymity and to ensure confidentiality. Upon completion of the research, all materials relating to individual participants will be returned to them.

This research is being carried out by Fi McAlevey, who may be contacted at (03) 3515526. She will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you have about participation in the research.

The project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

Graham Nuthall
Professor of Education
CONSENT FORM

I agree to take part in the research on home schooling being carried out by Fi McAlevey. I understand that I will be asked to take part in two 2-hour interviews, and that I will also be asked to generate some written material myself.

I agree to the interviews being recorded by tape recorder, and understand that the tapes from my interviews, and the written material I produce will be returned to me at the completion of the research. I also understand that my anonymity will be preserved through name changes and the removal of any identifying details.

I consent to publication of the results of the project. I am aware that I may withdraw from the project at any stage, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

Date...........................................

Signed (Initials only please )..........................................................