

**RESEARCHING SELF-EVALUATION  
BY EDUCATIONAL PRACTITIONERS**

**AN INVESTIGATION OF A STRATEGY  
FOR IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL  
PRACTICE**

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**1997**

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# NOTE ON THE SUBMISSION OF THIS THESIS

Vicky Hurst enrolled as a PhD student at Goldsmiths in the early 1990s. She completed her thesis, but was unable to submit it before she died on 26 April 1998.

This submission comprises:

- **The Thesis** itself; she completed the text of her thesis, and the only changes it has been necessary to make have been the rationalisation of the paragraph numbering and the type-faces.
- **The Bibliography**: she made notes on some of the works to which she makes reference in the thesis, but did not leave any bibliography as such. It has been necessary to go through the text of the thesis and compile a comprehensive list of her references, and to annotate as many as possible from sources other than her own notes. There is only one reference which it has not been possible to trace, Otto (1995) (see pages 57-58).
- **The Appendices**; she collected together much of the material she intended using in her appendices, chiefly comprising the typescripts of her audio-recordings, but was not able to compile it into any rational order. The appendices included in this submission are entirely her own work, but the selection and ordering of it is the outcome of an effort to reconstruct her intended rationale.

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March 2001

# **ABSTRACT**

This study combines the data from three linked research activities which examined how teachers and other practitioners in the Early Years of education (0-8) can improve their practice through evaluating their own work. The major thesis of the research is that the practitioners' observation and research of children's educational interactions and experiences provide effective data both for judging the appropriateness of the curriculum provided and for developing more appropriate ways of providing for learning.

Starting with an exploratory pilot stage (Phase One), and a second stage of action research undertaken jointly by the researcher and a number of practitioners (Phase Two), the research proceeded to a third stage (Phase Three) in which it formed a part of a national project in practitioner self-evaluation through action research.

Analysis and interpretation of the data from these three research activities highlight aspects of the nature and the requirements of practitioner self-evaluation in the Early Years, and cast light on how educational improvement can be initiated, directed and implemented both by practitioners and by policy makers. In particular, differences between approaches to evaluation are traced to differences in the curriculum model employed, and the important role of observation in self-evaluation and thus in curriculum improvement is shown to be related to the adoption of a developmental approach to the curriculum in the Early Years.

The research thus offers a basis for recommendations for strategies for improving the quality of educational provision for young children.

The action research model used in the three phases of the research is also analysed and its suitability for research and development in Early Years educational settings is explored. In this exploration, of particular interest is a resultant shift in the research focus, as the researcher's own perspectives and development themselves became a further subject of the research.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis attempts to follow the development of the writer's own understanding of some of the processes and principles that seem to be important in practitioners' efforts to improve educational understanding and practice. Colleagues working in schools, nurseries and Higher Education have been valued partners in the search for clarification of these processes and principles. In particular, the opportunity to explore strategies and identify key aspects with colleagues working on the major project *Principles into Practice*, parts of which are referred to as Phase Three, has given a substantial additional perspective to the writer's conclusions.

The contributions of all these colleagues are most gratefully and warmly acknowledged.

## **Note on the Term 'Practitioner'**

This term is used throughout to refer to all professionals who work with children under eight except for childminders, who were not included in the research. Where relevant to the discussion, the appropriate term for a professional is used.

# **SECTION ONE**

## **T H E R E S E A R C H**

**1986-1996**

**This section describes the intentions of the research, the research design and the intentions and problems that influenced its development. It gives an account of the findings of the research about practitioner self-evaluation and about action research in early childhood education. The intentions, problems and solutions experienced here link with the discussion of wider issues that will take place in Section Two.**

# **CHAPTER ONE:**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH**

### **This Chapter**

**explores why it is hoped that this investigation will be a helpful contribution to educational thinking,**

**offers a definition of the kind of educational evaluation under investigation,**

**outlines the three Phases and gives a short overview of issues that arose in the research methodology,**

**and lists some of the questions that have emerged from the research to be explored more fully in Section Two.**



## **1.1. The research intentions and activities**

The three Phases are reported and analysed below. They took place in three linked but separate research studies, **Self-evaluation by Teachers and Student Teachers** (Phase One), the **Workplace Nurseries Monitoring and Evaluation Project** (Phase Two) and **Principles into Practice: Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning** (Phase Three). This Section describes the research design and the intentions and problems that influenced its development. It gives an account of the findings of the research about practitioner self-evaluation and about action research in early childhood education. The intentions, problems and solutions experienced here link with the discussion of wider issues that will take place in Section Two.

Section Two discusses some deep-laid conflicts that are brought to the surface in these three Phases. It explores the implications of practitioner self-evaluation for understanding of the curriculum and improvement of education and links these with some differences of approach to evaluation and curriculum theory. It discusses the implications of the priority given to observation as the basis for making educational statements with some ideas about the relationship between data-gathering and authority in these statements. It ascribes the process of developing ideas and educational theory in this way to the debate about what is, or should be, the role of Higher Education in the education of teachers and other practitioners. It suggests some avenues for educational development which should be explored.

The research described took place in three phases, of which a brief description has been

given in the Abstract. The first two had links with each other, and provided some ideas for strategies for one aspect of the third.

The first, **Self-evaluation by Teachers and Student Teachers** (Phase One) was a personal investigation of teachers' strategies of self-evaluation with staff in two infant classes and other settings and with student teachers between 1986 and 1991.

The second, **Workplace Nurseries Monitoring and Evaluation Project** (Phase Two) was a Goldsmiths' College monitoring and evaluation pilot project between 1990 and 1993, which aimed to generate experience and strategies which would be of use in the evaluation and monitoring of workplace nurseries. This project took place in one local authority combined nursery centre and one non-profit-making day nursery. Both were in inner city areas, as were all the institutions in the first project. The practitioners involved had a range of qualifications.

The third research project, **Principles into Practice: Improving the Quality of Children's Early Learning** (Phase Three) was a national project sponsored by a City trust between 1993 and 1996. In this, in which I participated as deputy-director concerned with pre-school settings, the methods I employed in the pilot project for evaluative work with practitioners drew on the experience of the two earlier projects.

All three projects are set in the early years of education from birth to the age of eight; there have been both benefits and formative influences for the research as a result of this.

## **The implications of researching the developmental early childhood curriculum**

The setting of the research in the developmentally appropriate curriculum for early childhood education was intended as a way of getting access to what is arguably the most flexible and individual-oriented part of the education system. The early years phase of education, which focuses on the years between birth and the age of eight, is a distinctive phase of education with its own rationale and methods. Its reasoned structure for the curriculum is based upon understanding of how young children develop and how we can support, extend and enrich their learning; the curriculum itself is described as a 'developmental' (Blenkin and Kelly 1988) or a 'developmentally appropriate' curriculum (Bredekamp 1987). This curriculum is defined by the relationship it establishes between children's development and educational theory, and classroom practice is evaluated by the way in which it meets the needs of the individual children concerned. The nature of this curriculum is valuable in itself, but is also a favourable setting for the study of practitioner evaluation for reasons which will emerge from the following discussion of its characteristics.

In devising a curriculum, practitioners use their knowledge of learning processes in early childhood and their knowledge of the content for learning to provide indoor and outdoor environments for learning at each individual's own pace. Within the planned learning environments, staff place value on children's pursuit of their own interests and learning strategies, which practitioners support through a range of educational areas within and between which children are normally able to pursue their interests at will; the day's programme and the

classroom organisation are constructed to support this. These areas will usually include the following:

**‘Creative or craft area, often organised on a "workshop" basis; Book area; Writing area; Construction area, with large and small blocks for building; Puzzles and games; Role play provision; Miniature world provision; Malleable materials; Outdoor play area with climbing, digging, imaginative and games equipment available throughout the day; Natural world materials (sand, water, earth, growing things) and equipment.’**

**(Hurst, 1991)**

Children’s spontaneous activities, their explorations, their conversations, their outdoor discoveries and energetic play, and above all their imaginative play whether indoors or out, are all perceived to be powerful learning strategies, which are supplemented by the active interventions which staff feel to be appropriate. Practitioners have to be sufficiently understanding and flexible to use evidence of children’s learning as the starting point for an initial or subsequent stage of planning. They are therefore more likely than practitioners of later phases to be able to reflect on their practice in the light of what has been learned from observing and analysing children’s behaviour and activities.

Again, from Eisner’s discourse on evaluation, it can be seen that there must be a value-base to provide principles for education, since education is, in his definition, a normative

activity. The overwhelming majority of local authority Guidelines for the early years of education collected during the progress of the Quality in Diversity project (as yet unpublished) indicate that practitioners of the early childhood curriculum are accustomed to justify it through reference to principles. There is a structure of principle underpinning practice which makes the principled evaluation of practice more natural in early childhood education. This feature, the basis in principle, is at best a close link with research findings. In early childhood settings the association is often less close than it should be, but at least there is a preparedness to talk in terms of principle. These principles are framed in developmental terms, and relate to what is known about how children develop and learn - a useful preparation for evaluation of educational provision. The theoretical basis of the developmentally appropriate curriculum may be summarised as follows; it provides a set of developmental principles to underpin evaluation.

Fifty percent of intellectual growth takes place in the first five years of life (Brierley 1987, Trevarthen 1993), and children make this growth through their own interpretations and constructions of the world and their experiences (Athey 1990). Children who experience high quality education which fosters choice and responsibility are more successful, both socially and educationally, than those who experience a formal and rigid regime (Nabuco and Sylva, 1995). Successful learning is founded on personal integration and expression, and children can be alienated from learning in school if their experience becomes formal and academic too soon (Barrett 1986). Intellectual achievement and emotional stability are related to how closely the aims of education are shared and agreed between parents and teachers (Athey 1990, Lazar et al. 1982). A developmentally appropriate curriculum is challenging for children and complex and

professionally demanding for teachers (Blenkin and Whitehead 1988).

**‘A developmentally appropriate curriculum has the following characteristics:**

- it draws upon and extends the knowledge and skills that children bring into school;**
- it recognises differences in rates of maturation;**
- it makes possible assessment of children’s development through skilled observation and record-keeping over time.’**

**(EYCG 1993)**

Concern is often expressed that, if the subject content is not specified, it is not possible to have a well-structured curriculum, and it is certainly true that subject knowledge is part of the developmental curriculum. How then does the early childhood curriculum relate to ‘subjects’ or curriculum content? An example of the relationship could be taken from the support a practitioner gave to children’s early investigations of the natural world.

**‘Two children are crouched over something on the ground: the adult asks what it is, and one child raises a hand with an ant on it. The other child gives a scream and begins to stamp on the ants on the ground. The adult stops her and explains about other living creatures and looking after them, about how they live, and about how though we can be frightened of them we must not hurt them unnecessarily. The child who stamps says that her mother kills ants, and beetles. The adult says "Yes,**

**we don't like them indoors, do we, but they're all right outside."**

**(Personal observation, summer 1985)**

The kinds of subject knowledge needed certainly include science, notably biology, but early childhood specialists would highlight other aspects first, those to do with the children's development and their feelings about the ants. The subject knowledge has to be mediated through understanding of each child's needs and capacity to understand, and through a respect for each child's dependence on her mother, father or carer whatever the family's cultural differences from the culture prevailing in the educational setting.

From the developmental principles enunciated above it is possible to derive principles which underpin evaluation by providing criteria for quality. These can be illustrated in action by applying them to the example given above.

Evaluative questions based on criteria derived from developmental principles can be applied to this observation in the following way:

Fifty percent of intellectual growth takes place in the first five years of life - the quality of provision is crucial for their learning.

**Has the practitioner thought about how to support and extend the children's learning about other life-forms, both indoors and outdoors? Is this episode part of an established focus or is it a 'lead' to follow up?**

Children make this growth through their own interpretations and constructions of the world and their experiences.

**What opportunities has the practitioner given for children to have a range of learning experiences, time for talking and reflecting, time, space and well-planned resources for their own representation through drawing, painting etc?**

Children who experience high quality education which fosters choice and responsibility are more successful, both socially and educationally.

**What choices and responsibilities do these children have that might be related to the arts or to some other focus of interest?**

Successful learning is founded on personal integration and expression, and children can be alienated from learning in school if their experience becomes formal and academic too soon.

**The children's anxiety and revulsion are the most important feature of this experience for them - how can the practitioner help them to learn not just to deal with their feelings but also to learn about feelings and how to deal with them?**

Intellectual achievement and emotional stability are related to how closely the aims of education are shared and agreed between parents and teachers.

**What kind of shared commitment to the children's learning do practitioner and parents have, and how can parental support for learning about other life-forms be enlisted?**



Assessment of children's development should be done through skilled observation and record-keeping over time.

**What methods does this practitioner use to inform her/himself about the children's understanding, knowledge and skills in all areas of the early childhood curriculum, and what experiences and interests have been and are the contexts for this learning? What plans does the practitioner have to gather evidence of learning and development and to reflect evaluatively on how children respond to her/his practice on a continuous basis?**

A developmentally appropriate curriculum is thus able to provide internal evaluative criteria for challenging and extending practitioners. It also provides the model for collection of evidence on which to make evaluations.

Practitioners in the early years should be able to provide a curriculum that is based on developmental understandings and insights, but evaluation must be at the centre of the provision of this kind of personalised curriculum. Ideally, observation provides the evidence of children's actions and interactions, and this initiates a process in which practitioners apply their professional principles to their perceptions of their practice gained from the evidence. These judgements are usually broad and far-reaching, and may, as indicated by Eisner (1985) involve deciding whether one is educating or mis-educating the children in one's charge (see above). The values underpinning these judgements are based on ideas about the purpose and value of education, and are directly linked with ideas about the nature of human life and the role and

value of childhood. Educational judgements, in effect, call upon the practitioner's own values and principles and contribute to the practitioner's 'moral purpose'.

However, there are certain kinds of educational philosophy which are more conducive to practitioner self-evaluation than others. The vital element is the degree to which practitioners are challenged to make up their own minds about the kind of education that should be provided. Where a curriculum is seen as given from outside the practitioner's own sphere of responsibility, requiring only to be 'delivered', the incentive to make independent evaluations is lacking, and so is the opportunity. Independent personal and professional judgement are vital to self-evaluation. There is thus an important connection between the type of evaluation investigated here and the type of curriculum involved in early childhood education; this connection will be explored further later. The early childhood curriculum is not the only one to lay stress on a negotiated developmental curriculum in which the practitioner has to make the crucial decisions, but it is notably one in which the practitioner's independent professional judgement is particularly influential on the educational undertaking because of the extreme youth, dependence and vulnerability of the children.

These independent professional judgements, when they are based on observational evidence, strengthen practitioners' expertise and inform their own understanding. Evaluation of the early childhood curriculum can be a self-generating source of curriculum insights and understandings as well as of improvements in expertise. These insights and understandings, and the role of observation in generating them, will be explored in Chapters Six and Seven.

## **1.2. The intended contribution of this research to educational thinking**

As described above, this study is based on research into practitioner self-evaluation in the early years of education from birth to eight years that took place in three interlinked and progressive studies. What has been learned from this research leads to a broader discussion of some issues about education. These issues are located in the areas of evaluating education, developing the curriculum in early childhood education, making authoritative statements about education, generating and using educational theory and researching ways to support practitioners in their own settings. Finally, consideration of these issues leads to some suggestions about improving the preparation and professional support of practitioners.

The intention of the research, which has been informed by the thinking of Lawrence Stenhouse and others associated with his work, is to explore ways in which practitioners can improve their own practice. This approach takes a particular view of education as its starting point. Although the research is set in the context of the developmentally appropriate curriculum for children between birth and the age of eight, its model of education is close to that put forward by Stenhouse (1975, 1983). The model is built on an idea of knowledge as being to do with internalising procedures, concepts and discipline-based criteria rather than information or behaviour set up as objectives for learning. The effectiveness of education is, in this model, to be judged by how effectively the learner has made these procedures, concepts and criteria his or her own to be applied as wished. This definition leads to highlighting the processes of learning as ultimate aims rather than specific measurable outcomes, and to identifying the

individual learner's experience and progress as the source of evaluative criteria rather than the whole group's achievement of generalised standards.

An example of this model in early childhood education might be the difference between a child who 'knows' that a stone will not float because he or she has been told this, and a child who knows it from repeated experience and who can undertake investigations to establish whether it would sink in all circumstances, can refer to a concept based on this procedure to explain why the conclusions are as reported, and can refer to fair criteria for repeating the experiment. The difference is between someone who has usable knowledge and someone who has memorised a piece of information which may or may not have a memorised explanation attached to it. The strength of this model is that learners' knowledge is usable because it is based on their own experience; its problems stem from the requirement that practitioners should provide plentiful and developmentally appropriate opportunities for learning in this way for this is in conflict with recent educational reforms. The distinction between narrow preset educational objectives and methods of procedure noted in Stenhouse (1975) is one which has been highlighted in the current discussions of the impact of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1 on children under eight and its likely impact on children of four years old and younger (Blenkin and Kelly, 1994). However, the process model of education, and the role of enquiry in effective learning as claimed by Stenhouse (1975, p. 38), are similarly claimed by early childhood specialists (Blenkin et al, 1995).

This is a model of the curriculum as induction or initiation into knowledge rather than

as the transmission of information or the shaping of desired behaviour. It is one in which the 'capacity to think within the disciplines can only be taught by inquiry' (Stenhouse, 1975, pp. 37-8), and it is one in which the practitioner is not the fount of knowledge but a senior learner, supporting and extending children's learning. The model requires a particular form of assessment, one in which the learner's progress in her or his enquiries and interests is the yardstick, 'ipsative assessment' (Blenkin, 1992), and a particular form of evaluation which does not have pre-set objectives of either information or behaviour.

**'Education as induction into knowledge is successful to the extent that it makes the behavioural outcomes of the students unpredictable.'**

**(Stenhouse, 1975, p.82)**

The series of research activities to be discussed here forms a progressive investigation of the application of this integrated model of knowledge, learning, curriculum, assessment, evaluation and curriculum development through practitioner research in three stages. The first, Phase One, shows what practitioner self-evaluation was found to offer when the research attempted to monitor children's learning. The second, Phase Two, explores how an action research approach was found to support practitioners as they investigated children's learning in order to evaluate their own work. The third, Phase Three, is concerned with how practitioners can be supported in building this kind of approach into their daily work. Each Phase has evolved from the previous research, and the conceptual structure has had an evolution of its own as well.

This research found its present conceptual structure during the first exploratory sessions of Phase One. This happened because of an encounter with the nature of classroom research in the course of trying to implement an initial plan based on testing a hypothesis about the nature of the early years curriculum.

The first stage in 1986 was planned as an investigation with a reception teacher of her strategies for helping children whose behaviour was troubling to her to settle better into the class. However, during the first session a problem was uncovered; the researcher could not adequately describe the classroom transactions and their effects until the meaning of these transactions for all the participants, adults and children, could be understood. Reaching a dependable understanding of the perceptions, intentions and experiences of all the participants had to become the first step in the research so that the settling strategies could be investigated. After the second session, in which the attempt simply to monitor what was going on suddenly appeared to be an entire, worthwhile, and rewarding purpose in itself, a shift in the emphasis of the research took place. To study the evaluation of the classroom as an educational entity became the broad aim of the research, and the practitioner's evaluation of what was going on became the specific focus.

This shift in focus was the first of two transforming changes that took place early in the research. This first shift gave the research an orientation towards the classroom experiences of young children and practitioners' attempts to evaluate these experiences. It took the research away from the investigative approach that had been planned, and gave it a much wider brief

which covered everything that could be understood and known about what was going on for all the different participants in this educational undertaking, with the practitioner's understanding of all this as the focus of the research. As a result of this shift there was a sudden need for a different set of supporting research concepts, procedures and theories to underpin the investigations.

A search for existing models of research into evaluation of educational interactions revealed that the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP) and the later Ford Teaching Project (FTP) provided guidance on the nature of such research, the nature of its procedures and the educational theory that underpinned it. This gave the educational principles, the research procedures and the research conclusions a coherent theoretical structure. This structure was understood and applied in the context of the research as in the following outline.

### **Linking education with experience and development**

The HCP took as its foundation the axiom that the experience of learners must be taken to be the leading force in education, because it is through personally giving meaning to ideas and thought processes offered as worthy of being learned by more experienced people that the learner comes to take them as his or her own. The 'family tree' of this thinking comes through Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky, and is amplified in the developmental early years curriculum by the more recent work of Bruner, as in Bruner and Haste, (1987). Education as development

follows from both seeing enquiry as the route into knowledge of disciplines and from seeing experience as the leading force in education. Personal development is the aim of both of these views. The developmental early years curriculum is an attempt to provide a curriculum for development through worthwhile educational experiences. This curriculum is based on recognising and valuing children's learning experiences, past and present, at home and at school, and creating educational opportunities that build on and extend them. Practitioners providing these educational opportunities note children's previous learning and take advantage of children's individual learning strategies, interests and particular needs in order to promote learning and development across five main areas, physical, emotional, communicative, cognitive and social, which apply differentially across the first eight years of life. Education as development has been described as a curriculum by Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) and in relation to early childhood by Blenkin and Kelly (1980, 1981, 1996).

If practitioners aim to provide an educational context based on learners' experiences and aiming at their development, they must have relevant information about the learners on which to build their educational provision. Yet practitioners have difficulty in seeing experiences through their pupils' eyes. Although they are often impelled by high educational aims and egalitarian principles, their own intentions, perceptions and all the issues of order and discipline in group learning make it difficult to separate what the pupils experience from what they provide. In addition, there is often an understandable resistance to confronting the gap between their expressed aims and their actual practice as experienced by the learners. Research in education should aim to help practitioners to understand the experiences of learners and the



conditions which affect their learning, in order to give them the information and expertise they need to develop strategies for supporting the learners and improving their own provision for their learning. The developmental early years curriculum sets great store on giving priority to children's development through creating a classroom context for development (Blenkin and Whitehead, 1996) and adapting and developing this by learning from observation of children's responses and initiatives (Hurst, 1991, Lally, 1991).

However, there is a substantial gap between having a well-thought-out curriculum theory and providing an effective education. Stenhouse believed that it was only through teacher quality that educational improvements could be made at classroom level (1975), and recent criticisms of what is provided for the under and over fives seems to confirm the need to give practitioner quality a higher profile. The critics point to a range of failures which all come within the responsibility of the practitioner.

Some point to failure to implement learning through play in spite of stating this as a principle (Wood, Bennett and Rogers, 1996). Others are concerned about a failure to develop a language for talking about educational aims and criteria for children under eight that would be usable in public debate (Alexander, 1992). Two authors familiar with the social services scene warn that failure to provide a curriculum for under fives that is convincing and understandable by the general public makes it hard for parents and practitioners to unite their efforts (Moss and Penn, 1996).

These concerns have now been brought into sharp relief by the Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (SCAA, 1988 onwards) for children between five and eight, and by the introduction of the government's *Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning before Entry to Compulsory Schooling* (DfEE/SCAA, 1996). The 'outcomes', which are examined at length below, impose for the first time on practitioners working with children under five a set of pre-specified objectives for their teaching. Although the 'outcomes' are intended to apply only to those settings wishing to redeem vouchers for the education of four year olds, they are likely to stimulate parental pressure on all under fives settings and to challenge practitioners to demonstrate the value of the developmental curriculum as an alternative approach to the narrow opportunities for learning through experience which these requirements suggest as appropriate.

It seems likely, therefore, that early childhood practitioners will be challenged from various directions on their understanding of education, their models of the curriculum, their view of assessment, their role in developing the curriculum and their capacity to make authoritative statements about the learning of young children. All of these issues present themselves in relation to practitioner self-evaluation; through researching self-evaluation by practitioners in early childhood education it has been possible to explore how Stenhouse's injunction to research the curriculum as an evaluative response to the process model (1975, p.125) can guide these practitioners towards a clearer and more confident view of their role in the provision of high quality learning opportunities for young children.

## **Researching new ways to tackle old problems**

There are other positive ways in which researching practitioner self-evaluation could benefit thinking about education in general. There is much evidence-gathering, analysis and reflection to be done if current educational problems are to be resolved. Some of these problems, often seen as modern developments, are in fact as old as the formal school system itself, and solving them would require a radical shift in thinking. Educational provision for the children who make up the average and below average majority in the maintained education system has never been satisfactory, and if education has a responsibility for a general social and economic decline as well as for children's individual frustration and deprivation it must be in this area. The Newsom Report (1963) draws attention to our failure in provision for less able pupils as a failure in regard to 'half our future'. In spite of efforts to build an effective system over the last thirty years the evidence suggests that we have not been successful. Sir Claus Moser (1969) identifies a serious short-fall in pupils' achievement of intermediate qualifications in secondary schools as a cause of poorer performance by the United Kingdom in some areas of international economic life in the 1990s. He draws attention to the need to examine how under-achievers fare, and to make changes to accommodate their needs. Yet the UK school system continues to be judged by the achievements of its highest flyers (teachers as well as pupils), and the achievements of more average children and their teachers go unevaluated. It will be hard to turn this approach around, and harder still to reverse the trend towards unrealistic polarisation towards the upper end of achievement. Systems of evaluation that monitor the experiences and development of each individual learner could help to redress the balance. Again, few systems

of school improvement exist that enable change to be made from the classroom upwards, yet the evidence and rationale for change must begin at this level. Fullan, known for his interest in whole-school improvement approaches, still sees the moral purpose of individual practitioners as the essential for educational change.

**‘The building block is the moral purpose of the individual teacher. Scratch a good teacher and you will find a moral purpose.’**

**(1993, p. 10)**

This moral purpose must be set against weaknesses inherent in mass educational systems. Dewey showed long ago how the very nature of formal schooling sets it against children’s natural ways of learning from their experiences of real life (1899, 22nd impression 1967, p.61). Schostak (1986) has documented in a case study the process of alienation from formal school content and methods that begins with individual experiences in each child. If ways can be found to help practitioners learn with children how to teach them better, and to help schools learn from these practitioners, some of the needed changes of emphasis could begin to happen. A system of evaluation based on researching children’s experiences in classrooms and employed by practitioners as self-evaluation of the impact of practice on learning could be a dynamic force for change towards a more individual focus and away from the assumption that the most easily measurable are the best educational criteria of quality.

The initial training of teachers has to be referred to in the discussion of changes that are

needed. In this research the professional preparation of teachers is the context for much reflection on the virtues of practitioner self-evaluation and how identifying this as a key professional process would improve teaching quality. These reflections are prompted by concern that the direction in which policy is being directed may prove particularly harmful to the development of intending teachers of the youngest children. Since the introduction, during the 1980s, of new criteria for the education and training of teachers under the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) and later the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), and the introduction of the National Curriculum through the 1988 Education Act, subject knowledge has been seen as the area for which teachers need preparation. Indeed, at the time of writing, early childhood practitioner self-evaluation of the kind discussed here is not mentioned in proposals for the reform of initial teacher education. The 1994 Education Bill identified subject knowledge alone as the focus of courses, with no emphasis on the study of child development, the planning of age-phase provision, or what constitutes a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Moreover, in 1996, the TTA's consultative group on teaching competencies did not even identify an area of age-phase specialism. Neither in the content of courses nor in the competencies through which students are assessed is there a place for evaluation of practice through developmental criteria. Consequently, current assumptions that evaluation is about meeting set targets for the National Curriculum and the *Desirable Outcomes* go unquestioned. In the schools practitioners are expected to acquire understanding of how to educate, but again this is seen only in terms of practical strategies for the delivery of the basics of subject knowledge, and the management of behaviour.

If practitioner self-evaluation were to form a prescribed part of the preparation of intending teachers and other practitioners for work with children under eight, students would have their attention directed to those essential characteristics of education described by Stenhouse (1975) and Eisner (1985), and to the values which underpin the moral stance of teachers. These, according to Fullan (1993), also are the basic building blocks of the change and adaptation which are essential to education's health. In the explanation of the three research phases which follows, the connections between practitioners' self-evaluation and the development of quality in practice and in understanding are a constant theme, whether in intending or in qualified practitioners.

The next part of this chapter will discuss some aspects of evaluation as a public and as a professional tool, and the meanings and messages that the different kinds of evaluation convey to all those with interest in education, children, parents, practitioners, senior management in maintained, independent and voluntary provision, governors and management committees, local and central government and the political parties.

### **1.3. Defining Educational Evaluation**

In a time of central government-led radical reform of education practitioners find themselves under the spotlight and their work evaluated according to criteria and procedures with which they are unfamiliar. To put the post-Education Reform Act (1988) developments into context, this discussion of ways of defining evaluation will begin with describing approaches to learner-based evaluation and contrasting these with 'scientific' approaches which have been

promoted on various justifications.

Early childhood practitioners tend to judge their work in terms of the progress of individuals according to criteria based on their own (ipsative) development and learning, and on how well current practice has met the individual's requirements and fostered this progress. Although the subject content of the early childhood curriculum is defined (linguistic and literary, mathematical and scientific, etc), the evaluation of practice has been on a broader base than this, in which individual children's development in all areas (social development, for instance) provides evidence for evaluation. This developmental base of education in the years from birth to eight gives a character to its evaluation which distinguishes it from other approaches. The main differences are in the developmental criteria for quality, the observational evidence which is sought, and the evidence-based reflections on which judgements are arrived at. This way of evaluating is based on developmental approaches to the curriculum.

For those who see education as instruction with a view to precisely defined learning outcomes, however, evaluation is a precise, quasi-scientific, process, in which programmes of instruction are evaluated for their capacity to bring about the desired results. These outcomes are specific and limited, and the work of teachers is evaluated according to the extent to which they have succeeded in instructing children in the desired programmes. The justification of this way of evaluating has been in its apparently scientific basis; its critics have attacked this basis as inappropriate for teaching, which they see as more akin to an art than to the sciences.

William James, arguing approximately one hundred years ago against tightly defined objectives based on emerging ideas about psychological laws, points to the inherent weakness in the position of those who would reduce education to a precise science:

**‘...you make a very great mistake if you think that psychology, being the science of the mind’s laws, is something from which you can deduce definite programmes and schedules and methods of instruction for immediate schoolroom use. Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art: and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application, by using its originality.’**

**(quoted in Eisner, 1984, p vii).**

Our growing understanding of the ways in which the human mind develops and extends its power has enabled us to take further the point that James makes about the need for an ‘intermediary inventive mind’. Isaacs, writing in 1933, turns around the direction of the influence which James had feared so much. As an alternative to the rigid application of ideas about learning derived from psychology, she argues that her own Freudian psychological knowledge supports a set of educational principles in which the child’s emotional needs and personal constructions of understanding of the world have a direct bearing on the kind of education to be offered; in other words, that the individual’s personal experiences and interests are the guide to educational provision, and point the way to the theories which underpin her practice.



**'I do not, however, need to make out a general case for considering the direct bearing of children's overt behaviour, descriptively viewed, upon educational techniques. Few people nowadays need to be convinced that an understanding of children's overt interests and normal activities is an indispensable part of the equipment of the educator...'**

**(1933, p.403)**

At the time that Isaacs was writing, teachers were flocking to hear and read all they could of the new Freudian approaches. Yet the acceptance of the central place of children's 'overt interests and normal activities' that she anticipated has not taken place. Conflicts between the adults' purposes and the children's developmental needs and purposes remain characteristic of education today. Bettelheim remarks that schoolwork, 'an issue around which parent and child are frequently at cross-purposes, may serve to further illustrate how their different perspectives can easily become a stumbling block between them.' (1987, p. 55)

Eisner (1984) picks out our failure to understand education as an art rather than a science as being at the root of our vulnerability to closed systems of education which fail to give children the needed opportunities to express themselves and achieve. He regards teaching at its best as an art, and educational evaluation as a process that can profitably employ the methods and perspectives of those who appraise the work of artists (1984, p.1). He thereby gives a lead towards valuing education as concerned with feeling, thinking and personal self-expression in the individual.

Eisner's assertion that education is to be understood as an art rather than a science opens educational debate to scrutiny based on values. The impact of this is to give practitioners an alternative basis on which to judge. For instance, it may be the case that whole-class instruction can allegedly be shown to be the most efficient way to instruct children about mathematics, but the early childhood practitioner will wish to argue from a developmental value-base that learning from instruction is only a very small part of learning in the years before eight, and that children will learn other, much less desirable, things as a result of being cut off from physical movement, active exploration, social exchanges and a close relationship with the person or people teaching them.

Eisner's assertion also links with another, this time about evaluation. He directs our attention to the way in which true evaluation, being based on values, makes value-judgements unavoidable.

**'Evaluation deals with appraising the value of some object, enterprise or activity. Evaluation is ineluctably value-orientated. Without a conception of virtue, one cannot evaluate anything.'**

**(1985, p 5)**

This involves practitioners making value-judgements about their practice by relating educational provision and interactions to what they believe should take place (their professional principles). That these principles can be broad and far-reaching, rather than specifically defined

in educational terms, is also fundamental to Eisner's interpretation.

**'Evaluation is ubiquitous in our lives and is a critical part of any responsible educational enterprise. The reason this is so is straightforward. Education is a normative enterprise: we seek virtue, not mere change. Educational evaluation is a process that that, in part, helps us determine whether what we do in schools is contributing to the achievement of virtuous ends or whether it is antithetical to those ends.'**

**(1985, p 5)**

### **Evaluation and educational evaluation**

Practitioners' educational evaluations are the focus of this thesis, but it is only one kind of evaluation. Evaluation of services, educational and in other fields, is becoming of increasing interest as expectations rise and pressures on budgets mount. The generic term 'evaluation' has, however, a variety of meanings and purposes. For this reason, the introductory section of this chapter sets out to give an outline of some of the different meanings and purposes attached to the term, with their attendant strengths and weaknesses, and to clarify the definition of evaluation that is used here. This clarification will aim to reveal the underlying beliefs about the nature of education that shape the interpretation of the term 'evaluation'. A longer discussion of the evolution of some of these differing views of education, with their consequent forms of evaluation, will be found in Section Two.

The purpose of evaluation is sometimes determined by economic stringency, when it becomes necessary to ration resources by allocating them preferentially to those who produce the greatest output. As demand gains over public resources, this kind of evaluation of centrally-provided services of all kinds has inevitably come into the foreground and is claimed as an essential process by fund-holders and policy-makers. The survival of hospital departments, for instance, is determined by evaluations which seek to put a quantitative value on the output of each department in order to decide where to continue to fund and where to cut. This poses problems for departments which cannot easily show a quantitative version of their output, such as those concerned with mental health, the health-care of the elderly, or genetic counselling. For those who work in such departments the criteria of success may be measurable only in terms of the quality of life of patients, that is to say qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative evaluation is harder to justify; it can be seen as unreliable because it is subjective (as experienced and reported by the patient) or because it is dependent on the word of the professionals concerned through their observations of the patient and professional judgements made on this basis. One attempt to produce a quantified version of a qualitative experience resulted in a hybrid kind of evaluation, but only observable physical evidence was used. In this experiment, administrators compared the results of hip replacement operations with other interventions through relating years survived after the operation and quality of life according to precise criteria based on physical data such as mobility. For medicine with criteria based on more subtle evidence, it seems there is no such justification, and practitioners of early childhood education, which is concerned with changes that are personal, internal and complex in children between birth and the age of eight years, should note this limitation.

A second meaning of evaluation comes from political sensitivity to parents' and employers' concerns about the need to prepare children for a harsh future in a world of increasing competition for trade abroad and hence for jobs at home, with an enhanced decline in the manual and labouring work which is now rendered unnecessary by automation. The purpose of this kind of evaluation is to ensure that infant schools for children from five to eight years old, and even schools and other educational settings such as playgroups for children as young as four years old, are rated on the numbers of children reaching specified levels of attainment. One purpose of the National Curriculum and its assessment through age-related attainment targets for children between the ages of five and eight has been to construct league tables of schools and give parents 'objective' evidence on which to base judgements of their children's schools and teachers. The same purpose led to the government's publication *Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning in the Years before Compulsory Schooling* (DfEE/SCAA, 1996) which seeks to ensure that children enter infant schooling with the groundwork laid for the later attainment targets, and that institutions whose children do not achieve this by the age of five lose their entitlement to take part in the voucher scheme. Again, there are early childhood concerns about this approach. How objective can the evidence be, when so many variables are involved? And how appropriate is it to measure the progress of very young children in formal terms (the *Desirable Outcomes* are intended to be assessed through paper and pencil tests)? And would this give a realistic and helpful picture of the range and depth of a child's learning? Success in attaining narrow pre-specified levels of performance is not how early childhood practitioners have traditionally evaluated their work.

However, it must be accepted that judgements of the value of public services such as education will always, and should, be made. What is important for practitioners is that these judgements should reflect not just a concern for 'value for money' (a phrase which leaves unexamined what is deemed valuable and why) but should show also a concern to discuss what the values are on which the evaluation is based. Externally-imposed approaches to evaluation cannot be expected to discuss educational values according to practitioners' agenda. There is a definite need for practitioners' concerns to be part of any approach to evaluation of services, but external approaches can only be shown to be inadequate or inappropriate on their own if there is an alternative credible approach ready to hand.

Here is the central issue of this research. It would not be realistic to expect that the State could ever be content with a purely practitioner-based evaluation of so vital and expensive a public service as the maintained education system. But is it unavoidable that there should be as little practitioner input into educational change as there was in the years between 1976 and 1996? If practitioners' own self-evaluations can be shown to be capable of supporting both improvements in practice and new insights in the development of educational provision there might be more hope that insights from such judgements could be seen as useful contributions to educational debate.

In studying at close hand the evaluation process in different early childhood settings, this research aims to reveal something of how practitioners themselves make judgements about their practice, and how these judgements support evaluations of developments in education. In so

doing, however, it must be admitted that there is evidence to suggest that educational evaluation is not yet strongly developed among practitioners of early childhood education, or, for that matter, of any other phase of education. The *Principles into Practice* research project, aspects of which will be discussed in this thesis, found in its nationwide survey that evaluation was one of the least valued professional processes among practitioners working with children under eight (Hurst and Yue, forthcoming). Thus, not only is it vital to find out whether early childhood evaluation could provide a sound basis for making judgements about practice and improving practitioners' expertise; it is also essential to research how it can be improved and systematised so that it becomes a professional process from which generalisations can be derived.

These are the reasons why this study has set out to investigate evaluation by early childhood practitioners, its nature and purposes, its processes and criteria of quality. The precise research focus has been chosen to find out how such evaluation undertaken by practitioners on their own work improves their practice and their expertise, and to examine the effect of more systematic application of action-research strategies upon the quality of their self-evaluation.

The kind of educational evaluation discussed here has been chosen for research because of its open-ness to change and its responsiveness to the needs of learners. Its capacity to interpose an inventive and original mind to mediate between adults' objectives and children's educational experiences introduces a dynamism which can be a force for change. This view takes the personal experience and expression of children to be the evidence that is most relevant to the Practitioner's educational purposes, and the practitioner's reflections on this evidence to be the

key process in improving educational provision.

This chapter will now explain the three research activities which focused on practitioner evaluation in the education and care of children under eight. These were undertaken in an attempt to learn more about what is involved in practitioner self-evaluation and the strategies by which practitioners can be more effectively supported in evaluating their work and making educational decisions on the basis of these evaluations.

#### **1.4. Issues in the research methodology**

The research methodology will be spelled out in detail below. As explained above, the investigation of teachers' self-evaluation, which was chronologically the first of the projects, was the source of initial ideas about how practitioner research in early childhood settings might be approached. It was the intention from the beginning to take some aspect of the ongoing decision-making of teachers as my focus. The research methodology was initially based on the pattern of evaluation in early childhood education which has been referred to above, encountering sequential stages of insight into particular aspects of it, and the influence of particular aspects on practitioners' development and on the growing insights about research. The experience of working with the two teachers confirmed that each setting is unique, and that the uniqueness factor must be accommodated. This placed a priority on understanding the practitioner's intentions, which relates to conclusions about the research relationship which will



be further described in Section Two, Chapter Five.

In addition to information gathering about the practitioner's intentions there was the issue of the focus of shared interest within the setting. The first research project was slow to settle finally on a focus, as will be seen from the later examination of the data; this was probably because of the attempt to suggest a focus on how Teacher A approached helping children whose behaviour troubled her (details of this will be found below). The subsequent research experiences established that the focus should emerge from the practitioner's intentions, thus casting more light on them and giving to the practitioner something of immediate value and interest. Further clarification of the focus proceeded, pace for pace, with the development of practitioners' own understanding of the issues, dilemmas and personalities in each setting. A self-chosen focus now appears to be essential for the practitioner's self-evaluation and self-development. Issues of power and control are involved here, and will be discussed in more general terms in Chapter Five.

I here identify another two noteworthy characteristics of the research. The first is that the three pieces of research (the two projects, and the methodology used in the third) are developmentally sequential in terms of their research methodology; there is a cycle of methodological hypothesis, action, evidence-gathering and reflection, establishment of tentative certainties, new hypothesis based on these certainties and so on. The second is that the research as a whole is characterised by a shift in its perspective. As the research develops so does insight about the role and development of the researcher, so that the 'outsider' begins to be a part of

the research focus. The research relationship places the learning of the researcher under the spotlight. Subsequently this attention to the researcher enables the research to shed light on the role and experiences of the 'outsider' in educational research.

The highlighting of the researcher as a part of the research relationship throws light, I think, on the fundamental assumption of the uniqueness of each educational association referred to above. It is confirmed by Eisner:

**'That there are many versions of virtue is true. It is one of the factors that makes education more complex than medicine....Even within a particular culture, community or neighbourhood there is comparatively wide variability with respect to the educational values that are regarded as important. This makes educational evaluation a difficult and complex task, yet in the end some values must be advanced, some judgments must be made about the quality of what has or is taking place. Unless this is done we have no way of knowing whether we are educating or mis-educating.'**

**(1985, p. 5.)**

Implications for research methodology follow from this. Research that takes account of the uniqueness of each educational setting must be both general in its conclusions, to avoid being limited by specificity, and rooted in the realities of the specific setting. It seems that this requires different levels of reflection. This has been reflected in the settings-based research phase of

*Principles into Practice*, in which the practitioners are known as the action-researchers, the project-based associates research partners, and myself as deputy-director. The different levels on which reflection is possible and desirable seem to be replicated in these different roles.

Although it is desirable that the level of research partner and deputy-director should give opportunities for general oversight of the research developments and broad conclusions, the nature of this kind of research would definitely distinguish it from research which is based on quantitative and statistical approaches. The national survey which was the first phase of *Principles into Practice* was a preliminary fact-finding for the second, action research, stage.

The usefulness of qualitative and quantitative methods in education can be seen as contrasted, the first in case-study and the second in large-scale studies of particular groups. This is an important distinction at the present, since educational research is in its infancy, and there is not much common experience on which to draw. I hope that, in the future, there will be confirmation from quantitative methods of some of the conclusions derived from case-studies, although at present the latter are too few in number for sufficient data to be accumulated. It will surely never be possible to bring the two methods completely together, for, even if case-studies produce a substantial amount of data, not all the data will necessarily be of a kind that is amenable to statistical organisation and analysis. I nevertheless hope that, eventually, there will be occasions on which the two methods can be brought together, where mass data may 'help us to relativise our personal impressions' (Dr Gundel Schumer, Max Planck Institute, Berlin, personal comment, 1992) How this might happen will be discussed later, in Chapter Two.

## **1.5. The early questions raised by the research**

From this outline it will be seen that the kinds of question raised by this research have to do with:

whether this investigation could make a helpful contribution to educational thinking by exploring what research-based educational evaluation by practitioners in the early years of education is like as a process;

what might be the nature and methodology of the kind of educational research which practitioner/researchers are able to undertake;

how practitioners in the early years of education can incorporate research-based evaluation into their practice through observing educational interactions and reflecting on them.

Two further issues, which are implied in Stenhouse's definition of knowledge, will require investigation. These are:

how theoretical understandings about education arise or are clarified in practice, giving practitioners a surer sense of their own principles in action

(‘principles of procedure’ in Stenhouse, 1975, p. 39);

how theoretical understandings about learning about education also arise for the 'research partner', clarifying connections between each case study and general statements about the appropriate content and processes of practitioner education, training and support.

These issues will be the focus of the succeeding chapters in both Sections. In Section One the emphasis of Chapters Two and Three will be on providing the detailed analysis of the three research phases that will show what has been learned that is relevant to the discussion of these issues. In Section Two a broader perspective will be taken on what has been highlighted in the discussion of the analysed research data.

Chapter Two will now provide a more detailed analysis of the research methodology and will draw attention to the role of the researcher.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **This Chapter**

**explains the methodology used to research evaluation in order to**

- observe it in operation,**
- record issues that seem important,**
- learn how it may be supported and systematised,**

**notes some aspects of the research relationship and the role of the researcher (noted in the previous chapter where the shift of focus to include the researcher was described),**

**and characterises the methodology in terms of action research, and looks forward to another shift of focus in which the burden of the action research process moves to the practitioner and the 'researcher' becomes a 'research partner'.**

## **2.1. The methodology of the research**

The underlying intention of the research has already been described as it evolved in Chapter One. It must be articulated as clearly as possible here; the aim is to research whether particular kinds of strategies will help practitioners to improve and strengthen their evaluations of their work by empowering them to make clearer, better justified and more closely reasoned judgements about the quality of their practice. Stenhouse's argument that each practitioner should also be a researcher has become more and more central to this research as the case for practitioner self-evaluation has become clearer. Without the element of research into education, the practitioner is always at risk either of repeating the same evaluative cycle, as if education was not about change and adaptation, or of accepting criteria with which to evaluate from external, non-educational, sources. Practitioners, in a word, risk marking time on the same spot or marching to another's tune and in a direction which may not be acceptable to their professional judgement. A practitioner who does not wish to do either will, he suggested, have to have the following characteristics:

**'The commitment to systematic questioning of one's own teaching as a basis for development;**

**The commitment and the skills to study one's own teaching:**

**The concern to question and to test theory in practice by the use of those skills.'**

**(1975, p. 144)**

I would suggest that to the above should be added the statement

**‘The will to commit all the above to the generation of theoretical understandings about education and practical strategies to improve practitioners’ expertise.’**

This research makes a fundamentally liberationist assumption that practitioners of all kinds of education will benefit by being given research tools with which to develop understanding about the curriculum for their particular age-phase and about what teaching it involves. This will enable them to make more professional decisions about their work, but more than that, it will make it possible for them to take part in the generation of knowledge about their own discipline. This assumption is definitive of the kinds of research design that can be used, and it has been extremely important to me to find a research design that was capable of ‘learning’ from the practitioner’s initial and developing insights and expertise, and returning to the practitioner something of value to her or his development as an independent practitioner, while also contributing to general educational knowledge.

This influenced decisions about the best kind of model to follow. In analysing the search for models I will begin by chronologically noting the criteria as they arose within this liberationist framework, and then discuss what I take to be the most serious criticisms of the model chosen.



## **Characteristics of the research and criteria for the design**

Within its aim of empowering practitioners this research has two strands, each of which contributes to the research perspective:

- a focus on the practitioner's self-evaluation and how it may be supported and systematised;
- a focus on the practitioner/researcher's role and its impact on professional understanding.

The interaction between these two strands is complex. The professional insights and perspectives of both partners in this collaborative research have for their theoretical context and their data collection all the pedagogic theory and educational interactions of the setting - the principles of how we educate young children and the values that underpin these principles, the processes of observation and assessment of children and the negotiation of the practitioner's curriculum planning and provision. The interpretation of data draws on the insights of both partners; it is a dynamic process in which agreement is not necessarily easily reached, and researching it requires a methodology which can accommodate the actions, thoughts and learning experiences of both partners. It was an initial assumption that there would be, as in views drawn from the work of Humanities Curriculum Project (Elliott, 1991, pp. 26-7), a clear distinction between the enquiries of practitioner and researcher. This was soon being eroded, as will be

explained, and some different interpretations of the relationship had to be developed.

Few studies of teacher evaluation in action were discovered during the search for models at the outset in 1986. However, some helpful models were found in the comparable area of studies of educational problem-solving. Of these, the most influential studies for this research were those in which:

the **context** chosen was the child's eye view of education,

the **problems** confronted were to do with practitioners trying to support children and adapt their plans and actions appropriately,

the **methodology** used was one which would give the most uncensored information about what children were experiencing.

The research methodology chosen was an action research project, along the line of studies following the work of the Ford Teaching Project which have focused on practitioners' self-reflective enquiries into their own practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). There were several ways in which this kind of approach seemed an appropriate model to adopt. In the Ford Teaching Project the context chosen was the pupil's context of learning in classrooms in secondary education - the dynamics of group work which can promote or wreck a teacher's plans, and factors such as classroom rivalries and gender bias. The problem initially confronted in the Ford

Teaching Project was the frequent perception gap between teachers' descriptions of what they do and their actual practice. The methodology used was based on the concept of triangulation in assessment of teachers, in which child, teacher and observer formed the three sides (Elliott, 1976). The aim of this methodology was to try to see the educational experience from the child's point of view and to support teachers in continuous adaptation to shape their teaching more appropriately. If teachers were to be continually adapting their practice, a framework which supported their adaptation must be provided; hence the idea of a continuous research/action/research cycle or spiral as characterised by McNiff (1988, pp. 44-45).

The Humanities Curriculum Project was also a useful model, particularly in relation to the vision of teaching that underpinned it. Its vision was that responding to the need for change was

**'part of the continuous process of educational development...No doubt the brakes on change will be the entrenched attitudes of some teachers. But we must not underestimate the pedagogical problems which face teachers of the greatest sensitivity, intelligence and goodwill. If they are to make headway they need, as do other professions, to have new knowledge and techniques placed at their disposal.'**

**(Schools Council/Nuffield Foundation, 1970, p. 4)**

The Project sought to help teachers develop in pupils an understanding of social situations and human acts. This was not very different from the aims of my own project, to help



practitioners develop in very much younger children all the understandings and competence they need to make a success of their early learning in group settings.

Both the Ford Teaching Project and the Humanities Curriculum projects emphasised the need for research tools that could be responsive to changes in the practical collaboration and theoretical conceptualisation of the teachers and researchers involved. The action research concept and tools developed in these projects were influential on the structure of the methodology from very early on in my research. In the following section the beginning points in terms of the conceptual framework of the research are described and the shaping of an action research approach is shown.

### **2.1.1. The advantages of action research for educational development**

Action research is well suited to practitioners' investigations, because of this flexibility in adapting to different kinds of concerns and problems and its capacity to change and adapt as practitioners' perspectives change. It is also extremely economical of time, effort and money in that it enables conclusions to be hypothesised, tested, confirmed or negated, and incorporated into practice if desirable all in the same process. By comparison, less flexibly structured research programmes could take much longer to reach the same point since their focus and methods cannot be adjusted during the programme, and another programme must be set up to test out the hypotheses generated as a result of testing the programme's original hypothesis.

Action research sees the place of research as being everywhere and all the time. Like the difference between summative and formative assessment, the difference between action research and other forms is the difference between wishing to test what others have learned and wishing to learn oneself and then do one's own testing. Early years practitioners need have no fears about action research as long as practitioners themselves are well represented in its use. They have, and will continue to have, good reason to fear other kinds of research, because they have so little part in the generation of hypotheses and so little influence over the methodology and direction of the research programme.

If there is to be a way of allowing practitioners to have some control over their professional destiny, action research must play a definite role. Just as evaluation is the process by which teachers exercise their professional expertise and make an input into their own professional development, so the profession as a whole has much to gain from practitioners engaging in action research. This route to development of educational practice and hence policy offers an enhanced role for practitioners as a body, and enhancement of their status as informed professionals.

### **2.1.2. The conceptual framework of the investigation**

The investigation described in this thesis is set in the context of early childhood education, as described in Chapter One. The early childhood context is significant because it has set the research within a particular conceptual framework, that of the developmental model of

the educational process, and because this is a conceptual framework which corresponds quite closely to the assumptions of the two research project referred to above, in taking the child's eye view as supplying most important information for the practitioner. This is reflected in the learner-centred perspective taken in this research project, in which the purposes of evaluation are defined by the development and learning needs of individual children, as described in Chapter One.

The evaluation which has taken place in each of these settings is based on this developmental philosophy and practice. The underlying principles to which participants are committed are based on understandings about learning in early childhood. Children are seen as autonomous in their building up of knowledge and understanding of the world ('Ruth', see below); their talking, playing, representing in drawing and other ways, experimenting and exploring are the central focus of the practitioner's interest (Teacher A, 'Bob', see below). This can be seen in all the settings, in practitioners' aims and expressions of concern. In this research, therefore, the appropriate kind of evaluation is seen as focusing on the needs of individual children for particular educational experiences. Research in this kind of evaluation cannot be undertaken by means that do not reflect these aims. Researching it would seem to depend on using a methodology that was sympathetic to evaluative processes already established and that was usable by the practitioners. I identified two particular aspects as having a leading role in evaluation which would need to influence the research design.

**Firstly, education should be seen as about change, involving the practitioner and the**

**learners in a negotiation process in which the practitioner expects to be constantly adapting the experiences provided to meet the children's needs:**

**Secondly, there should be an emphasis on collecting appropriate evidence, observing, analysing and reflecting before making plans and implementing them.**

The first aspect, the cycle:

**observation,  
reflection,  
planning,  
evaluation,  
adaptation,  
readjustment of ideas,  
further planning**

which is the theoretical basis of early childhood education, was not, I thought, seriously at odds with the basic action research design as outlined by Elliott (1991, p. 71). There was another reason why this particular design appealed as a design for researching evaluation; there were certain ways in which it differed from and improved on earlier versions, such as Lewin's (1946), as summarised in McNiff (1988), in which each turn of the cycle appears to complete a chunk of thought rather than being a continuous generation and regeneration of ideas as in Elliott's design.

However, in a passage that is of central importance to the liberationist intentions of this research, McNiff stated a concern that in spite of this all the schemes put forward by Kemmis, Elliott and Ebbutt tend to

**‘...require teachers only to apply systems to their pupils. In this sense they may be accused of prescriptivism and possibly of being no further advanced in educational democracy than an interpretive tradition.’**

**(1988, p. 36)**

This was extremely worrying. For if the model was too prescriptive no reliance could be placed on the research conclusions about how to empower practitioners. Some time after, a period of reflection suggested that I had overlooked certain aspects of my own interpretations of the model, which - perhaps departing from the structure of the model as intended - had introduced the element of partnership, dialogue and, significantly, the outsider as part of the focus of the research. The research was not only shared in the sense of being carried out by one or more practitioner and myself as researcher. It was shared in the sense that both sides were ‘in’ the research.

### **2.1.3. A developmental framework, including the role of the ‘other’**

Like the early childhood planning and evaluating cycle, the action research cycle should



be open to new ideas and new orientations, and if it is, it can generate new understandings. These new understandings can probably come about in more than one way, but in general terms it seems that the involvement of another person in reflection on the research evidence is a help in the process. Ashcroft (1996) celebrates what she calls the 'classic action research model' for the way that it draws attention to the different stages and to the importance of data collection, but she finds it inadequate for solving the problem that one cannot know what it is that one does not know.

**'Teachers are assumed to be in a position to define all their own goals with little outside help. In the course of the research, experienced teachers may become aware of other issues that need investigation, but this is a chance rather than an inevitable consequence. In the case of student teachers, with their relative inexperience of the factors that contribute to classroom problems, this difficulty will be more acute.'**

**(1992, p. 37)**

She suggests that we need to involve outside help in order to achieve new ways of looking at problems.

**'In all of this, the role of others, whether in groups or as individuals, becomes essential. Alternative problems or ways of conceptualising the problems that are recognised can be drawn to the student's attention.'**

**(op. cit., p. 37)**

This role of the 'other', what I have called the 'outsider's role' in Chapter One, seems to be one explanation of how it is that Elliott's version of the cycle can become open enough to break into new problems or new areas for investigation.

This emphasis on the role of another perspective sheds light on how some researchers have approached a further issue which was mentioned in Chapter One - that of understanding an unknown culture well enough to know the significance of what has been observed. In Chapter One the difficulty of getting to know a new classroom or other setting was discussed. In the model of research being discussed here, acquiring inside knowledge is a specific aim in itself. To achieve this requires a particular approach. An example of this is the work of Otto (1995) which describes her research into graduate medical education in Tanzania. In order to interpret what she observed, she needed a way to understand the unfamiliar cultural assumptions.

**'...the researcher must bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar to understand and examine the research question. Interpretive investigators share the common problem of finding methods of understanding unfamiliar data.'**

**(1995, p. 280)**

Otto's solution was to draw in a native Tanzanian intern MD, Nkanga, to be her collaborator. With his help she was more able to understand the Kiswahili words that were being used, but she found that she needed to know

**‘not just what the teachers were saying, but also what they were meaning. This was something literal translations could not provide. My background in action research provided a means to reflect on the working relationship that Nkanga and I had. It also allowed us to move his work into the area of cultural interpretations.’**

**(op. cit., p. 281)**

Admitting that this kind of research requires a partnership of at least two who are able to draw on the necessary range of inside and outside knowledge brings its own structural developments. Otto found that moving from translation to interpretation meant that decision-making was no longer purely hers, and nor were her answers to research questions. Later, she found that Nkanga added his own research question about the nature of the student/teacher relationship and her perception of it. Although at first she could not mesh his questioning with hers, there was an eventual integration into a large picture when she and he could allow each interpretation to complement the other. This throws light again on the issue of the involvement of others in the research, and how this can extend the range of the discussion and reflection. Otto believes that without this she would have remained an outsider.

The model that has emerged from my efforts to shape a research design to suit practitioners’ self-evaluations is one which is predicated for change: change in the minds of practitioner/insider and researcher/outsider; change in understanding the research context and phenomena; change even in the design of the research itself. The learning of the protagonists in the action and the learning of the outsider/s are both dependent on open-ness to change. It is

through their endeavours to understand and learn from the evidence they have of the situation that insider and outsider are confronted with the necessity of changing. Observation, reflection and analysis are the heart of this process and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. At this point, however, I would like to explore one general aspect of observation shared between insider and outsider - the way in which it has a tendency to bring up problems for the research to work on. In effect, it seems as if the role of observations is to express the research in terms of problems - to problematise it.

#### **2.1.4. A problematised framework for researching evaluation**

Chapter One included a description of the research process, its issues and some of its problems. Problems have had a shaping role in these research activities, in the following ways:

1. Practitioners' initial perceptions helped to define practitioners' initial focuses but could also bring the researcher into a state of conflict with the practitioner if the evidence seemed to be pointing the other way. Teacher B in Phase 1 was worried about whether she was giving children enough support for their reading, but the evidence that I, as the researcher/outsider, gathered to help me get 'on the inside' of children's experiences suggested that there was a more fundamental issue, that of some children's failure to grasp what was going on (see below for fuller details). This drew attention to the value of tracking individuals and analysing their experiences as a background context for more detailed focusing. This became a

part of the strategy used in Phases Two and Three; general observations were used to inform the understanding of the outsider but also to give the insider some counter-weight to the pressure of practitioner-led concerns.

This consideration also spurred one practitioner to extend her own role in the research - the nursery nurse 'Bob' in Phase Two felt she needed to learn more about very young children's learning in her own setting so she video-recorded and analysed her own observations independently. Her thoughts on the learning she observed, and the conclusions she drew about how practitioners should plan, resource and extend children's learning will be found in Chapter 3. They are among the most wide-reaching and well-reasoned of any encountered in all three phases of the research.

2. The problem of my own disempowerment in unknown settings influenced the development of my role as the researcher; it meant that I had to emphasise my role as a learner. By the time I felt more comfortable and 'inside' the setting I had lost some of my 'outside' qualities. In particular, I had come under the influence of the research relationship. For instance, in Phase Three I found myself working with a mother of one child and grandmother of another as part of my research with a teacher and nursery nurse team (see below for details). I had a relationship with the family of children being observed as well as with the practitioners with whom I was researching. Not only was I learning what it was like to be a close family member involved in the care and education of a child with Down's Syndrome, I was learning about the developmental aspects of disability and how a curriculum could be negotiated that would be

empowering for the family and for the child. I was, in my own terms, generating knowledge and understanding and locating it within my own expertise and experience. I could put this insight about how knowledge and understanding can be generated into the research design and talk in terms of theory being generated in action, which will be explored in Chapter Seven. I could also begin to ask some questions about the impact of the research on myself. I had already noted the shift in the research towards including the impact on the researcher; now I could start reflecting on the nature of the impact in more detail. It began to seem as if knowing and understanding through research might be a different way of acquiring the kinds of knowledge and understanding most needed for evaluation. In fact, might participation in action research of this kind be the logical outcome of commitment to early childhood education and its characteristic approach to evaluation? Might it be what evaluation really ought to be, in that other ways were less reliable and professionally justified?

Problems could thus be described as getting in the way of the research, but also as what the research should take as its focus, since they related to essential theoretical and practical aspects of the process of evaluating in classrooms. In focusing directly on problems faced by practitioners we have opportunities to contribute to their effectiveness and fulfillment. Problems need to be seen as central to the research, and require an appropriate methodology. Action research has been defined as essentially focused on practitioners' perceptions of their own difficulties.

**‘A fundamental principle of action research is that it begins with teachers’ own understanding of the practical problems and issues that they face in the classroom with kids. It doesn’t start off with a theoretical problem, it starts off with a practical problem. It’s concerned with understanding that problem and trying to find ways of resolving that problem.’**

**(Elliott, 1991)**

To characterise this research in terms of the problems it focused on directs attention to how formative problems can be, but also to the fact that they can be stopping points. Over time, my case-study based action research project, conceptualised as an action-research cycle found that the nature of the problems confronting practitioners, and practitioners’ different responses to them, meant that:

- some, like the nursery nurse and teacher team mentioned above continued to focus on the same problem of managing children’s troubling behaviour,
- while others went on to a new problem attached to the issue identified, like Teacher B whose concern to help children with their reading was widened by evidence to a concern to help some with particular difficulties to ‘find their place’ in the class concerns,
- while yet others identified a new version of the original focus, like ‘Bob’,

whose concern with one child's difficulties was then widened to consider how planning, resourcing and the use of practitioners' time could be informed by evidence of the children's learning.

The cycle of action research as defined by McNiff (1988, p. 32) has many different variations. This variety is also true of the outcomes for the practitioners involved.

### **2.1.5. The collection of data for action research**

The data for this research has been gathered through joint working with practitioners in the various institutions. The main body of evidence consists of audiotapes and written notes of classroom interactions and conversations with practitioners. There have also been two questionnaires used to establish basic facts - about levels of training, for instance - which were given to all the nursery centre and day-nursery staff. The observations of classrooms, taped and written, are intended not as the focus for research in themselves, but as the material for discussion with practitioners. It is in the conversations with the practitioners that the real focus of the research takes place.

Phase One is reviewed in detail because it has been the one in which the cognitive foundations and practical strategies have been established. The nature of the data and the learning in Phases Two and Three are also given.



The outline of the data is linked to the questions with which I have tried to shape my thinking. Some questions were present at the beginning, some arose as the work went on; questions continue to be provoked during the final conclusions. At the end of each research activity I have recorded the conclusions I felt I could draw. These, while based on the data and in some senses more like reflections, are also data relevant to the development of my understanding about the process of educational research.

## **2.2. Data and Findings of the Phases**

### **2.2.1 Phase One, Stage One:1986**

#### **Five half-day sessions in the classroom with Teacher A.**

I began the research with the idea of working with a practitioner and looking at how teachers provide for children who give them cause for concern in the classroom. I spoke to Teacher A, who was opening a reception class and we agreed to collaborate. I would gather information about classroom interactions between her and the children which would help her to provide for her children's needs as they settled in to the class. I noted with pencil and paper how she spoke to the class, gave her a copy, and asked for her comments. She was alarmed at the amount of managerial language she was using, and together we agreed that we both put children's spontaneous talk and activity into a position of priority. She then evaluated my records according to the criteria of how well her efforts as a teacher supported children's autonomy,

including the needs and purposes of individual children she had particular concerns about. As a result, she decided to change some of the patterns of classroom organisation she had established, so that children could manage their own needs better and she had more time to talk to them about what they were learning. I was aware that in fact A had changed the focus to one that was more interesting to research because it aroused her concern. I learned that practitioners ought to be the ones who chose the focus if I wanted to learn about their approaches to evaluation.

I learned something else about the process of evaluation and decision-making in education as well; I noticed that being given some relatively objective information about the classroom enabled A to evaluate what she was doing, and to develop new ways of providing for the children. I noticed that she and I both appealed to some principles which we saw as fundamental (the importance of children being able to pursue their own interests, for instance) and which would provide criteria for evaluating practice. If, for instance, something that she did led to undermining children's conversational interactions she would wish to reject it, no matter what the arguments of efficiency in its favour - other ways of being efficient would have to be found.

My understanding of the general process of helping with evaluation and consequent decision-making was that it seemed to involve:-

a) gathering information as objectively as possible i.e. with as broad a focus as might be obtained [an 'outside' view]; the tape-recording was more acceptable than my written

notes.

b) interpreting that information in the light of general educational principles which put the development of the individual pupil first ('don't I talk a lot!').

c) agreeing criteria for judging the effectiveness of a teacher's practice which could be found by looking at the experiences of the children in the classroom (A's decision to give up the carpet sessions in the mornings because the children were being kept there too long).

#### **1986: Conclusions from work with Teacher A**

**Objective data challenge practitioners' thinking and provoke developmental interpretations for the evaluative process.**

**These lead to clarifying developmental criteria for quality. Research processes to note are the finding of a focus - this needs to be the practitioner's independent choice - and the research tools should give practitioners the information they need on which to base their choices about action.**

### **2.2.2 Phase One, Stage Two: 1986-7**

#### **Four half-day sessions in the classroom with Teacher B**

I next worked with Teacher B, who had a vertically-grouped infant class in a different school. In introducing myself to her, I described the method as it had evolved and as I express it above. Remembering A's response to the classroom information I gathered, I tried to give B the feeling that she could have the process under her own control - my research could be like a light that she could shine on areas that interested her. Her first wish was to evaluate her support for children's reading, but she also mentioned a concern to know how the youngest children's needs were being met in the class, where there was a great range of stages as well as of ages.

By this time I was committed to using a tape-recorder and radio-microphone to record the teacher's interactions with children. I had recorded one session with A, and realised - after an exhausting attempt to transcribe the whole of it (see Appendix A) - that this was not a realistic method, since no practitioner could devote so much time to transcribing one half-day's evidence. Instead, the practitioner could select what were the most interesting parts of the tape to discuss without imposing self-defeating burdens. B took the tapes after each session and noted down what she felt was particularly interesting, and after I too had listened to the tapes we discussed the implications. B felt reassured on the whole about the reading, but we both noticed that two particular children were a bit 'adrift' in the classroom, not understanding what learning they were being introduced to. One was rising five and had just come from the school's nursery

class. The other would be leaving for the Juniors at the end of the academic year. I supported the evidence from the tapes with observations that I had made independently, and talked through with B what might be done to make room in the classroom for these children's needs.

From this stage I felt that I learned that:-

a) information gathered in as objective a way as possible was essential if the teacher was to learn something new (the change from a focus on reading to the needs of individual learners)

b) criteria for judging practice which Teacher B used when reviewing the data were closer to the individual children's own needs than those which came from priorities of the infant classroom (her concern for Jeremy)

c) collaboration could extend to more than the observer acting as a tool in the teacher's hand. I had undertaken a couple of brief observations to add weight to the interpretation that I had put on evidence from the tape - I was also taking a hand in the direction of the research by producing evidence that there was cause for concern about Jeremy and David. My concealment as neutral observer was over, at least in my own eyes.

## **1986-7: Conclusions from work with Teacher B**

**The role of objective data and the practitioner's learning from it, the researcher as active participant providing more data and sharing the interpretation of data.**

After these two experiences with classroom teachers I began to feel that I had some idea of what the collaborative research process had to offer. I wanted to try it out in other situations, and to discover whether it would work in initial teacher education, or in multidisciplinary projects. The broad effect of this was to find out what some of the limitations of the process were, and, in this way, to get to know more about the process and about what participants needed to bring to it.

### **2.2.3 Phase One, Stage Three: 1988a**

#### **Student teachers and College-based learning**

During the running of a short course on history for students I sought to co-evaluate with students the educational interactions in our seminars, through reflecting on 10 weeks of seminar sessions and analysis of classroom activity and a written report by students. No recording support was available. I wanted to look further into the way in which educational criteria can be found in the process of reflecting upon what education ought to be like (as in the reflections by both teachers, above). I felt that in the group we made statements about history as a discipline and how children learn history which corresponded to the principles enunciated in

early childhood education. If we measured these against our own observations and perceptions of schoolchildren we had studied, we could find ourselves in possession of a fairly comprehensive set of criteria against which to measure our work.

I asked students to try to evaluate their own work in history against the criteria we evolved in our group work. At first, the results was disappointing. Broadly speaking, the college tradition of students evaluating courses for their satisfactoriness to themselves had been strong in the students' minds, and their evaluations were not of their own thinking and practice but rather of how far they felt the course met their own learning needs. What I was disappointed in was the difficulty in teaching professional objectivity and self-awareness about one's own thinking and experience. It seemed hard to get into the habit of listening to one's own voice or reading one's own plans with the needs and responses of children in mind so that one noted where one's own blind spots or weak links were.

In spite of the above concerns however, study of the students' responses showed that they were aware of some criteria of quality in provision for children's learning, and there was, I felt, room for hope that with more time for experience and reflection these could have contributed to a critical evaluation of their own practice and understandings. I came to feel that I had learned:

a) that the objective standpoint was hard to achieve and should be studied carefully as an aim in itself. This would be an advantage to any intending teacher. Learning to teach

involves learning to adopt the perspective of others, and evaluation is a process all students should be able to use. My kind of research collaboration could contribute to the learning of this process. At a later point in Phase 3 two Canadian undergraduates temporarily placed with the project strongly recommended an action research involvement in the classroom for all students as a way to begin the process of reflecting on one's own practice.

b) that time, and personal involvement, were necessary if the process was to develop. Students were not unable to evaluate in the way suggested to them, but they needed time and support for this to become a part of their expertise.

**1988a: Conclusions from work with students on College-based history course**

**Collaborative evaluation in initial teacher education faces the conflict between evaluating courses and evaluating one's own learning: the objective standpoint needs time and opportunity to be developed.**

## **2.2.4 Phase One, Stage Four: 1988b**

### **Students and school-based learning**

The aims of this activity were that the data should provide information about the nature of the development of teacher evaluation in students and whether the process developed so far



could help with this. We might see how evaluation can be undertaken as part of the process of learning to teach; we might also see what part it might be able to play in educational development. The period of involvement took place during a 4 week block practice in which 1 session's use of the recording equipment was offered. The offer was made that students who wished could ask me to bring the recording equipment so that they could record themselves for further reflection and self-evaluation as part of their normal TP work. Few took up the offer, and those who did spelled out in their replies to my enquiry why they found it potentially helpful but difficult to operate this system.

The reasons focused more explicitly on the way people feel about gathering evidence about themselves than any replies had done before:

a) the technology used required time to explore before one could know what to expect from it

b) the process of examining one's own practice was emotionally threatening, and needed to be undertaken in the context of close personal support.

#### **1988b: Conclusions from work during teaching practice**

**The needs of students show that collection and review of objective data from the classroom makes demands on self-confidence: the role of the tutor conflicts with that of the research partner over self-judgements**

**based on the review of objective data. The research partner should not be part of the appraisal system if students are to feel confident enough to evaluate their work.**

From 1988 onwards the offer of technology that students could borrow and operate themselves was continued and a few requests were made by students who were supervised by the writer. The small but regular number of requests suggests that certain students, who were introduced to the idea during their TP or during daily work in schools, have felt confident enough to incorporate it into their own processes of information-gathering and evaluation. However, the numbers are too small to say that using tape-recorders in self-evaluation has become a regular part of the process of ITE; rather it is a feature of particularly self-confident and committed students. Tentative conclusions are that the level of group and individual support needs to be looked at if this is ever to become the case. Is this a problem, given likely developments in ITE? Present trends in ITE suggest that levels of support are likely to have to be much lower than ever before. The present trend away from input by lecturers and towards learning from class teachers could lead to a weakening of the professional strength of teachers in evaluation of their own work.

Given what we know about the importance of matching the curriculum to children's levels of understanding, learning strategies and so on, it seems essential that self-evaluation should form a large part of students' initiation into teaching. It may be unfortunate that the key ingredient - tutor:student time - should be in such short supply, but this is no reason to jettison

the process that offers real hope of improving educational quality. Rather, we should look to what we can learn about economical and effective ways in which to support students and teachers as part of our attempts to help education become a more autonomous discipline.

### **2.2.5 Phase Two: 1990-3**

#### **The Workplace Nurseries Pilot Project**

The Goldsmiths' College pilot project in monitoring and evaluation aimed to develop strategies to support staff working in nurseries providing day-care for working parents. We were fortunate in being invited to work in two settings providing care and education - a maintained combined nursery centre in inner London, and an independent day-nursery in central London. It was hoped that the process of supported evaluation might help staff to monitor and improve their own practice, and help with the monitoring and evaluation of any expansion of nurseries for the children of working parents by identifying some strategies for improving and maintaining quality of provision. It was hoped that we might also see how the process of supporting staff in evaluation not only improves practice but also deepens understanding so that it can help in teaching people how to teach better by enabling teachers to develop their practice and extend their expertise, and by generating a body of valid and relevant educational theory about generating and maintaining quality.

This Phase, and Phase Three, were very different in structure from Phase One, but the

writer's share in them embodied significant elements drawn from the first Phase.

Phase Two was a pilot project in staff evaluation in workplace nursery settings, jointly undertaken with a colleague, and funded by the College. It investigated monitoring and evaluation of education in two nurseries providing for children of working parents. The project studied the process of evaluation in these settings where staff had a variety of qualifications, predominantly NNEB (nursery nurse) training, with other qualifications as well including DFE-approved teacher training (nursery and infant).

The intentions of the project were to explore how monitoring and evaluation of practice might be done should the expected expansion of employer-led day-care take place. The rationale for the project was defined in terms based on those evolved in the earlier work on evaluation reported above: with a colleague, Geva Blenkin, I would work with practitioners in two settings to develop strategies for supporting the evaluation of practice. An action research approach would be used again, with a first-stage fact-finding questionnaire to establish the participants' qualifications and experience.

The research took place in inner London. Two nurseries aiming to meet the needs of parents who require day-care for their children took part; Centre 1 is a local authority combined education and social services nursery centre in Tottenham, London N 19, and Centre 2 is a non-profitmaking private nursery, situated in EC 1 and sponsored by a large financial firm in the City of London. Both centres provide education and care for children from babyhood to the

age of compulsory schooling. The numbers involved were approximately 80 toddlers and children under five in Centre 1 and approximately 5 babies and 25 toddlers and under-fives in Centre 2. Qualifications of staff included trained nursery nurses, Montessori teachers, SRNs and trained nursery/infant teachers.

The key element taken from Phase One was the action research model with observation-based data, which staff in one setting took on under their own leadership and used for their own evaluations (see below and Appendix E). In the other setting, individual members of staff used the method to evaluate their provision for large or small groups or individuals in their care (see Appendix F). The interaction between principles and values held by staff and the observation-based evidence of children's experiences was similar to that of the teachers in Phase One.

The questions which arose in Phase One about what staff would need in order to self-evaluate were explored through the action research approach. In each nursery, a period of joint staff/researcher observations and evaluations was followed by a development in which the staff took the process of evaluation a stage further, both nurseries deciding independently to focus on outdoor play. However, staff also made it clear that they did not find it easy to continue to self-evaluate without some outside support (Appendix E).

The two basic focuses of this project's investigation of ways to develop the self-evaluation process were externally-supported observation and discussion of observations.

The ongoing process of information-gathering was focused on child-observation to inform staff about their children's experiences and achievements, and this formed the basis of discussions about the evaluation of work by staff. Recording equipment was not used because the only satisfactory method seemed to be to use the bulky and heavy set of tape-recorder, radio-microphone and transmitter. Extra help would have been needed to operate the system, but an extra member of the staff team would have been beyond the project resources. Practitioners were asked to make observations of their own choice of focus. They have needed practical help and encouragement to do this because of the constant demands on the time and energy of staff working with children from babies to five year olds. On occasions the researcher undertook observations for members of staff. When staff have undertaken their own observations the results have been highly satisfactory, for instance in enabling them to carry out more effectively their policies for outdoor play, and in enabling them to demonstrate and meet the social and emotional needs of very young babies.

Findings: The findings confirm, in general, the points identified earlier about the importance of a shared or partnership approach, the value of observation-based evidence, and the practitioner's self-development through reflection on what has been learned. They also confirmed that it is difficult for practitioners working with young children to undertake their own observations because of the constant demands on their time, and that support from within or outside the setting would be necessary. Where observation was achieved by the practitioners it was done either by the head or deputy head, or by the united efforts of a groups of people. This is one reason why, in Phase Three, the support of other colleagues and the head teacher were

noted as being necessary for practitioner self-evaluation in early childhood education.

### **1993: Conclusions about Phase Two**

**Importance of observation and assessment in evaluating; criteria for evaluation are directly related to the principles which define participants' conceptions of education and of childhood itself. Staff need an outsider both to help with observations and for another viewpoint.**

## **2.2.6 Phase Three: 1994-5**

### **Involvement in *Principles into Practice***

This project, my involvement with which is given as Phase Three of this research, has far wider influence than the particular aspects relevant to the evolution of the professional insights described here. For an outline of this national project see Blenkin, Hurst, Whitehead and Yue (1995). The subsequent phases of the project will take it through 1996 at least.

The aim of the project was to explore ways of meeting practitioners' needs for professional support and development to allow them to improve provision for early learning. After a representative survey to establish practitioners' circumstances and how they saw their needs, an action research approach was tried out in independent and local authority educational

provision for under eights and in playgroups and day nurseries. The writer's part in this project as deputy-director for preschool settings allowed for explorations of action research strategies as professional development support for practitioners, based on practitioner-led investigations and evaluations of their work in the various settings. The part of my research reported here was done through a continuance of the work with one of the settings from Phase Two (the combined centre) and with a new setting, a maintained inner-city nursery school.

In the pilot action research stage of Phase Three staff in these two research centres developed personal interests and focuses of their own. In the combined centre a nursery nurse, Bob, used video and written observations to record the activities of children from 9 months to 2 years old, and has shown that assumptions about provision for them need rethinking, since she has evidence that contradicts assumptions about their needs. She was at this stage the only participant I worked with who was able to undertake her own data-gathering on a regular basis, and even so this was very much dependent on staffing levels and on the support of the head of the centre. Another nursery nurse at the same centre, Ruth, examined what was involved for staff in providing for children's autonomous use of the learning environment, and the team she worked with became interested in the use of observation both for monitoring children's progress and for assessing their use of provision. A major problem was that, as a large and busy team, they had little time to discuss their findings together, since they were all on different shifts.

The head of centre, the deputy head and the teacher responsible for Ruth's team were strongly in support of the participants throughout the centre's involvement in the research.



During this stage, they provided support for Ruth and Bob whenever they could. Both the deputy head and the teacher had taken part in the Phase Two research (see Appendix B).

In the nursery school a team of two, a nursery teacher (deputy head of the school) and a nursery nurse, each undertook to investigate children who were giving cause for concern and to evaluate provision for them. In the case of the nursery nurse, a violent and unpredictable boy was monitored through observations done by the writer which were discussed by staff with his mother, and which provided evidence for the clinic they were attending as well. The nursery teacher first focused on the boy mentioned earlier about whose capacity to communicate there was anxiety; close observation by the writer revealed the extent to which he was benefiting from being in collaboration with his teacher; he appeared to be generously supportive of younger children, contradicting the teacher's impression of him as rather wild and careless of others' feelings. It seemed from the observations that he was physically very active and noisy indoors as well as out, but that he could spontaneously show consideration for younger children if they seemed unhappy. This discovery enabled her to take a more confident approach to his activities in the classroom. When he left, she chose to focus on a boy with Down's Syndrome, asking that I talk to his grandmother who usually brought him to school. The accumulated records of all three children were passed on to their next schools.

More significantly, the observations were copied to and discussed with the parents and a grandparent. This new step, the involvement of a parent/grandparent in the monitoring of a child, may be the most significant result here; it is definitely a change of practice, and very

unusual, in my experience, to share formal observations of children with their parents.

Both practitioners in the nursery school, and most of those in the combined centre, found it impossible to find time to observe, and the coming of the stage of *Principles into Practice* at which they will be asked to continue on their own means that the only way they can continue is if the head teacher can find time to come in and support them regularly. They would, during this second stage, receive research visits twice a term; so far, there is not enough evidence to decide whether they will be able to carry on doing the observations.

All the participants worked with in Phase Three made it clear that support of one kind and another was essential. 'Bob', for instance, stated that she could feel bold enough to examine her practice because the writer was encouraging about her intentions and her professionalism.

### **1995: Conclusions from Phases One, Two and Three**

**Evaluation is a process at the heart of early childhood education for which practitioners need appropriate support if they are to be able to improve their provision and develop as professionals. Part of this support consists of having help from an informed and supportive outsider, who is prepared to make observations or recordings to assist staff. However, the practical support of colleagues and senior management is vital as well.**

During the action research phase of *Principles into Practice*, this supportive and partnering role became part of the role description of the 'research partner', the associate who was the practitioner's support and link with the main project. Gradually, the role of the practitioners came also to be defined more specifically, and they were known as the 'action researchers'. The trend which began with sharing the decisions about observations between researcher and practitioner has been carried into a more practitioner-oriented research stance, with the 'outsider's role' defined in terms of partnership.

### **2.2.7 Summary**

This section has described the initial aims for the research design, the effect of experience in expanding and shaping the design, and the specific conclusions about the role of the researcher as outsider that were drawn in the course of the research.

The initial research design was conceptualised as an action research model based on the work of Lewin as developed by Elliott with Adelman (1976) and summarised later (1991). It was however expected to be more flexible and open than the word 'model' might imply. Jack Whitehead's injunction that educational research should be educational (1986) was taken to require that there should be the possibility of change in understanding as well as in practice, and this was taken to mean that there should be the possibility of redefining problems and focuses within the model. The role of the outsider became of interest early in the research, in spite of

an initial assumption of Stenhouse's position that there should be a clear first and second order distinction between the enquiries of practitioner and researcher. This raised questions about whether the research was in fact collaborative and shared rather than owned by the researcher. Later experience and developments confirmed this, and led to a redefinition of the roles in which the practitioner was the action researcher, choosing the focus and (mostly) doing the observations, while the research partner was the link with the research project itself and shared in the analysis of the findings and the discussion of conclusions.

### **The methodology**

The methodology chosen for this study of practitioners' self-reflective enquiries into their own practice was based on action research models. Information was gathered in as objective a way as possible, and criteria for judging practice were developed from reviewing the data. It was expected that this would enable practitioners to adapt and develop their practice; it was not anticipated that the development would extend to the researcher's understanding of what was involved, but this was in fact the case. It was difficult for practitioners working with young children to undertake their own observations because of the constant demands on their time, and support was necessary. Reflection also required the support of a colleague; points mentioned were the value of having a colleague's attention and time, and the need for emotional support in reviewing practice.

### **The research relationship**

The shared or partnership approach in this investigation was important for supporting the

collection of observation-based evidence, and for supporting the practitioner's self-development through reflection on what has been learned. Although both were part of the researcher's responsibilities in the first two Phases, the third Phase showed that colleagues and senior management in the settings could take on the first, while the second remained the responsibility of the 'research partner'.

### **The shifts of focus**

The action research model seemed to encourage adaptation and change in the researcher as well as in the practitioner. The shift of focus to evaluation in the earliest sessions of Phase One was matched by the realisation that collaboration could extend to more than the observer acting as a tool in the practitioner's hand. The researcher was also learning, and learning in action side by side with the practitioner.

### **Action research and practitioner self-evaluation**

Stenhouse's argument (1975) that each practitioner should be a researcher throws light on what practitioner self-evaluation requires. Research into supporting the research aspects of this aspect of the practitioner's role can throw light on how improvements in education can be supported.

In the next Chapter, a more detailed examination of the three Phases of this research will show the activities and evidence which took place.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **AN ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

**In this section of Chapter 3, all three Phases, which have been briefly outlined in the previous chapters, is discussed under the following headings:**

- the developmental stages of the research activities,**
  
- the shift in perspective,**
  
- the issues raised by the findings.**

**An overview of the three Phases is set out in Chapter One, and the methodology of the three Phases is described in Chapter Two. The documents relating to the research in the three Phases will be found fully presented in the Appendices.**

### **3.1. The developmental stages of the research, including shifts in the research perspective**

#### **3.1.1. Phase One**

It has been explained above that the first research activity (Phase One) has developmental links with two following Phases, Two and Three. Phase One has had the role of evolving some possible methods for case-study research and establishing some preliminary outlines of what might be learned in this way.

The research has already been presented in an overview (Chapter One) and from the point of view of its methodology (Chapter Two). It may be helpful to review in brief the salient points of the research Phases as they occurred.

In outline, Phase One went through several stages. The first two stages were with two infant teachers (spring and summer 1986, autumn 1986 to January 1987), during which the focus on evaluation gradually evolved, and a methodology based on observation by the researcher and analysis by the teacher was developed. The subsequent stages of Phase One involved attempts to develop this focus and methodology in other contexts. The contexts for this phase were a college-based course for undergraduates (1988), and the classroom work of student teachers (1988). These latter stages were not productive of the innovatory quality of insights and change in orientation towards reflection that the two teachers had demonstrated. In this, the latter stages

demonstrated some of the hitherto unexamined requirements for a successful collaboration of this kind.

In Chapter Two it was noted that the research has had a tendency to a changing and developing focus. The shift to an awareness of the role and concerns of the researcher was noted above. There was an earlier change, however; this first change was in the orientation of the investigations of Phase One which are now, in their content, investigations of teacher evaluation. However, at the outset at the beginning of 1986, there was a different intended focus - this was to have been how teachers approach helping children whose behaviour gave cause for concern. The writer felt this area of investigation, which had been chosen in advance of spending time in the classroom, was too externally-originating to reflect the agenda of the teacher and children and rejected it after the second session with the first teacher. A wider, more centrally focused subject was developed in collaboration with the teacher instead. This process of the developing focus and its successive stages are now to be described more fully.

As was explained in Chapter 1, Phase One went through different stages, of which the first two were formative for the approach to researching practitioner evaluation, and the later two identified some of the necessary conditions for such evaluation to take place. During these stages only one research perspective was perceived, although evaluations completed after the end of Phase One (May 1991) show an awareness that my own growing insights had affected the progress of the research (see Section 2 below). Awareness of the impact of the research on my own development was to come later (see below).



This description of Phase One will present for each stage an outline of the research questions applied to it, the methodology for data-gathering used, and the findings which distinguish that particular stage. These findings are the links to the succeeding stage through the questions which emerged from them to shape tentative ideas for future action.

### **3.1.2. Phase One, Stage 1: 1986**

**5 half-day sessions in the reception class of Teacher A. (Appendix A)**

This stage is analysed in greater detail than any succeeding stage because of its being the point where many formative decisions were arrived at. These were to be a continuing influence on the development of the rest of the Phase, and my contributions to the two succeeding Phases.

I began the research with the pre-formed intention, based on some classroom investigations of my own in 1983-4, of looking at how teachers provide for children who give them cause for concern in the classroom. I spoke to Teacher A, who was opening a reception class and we agreed to collaborate. [Children's names have been changed]

**Note of preliminary discussion 21.1.86.**

**7 girls/23 boys in reception class. AG's concern is for children who cause your attention to wander from other children - testing adults.**

**Emmanuel - lively, into everything and everyone's concerns.**

**Dean - hurting??? other children. [A was not certain whether this was intentional hurting]**

**Getting in touch with girls is also important to AG especially the quiet ones.'**

We agreed that I would gather information about classroom interactions between her and the children which would help her to match her children's needs as they settled in to the class.

#### **Session 1, 24.2.86**

On my first visit (24.2.86) I settled myself where I could make contact with children ...

**'while being able to see and hear interactions Child-Teacher and Child-Child in most areas of the classroom. Used brief notes to record general impressions and verbal/physical interactions; noted Teacher's descriptions and analyses of class, individual, her intentions, etc' [these were given to me verbally during the morning to help me 'find my feet in the class']**

I recorded my impressions of the class programme and the ethos the teacher aimed for;

**'Instructions during the morning referred to the group need for quiet talk, to care**

**of equipment that all use, and to the responsibility on users to tidy carefully what they had been using. Restrictions on individuals' activities were in terms for [of] danger to people and equipment (no running, chasing), noise, and room available at activities.'**

**First stage methodology.** I noted with pencil and paper what I called the 'Interactions Observed', which focused on what I felt were the times when the management of individuals' needs would be paramount - group time on entry to the class, for instance. In effect, these notes give snapshots of A's guidance and support for children, in which there is, not surprisingly, a strongly directive tone. I left space at the bottom of each page for her comments, which she used to give information on children's current concerns, such as a mother's hospitalisation due to a difficult pregnancy. At the end of the morning we had a brief discussion in which she gave me more details about her perceptions of the children, and how she hoped to develop the class behaviour. I recorded her comment on the class programme as follows:

**'She notes that it is hard for such young children to wait (for a turn or for permission to move freely); the group are "quite good, most of them, at finding something else to do when there isn't room and they have to wait their turn", but she wonders whether it might be more appropriate for them to start on activities as they enter the room in the morning rather than sitting together until all are present and the dinner requirements notified.'**

Teacher A is here introducing a different theme from the one we had given ourselves - one which springs from her concern with meeting the children's emotional needs, but which widens the focus to include the whole class. Neither of us seems to have been conscious of this change of emphasis at the time, although clearly it had an impact on our thinking, since this became her focus and she did indeed alter the classroom programme at a later date. For the meantime, however, we continued to try to focus on the management of particular children or particular times of day. Only certain children's names were changed for the record - not all children were to be observed in detail and recorded.

**Session 1: tentative findings and question/s arising from researcher's notes:**

How does A deal with individual children's behaviour?

Method of gathering data - problematic [length]

Pencil notes of significant interactions (these are selected by researcher)

Special focus on particular children (names coded)

A is aware of tension between young children's needs and class programme

No questions posed to me by A

**Session 2: 3.3.86**

The next session focused on methodology for recording information for the focus on management of behaviour. A felt that the record would be improved by the addition of the time of events and her position in relation to the child or children she was addressing. We agreed a way of recording this by the use of symbols.

The record of this session shows my thinking to have been concerned with both management and future development of ways of helping practitioners to help each other.

**'considerations of teaching style....and...issues of management' [and the fact that it had not proved too difficult to record the names of all the children present at the first session meant that] 'a teacher evaluator assisting a colleague would not need to allocate significant amounts of time to the stage of initiation into the group as a whole'**

The record of this second session was a note of how A spoke to the class in a continuous form, with the insertion of times, and with symbols to indicate her position in relation to the child or children she was addressing. I gave her a copy, and asked for her comments both verbally and in writing in the space at the bottom of each page of the record.

This session was formative for both of us. I had a serious methodological problem. In my covering letter I apologised for the length of the record (14 A-4 pages) and asked

**'was it an especially busy morning or was I just noticing more? I was really shattered afterwards but I can't see that much could be left out because your style of management applies over the whole field - or at least I think so!'**

A full list of code-names for the children was included with my record.

This continuous record highlighted more than the first one the length of time the children were sitting on the mat at the beginning of the day. The record began at 9.00, yet it was more than 30 minutes before the children could begin their activities.

**9.34 ...(She gradually settles children to activities...)'**

Teacher A wrote very little in the space reserved for her comments,, but what she wrote showed a certain discomfort, focused on the language she found recorded.

**'Shades of Joyce Grenfell!'**

**'I find it quite painful to read. My constant chatter seems quite banal!'**

At the end of the record, which included a summary of our conversation about individual children, she commented that she thought it was a very fair recording.

**Session 2: tentative findings and question/s arising:**

How does A deal with individual children's behaviour? (unchanged)

Method of gathering data - still a problem

Pencil notes, continuous record, timed, A's position noted (changed)

All children's names now coded (researcher's decision)

A is critical of own language use (changed)

No questions posed to me by A

### **Session 3: 10.3.86**

The next session's recording has, at the bottom of the first page, her comment

**'I definitely feel that I need to review the start to the day. - free activities perhaps? allowing children who need to talk the time and opportunity.'**

At the end of the session we discussed her beliefs about the kind of classroom provision that is appropriate for this age-group (reception). She described the need for

**'Lots of activities at once because of the risk of boredom - Must recognise their short concentration span. They also want attention instantly!' [A's written comment on the record of this last point: 'must gradually learn that this is not possible or desirable']**

#### **Session 3: tentative findings and question/s arising:**

How does A deal with individual children's behaviour? (unchanged)

How do teachers provide for reception children's needs? (joint concern, changed)

Method of gathering data - still problematic

Pencil notes, continuous record, timed, A's position noted (unchanged)

All children included in researcher's focus (unchanged)

A wants to review programme for start of day (changed)

#### **Session 4, 17.3.86**

The record of the fourth visit shows the children on the mat for a similar length of time to the previous sessions. A returned to focus on her language in her infrequent written comments, ending with

**‘After reading this I feel that I talk far too much and don’t listen to the children nearly enough.’ (17.3.86)**

I recorded in our discussion after the session:

**‘A was interested in teachers’ use of leading questions which can take the initiative away from the child; she finds this record sometimes causes her to wonder "why did I say it like that?"’**

It was after this session that A finally changed her arrangements for the 9.00 to dinner-money collection period so that children could come straight in and settle to activities at once.

I was still having problems with the amount of material there was to record (26.3.86). Discussions with College colleagues gave rise to the possibility of using a tape-recorder, perhaps with a throat-microphone for the teacher. I was concerned about this, because I felt it would limit the value of the process for classroom teachers unsupported by the resources of Higher



Education (Research Update, May 1986).

The attempt to show by symbols something of the conversational relationships in the classroom (who talked to Teacher A, to whom she addressed remarks) was still in operation. (It had been developed in recording the second session, noted on p.000, above, as a possible means of making the notation of classroom transactions easier and clearer. It was eventually dropped in favour of recording the conversations on tape.)

**‘This, though a poor substitute for the panning action of a video camera, would it was hoped help to indicate the salient features of the classroom from the management and personal relations point of view.’**

**Session 4: tentative findings and question/s arising:**

How does A deal with reception children’s behaviour? (changed)

How to record accurately and manage amount of material?

Method of gathering data - problematic

Pencil notes, continuous record, timed, A’s position noted (unchanged)

A is critical of own language use (changed)

A to change start of day programme (changed)

**Session 5, 30.6.86**

The summer term was busy for both A and myself - she had a student in her class, and I had

particular College commitments. There remained time towards the end of term for one or more possible sessions. Direction of the focus for this continuation was seen as being up to A. My Research Update of May 1986 summarised her interest in examining teacher language, and in restructuring her entry procedure to give children more time for activity. The Update was sent to A for her comments. In the meantime, I prepared an analysis of the kinds of language use I noted in the records of previous sessions.

We were at last able to meet to talk on June 10th, 1986. We discussed the issues of how to record sessions, and decided to try a tape-recorder. We hoped that this might help with the difficulty of being natural while being noted down which A expressed, and that it would also prove a more accurate tool. Teacher A said that, for the focus, she felt that the amount and functions of her own talk were something to be considered - she would like to develop her practice towards talking less and listening more, and towards a smaller role for controlling language. I asked if she would like me to count up her 'control' utterances, but she said please would I not, as she felt unhappy about the control function of her language - it made her feel that she was not putting into practice what she believed was essential for children's education. Instead, she proposed to continue the new entry procedures with the increased choice of activity at 9.00, and to examine her own use of language, particularly in relation to the children's own initiatives. We hoped to look forward to a more leisurely research relationship in which A could continue to draw on me for research support but at her own initiative and less intensively.

Unfortunately, however, pressure of time and other commitments meant that we were

only able to achieve one more session together - the one in which we used a tape-recorder and a radio-microphone to record A's talk (30.6.86). In this session A returned to her old pattern of keeping the children beside her on the mat until dinner money had been collected; she said that she needed to do this because she had to re-establish her relationship with the class after the student's teaching practice. She was pleased with the record of children's interruptions to the group discussion - **'The interruptions are a good sign - participation.'** I noted privately that this was the first time she had ever written a comment on a record of classroom interactions that was not self-critical.

Teacher A wrote no other comments on the record of this first tape-recorded session, which is hardly surprising since the transcript takes up 50 typed A-4 pages. The record was definitely a great improvement in terms of accuracy and 'real life' atmosphere, but it took 15 hours to produce, and was therefore hardly a likely candidate for general use by busy practitioners or busy lecturer/researchers. This was a problem to be tackled in the next classroom with Teacher B. However, Teacher A expressed her general satisfaction with the methodology in a discussion of 5.11.86. She felt that having an outsider to help was a positive thing - that exchanging roles with a colleague might not be so easy, as

**'[I] need relations redefining and the arena widening beyond one's usual perspective.'**

## **Initial findings from work with Teacher A**

This first stage of the research in Phase One was immensely influential on my understanding of what research with practitioners could be like, and how one might go about it. With A, whom the above records demonstrate to be a high-principled and conscientious teacher with a strong interest in research and in improving her professionalism, I learned about the kind of professional self-criticism practitioners could engage in. A's interest in language was, I feel, closely linked with her awareness of the need to adapt her class programme to match the emotional and social needs of her children. This self-criticism was deeply reflective and constituted a major act of professional self-interrogation. It was thus a strong confirmation that what I was trying to do was worth attempting - there was indeed much to be gained if a suitable methodology could be evolved.

But was it going to be possible to find a way to record classroom interactions accurately that would not be impossibly laborious? There was no question of my being able to repeat the 15 hours of transcription, nor of any teacher being able to take the time to read it.

The findings from this first stage can be summarised as follows:

### **Stage 1: findings and question/s arising at end of Stage:**

**Can an outside researcher help a practitioner to self-evaluate? Appropriate method of gathering data?**

**How can the methodology be improved?**

**Pencil notes or tape transcripts, very laborious**

**Findings and questions arrived at**

**Approach to evaluation is to a high standard of professionalism**

These were the immediate findings and questions to be taken on to Stage 2. Some underlying conclusions were also beginning to emerge.

**Underlying themes:-**

**The value of observation as a research tool:** Observation of children's experiences is the main agent of change in the research reported so far. The changes in understanding of children's educational needs which were noted in both teacher and researcher appear to result from the encounter with evidence from the educational setting, which documents the implementation in practice of principles and underlying values held by the practitioner. One common factor is advanced as the cause of this change-provoking quality in the evidence: it is evidence gathered through observation of interactions in the practitioner's own classrooms or other settings. Although there are pitfalls, difficulties and inevitable limitations associated with trying to construct a reasonably accurate record of children's educational experiences (see below, p. ), the overall impact of this method has been noted in all the different stages of Phase One. This approach became, along with questionnaires, the fundamental method for Phase Two (1990-3), and the main

method used in the classroom-based aspect of Project 3 (1993 onwards).

**The importance of the collegial approach:** Again, it is likely that observation was only one of the causes of increased reflection and analysis of practice. Teacher A pointed to other factors that must be influential in whether practitioners feel able to self-evaluate.

**‘You must not under-estimate the part you played in the success of your visits to my classroom. Your sympathetic, non-judgemental approach did a lot to put me at my ease and give me confidence in your presence. I came to value your observations and the subsequent discussions have been useful.’**

It would be rash to claim that the observation-based methodology described here is entirely responsible for the changes documented in Teacher A or, to look ahead, in Teacher B. However, it is not unreasonable to claim that supported observation and analysis did help both practitioners by giving them evidence on the basis of which they could evaluate their work, and that it encouraged them in their reflections on how their educational principles could best be put into practice.

### **3.1.3. Phase One, Stage 2, 1986-7**

Stage 2 consisted of 4 sessions in the classroom of Teacher B (a vertically-grouped infant class). (Appendix B)

In my letter to the head teacher I described the method as I felt it had evolved and offered:

**'my services as a recorder/observer of teachers' classroom interactions to enable teachers to take a more objective view of areas of their practice, evaluate what is happening and focus on areas they wish to adjust or develop. I have used both pen and paper recording and taped records with a radio-microphone attached to the teacher, sending a transcription after each session for the teacher's use and comments.'**

The response from the head teacher showed an interpretation similar to that I had formed from my work with Teacher A.

**'One member of our infant staff is interested in taking part in your research project next year. Her name is PW ....I also would be interested in this kind of activity going on in school as it would serve to raise people's consciousness about methods and the rationale for self-evaluation. Opening up the discussion with practical**

**examples would be very valuable...'**

**Focus of Stage 2:** In our brief preliminary discussion I suggested to B that my research could be like a light that she could shine on areas that interested her. Her first wish was to evaluate her support for children's reading, but she also mentioned a concern to know how children's needs were being met in the class, where there was a great range of stages as well as of ages.

**Methodology for Stage 2:** I was committed to using a tape-recorder and radio-microphone to record the teacher's interactions with children. Working from what A had said about the various factors that were problems for her, such as the discomfort of being observed and the importance of accuracy in the record, I felt we needed a different way of recording and analysing that would make the teacher feel things were more under her control. Also, it was clearly not a viable option for me to make a full transcript of the tape each time. I suggested that B took home the tapes and returned them at my next visit with her notes of what she felt to be significant, linked to the tape through the tape-numbers. I now realised that the teacher could select what were the most interesting parts of the tape to discuss. This would have the advantage of making it easier to focus on what B was concerned with, rather than my own pre-determined ideas. After I too had listened to the tapes we would discuss the implications and form plans for the next session.

### **Stage 2, Session 1, 28.10.86**

The record of this and the succeeding sessions is quite different from the previous records. B



has noted the outlines of the class programme, the activities and who took part in them, and significant aspects of children's behaviour. The following is a characteristic section. The names of children who are later focused on for particular reasons have been changed. The numbers refer to the tape-recording.

**516 return to class**

**assignments for morning**

**sorting leaves - Stacey, Joanne, Billy**

**number work - David, Claire, Hayley, Matthew and Jeremy**

**writing - Caroline, John O., Wayne, Michael D.**

**collage - Mark, John P., Michael H., Richard**

**607 Group of children were v. quiet - Joanne and Stacey particularly seemed inhibited by the tape although later in the morning they seem to forget about it.**

**627 Jeremy talks about his number activity**

**635 David is telling me that his number activity is too difficult and I sort out some different cards for him and get him to read the numbers off the cards before he begins.**

**678 Jeremy interrupts**

**(side 2)**

**24 Jeremy interrupts sorting activity**

**86 checking Jeremy's ??? [illegible] activity with him**

## **Impact of the methodology on the research activity**

The impact of the new methodology was noticeable. After the first session I felt rather disempowered. Without the tape I had no way of defining my own perspective, and it seemed as if I did not have anything much to contribute. I did not regret handing it over to B, but I realised that there is a need for some kind of record-taking if one is to take an informed view of what happens in a classroom. Another consequence of the new method was that there was no longer a joint feedback at once; instead, comment on the tape was delayed until we had both heard it. The first three tapes (including a tape of one child made during the second session) were discussed simultaneously on 14.11.86.

### **Session 1: tentative findings and question/s**

How does B deal with reading, and with individual children's needs? How is the researcher's own perspective on the class to be informed?

Method of gathering data: continuous taped record of B's talk with children, B analyses first

No questions posed by B until joint discussion of 14.11.86

### **Session 2, 12.11.86**

For this session I suggested to B that I should add to the records in addition to the tape my own pencil and paper observations of particular children. After discussion, we agreed that I would help B by observing two younger children following a literacy task, and one older child, Jeremy,

whose behaviour was taking up a large proportion of B's time. B's record from the tape is similar to that recorded above, except that this time she has listed the activities and those who took part in them separately from her notes of her observations of children's behaviour.

**[side 2]**

**345 Jeremy screeching**

**523 Stacey clearly enjoyed the story about the baby and was able to relate to many incidents in the book.**

**570 incident referring to David's taking other children's work - something he often does**

**627 conversation with Michael H.'s mum who had called in with an 'I'm 7' badge for Michael**

**644 Jeremy anxious for me to see his group's work**

**[side 3]**

**183 Joanne reading [Joanne is 6.10 years, she is experiencing great difficulties in learning to read - needs lots of encouragement to boost confidence and sensitive and patient treatment. Mum is over anxious and tends to get cross when Joanne gets things wrong.]**

The documentation for this session also includes my observation of Jeremy. Unfortunately the observation of the other two children has been mislaid, but I can record that B felt that it indicated that one child was very well-informed about classroom procedures and the literacy task

set, while the other was still in the early stages of settling in and would need a less demanding task.

The observation of Jeremy (6.3) at an activity sorting pieces of cloth into winter and summer weights caused us both great concern. He seemed to focus on the physical activity of cutting or sticking instead of the conceptual side, and did not seem to understand at all why one pile was for one kind of material and the other for a different kind. In the discussion that followed these first sessions (summarised in report of 14.11 86), I suggested evaluating the provision to see if there were ways in which he could be drawn more into the cognitive context of classroom activities. I also suggested developing a 'workshop' approach to representational activities, which would give opportunities to 'key in' to the children's personal concerns and preoccupations and obtain the deeper understanding of their qualities and home backgrounds which she (B) is constantly seeking. (The research implications of this suggestion are discussed in Section 2, below).

**'This would be a context within which the behaviour of specific children such as Jeremy could be appropriately studied, with plentiful opportunities for him to contribute through his spontaneous play and representation....'**

This document also records that B was continuing her interest in noting

**'Generally in area of the educational tasks of the class - children's completion of**

**writing assignments, number games, sorting etc., any problems, any interruptions. A particular awareness of one child as needing attention for work in process and for interruptions for social relationship issues with other children.'**

On 2.12.86, the day before Session 3, B wrote a note for me to see the next day. In it she said

**'The recording of the session 12 November does highlight the difficulty of listening to children read in a busy infant classroom. Perhaps the workshop idea may help to provide the children with an area in which they could work freely and to an extent independent of me allowing me some uninterrupted time for individual reading...I like your idea of using the tapes to evaluate my responses and interactions with Jeremy...I think too - I hope you agree - that it will be possible to follow both the aspects of**

**1) Jeremy - drawing him into the cognitive context of classroom activities and endeavouring to modify his behaviour.**

**2) Approaches to listening to children read.**

**I feel both will be possible because after listening to 12.11.86 tapes I do not think - but please feel free to offer constructive criticism - that my approach to listening**

**to children read and encouraging progress in this area needs changing. the real problem is, as I have already outlined, providing the right sort of context for children to read.'**

**Session 2: Research question/s**

How does B provide for reading? (unchanged)

Method of gathering data: taped continuous record, pencil notes of additional observation (changed)

B is less worried about reading strategies, seeking better context (changed)

**Session 3, 3.12.86**

Unfortunately the tape did not work for this session, and all the documentation that remains is my note of the workshop area which I had been asked to oversee. This includes the following short discussion with B:

**'Interested in play in classroom - could workshop etc. be used unsupervised? V [myself] if they were taught. Also workshop should have a normal place in the classroom routine as one of the options available. Will suggest P [B] directs children to wide range of opportunities at outset, enunciating each and not making play/work distinction.....'**

### **Session 3: Research questions**

Can B's workshop approach provide more for individual children? (changed)

Method of gathering data: pencil notes, taped continuous record (unchanged) but technical failure

Organisational and curriculum implications of workshop (changed)

These pose questions we shall have to consider as we go.

### **Session 4, 10.12.86**

Session 4's documentation shows that B made brief notes of her own activity as before, then listed the activities available and who participated, including:

**3) Workshop: Billy, Joanne, Sarah, Michael H.**

**4) Clay: Jeremy, Louise, Stacey, Hayley'**

The other activities listed were two number activities and making Christmas decorations.

My own notes included the following notes of our discussion:

**'PW [B] wondering whether she could fit some readers in this morning - possibility she may find it easier if she spread her teacher-intensive activities out throughout the day and adds more self winding activities eg. sand and water which could assist with other activities, as could [illegible - ? clay?] if replanned.**

**The very clear description of the day's activities each morning [to the children before they start the day] could include sand water malleables and workshop activities in the opportunities. The loss of tables would be made up by fewer [unfinished - ? activities requiring table space?]**

There is also a transcript made by me of a separate tape from the clay area during this session, which I made as part of an interest in monitoring the clay to see what changes would be needed for it to become a manageable part of B's normal routine. The transcript records the arrival of Jeremy's mother to take him to the dentist, and B's efforts to get the clay off his hands and jumper.

Lastly, in her letter of 14.1.87, B included a paragraph explaining how she organised her analysis of the tapes.

**'I have listed the children's starting activities and from the tape we learn how many of them spent the rest of their time that morning. You will remember that Hayley and Joanne did some excellent work in the workshop (race track and restaurant) and Michael with some other boys - don't remember who now - made a castle. A group of boys went on to work with Polydrons...Matthew, Caroline, Victoria and a number of others enjoyed the clay activity.'**

It seems clear that one of the great advantages of the tape for B was that she could use



it to track individual children through the session, and use the information gained to build up a much better picture of what they were getting out of her provision.

### **Initial findings from Phase One, Stage 2**

Teacher B summed up (letter of 14.1.87) what she felt we had learned together as follows:

**‘I think the workshop idea worked very well. You will notice - as I did - from listening to the tape that the number of times Jeremy sought attention throughout the morning is considerably less than on other mornings. It worked too for other children like Louise who is prone to be very demanding.**

**‘Of course, I have always included junk modelling and clay among classroom activities but these work areas are not available on a daily basis. I have tended to use them as, perhaps, afternoon activities, keeping to the development of more basic, cognitive skills in morning sessions. That doesn’t mean I am devaluing the importance of creative activities but that the notions of accountability and the importance of enabling my young learners to become literate and numerate juniors I do feel very keenly.**

**‘However, I believe the workshop idea could augment the development of cognitive**

**skills by providing a creative outlet for a number of children and leaving me free to work with individuals or groups.....The real problem for me as a teacher is one of organisation....'**

For me, the new learning that stage 2 and Teacher B had brought had to do with realising that the process of evaluation as we had come to define it over the past year was applicable to different teachers' purposes and different classroom settings. The contrast between Teachers A and B in terms of their age-group, class structure, outset preoccupations and particular interests was sufficient to be reassuring about the capacity of my strategy of supporting evaluation to help in a range of situations. The next question would be - was this approach capable of being applied more widely, and in what conditions?

The methodology was not perfect - a copy of the tape each would have enabled us to have informed discussions the week following the session - but it was much improved, and both of us were reasonably satisfied with it. The addition of observations as well made for a very full coverage.

Further to these general points, I had already learned that:

a) information gathered in as objective and accurate a way as possible was essential if we were to learn something new

b) it was important to have information about the children's experiences, through observations or tape-recordings, in order to make an evaluation which would help to improve their educational provision - otherwise the evaluation might take place on too narrow a front. Neither Teacher A nor Teacher B would have ended up feeling content if we had only focused on our initial concerns

c) collaboration could extend to more than the observer acting as a tool in the teacher's hand. I had undertaken a couple of brief observations to add weight to the interpretation that I had put on evidence from the tape - I was also taking a hand in suggesting some adaptations that B might find useful for her purposes.

These findings and further questions may be summarised thus:

**Underlying themes and questions beginning to emerge.**

Is self-evaluation as defined adaptable to different teachers' needs?

Can self-evaluation help in other settings than infant classes? (changed)

Method of gathering data: Pencil notes and taped continuous record (unchanged)

An answer to this question was sought in stages 3 and 4 of Phase One. Individual case-studies, as discussed elsewhere, cannot give us generalisations immediately applicable to other settings. What may be true for one setting may not be true for another, and where something so deeply rooted in personal values as education is concerned, it would need a very

large number of case-studies to establish the appropriateness of either methodology or conclusions drawn from investigations with a few practitioners in a few settings.

The research has developed a double perspective, which has latterly included the researcher in the investigation. The developing quality of this research has also led to the evolution of a second perspective. It appears from the retrospective analysis of the researcher's changing insights that the effort to understand the teacher's intentions and the children's experiences in various educational settings has been influential on the researcher as well. The role and experiences of the researcher as 'outsider' are seen as part of the research data. This is explored more fully in Section Two.

The investigations, therefore, encompass both what was learned about teacher evaluation from the investigations, and what was learned about the experiences of a researcher working with a teacher in a collaborative project of this kind. The overall impulse to reflection must be recorded. For instance, Teacher B summarised her overall response to the research involvement in a three-page letter which concluded as follows.

**'Well, Vicky, I hope all this helps. I've written my thoughts and discussions with myself much as the arguments, counter arguments and solutions occurred.'** (14.4.87)

The opportunity to reflect and develop was of great value to all who participated in this research relationship.

### **3.1.4. Phase One, Stages 3 and 4, 1988**

Stages 1 and 2 of Phase One had shown that evaluation was linked to the development of classroom expertise and understanding. This raised the question, could supported evaluation following the lines used be included in initial teacher education with profit? My hope was that by sharing this process with students I might help them to become more objective about their work. I was aware of occasions on which the evaluation of their learning and expertise tended to seem dominated by the view of the tutorial supervisor, and this contrasted uncomfortably with the self-monitoring of the two teachers I had worked with.

During 1988 some opportunities arose to explore the focus on evaluation with student teachers. As has been remarked above, this was not in itself a very satisfactory operation; however, there were definite benefits, both in terms of seeing what could not be done (what were the essential preconditions for evaluation) and in terms of seeing that even under unpromising conditions some students were able to make use of this approach to develop their expertise and insight.

By 1988, the collaboration had gone through the first two stages, during which the focus on evaluation gradually evolved, and a methodology based on observation by the researcher and analysis by the teacher was developed. The subsequent stages of Phase One involved attempts to develop this focus and methodology in other settings where evidence of young children's experiences could be used by practitioners to evaluate their provision. The different settings for

this phase were a college-based course for undergraduates (1988), and the classroom work of student teachers (1988).

Stage Three of the research project was conceived as an attempt to research some ideas that had arisen during Stages One and Two. These ideas were to do with:

- \* the relationship between the teacher's professional judgements about the classroom and sources of information - the need for methods of data-gathering that are as nearly objective as possible,

- \* the relationship between the teacher and the data - such as that the teacher grows in confidence from taking an active role in assessing the meaning of the data and in directing the focus of interest for further development,

- \* the relationship between the teacher and the outsider or researcher - such as that if they shared the assessment of the data the researcher would also be able to share in the classroom development of the strategies jointly worked out and give both practical and moral support to the teacher.

Were these factors fundamental to all processes of evaluation in education? If so, then they should apply just as much to student teachers as to practising teachers; if not, were they as fundamental as they seemed? Could some principles of evaluation be beneficial to student

teachers? Some of these principles might be seen as relating closely to central issues in the education and training of teachers - for example:

- \* the importance of objective feedback in making judgements
- \* the importance of taking responsibility for judgements about the way things are going in any given pedagogical situation and for deciding what are the priorities for attention
- \* the importance of feeling supported rather than undermined by the help one is given.

### **Details of the proposal for work with student teachers.**

The approaches to the two infant teachers had been informal and formative, which was suitable for the early stages of research and for a one to one collaboration. However, this new development would involve more people and the relationship would be different. A proposal was devised which, it was hoped, would be capable of meeting some of the requirements noted above, in particular the need to feel supported rather than undermined by help. The constraints of the pressure on the time of students and staff during teaching practice had to be noted. The proposal was outlined for students and their class teachers as a suggestion they might like to explore, which might be of help to them in a range of ways.

**‘These tape-recordings will be for the students to use as seems most fruitful; some may wish to listen and reflect, and record their reflections in their daily observations (both examples of pupils’ talk and their own responses/initiatives will be available**

**and accurate - a great boon to the very busy!); some may transcribe sections of the recording or the whole for discussion with teacher and supervisor, and include the transcription in their daily observations; [.....] However, some may be interested to know of this resource but not feel they are ready to make use of it at this stage.'**

Particular emphasis was laid on the students' need to avoid gathering too much data, partly because of the pressure of time and partly because the previous experience seemed to suggest that quite brief interactions contained much food for thought, and it was at the deeper levels of reflection that the most profitable insights were gained (eg the interaction with Jeremy)

### **The relationship between supervisor, student and classroom teacher**

Issues of power and control have been discussed earlier, particularly in relation to the control of data recorded in the classroom (see above, Teacher A and Teacher B). In relation to student teachers there is an additional dimension in that the relationship between student and supervisor, as between student and class teacher, is a pupil:teacher one, in which supervisor and teacher are seen as responsible for the student's learning. In addition, the class teacher has an over-riding responsibility for the pupils in the classroom, while the supervisor has an over-riding responsibility for deciding whether the student's performance reaches the required standard of the ultimate examining body.



The issues were again spelt out in a document which attempted to draw a distinction between the research relationship and the others in which the parties were involved. A particular point was made of what had been experienced in the first two stages of the research - that the teacher/student teacher needs to feel equally enfranchised in the research in order to feel the possessor of its conclusions. Reference may be made here to the dilemma posed by Bruner (1980) in relation to the separation of researchers and practitioners, and to the suggestions of Lynette McMahon (see discussion above) about the balance of power in research projects.

The situation was expressed to the participants as follows;

**‘....it may be taken that the relationships are more or less symmetrical as they function in regard to the ongoing process of evaluation of teaching practice and it is within this day to day process that the research strategy is located. The nature of co-operative action-research demands that each participant should be able to contribute to the development and evaluation of the project, and supervisor, teacher and student will each have an individual contribution to make to the collection, analysis and further use of the data gathered.’**

The idea of a research ‘contract’ arose because of a growing awareness that there were interests to be protected on both sides in the research relationship, and a responsibility for the children, staff and school as a whole. There was also a need to consider the issue of power in the research relationship. It seemed that a contract would be of particular importance in the

teaching practice situation, where different sets of interests and responsibilities overlapped between school and college to a greater extent than in the classroom context previously researched. It was also hoped, however, that it could be used in any research in schools.

Accordingly the following was put forward; to date no queries or objections have been advanced by any of the parties concerned, nor have any drawbacks or weaknesses yet been discovered in practice, but the wording was by no means fully tested.

### **Results of the proposal**

Just over half of the group took up the option (17 students.) Of those, for a variety of reasons, eight did not make an initial recording, and one recording, though twice attempted was a failure both times due to excessive background noise and the difficulty of adapting the technology to cope with this. A possible solution to this problem will be discussed below.

Illness (in researcher/supervisor as well as in students) and administrative problems accounted for five of the other non-recorders.

Of the three who declined the opportunity, the reason related to anxiety. Of these, one felt very anxious about the whole situation, so there was no question of attempting a recording. One had thought the recording would be played back to an audience including teacher and supervisor and the misunderstanding was not realised and corrected in time; "9.3.88. "H" at

[name of school] - said no, because of anxiety, but when she heard she wd. take the tape home with her she thought she cd use it another time. I might try later if poss. [Unfortunately there was not time for another attempt.]" (Notebook.)

Interestingly, another, Student G., was concerned that the selection of a particular period of time for recording made for an artificial situation - she would prefer, as would Students E. and F. (see Students, nos.10 and 11), the tape-recording opportunity at a time when she knew she could initiate its use when she wished. " pm "G" at [name of school] - felt it was an intrusive element when a particular time was selected - a bit artificial. She + I thought she might find it easier to use it first on half-day visits as the RM [radio-microphone] cd run throughout." (Notebook, 3.3.88.)

This last problem had to do with the difficulty of using expensive equipment which had to be brought and looked after by the supervisor and was therefore linked to once weekly visits at a time which might not be the most suitable for tape-recording; it seems likely that this gave at least Student G. the feeling of being unable to control the process so as to use it to greatest advantage in her particular situation, and the suggested solution will be explored for the future, along with modifications to the technology (see below).

However, the suggested solution may bring other benefits as well; the suggestion, made by three of the students, of trying the method during half-day visits to local schools may help both with the feeling of control and with the pressure of trying to use a new method during so

stressful a time as blocked teaching practice.

This area of control and confidence, already noted in relation to the two practising teachers, seems certain to have been an important influence for the students as well. Not only were they subject to the same anxieties about the experience as the teachers, they had other potential sources of worry too; they were in unfamiliar classrooms, engaged in only their second experience of blocked teaching practice, and, perhaps most challenging of all, in the relationship themselves of pupil to teacher, in which it is always difficult to maintain one's self-confidence. In these circumstances it is a tribute to the students' morale and maturity that the proposal was seen in a positive light by many, and that several made good use of the recordings, whether transcribed or not - only Student E. went through the full process and produced a transcription.

However, this factor of confidence is a problem which must be researched more fully; self-evaluation is so valuable a part of the teacher's professional equipment that renewed efforts must be made to make the process more acceptable and usable for the students.

### **Aspects identified for further consideration**

As only two students returned a response to the request for a formal evaluation it is difficult to be certain about what might be the crucial factors for all the students, but the two who responded, and the informal comments of others, indicate areas where one could begin to look.

### **Familiarisation:**

Student E. was certainly aware of a feeling of disquiet about the process; "Initially I was quite hesitant about using the technique as nobody likes to hear their own voice on tape plus the horrendous things you say without realising." However she had been trying out the effect of tape-recording before and found that this helped with the anxiety. In her analysis she develops this idea, and suggests how more experience could help with the feelings of uncertainty. This is a very useful pointer to the potential value of time to get used to the technology and the feelings, and making the use of tape-recording a more normal part of daily practice should be tried for the future, in whatever circumstances seem most favourable - perhaps in college to begin with.

**"As mentioned above taping did alter my reactions in some respects and I think you inevitably feel more self-conscious because of this. The only solution I feel would be a lot more experience, i.e. more taped sessions, whereby after a time you felt entirely confident and natural."**

Student F. also points to unfamiliarity as a problem;

**"Personally, I was aware of the microphone all the time, even when talking to the children - and this is a problem for observation-based research."**

However, she sees a useful role for taped interactions, and envisages them as part of the ongoing work in college.

**"I enjoyed using the tape-recorder and would like the opportunity to do so again. It could be used on the half-day visits and it might be interesting and valuable to listen and discuss recordings in seminar groups or with individual tutors. There could be more of this type of work in college."**

Student E. however has reservations about work in college, and it would be necessary to remember that reactions will not all be the same.

**"Personally I would not like taping within the college setting as it is much worse speaking before peers than before children! I think I would be too self-conscious and this would probably defeat the object of the exercise."**

In conversation with Student G. the topic of the role of the supervisor as model in this process came up;

**"I also mentioned briefly the possibility of using it on myself - my role as model is probably much more important than previously with the two teachers. I did consider taping the supervisor/student/teacher exchange, but on reflection I feel this is altogether another ball-game + in addition there wd. be a whole new set of interests to safeguard + confidentiality to observe so it would probably be best to tape ordinary interactions with chn. I could perhaps get some material useful for Clio and friends ? ["Clio and friends" is the working title for the personal and collaborative evaluation written up as Stage 4 (3.3.88, see below).**

**Technology:**

Problems were frequently experienced with noise levels in the classroom. Several factors may have contributed to make this more of a problem than in the earlier work; the students were working in nursery classrooms where it was rare for a large group of very young children not to be speaking and playing spontaneously - where a student had a group in a separate room the difference was striking,( see Notebook, Student I, and RM reflections,29.2.88.) unlike the practising teachers the students were not experienced in projecting their voices in the classroom nor were they normally addressing a large group all at once, so their own voice levels were low. The students were particularly interested in hearing what the children said, and this was especially difficult since they were younger than those previously recorded and their voices often less distinct.

After consultation it was decided to try using personal tape recorders with built-in volume control; students would in future be able to have both the occasion of recording and the volume of recording under their control. These have been purchased and will shortly be tried out.

**Conclusions - essential conditions for research**

It is to be hoped that these two suggestions for further action will make it possible to explore self-evaluation with students more fully. It is most important that they should be helped, not just to take a self-aware and professionally self-critical stance to their teaching, but that they should feel not less but more secure and confident as a result of doing so. Clearly there is much

to be learned about how to do this, and in the process to be learned about what is involved in teaching, in learning to teach, and in learning to teach well.

In the case of the two practising teachers the introduction of the researcher meant the introduction of an outsider, of another and independent eye, into the classroom. Students work in classrooms where they are continuously under other independent and professionally critical eyes; perhaps the introduction of the idea of techniques of self-evaluation will help them to develop that inner eye through which their own independence of judgement may develop? This was the conclusion after seeing the first two students use the tape-recorder and radio-microphone on teaching practice.

**"Overall impact of RM seems to be as another eye, another perspective. Makes one concentrate/focus on what is happening wch. will be recorded, + later engages one in its own perspective by contrast w. one's own. V. like having another person, whom one has endowed w. insight into this, come into the CR."**

**(Notebook, RM Reflections, 29.2.88.)**

These latter stages were not in themselves wholly unsuccessful, in that gains in understanding can be shown in each. Yet they were not productive of the innovatory quality of insights and change in orientation towards reflection that the two teachers had experienced. In this, the latter stages demonstrated some of the hitherto unexamined requirements for a successful collaboration of this kind.



**There must be agreement on the subject of evaluation.**

During the college-based course, students were told of the research concern with evaluation. They were asked to keep notes of their own learning during student presentations and group discussions so that their gains in understanding through their own activity could be monitored. At the end of the course a summary was circulated for comment. It appeared from the responses that while some students had made gains in their capacity to reflect on their own insights and understanding, many had seen the exercise as just another invitation to evaluate the course.

(Appendix C)

**Practitioners need to feel reasonably secure in order to undertake evaluation through observation.**

The student teachers who were invited to collaborate were on their second teaching practice of the course. Although they were aware that it was College policy to educate them in self-evaluation of their work, several factors made it difficult for them to use the research methodology to do so. The short amount of time in the classroom, anxiety due to the nature of the relationship between researcher/tutor and student, and inexperience of the use of a tape-recorder were all cited by students. (Appendix D)

Nevertheless, it should be recorded that a few students showed a grasp of some of the principles of self-evaluation and a willingness to try the methodology that was significant, given the difficulties - conceptual, emotional and practical - noted above.

The encouragement derived from this suggested that further research could profitably be undertaken with outside funding to see how far the obstacles identified could be removed or minimised to enable students to improve their practice and understanding through evaluation. A proposal was drafted as follows, which shows some of the lines thought to be favourable. Unfortunately no funding was available.

*RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL: February 1989*

*Strategies of self-evaluation in initial teacher education*

*Research undertaken so far with serving teachers, and through a pilot study among a group of student teachers, has suggested some critical factors in successful strategies of evaluation in the classroom. These include reliability of feedback and a genuine equality of direction of the classroom investigations or research...the use of tape-recordings of classroom interactions in a structured framework of analysis and evaluation can enable teachers and students to examine the detail of their practice in classroom situations in a way that achieves greater objectivity without too great a risk of undermining confidence.*

*The education of student teachers is an extremely demanding professional task; the learner has to be assisted to come to an awareness of the needs of individual pupils, of the classroom as a functioning whole and of the impact of teachers' strategies within a comparatively short space of time in order to be able to benefit from educational input during the I.T.E. course. Without this awareness much that is heard or read is meaningless, and time can be wasted before students achieve the transition from a subjective to a more objective approach to their practice. In this process the teacher educator needs to take account of the same fundamentals of development of classroom expertise and understanding as are described above; in order to educate student teachers effectively it is necessary to incorporate principles of objective feedback and reasoned direction of investigations into programmes of guided classroom experience.*

*The developing trend in Government proposals towards basing the development of teaching expertise and understanding in schools rather than in Higher Education provides a justification for focusing on ways to maximise student learning in the classroom while maintaining the input of Higher Education into such areas as child development and curriculum studies. The proposal suggests that an emphasis on observation-based evaluation by students would provide this.*

*Recent pronouncements by the Secretary of State for Education and Science on the importance of giving high priority to preparing students for effectiveness in the classroom, combined with the CATE requirement that all students should now spend two years of*

*their initial teacher education in subject study at their own level, face teacher educators with the dilemma of how to provide more professional input in a much shorter time than was previously available when all-education B.Eds. were acceptable. There is, therefore, an even greater incentive to explore ways of making the most effective use of time spent on classroom experience, and it would seem a profitable line of enquiry to examine the use of technological feedback within a supportive framework as one option.*

*The attached outline 'Observation and Meeting Individual Needs in the Early Years' (Appendix D) describes an attempt to help students to focus more precisely on what takes place in their interactions with groups and individuals in classrooms; it is hoped that through their close examination of the data obtained they will be able to assess individual children's stages of understanding and provide appropriately for them in their projections of further provision. They will also be able to evaluate their own development and test out their evaluations against the perceptions of their supervisor and the classroom teacher. Not only does the use of tape-recordings have the advantage of providing fairly incontrovertible data to which student, teacher and supervisor can refer, it also makes a much more effective use of the supervisor's time in that all three parties can have access to information gathered while the supervisor may have been helping elsewhere.*

The ideas put forward here for development have not been explored as yet. The future of Higher Education's role in initial teacher education is uncertain and this casts a query over

many initiatives of this kind. However, it may be that in later days it will be possible to try to help students to get further along the path of self-awareness and objectivity in this way. The accounts that follow may be able to give more detail of the kinds of benefits that might be expected from such a development.

### **3.1.5. Phase Two, 1990-3**

It has been explained that although the two subsequent Phases were separate in conception and structure from Phase One, my part in them built on elements drawn from the first Phase.

In Phase Two (1990-3) the intentions of the project were to explore how monitoring and evaluation of practice might be done should the expected expansion of employer-led day-care take place. The rationale for the project was defined in terms that are similar to those evolved in the earlier work on evaluation reported above - the improvement of provision for learning through supporting practitioners in evaluating their work. The design of the research has been outlined in Chapter Two, and details of the methodology will be discussed in Chapter Seven in the context of reflections on research relationships. The action-research cycle as it was conceptualised at this stage will be found below. The cycle itself is of great importance, but an aspect that was essential to it which deserves discussion was the process of analysis and reflection which enabled practitioners to become more conscious of the issues arising from their observations.

## **The role of reflection in developing the research**

There is a strong emphasis in this Phase on reflection and discussion. Development is often through debate arising from the examination of underlying values implicit in choices. In order to ground decisions both in the real experiences of children and in the principles of staff, debate should draw on a body of information to explore as well as theories to dispute. Without qualitative enquiry that is grounded in the classroom experiences of children and teachers there would be no first-hand material for the debate, and no meaningful discourse to support the debate.

Communication, verbal and written, formed an important part of development throughout the project. During the first year (1990-1) discussions with participants were circulated in summaries focused on expressing shared understandings about what is involved in evaluation in the early years of education. During 1991-2 broader aspects of the project were discussed, including the role of the researcher in the development of the project.

The two basic parts of this project's work to develop the self-evaluation process were observation and discussion of observations. The ongoing process of information-gathering was focused on child-observation to inform staff about their children's experiences and achievements, and this formed the basis of discussions about the evaluation of work by staff. Although staff had thought (and feared) that they themselves would be observed, only the first stage of Phase One had concentrated on recording the practitioner, and that for reasons of researcher-

acclimatisation. From the second stage onwards it had been found profitable to rather present the practitioner with information and discuss what could be concluded from it (see above).

During 1990-1 the programme of observation-based evaluation got slowly off the ground. There were two reasons for this slowness. The first was the essential process of acclimatisation which the researchers needed in order to acquire a degree of 'inside understanding' of the children, the staff and the structures of the two Centres. (More will be said of this below). The two researchers each undertook a programme of observation of the children and the curriculum provided. The second reason for a slow start was that there were some important understandings about the research approach which needed to be established, in particular that staff were not going to be appraised or examined on their work, and that the researchers intended to focus on staff evaluating their own effectiveness in achieving their own aims.

The following will give an idea of the range and depth of thinking produced. Two examples of staff self-evaluation now follow, one from each Centre.

### **Centre 2 - J, spring-summer 1991**

J followed a programme of observation of a baby in her care, in order to see what kind of provision seemed best to meet her needs for stimulus. The observations began when B was 3 months 3 days. The full version of these observations will be found in Appendix E.

### **B, 3 months 3 days**

**B is sitting in the bouncy chair in front of the mirror. B turns her head from side to side. She looks in the mirror, her eyes fix on Katie's dress. She watches Katie walk across the room. B looks up at the shelf. An adult walks into the room. B turns her head to the left and looks at adult, then turns her head back and looks at self in the mirror. She starts to move her arms and legs. She watches the movements. The adult that has just walked in is standing next to B. The adult starts to talk. B turns to the adult and watches the adult. Elizabeth walks past B on her right hand side. B turns her head to the right and follows Elizabeth's movements.**

### **Comments**

**'I wanted to see B's reactions to the mirror without the added attractions of mobiles. When the adult entered the room, I could have asked her not to stand by B and to be quiet, but I felt it important to observe B's reactions to the adult. B is watching intensely everything that is going on, the slightest new movement or action, B will fix on.**

### **B, 3 months 24 days**

**B is lying on her back, head turned to the left, looking at her reflection. She turns her head back to the hanging mobile, then back to the mirror. She watches herself.**



**Katie [another child] walks over to B and pulls at the mobile.**

**B turns her head to Katie and the mobile. B looks, turns away to look in the mirror: her legs are kicking...**

**B, 4 months 19 days**

**NN [nursery nurse] sits B up holding her. "Do you want to look in the mirror sitting up?" B smiles. NN lays B down on to her back. NN "Look B." NN taps the mirror. B turns her head to the mirror and looks at herself for a few seconds. Another baby crawls over to B. B turns and looks at the baby. After a while the baby moves off. B turns back to the mirror and starts to gurgle. She continues to look for three or four seconds. Then the other baby crawls back to B. B turns her head back to the baby. The NN talks to the baby. B turns her head to the NN then back to the baby...'**

**B, 5 months, 13 days**

**B is sitting in the bouncy chair which has a toy attached to the chair...B turns her head to another baby, turns back to mirror then to NN sitting beside her. Jamie moves towards B. B turns her head to the mirror, then back and plays with the toys on the chair. B begins to move her arms and legs and begins to cry. The NN lifts B out of her chair and comforts her.' (Appendix E)**

In conversation J commented that her first view, that B would follow with her eyes any action or new happening had been confirmed (see above). Now she also had information from the series of observations that B consistently preferred children and adults to toys, and that even her own self in the mirror was less exciting than a new person. This would help her develop and change the way she thought about providing for B, and for other babies in her care (Appendix E).

I feel it is important to include this long series of observations because it shows the quality of observation and analysis that the practitioner brought to it. It also shows the quality of understanding of young children's development that is necessary if self-evaluation is to be effective - a theme that becomes clear during this Phase.

### **Centre 1 - A, spring-summer 1991**

At Centre 1 there was a particular interest during the first year of the Project in the outdoor play area. A approached this by starting off with observing an individual child, and later developed ways of additionally tracking children's use of particular pieces of equipment (see Appendix E).

#### **Observation of J, outside [all children out after lunch]**

##### **12.34 sitting in tyre - watching children**

**R comes out of sandpit and puts sand on her. J does nothing. R told not to by staff.**

**12.35 J gets up, walks away. Trips up, starts to cry. Child [Sophia] comforts her. She comes over to me. Stands by me. "I'm trying to find Mavis and Lisa." Where have they gone? They must be somewhere.**

**12.37 Walks to classroom door - runs with Mavis, Lisa, Mabel, Sophia and Kayleigh. Others run on to hill. J stops, walks holding hands with S - walking on small wall around raised beds by trees.**

**12.45 Sees me watching her + comes over to me. Holds my leg. Picks up "ice-cream" trolley wanders round on own pushing it. Joins others at bottom of slide, pretending to give ice-creams to them. Pushes trolley away - watches girls [Lisa, Mavis, Mabel] at top of hill. All rush down to her trolley.**

**12.46 Pushes trolley into corner and plays handing out ice-creams to Sanjay - goes under "lorry-climbing frame". Goes round to animals.'**

The observations of individual children's use of the playground, of which many more will be found in Appendix E, gradually built up a picture of what children were wanting to use the playground for. It also helped to build up a staff consensus on what they wanted to do for playground provision. A new characteristic of Phase Two is that we were relating to a group of staff as well as to individuals. The quality of the evaluation still depended on the capacity of individual practitioners to observe and analyse, and to discuss and reflect, but with groups of

staff involved there was also the question of the group consensus about how provision should develop. This was the reason why H and A at Centre 1 wanted to develop a programme of development of outdoor provision in which all staff could be involved.

By November 1991 it seemed that staff at Centre 1 were pleased with the results of their work. In a discussion about the research the following comments were made:

**HJ - We looked and talked more. Staff bring up regularly in meetings the criteria [for staff roles in outdoor provision]...Peer appraisal and monitoring easy to accept professionally now**

**JC - Children are discovering more - using buckets in sand more imaginatively...effect of more varied provision from observation of children...'**

At Centre 2 staff had also been thinking about outdoor play and observing children, although they did not construct a schedule for use of equipment as did Centre 1. With Centre 2's smaller numbers it seemed appropriate to make observations and discuss them as usual. The results seem to have been appreciated.

**23.9.91 'Since our discussion on the use of the garden, I have observed a lot of children playing very imaginatively, in groups and individually and**

**alongside of others. Generally the children appear to be calmer and happier, less arguments breaking out, children absorbed in creative and physical activities and working co-operatively. LB, Coordinator of Centre.**

### **Insights into the process of evaluation from Phase Two**

Active participants were asked their views on the place of evaluation. In May 1991 an interim statement was circulated, summarising the views of the chief participants, both researchers and practitioners, as gathered from interviews and noted by VH.

**L [head of Centre 2] sees our joint investigation of the monitoring and evaluation process in terms of ongoing staff development, and feels that she, as team leader, should take a leading role in it, and also incorporate it into the regular sessions she has with individual members of staff to review their professional development. H and A [Centre 1, respectively deputy-head and team leader] have said that they feel a responsibility for structuring the centre's continuous review of its work to include the research into monitoring and evaluation. They feel that while I was absent [a term's illness] the impetus towards observation died down, and that if anything is to happen they must take the initiative... They are incorporating the investigations into the centre's theme of outdoor play; they have been working to develop their**

**provision for this during the year 1990-1, and see the research as an opportunity to continue the focus.....'**

The participants' discussion document from which these points are taken can be found in full in Appendix E. Further points also emerged:-

- \* Staff need to base their monitoring and evaluation on their own professional insights
- no blueprint can exist for how we actually go about evaluating since different people will be concerned about different things. However, certain ways of approaching evaluation can be identified;

- \* observation - this means the normal open-minded process that staff use when they want to get some idea of what is going on, without a preconception about what is being looked for in any specific sense

- \* getting another view to balance one's own observation

- through collection of evidence in additional ways or with a special focus [i.e. tape recording or observing one child in particular]

- and through use of another colleague as collaborator, extra observer or in some other way

- \* discussing the meaning of the observations and other evidence - this is the point at

which issues or problems may be identified

\* thinking about why we decide one aspect is particularly important - this is where we are talking about the professional decisions staff make about their work and how they have underlying reasons for their decisions [we could call these professional criteria of quality].

\* forming an explanation about what is going on and what, if anything, to do about it. This leads to forming of plan of action, putting plan into action, then observing again, again trying to be as open as possible to an objective view of things that are going on. Again, at this stage extra evidence and help from colleagues is very important.

\* The whole process is a continuous one, because staff will hopefully go on thinking about what has happened as a result of their actions and will continue to evaluate their work.

The project confirmed the importance of the professional processes of observation and assessment that practitioners go through in evaluating their work. It established that criteria for evaluation are directly related to the principles which define participants' conceptions of education and of childhood itself; one of the participants (Centre 2) added to her response to the questionnaire a statement reasserting the value of the principles of her original training. It has been the experience of the project that participants believe that evaluation is to be discussed in

the light of these principles and the values by which these principles are justified.

Through sharing and discussing the process of evaluation practitioners relate their principles and the values which support them to the provision that they make for the very young children in their care. In order to discuss what might be developmentally appropriate provision, staff have to be prepared to examine their own practice in the light of their principles.

Participants in the project have emphasised that they do not feel it would be possible for nursery workers, whether qualified or not, to undertake and maintain a critical approach to their work without an outsider to bring an alternative perspective to bear, and to give the moral support necessary for self-evaluation of their practice. Staff also made it clear how much they wished to have opportunities to continue their professional development and how much they valued a non-judgemental but professionally critical outsider's collaboration.

### **3.1.6. Phase Three, Principles into Practice, 1993 onwards**

Phase Three is a national enquiry into the circumstances, training and professional principles of a representative sample of practitioners working with children under eight in England and Wales. It is funded by a large City charitable trust. It has a projected life span of three years. It employs three full-time research associates and four members of College staff part-time. The writer's involvement in the programme of case-study research into practitioners'



application of their principles in classroom practice is the area of the project described here. It is described from the point of view of

a) the continued recording of practitioners' use of an action-research approach to evaluating and improving their work

b) the continued exploration of the role and development of the practitioner who supports these practitioners in their evaluations

Details of the quantitative enquiry will be found in Appendix F. The categories of information include: kinds of provision examined, qualifications of staff, what the head of the institution believes are the factors that facilitate a quality curriculum (ranking items) and what constrain a quality curriculum (ranking items). Two questions have elicited personal responses: the first asks what constitutes a quality curriculum, which requires respondents to write down their principles, and the second asks how teachers of young children should be trained. The quantitative information is being processed, as are the responses to the two, more qualitative, questions (Blenkin et al 1994, Blenkin et al 1995). Of the qualitative elements within the questionnaire, the professional narratives describing the curriculum have highlighted certain issues. There are, for instance, statements about teacher training and its content.

## **Piloting a methodology for qualitative studies**

The case-studies are intended to focus on how the practitioners' principles are being translated into practice. The approach has been to work with practitioners in their classrooms in an action research structure, along similar lines to those of Phase Two on monitoring and evaluation in workplace nurseries.

Since 1993 I have worked with practitioners in two different settings. The first is Centre 1 of Phase Two, where staff were keen to continue and develop their work. I have worked with a member of staff - 'Bob' - who is responsible for children under eighteen months, and with 'Ruth', through whom I have been drawn in to work with her team looking after children of two upwards. The second setting is a maintained nursery school, where I have worked with two members of staff who work as a team in one classroom. Although we have here pursued separate topics, following each practitioner's particular interests, the topics have shown similar concerns and have similar impacts on the team's approach to their class.

The first collaboration was with Bob, and it was with her that the pattern of working was established. As agreed with the Principles into Practice research team, Bob first gave her definition of what constitutes a quality curriculum for young children, and then described her particular focus as heuristic play - provision of materials for exploration and play for children in the second year of life. (For details of heuristic play see Goldschmied and Jackson 1994). We agreed on a strategy which involved a regular cycle of observation by me of an aspect of work

defined by Bob, comment by Bob, redefinition of the focus by Bob, a new observation and so on. Through this cycle I hoped to see Bob's principles in action as she commented on and evaluated her practice. When Ruth joined the research in the late autumn the same pattern was followed with her, with a focus on her chosen interest of autonomous use of classroom workshop provision by three and four year olds.

Pattern of observation and analysis:-

Visit 1:        Focus of observation 1 decided on by practitioner  
                  VH undertakes observation 1  
                  VH gives evidence from observation to practitioner  
                  Practitioner evaluates practice from evidence

Visit 2:        Practitioner defines focus on basis of visit 1's work  
                  VH undertakes observation 2, etc

Method of observation:-

Observations undertaken for Bob were at first made by a combination of paper and pencil notes backed up by tape-recording, but both Bob and I found this inappropriate for use with such young children. Latterly a video-recorder has been used. This is more satisfactory in that it picks up evidence of children's body movements and facial gestures, their use of space and

relationships with each other, and their vocalisations. This record has been found to be of interest by the Head and parents as well as useful for the research, and we hope to continue using the video-camera.

### **Impact of Bob's video evidence**

The children's use of the play materials is striking. The five or six children, all under 15 months, play for almost 40 minutes, with minimal contact with adults, and with almost no conflicts between themselves. Their concentration is deep, and, undisturbed by any external distraction, they explore with all their senses the uses they can make of the 'found' materials (Appendix F). The effect of observing the children using the selected play materials has been to change Bob's appreciation of established practice in daily provision in her room. She feels that often it would be better to put out fewer materials for play, to change them less frequently, and to aim for the kind of long and deep involvement that the videotape shows. She sees a different staff role as vital for this, expressing it as 'keeping quiet and being company' for the children. She has now requested that the video record should take place in the room the children regularly use. So far the evidence (Appendix F), suggests that her hypothesis is right. A child of 12 months has displayed concentration patterns similar to those shown in the earlier video, while playing with water in her home-base room and supported by Bob.

With Ruth, the observations are handwritten. The following excerpt gives an example of the material that is being collected and fed back into the nursery team (2 teachers and 2 nursery nurses) of which Ruth is a member. An example follows:

**Observation.**

**15.11.93 Three year olds using graphic materials (Jade, Alisha, Daryl, Flora). Different colours and shapes of paper, felt pens and pencils, on a small table, with two chairs. Ruth working nearby with another group of children. The observation begins with Jade and Alisha seated side by side, discussing their work as they use the materials. Various aspects of children's awareness of literacy appear, particularly its roots in the home and the children's understanding of the classroom's practice in relation to their work.**

**In the observation R=Ruth, who was sitting at a nearby table.**

**'A: you've got the same as me**

**J: my mum's got this**

**J: look, look at me, Ruth**

**R: beautiful**

**J: this paper.... you got to do a name on it**

**D: (takes pen)**

**J: no, no....don't take some, got to put a apron**

**A: (inaudible)**

**J: let me do it**

**done it**

**R: you got enough room there, Daryl?**

**D: (brings another chair and sits on end of table)**

**J: I'm going to make it again (draws an enclosed shape)**

**.....I've got Daddy**

**A: I've got Grandma**

**(pause while they work in silence)'**

**(Appendix F)**

We agreed in discussion that Ruth's introduction of a 'workshop' approach was well worth pursuing, not least for what she learned about the children's understandings and associations, and that she would choose another similar focus next time.

Later observations enabled us to look more deeply at what was involved in supporting and extending children's autonomous use of provision. We began, after two more observations, to see that the adult's role in supporting autonomous behaviour was a subtle and challenging one. In the second observation, we saw a member of staff involved in a play situation where one child was immensely expert in the details of her own Chinese family's meals, while the adult had to support other children who were novices, as well as play at a complex level. The last observation showed an adult having, again, to play on two levels - one, a Lotto game with four children, and the other, a one-to-one game of deliberately mismatching the Lotto cards to create fantastic animals, as a ploy to engage the adult's attention by this one child among four. Looking back at the original observation printed above, we felt that we should note also the challenge to Ruth to be aware of the children's own associations with literacy, which would direct future provision.

During this term Bob continued to use the video to monitor developments in her room. She wants to use video as a way to evaluate her provision as well as to gather information about children's individual development. She pointed out that practically this meant having either to video a particular area or to follow a particular child or group, and she had felt pulled between her two concerns. However, she did in fact have evidence relevant to both.

This is a summary of her comments on video material from various dates: a copy of the video is available in the research office.

**Bob's overall conclusions are that she has evidence of the following as important factors in the activity and behaviour of her children, who are aged between 12 months and 2 years 10 months:**

- 1. Social interaction is of great value - see Grace below.**
- 2. Length of concentration on chosen focuses by many children.**
- 3. Enjoyment of solitary play - see Zachariah below.**
- 4. Children including those well under 3 showing knowledge and enjoyment of books, holding them right way round and turning pages in the right direction - see John below.**

**5. Children's enjoyment of repetition - see Rory and slide steps.**

**6. Staff very unhappy about appearing in the video - 'avoided it like the plague'.**

**Comments by Bob on detail of material:**

**28.10.94, 10.40 am**

**Grace 12m engaging in social relationships, especially with Mateo who is considerably older. She talks, shares home corner type play, giving and taking.**

**Grace talks to her doll (the same as on 2.11.94), and pushes it along in a buggy, even though she is still crawling.**

**Zachariah 2y in home corner play by himself.**

**John 18m by himself turning the pages of a book he has chosen. Says 'butterfly' then goes to Rory to show him. 'Rory...book...book.' Z later speaks on phone to Daddy, then chats to Rory 16m over a low divider.**

**John looks at the children's family photos displayed on the wall, one of which includes a visit to some ducks. He goes away quacking.**

**31.10.94, 11.10 am**

**Heuristic Play - Grace, Molly, Anoushka 2y and Rory.**



**Bob comments that this form of provision challenges staff to adjust to their new role of being quiet and supporting the children when necessary - they have to make a shift in their concept of the curriculum from what the adult does to what the children do.**

**2.11.94, 10.30 am, 2.50 pm.**

**Home corner, small world/small toys area**

**Grace with doll - talking to it, putting it on her shoulder and patting its back soothingly. Older child greets G, she responds. He leaves, she wavers between doll and following him, eventually crawls after him, then returns to doll. Follows child to door to bathroom area, then goes in and out several times with evident purpose.**

**4.11.94, 9.50 am.**

**Importance of choices by children about when to go outside and what to do there - these are relevant to adults creating the outdoor environment.**

**Rory 17m loves the rabbit and spends some time feeding it with leaves.**

**15.11.94, 9.35 am**

**Rory explores the steps of the slide - a continuous interest for him. He needs to be able to do this whenever he wants, which is an argument for not changing provision just because staff feel it needs to be changed.**

Grace loses her teddy to an older girl and refuses a substitute as does the older child. Grace will not be resigned to her loss, nor will the other. Bob notes how difficult this situation is since neither child yet has the understanding of waiting for a turn. Vicky remembered afterwards that Elinor Goldschmied emphasises the importance of having very ample supplies of all provision in Heuristic Play for this reason.

16.11.94, 10.10 am Outdoor sandpit

Zachariah digs and throws spadefuls of sand, some of which goes over Harry's head. He is asked not to do this because of the risk of getting sand in Harry's eyes. He goes to Harry, bends down and peers at his eyes, reports that they are all right, carries on with the sand. Harry joins him.

**Further development:**

Bob feels it could be helpful to study Anoushka, who has benefited from Treasure Basket provision even though she is 2 years old and it is for babies. Bob has also been supporting her interest in water play (video'd earlier). She was being very immobile, quiet and reserved-seeming, but has now made significant gains in language, including sentences such as 'I need my popcorn now' and 'Read this book now'.

Bob is also interested in studying the impact on staff of the role demanded by heuristic play and treasure basket provision.

**The impact of having different ages together in the group is also of interest to her.**

By comparison, the other nursery researchers seemed hard to motivate. As explained elsewhere, they were glad for me to observe children they wanted to focus on, and this led to interesting collaboration with parents and grandparents of the children. But by comparison with Bob, they seemed much less excited about the idea of changing their practice. My personal interpretation was that morale was low and that the challenge implicit in this kind of research involvement was ill-timed for these practitioners. I noted that the nursery nurse involved commented that working with me 'wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be'.

The pilot case-studies described here confirm several points noted from Phase Two. Observations or recordings of some kind are vital to the process of evaluation. The principles that practitioners believe in can then be applied to the evidence, and staff can establish in discussion what they feel about the evidence and what they wish to do next. Change can indeed take place as a result - a change that is much welcomed by participants.

The future of the research involvement with both settings will be explored during the coming year. It is hoped that it will be possible for staff at each setting to take on some of the initiative from the research project, so that staff time can be spread more widely. This, however, will depend on the ability of senior staff to provide the observational material and/or the support to enable staff to make observations and discuss them with each other. Both settings have said

that they are willing to try this, with a continuing but lesser degree of support from me. An illustration of the kind of effort required of senior staff follows.

**B) HJ reported on Blue Room (children 3-5 mostly).**

**It had been hard to create the right kind of structure for the observations within this large team with its focus on settling in new children. H had done a long observation of home corner play which staff had discussed. From this she reported the following comments:**

**Staff were not surprised at Samit's detailed and maintained play, but they were surprised that he did not talk to Emine or Geneika. He had talked to Emine in play before, and they both like the home corner. Samit has good concentration and is especially interested and knowledgeable about domestic routines and organisation. Emine prefers dressing up and taking babies out. Samit prefers the washing machine, and turns taps off very realistically.**

**The only time Samit spoke was a very quiet hello to Wendy, which was so quiet she couldn't hear him - unusual.**

The importance of this is that if we agree that evaluation of the kind described here is a valuable tool for practitioners, we need to know whether it is a tool practicable for normal use by staff in settings or whether it is one that will require an extra person to be added to the staff to give support. If the latter is true, even for nursery schools and centres which are comparatively well-staffed, it might be less likely that practitioners in less well-staffed

establishments such as playgroups, infant school classes and private provision will be able to make use of it. The following development plan for future work gives some idea of what might be involved.

*Proposed development plan for work with Centre 1, 12.94*

*Vicky will make two visits next term.*

*Senior management will support and provide organisation for regular observations and videoing. An 'outsider' ie. someone who does not normally work in the room will be available to discuss with staff what they have learned from the observations or videos. Vicky will ask staff to answer a short questionnaire on what conditions etc they feel are needed to make this process work for them.*

This approach might be seen as too uneconomic a tool for general use. The unanswered question from all three Phases is whether or not staff can 'take over' the self-evaluation process and use it without having an outside support. The association between evaluation and the role of the outsider has been complete in this research; the two have not been separated so that members of staff were evaluating on their own except where, as in the case of 'Bob', senior management in the setting took on the supportive role with a practitioner whose motivation and self-confidence were strong. From the experience of these investigations it is not likely to be possible for self-evaluations to be continued unsupported. However, the experience of Phase Three shows that, with the support of colleagues, practitioners can undertake observations and do benefit from it.

There are therefore arguments in favour of strategies of evaluation which involve 'outsiders' (outsiders in terms of the practitioner, that is, not necessarily researchers from Higher Education), in a role that is supportive of reflection and change rather than an observation-making role. It was made plain by Teacher A that she felt that the presence of another practitioner who took an interest in the issues and dilemmas she confronted helped in her re-orientation of her practice towards what she felt were principles she wished to aim for. The added stimulus and self-respect that practitioners experience from having an informed and interested outsider to talk things over with is a real factor in changed morale and hence the ability to change practice. Change, after all, is a challenging and threatening experience.

There is another point to consider. The effect on the outsider could be so beneficial as to warrant involvement for that purpose alone. This aspect, along with other wider issues, will be explored in later sections.

### **3.2. Issues raised by the findings of the three Phases**

The developmental stages of the research activities have established some facts about practitioners' investigation and evaluation of their own practice. A methodology based on supported observation and analysis helped practitioners by giving them evidence on the basis of which they could evaluate their work, and encouraged them in their reflections on how their educational principles could best be put into practice. It also brought to their attention the hidden

conflicts which influenced their practice, and gave them the evidence on which to make authoritative statements about what were appropriate ways to provide for children's learning.

The change in the orientation of the investigations, and the shift to an awareness of the role and concerns of the researcher, point to collaborative evaluation as a learning opportunity for those who support the practitioner.

The chapters of Section Two will take up some main themes identified by the three Phases of the research and show some aspects of the potential significance of practitioner self-evaluation. Chapter Four will examine where practitioner self-evaluation fits into the educational context and the debate about ways of evaluating and developing education. Chapter Five will expand on what has been said about observation's role in research-based evaluation, and show how observation can contribute the evidence on which practitioners can base authoritative statements about education. Chapter Six will consider the generation and application of educational theory, and how researching practitioner self-evaluation could help with the development of new strategies for the education of intending practitioners. Chapter Seven will look at the research relationship between practitioner and informed 'outsider' and comment on its relevance for future relationships between Higher Education and schools.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **WIDER ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH**

**This Section takes up some of the issues which have been raised by the research perspectives and investigations and sets them in the context of present developments in education. The first issue has to do with evaluation, the different forms it can take and their link with models of the curriculum, who can initiate it and on whose behalf; it also explores practitioner self-evaluation as one of the central processes of developmental education.**

**Subsequent issues considered will be those surrounding observation and educational decisions, the generation and application of educational theory, and an outline of the many areas which remain to be investigated, including some possible developments in the education and training of practitioners in early childhood education.**



# INTRODUCTION TO SECTION TWO

## THE GROWING CONFLICT OVER EDUCATION

The historical context of this research is the growing conflict over education that characterised the period from 1970 to the time of writing in the mid-1990s. The testimony of an experienced political analyst shows how striking a change has come over education in these twenty years. A hard-fought trend towards increased professionalism appears to have been sharply reversed, with consequences for children and parents as well as for practitioners.

**'The masters and mistresses of the great grammar schools might be the doctors of the education service, but humbler teachers wanted to be more than nurses in attendance. In the 1960s and 1970s they moved in that direction. Teaching was heading towards all-graduate status, and schools were heading towards a measure of professional autonomy. For a brief while, teachers were encouraged to help pupils think for themselves, to "educate", rather than being told what to do teach by universities and government inspectors. Some autonomy was abused, as in any profession. Mistakes were made. But I would venture that at the end of the 1970s most teachers were better respected and more professional than ever before.'**

**(Peter Jenkins, *The Times*, 19.4.95)**

According to Jenkins, the strikes of 1985-6 were disastrous for this process of professionalisation, because of the government response that it provoked (the Education Reform Act, national testing, Treasury control of teachers' pay, performance related pay, etc). There is reason to think, as will be shown below, that the move to control what is taught had in fact been in preparation for much longer, since the 1970s themselves. Whatever the precise role of the strikes, however, Jenkins was surely right in saying that the message to teachers of the policy changes of the late 1980s was that the government no longer trusted them. He attached great importance to trust as the essence of professional relationships of all kinds; this is a grave state of affairs in his view. He ended by saying that the Government might well get efficiency and value for money (although probably at a greatly inflated cost); it would certainly get uniformity and simplicity of audit.

**'What is lost is harder to define, because what is lost is inherently unquantifiable. I can think of no other word for it but trust.'**

**(ibid)**

For all who engage in a professional activity, the loss of trust is a threat to everything they try to do. It is doubly unfortunate for teachers of young children, since parents have to trust them with their children when they are at their most vulnerable and impressionable. It is no consolation to teachers that lawyers and doctors appear to be in the same position, nor is the loss of trust in teachers anything but an additional problem for nursery nurses and others who work with young children as they struggle to improve their status and qualifications.

It has been the aim of the research recorded here to investigate certain aspects of the professional activities of teachers and other practitioners working with young children. These investigations shed some light on the real nature of the professional relationship practitioners should have with children and with their parents. It is hoped that the exploration of wider issues arising from the research may also highlight some ways in which the relationship can be strengthened and professionalism increased, so that provision for the education of young children can be improved.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **ISSUES IN EVALUATION AND CURRICULUM**

### **This Chapter:**

- discusses curriculum, evaluation and curriculum development, and some light thrown on this by the research,**
- highlights the complex issues involved in the evaluation of education and questions some basic assumptions about the curriculum,**
- contrasts these questions with the development of government policy on education in England and Wales since the 1980s and its concern to measure the effectiveness of education through checks on the efficiency of schools and practitioners in teaching the prescribed curriculum.**

## **4.1 Curriculum, evaluation and curriculum development**

Evaluation in education can have very different purposes - the ongoing professional process of the practitioner in the classroom, which constructs a picture of classroom developments from ground-level up, and the evaluation which measures how far pre-set targets external to the process of education have been achieved. As described in Chapter One, the research activities reported here were undertaken in an attempt to learn more about how practitioners arrive at educational decisions - what criteria of quality and what investigative tools they can use to ascribe good qualities or failings to their practice, and how these judgements are used by them to develop future practice. Continuous practitioner evaluation, as described here, is qualitatively different from the national policy level as it has been since the passing of the Education Reform Act. The difference is to do with the contrasting pictures of education that can be discerned and the consequential differences in ideas about what the curriculum should be and how, and by whom, it should be evaluated.

The 1970s began a period of radical rethinking of the assumptions that had characterised the long after-war period of pursuit of ideals of personal development, equal opportunities and progressive pedagogy which culminated in the 1960s. The unease about educational standards voiced in Callaghan's Ruskin College speech was the herald of the educational debates of the 1980s in which 'child-centred approaches' and 'progressive education' became the target phrases for attacks on existing ideas of education. Carr and Hartnett (1996) gave an indication of how the dominant educational discourse sets the terms in which educational discourse is conducted,

and how this is in fact a reorientation of the criteria on which evaluation will be based in the future. They demonstrated as an example the way in which the conventional distinction between the concepts of education and training has been revised. They quoted from the DES document *Better Schools* an assertion that education and training could not always be distinguished because they were complementary (1985, p. 25), and from Lord Young, as Secretary of State for Employment in 1986, an assertion that training was merely the application of education. As they contrasted the different views of education that were represented in the educational discourse, they drew attention to the change in the terms of the discourse as an evaluative change.

'...such disagreements are not so much verbal disagreements about what is correctly to be called 'education' as political disagreements about the evaluative criteria for determining what 'education' should mean. The evaluative criteria judged as central by those favouring progressive methods (for example, developing the interests and understanding of each individual child) may be judged to be insignificant or even irrelevant by those favouring traditional methods. Moreover, the fact that the parties to this dispute are both using the concept of education in different ways does not mean that their dispute is purely terminological or that they are not talking about the same thing. It simply means that the disputants share the same basic *concept* of education but have different *conceptions* of education and hence different views about how this concept is to be understood.' (Carr and Hartnett, 1996, pp. 18-19)

These changes in the terms of educational discourse are reflected in changes in some views of the curriculum. The fundamental conflict is in the view of the curriculum which the two forms of evaluation relate to, and in ideas about who should control it. Practitioners evaluate in order to see how to develop an appropriate curriculum, while policy-makers demand evaluation to see whether and how well their intended content has been provided. In essence, the tension is between development and delivery of the curriculum, with the idea of the practitioner's evolving autonomy through negotiation of the curriculum running counter to the expansion of national government influence on education.

The deeper aspects of links between evaluation and curriculum will be explored in this section, in terms of the opposing pressures from practitioners and government. The following section will attempt to trace the origins of this divergence, and to highlight some of the fundamental points of conflict.

### **Evaluation and curriculum development: who controls the process ?**

Much hangs on the evaluation of education, for it is the evaluation that sets out the criteria for effectiveness and judges schools and practitioners, and it is the evaluators who have the strongest say in the future development of the curriculum.

### **Historical background**

The background of conflict against which the debate about the curriculum and its development takes place is as old as the idea of state-maintained education itself. Whereas

market forces and the views of influential persons, powers and parents exerted an accepted, and therefore an unexamined, control upon the independent sector, the control of the maintained sector was from the beginning a focus of conscious concern. Through the expression of this concern it is possible to trace the evolution, and often ebb and flow, of ideas about what the curriculum is for, and how it should be developed.

Themes that emerge during the first hundred years of British maintained education have been characterised as reflecting three views of the purpose of education which imply three views of the curriculum, and different ways of developing it.

#### **4.2. Three views of the curriculum and its evaluation**

These were first described by Blyth in 1965 as belonging to the elementary, preparatory and developmental traditions. The first of these, the elementary, may be explained as originating in the preoccupation of the elementary schools introduced by the 1870 Education Act with the demands of employers for a workforce that could keep records and figures in order, keep clean physically and morally, and be handy in the woodwork, gardening, cooking, cleaning and sewing thought suitable for the future lives of boys and girls of the labouring classes. As it was expressed at the time of the 1870 Education Act 'Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity' W.E.Forster, House of Commons, 17.2.1870. The emphasis on education for a future of low-level work has led some critics to argue that this is not education, but merely schooling (Kelly, 1988).



The second tradition, the preparatory, may be found in the pressure from the later stages of education for earlier stages to inculcate in their pupils the preconditions necessary for later learning, as in 'basic skills'. The pressure that this can exert on primary schools and within them from the top classes to the youngest children, is one problematic feature. Another is that the learning presented to younger children is a simplified version of that for the older ones, rather than being an appropriate learning experience for their ages, stages and interests. These two traditions both seem to have been involved in the pressure which Teachers A and B experienced, in the last months before the introduction of the National Curriculum, to push their children into becoming well-schooled pupils and into preparing them for the next class.

The third tradition, (here described as concerned with basing education on children's development and developmentally appropriate ways of learning) has been shown by Blyth to be the context in which ideas of informal education took root in the years after the First World War, with an accelerated growth following the Plowden Report. This tradition emerges from a broad pedagogical consensus about the implications of the work of Froebel, Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey.

These three views logically connect with different ideas about how evaluation of the curriculum should take place. The basic skills, elementary model links with pre-ordained behavioural objectives for learning; the preparatory models of the curriculum are linked more or less with the ideas of curriculum as meaning content in terms of knowledge and knowledge-based skills. The evaluation of education in these traditions is by central or local government

through assessment of children's performance on standardised extrinsic criteria, since the aim is for standardisation of results. The developmental model is linked more closely with the idea of curriculum evaluation as intrinsic to the educational activity, and curriculum development as arising from the classroom process of helping children learn to learn (Hadow, 1931, Blenkin and Kelly, 1981; Blenkin, 1988). Where this is the case it must be that evaluation needs to take place on a level closer to the actual classroom, since it is in classroom interactions between the teacher and the pupil that judgements are made.

### **The American experience**

This dilemma about the curriculum has some parallels elsewhere; Unruh [1975] describes how in America the 1920s saw a professional consensus on the priority to be given to children's developmental needs and ways of learning which was overwhelmed by the pressure from academics and industrialists.

### **The search for a developmental curriculum in Britain**

In Britain, the developmental curriculum had a longer heyday. Susan Isaacs' influence on the Hadow Committee set out an agenda to which the Plowden Committee worked, and her efforts to build bridges between theorists and practitioners through encouraging classroom research established for a while a high profile for the efforts of individual teachers to raise standards in education through hammering out principles of good classroom practice. She herself established criteria for the observation and interpretation of children's classroom behaviour which set leading standards for qualitative work today. Each decision about a child's education,

and about provision for the group of children at her school, was justified in terms of observations of the children and placing these observations in the context of knowledge and understanding of the world. She deprecated any other approach, and would accept no justification for failure.

‘Our failure to make any significant use of children’s interest in discovery and in the concrete events of the physical and biological world has other roots also [than our confusion between the child as fantasist and as explorer of the real world]. Partly, of course, it is the outcome of quite mundane and practical considerations. It is, for instance, so much easier from the point of view of space, of staffing and equipment, to keep the children relatively inactive and to "teach" them, than it is to arrange for them to "find out". (1930, 9th Impression 1966, p. 19)

‘When the children turned to us, we would in the first instance throw the question back to them. "What do you think? How does it seem to you?" (op.cit., p. 40)

‘We felt that the child’s own observation, even if incomplete, was more valuable than a just belief accepted on our mere word. His own imperfect observations can always be revised and completed by further effort, if we throw our own weight on the side of an appeal to facts. ... The rabbit had died in the night. Dan found it and said "It’s dead - its tummy does not move up and down now. Paul said "My daddy says that if we put it into water it will get alive again." Mrs. I. said

"Shall we do so and see?" They put it into a bath of water...' (op.cit., pp. 40-41)

The theoretical foundations of her work are still good; her avowed commitment to the work of Dewey and to the importance of child development theory for pedagogy are shared by a wide range of practitioners. However, as in America, the developmental curriculum has proved vulnerable to pressure from outside forces. This vulnerability itself will be explored, below, pp.

These outside forces have to do with the aim to impose on teachers a particular form of accountability for what they do.

### **Measuring, accountability and values**

The move towards teacher accountability of the 1980s is only the latest form of the demand for 'proof' of the efficacy of teachers' work. Unruh (1975), who has a strong classroom practice bias, tied herself into knots trying to reconcile her search for responsive curriculum development with the requirements for measurement. Both behaviourism and technology appear to be implicated here; behavioural science spread the word that humans could be measured in ways that mattered, and technology offered an increasing range of apparently scientific ways to measure and to compute the results.

Throughout the 1970s, and in many Western countries, there seem to have been quests for ways to talk about curriculum development which would not be bound by this straitjacket. Was the easily measurable a sound guide to what was, or was not, going on?

The experience of researchers and practitioners suggested that easy measurement and educational quality would not fit well together, because of the intensely individual nature of educational interactions, as described in Chapter 2. Stuart Maclure has described a conference in 1971 where delegates from America, Canada, France, Spain, Britain, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Italy and West Germany agreed to see whether 'styles' of curriculum development might be defined. This would enable the participants to escape their dilemma in which they sought to reconcile efficiency with humanity. Unfortunately, there were problems; style was so individual an attribute as to be the hardest thing to copy authentically and the easiest to ape. There could be no substitute in education for the personal style of the individual teacher, and however sophisticated curriculum development projects might be technically they would stand or fail by the quality of the teachers. It would be the teachers who would be in a position to bridge the gap between techniques and values, and those values would form the [often tacit] assumptions on which the style of curriculum development is founded. Amid the great range of ideas about the curriculum a broad agreement emerged that curriculum development could not be a

**'cold, objective, scientific exercise with right and wrong answers which can be derived from research, but an expression of a whole range of social, political and pedagogic goals, like the rest of the educational process.'**

**(CERI 1972 p.49)**

Where the CERI participants refused to see curriculum development in terms of scientific exercises Unruh went in the opposite direction, attempting to submit the responsive,

collectively-negotiated form of development she favoured to systems concepts (derived from physics, defence, industry and business theory) in order to systematise the goals, objectives, educational experiences and outcomes, costs and resources in ways that would be supportive to human values (Unruh, 1975, p.250 et seq).

This attempt to safeguard educational values through the grafting on of systems derived from other aspects of human life such as business raises the fundamental question of the role of values in the process of evaluation. It demonstrates the difficulty faced by those who would seek to raise standards in a personal-relations process such as education through the imposition of externally defined criteria for the success of the venture.

#### **4.3. Pressures on the school curriculum**

The previous discussion has focused on the questioning of approaches to curriculum evaluation and development that was taking place during the 1970s. In England and Wales the later 1970s and the 1980s brought new influences on the curriculum, which have affected the way in which evaluation is thought of, and which have attempted to assert a particular curriculum model.

During the 1970s the debate about the curriculum had focused on issues to do with the tug of war between educational proponents of different approaches to the curriculum and therefore to curriculum development. During the 1980s the debate took on a very different aspect as a result of the events at central government level of the late 1970s. As is sometimes said of

the financial markets, politicians 'caught a cold' about education, losing confidence in its ability to meet national needs, and within ten years the previously existing picture was overturned entirely.

In the process of the overthrow all sorts of constructions of the curriculum were revealed. Some of the features of this picture may be discerned in the debate of the 1980s as it developed.

In 1976 James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech introduced the idea of a new look at previous assumptions about the curriculum. This gave the opportunity for different groups, which had so far been unable to direct the development of the curriculum, to bring influence to bear on it through discussion of the school curriculum.

Among these groups were Her Majesty's Inspectorate, whose published statements demonstrate how rapidly thinking changed under pressure from government. In 1977 the Department of Education and Science published *Curriculum 11-16*, in which the curriculum was described broadly in terms of areas of experience, rather than in terms of specific content to be mastered in particular subject areas. By 1989, however, this broad approach was limited to children under five, in the HMI document *The Education of Children under Five*, (DES 1989). In the years between these two publications, a succession of HMI documents, from *A View of the Curriculum* (1980) onwards, outlined some ways in which the issue of reform of the curriculum could be approached. The secondary phase of schooling dominated their view, and led to a strong orientation of their later comments on primary education towards preparation for

the later years through the study of academic subjects rather than the broader cross-curricular approaches characteristic of much primary practice.

In their Foreword to *A View of the Curriculum* the Secretaries of State for Education and Science for both England and Wales expressed their view that they should give a lead in the process of reaching a national consensus on a desirable framework for the curriculum. HMI, for their part, introduced their document by stating that the only valid basis on which HMI can put forward a view is knowledge of schools as they are and realistic appreciation of the likely context in which any developments may take place. They had recently completed large-scale surveys of primary and secondary education from which they could speak. In fact, this statement bypassed another consideration, that of the values with which they had interpreted the information they had gathered from schools. There is, for instance, an unspoken assumption that there is no argument about the subject-basis of all education. There is also another oversight; is it unfair to wonder whether they could envisage another valid basis from which to speak - that of the general issue of the role of trained and experienced teachers in the development of the curriculum which they spend their professional lives teaching ?

HMI's approach did not recommend an extension of the influence of central government on the curriculum; it was based on the assumption of a continuation of the role of local authorities and schools' freedom of action in relation to curriculum development, assessment and evaluation. (In fact, as late as 1985 they were still talking in terms of teachers' informal 'impressionistic' assessments of children being 'from time to time' supported by teachers' own



formal tests; see below). They stated in *A View of the Curriculum* that

**‘The improvements in the curriculum sought by the Secretaries of State fall to be achieved mainly by local education authorities and schools.....The Secretaries of State believe that each authority should have a clear policy for the curriculum in its schools and make it known to all concerned; be aware of the extent to which its schools are able, within the resources available to them, to make curricular provision which is consistent with that policy; and plan future developments accordingly, in consultation with the teachers and others concerned in their areas.’ (para. 58, p. 20) ‘The pace and pattern of improvements in the curriculum will depend above all on the energy, imagination and professional skill of the teachers. This paper sets out the key questions, in the view of the Secretaries of State, for each school to pursue, building on what it has already achieved.’ (para. 59, p. 20)**

Evaluation was perceived as an important part of the improvement of the curriculum. In this process schools would need to be able to measure the adequacy of their detailed programmes of work; here HMI outlined what they believed to be the essential tools of curriculum development. These measurements would take place

**‘by reference to more specific objectives, some checklist of important knowledge or skills to be acquired, or of essential areas of understanding and**

**experience to which all pupils need access, within their capacities.'**

**(op. cit, p. 3)**

The kind of curriculum development outlined here suggested an evaluation that would be an end-of-stage process, rather than a continuous and formative one. Even so, there was much here that would require further exploration before it could become a system usable by a wide range of schools. There were also assumptions that education could be defined in terms of specific objectives, important knowledge and skills or areas of understanding and experience.

The tools which HMI offered for school-based curriculum development remain in part; the idea of objectives and checklists survives in the specification of attainment targets, and the idea of important knowledge and skills to be acquired in the programmes of study. The more broad-based approach, the definition of essential areas of understanding and experience with which HMI still sought in 1985 to safeguard children's undifferentiated learning, was eventually confined to the curriculum for the under fives (DES, 1989), and even this has not been easy. The Rumbold Committee (1990) on quality in provision for that age group strongly rejected one HMI's pressure for programmes of study for three and four year olds in favour of the 1989 definition of areas of experience (Pugh, G., pers.comm., 1989), but the report has never received Government acclaim or support. Instead, the expansion of nursery provision initiated in 1996 is governed by the *Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Schooling* (DfEE/SCAA 1996) imposed as a form of evaluation on the work of 'voucher-redeeming settings for four year olds' by the Department for Education and Employment jointly

with the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Children will be assessed on these 'Outcomes' at Primary School when they enter compulsory education at five. The contrast between this baseline assessment for the National Curriculum and the HMI 'Areas of Experience' from *The Education of the Under Fives* (1989) is quite distinct. Where the 'Areas of Experience' are broadly delineated and accompanied by statements and examples to show the range of possible learning that trained practitioners can expect, the 'Outcomes' are sufficiently specific to allow children to be assessed and graded by practitioners with little knowledge and understanding of early childhood education. Where, for instance, practitioners have been accustomed to use the general category of 'Linguistic and Literary Experience' from the 1989 document, they are now required to ensure that children can meet standards based on the following format.

Each subject is named as an 'Area of Learning' - like the 1989 definition but significantly different. In the 'Language and Literacy Area of Learning' children are required to perform under three headings, each linked first to the National Curriculum Level 1 Description, then to the National Curriculum Level 2/ End of Key Stage Description. Among the 'Outcomes' are the following which have been extracted from the full list for 'Outcomes' related to NC English. Each is contextualised with a reference to evidence from this research:

**(Linked with NC English: Speaking and Listening)**

**'In small and large groups, children listen attentively and talk about their experiences. They use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to**

**express thoughts and convey meaning to the listener...’ Teacher A, with a group of older four year olds, gave up her whole group session because she found so much of her language had to be managerial and controlling.**

**(Linked with NC English: Reading)**

**‘...They know that...in English, print is read from left to right and top to bottom. They begin to associate sounds with patterns in rhymes, with syllables, and with words and letters. They recognise their own names and some familiar words. They recognise letters of the alphabet by shape and sound.’ Teacher B found that Matthew, nearly 5, was not able to write his name or even to do a drawing when asked on entry to infant school.**

**(Linked with NC: English Writing)**

**‘...They write their names with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters.’ Ruth’s study of four year olds using materials for writing showed that the children, none of whom had difficulty speaking English in the observation, were interested in the informal aspects of writing, in particular in the writing done at home with parents.**

The basic proposal of HMI in 1980 was for a mixture of the content and the objectives approach to curriculum development, at the level of school and local authority. How seriously this limited their picture of the curriculum may be seen from its effect on their perception of the

curriculum for young children. The result was to present it as a basic foundation in behaviour, language and number. 'By the time children enter primary schools at about 5 years of age most have learnt to behave in a reasonably sociable way, though they may be unaccustomed to being members of such a large community as a school. They are likely to have acquired the basic structures of their mother tongue, not necessarily English, and be aware of and interested in the shapes, sizes, colours and quantities of things about them.....At 5, a few have a vocabulary that is hardly sufficient for their daily needs, while at the other extreme a small minority have a wider vocabulary, can detect fine shades of meaning and have begun to recognise written words; and a few have started to write.'(1980, p. 7) Even with reservations about this description of young children's learning in terms of the 'basic skills' of later learning, this is a far broader and less directive definition than that of the *Desirable Outcomes* sixteen years later.

#### **The next stage; preparation for 'the changing demands of the world outside'**

HMI's *View of the Curriculum* (1980) had seemed to anticipate a professional review of practice in a wider perspective; the Department of Education and Science in *The School Curriculum* of 1981 made it clear that a new relationship was envisaged between practitioners and the general public, and that central government would play some role in this.

The Secretaries of State for England and Wales stated in their foreword to the document that the present paper offered guidance to the local education authorities and schools on how the school curriculum could be further improved. The next paragraph followed this at once with:

**‘Parents, employers and many others also care about our schools. The paper explains to them where the government stands on a matter which lastingly affects our national prosperity and the whole nature of our society. Technological and other changes require an urgent response from our schools.**

**‘This paper covers the whole period of compulsory education. What is taught at school should be adapted to the needs of every pupil including the gifted, and those with special needs, so that everyone is appropriately prepared for the practical demands of adult and working life.’** (p. 1)

These two paragraphs constituted nearly half the matter of the short foreword, and indicate the political background against which the document should be seen. There seem, indeed, to be two interpretations of educational aims available in the document. HMI’s educational objectives and checklists were, as they stated in their foreword, concerned with ‘the essential analytical thinking that needs to accompany the design and construction of any curriculum.’ Again, their categorisation of the kinds of experience and understanding to be sought through the curriculum are recognisable as educational definitions (HMI,1980,p.3). The list of ‘broad educational aims’ offered by the Secretaries of State in 1981 reflect quite other values. A comparison is interesting:

HMI’s approach to curriculum analysis in *A View of the Curriculum* offered the ‘essential

areas' as criteria for evaluation in both primary and secondary education, though with some differences. In primary these were; language and literacy, mathematics, science, aesthetics including physical education, social abilities including religious education. By comparison, in secondary they identified; aesthetic and creative, ethical, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, physical, social and political, spiritual.

How does this compare with the DES 1981 version ? The most notable difference is that the distinction between primary and secondary education has gone and that there is a new formulation of the criteria to cover both sectors.

**'i) to help pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks, and physical skills;**

**ii) to help pupils to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast-changing world;**

**iii) to help pupils to use language and number effectively;**

**iv) to instill respect for religious and moral values, and tolerance of other races, religions, and ways of life;**

**v) to help pupils to understand the world in which they live, and the**

**inter-dependence of individuals, groups and nations;**

**vi) to help pupils to appreciate human achievements and aspirations.’ (p.3)**

Many excellent critical points have been made (eg. White et al. 1981) but these need not be repeated here in detail. The aspect being identified here is the difference in the language and values of the two documents, published only one year apart, and the even greater contrast with HMI's earlier description of the secondary curriculum in terms of areas of experience (DES 1977). For instance, point (ii) justifies the knowledge and skills to be acquired in terms of their relevance to adult life and employment. There are other important implications to be discussed as well, which have a bearing on the processes of evaluation.

**How are criteria justified?** Where the HMI criteria of 1980 stood squarely on some objectively identifiable groupings of experience, these criteria have only the judgement of the judge to stand or fall by. Key words indicate that neither the pupils' educational aims and intentions nor the general academic consensus on valuable experiences shall be allowed to determine the adequacy or otherwise of curricular provision. Pupils must 'question and argue logically and apply themselves to tasks', all in one phrase - who will decide if the argument is logical and what the task is to be? They must acquire 'knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment' - who will say what is relevant ? Who will say what is an 'effective' use of language and number ? There is nothing to object to in respect of religious and moral values, in understanding of the world, in appreciation of human achievement, as criteria, except that they are all couched



in terms which imply a known standard by which success can be judged, and yet there are many views of what would constitute meeting these standards.

There are many internal inconsistencies in these formulations and much that is left unspecified, but the general problem is that there is no way of showing whether or not the criteria have been met except by defining what is meant in each case. Otherwise the criteria are so broad and unspecific that they would permit a much wider range of interpretations than any other definitions would.

The only way in which these criteria can be satisfied is through acceptability to the ordainers of the curriculum. Who these are to be is outlined as follows;

**‘The Education Act [1944] lays upon the Secretaries of State the duty to "promote the education of the people of England and Wales". This requires them to take an overall view of the content and quality of education, and of the resources devoted to it, in the light of national policies and national needs. For example, every school should seek to give every child an adequate grounding in literacy, numeracy and other essential skills needed in our increasingly complex and technological society. The Secretaries of State have an inescapable duty to satisfy themselves that the work of the schools matches such needs. They must work with their partners in the education service so that their combined efforts secure a school curriculum which measures up to the whole range of national needs and also takes account of the range of local**

**needs, allows for local developments, and draws on the varied skills and experience which all those concerned with the service can contribute.**

In addition, unlike HMI's *A View of the Curriculum*, there is no intention that a single revision of the curricular framework will take place.

**'The 5 to 16 curriculum cannot, and should not, remain static but must respond to the changing demands made by the world outside school'. (p.1)**

The section of the 1944 Act from which the duty to promote the education of the people of England and Wales is derived gives only this very general duty to the Secretaries of State. The full text is as follows.

**'Part I**

**1. It shall be lawful for His Majesty to appoint a Minister [hereinafter referred to as "the Minister"] whose duty it shall be to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area.'**

It is unlikely that the interpretation in *The School Curriculum* could be seen to be unlawful, since the Act makes clear both the Minister's overall responsibility and the control and

direction to be exercised over local authorities. It is, however, a new interpretation, the import of which can be guessed at. The active and determining role envisaged for the Minister in the 1981 document took the development of the curriculum into central government's hands. This meant the introduction of other than educational values into the debate. The lines which led to the Education Reform Act had been laid down; HMI's *The Curriculum 5 to 16* of 1985 accepted that 'what is taught should be what pupils need to know', and it was open to central government to specify in the Education Reform Act what that should be and how the efficiency of education could be tested.

The issue of the 1970s about whether it was educational values or those of technology which should dominate evaluation had been clarified; the issue was now openly about whose values should dominate in the classroom. As discussed earlier, the kind of curriculum analysis proposed in *The School Curriculum* had opened the prescription of the curriculum to central government; however, what happens at classroom level is another matter. The very blindness that makes it possible to define the curriculum in terms of content of knowledge and skills leaves open the curriculum in action - the curriculum as negotiated between teachers and pupils - for development at classroom level. The question is, however, whether teachers and other practitioners would continue to feel that it was either acceptable or worth their effort in the current climate to do so.

In the next section it will be possible to look at some other views of the basis on which the curriculum could be developed, and these carry with them their own implications for who

should be the evaluators and, in consequence, the curriculum innovators and developers. They also bring an emphasis on the role of observation, which has wide implications of its own, for this is a key to whether evaluation rises intrinsically out of educational activities and processes or extrinsically as in the *Desirable Outcomes*.

#### **4.4. Evaluation theory and this research**

The history of the Humanities Curriculum Project and the approaches generated under its influence during the 1970s and 1980s reflect the way in which ideas about evaluation and its relationship to curriculum development were impelled onward by the impact of the classroom-based theories about curriculum development of Stenhouse. The main problem was the ruling out of behavioural objectives for the Humanities Project, so that aggregated data could not be used to 'provide gross yields on objectives' (Elliott, 1991). Instead, a naturalistic methodology had to be developed, but before that could be the case there would also have to be an understanding of how evaluation should relate to curriculum. Humble and Simons (1978) draw an analogy between the level of organisation and direction of the education system and the level at which it is to be evaluated; 'centrally-conceived innovation is somewhat at odds with an educational system which is locally administered and where autonomy for curricular decision-making is said to lie with the schools.' (1978, p.169)

In the very different structure of the post-Education Reform Act education system, the clarities of the period of dissemination after the Humanities Curriculum Project seem harder to attain. Yet, from the perspective of this microscopic slice of life in settings for young children,

some comments seem possible. The first is that it may be easier to decide who should do the evaluating if one is clear about why evaluation is undertaken and how, given its purpose, it is most effectively done. The findings of this research suggest that evaluation of their own work by practitioners can transform their practice in enabling them to see the gaps between their principles or aims and what actually takes place. This transformation can immediately affect the educational experiences of the children involved; for instance, Teacher B, when aware of how Jeremy was adrift in the class activity, was able to shift her practice in the direction of the more appropriate activities that would enable him to express himself and learn more easily. If practitioner self-evaluation can make this kind of difference, then it seems right that practitioners should do it as part of their responsibility for individual children's education. If they are to do it, it seems, from this research, that the evidence they need is to be obtained from observing the children and reflecting on it. As Eisner says, we have for too long been misled into thinking that tests and evaluation are analogous (1985, p.4). In particular, tests tell us nothing about individuals' progress in learning in comparison with what we learn from observing the process of learning itself, as in watching Ruth's young writers in the nursery centre (Workplace Nurseries Project) or the eager learner following his teacher around classroom and playground in the nursery school (Principles into Practice). If it is accepted that there is an argument for practitioners' self-evaluation through observation and reflection, then the classroom or other setting has to be the level for this evaluation.

But there are arguments, both practical and institutional, for saying that evaluation is also important at other levels. The practical argument is that evaluation is happening all the time and

to deny its value to politicians and fund-holders is worse than useless; it is dangerous to appear to deny the right of elected representatives and appointed officials to place a value on a public service. The institutional argument is that people in such influential roles should be in possession of findings from appropriate evaluations because their decisions must be as well-informed as possible. The issue seems to be more how such people can be persuaded to take advantage of evaluations which are reliable because they are based on real evidence of ongoing learning, than to do with whether they should be engaged in evaluating education.

If Carr and Hartnett (1996) are correct in thinking that the aim of what they call the New Right reforms of education, and in particular teacher education, are truly aimed at eradicating reflective teachers (p.197), then all practitioners who see themselves as professionals should be engaged in self-evaluation.

There is one other area of this research to be discussed; the role of the outsider/researcher and what it might mean in terms of evaluation. The separation of the first-order enquiry of the practitioner from the second-order enquiry of the researcher makes it possible to look more precisely at the different kinds of evaluation involved. As the role of the researcher comes more under the microscope, so the conclusions drawn by the researcher can be appraised for their contributions to understanding of evaluation. In the three examples from the research given earlier in this discussion (Teachers A and B and Ruth), and in the example quoted earlier from Bob's work (Workplace Nurseries Project), the comments that I felt able to make have drawn out statements about evaluation at a broader and more conceptual level than

that of the practitioner's immediate concerns, but in the same practically-based way. Evaluation has been described as focused on the individual child's experience of learning, educational for the practitioner and leading to curriculum development, for instance.

Elliott has used the separation of the roles of practitioner and researcher to identify teacher/researchers as undertaking empirical enquiry while conceptual enquiry remained the task of specialist theorists. As he expresses it:

**'The teacher's inquiry was focused on the problems of developing pedagogical strategies consistent with aims and principles. The [evaluation] team's inquiry was focused on the problems of facilitating teachers' reflective capacities. The team members were cast in the role of teacher developers which was also conceptualised as a form of reflective practice....The emergence of a second-order form of practical inquiry engaged in by external facilitators of teacher development has implications for the role of evaluation in curriculum development.'**

**(1991, p. 27)**

So far in this account the focus has been on the practitioners' activity and their development of new strategies for learning. In this discussion, the focus extends to the researcher's perspective on the links between curriculum models and models of evaluation and between evaluation and curriculum development.

The evolution of present perspectives on curriculum development has been reviewed and

some reference made to the implications for evaluation and curriculum development of different views of the curriculum. It was mentioned above that in the Humanities Curriculum Project the curriculum model was alien to the behavioural objectives model of evaluation, and the model of evaluation had to be changed to one which used a mass of complex data (Elliott, 1991). Instead, the curriculum was based on the process model of curriculum development in which the quality of the teacher was more important than anything else. This model, based on Stenhouse's work in the Humanities Curriculum Project and in which aims for the curriculum should be specified as 'procedural criteria or principles, rather than translated into behavioural learning objectives' (Blenkin, Edwards and Kelly, 1992, p. 119), is similar to the developmental model of the early childhood curriculum which was described in Chapter One. The discussion there suggested that qualitative evaluation is appropriately associated with this developmental curriculum which is responsive to pupils' experiences, interests and learning strategies and that quantitative and formal methods of evaluation cannot lead to a responsive and dynamic development of the curriculum. Here, another connection can be suggested; Stenhouse believes that practitioner research is an essential part of such a curriculum and that it is 'the evaluative response to the process model' (1975, p.141). There is thus a strong similarity between the Stenhouse view of the practitioner researcher and the early childhood practitioner as self-evaluator on whom this research has focused. These similarities and connections confirm the hypothesis with which the research began, that practitioner self-evaluation is not only the key to quality of education for individual children; it is also the key to development of the curriculum.



The forthcoming discussion centres on the belief that the only agent in a first order position to develop a responsive curriculum is a practitioner working with children, whether class teacher, nursery nurse or other professional. Efforts to improve the quality of education need to take account of practitioners' responsibility for active curriculum development, and their need for appropriate support if they are to carry out this responsibility.

It is not claimed that practitioners do sufficiently recognise and adequately carry out this duty. The present political situation, and the experience of young children and their parents, would be very different if this was the case. Professional recognition is lacking partly because, in spite of the efforts of some practitioners such as Rowlands (1984) to give greater prominence to the connection between observation of individuals and responsive curriculum planning, and researchers such as Stenhouse (1975) and Elliott (1984) who draw attention to classroom-based curriculum development, there is much that is as yet not clear about the implications of this responsibility, and about how it might become more than an occasional happening in relatively few fortunate settings. Some of the wider implications will be discussed in later chapters: here it is the process of evaluation that will be dealt with.

### **Searching for improvement through practitioner evaluation**

Certain problems and needs that we must tackle if we are to improve education at classroom level have been identified. Alexander's recent work describes several of these.

Better tools are needed for educational dialogue. Most recently (1992), he has made it

clear that in his view the lack of proper semantic and linguistic tools for talking about and focusing educational aims weakens attempts to improve education at all levels.

**‘The problem of amorphous language in the Authority’s policy statements on primary education was not limited to the PNP [Leeds Primary Needs Programme] aims...indeed if this had been a feature of the aims alone its consequences would have been considerably less serious, since aims by their nature tend to be somewhat broad and sweeping, and need to be given operational meaning through objectives and strategies. Nor is this a problem peculiar to Leeds. It is in fact a characteristic of much of the professional discourse in English primary education which goes by the name of "progressive", and the case for many of the ideas and practices under that banner is often weakened by the way they are expressed and discussed. Equally, meaningful professional dialogue of the kind required to improve practice is made extremely difficult because of the absence of shared or precise meanings...’** (1992, p.5)

One of the reasons for this very serious lack in our educational equipment may be the fundamental disagreement about curriculum explored in this chapter. It is hard to develop a shared language when the nature of what is being discussed is defined differently by the different groups who are nevertheless trying to work together. This may have a bad effect on practitioners’ willingness to run the risks involved in attempting to increase their own professional autonomy.

Education can be seen as a simple or a complex operation, depending on the speaker's perspective. In 1988 Alexander suggested that the undervaluing of primary teachers' work sprang at least partly from the difference between the public language employed about education (simple) and the private practice of teachers (complex). He showed, in interviews with teachers, that many found their own development a lonely experience even within their own schools - hardly an encouraging situation for the kind of professional autonomy required to take initiatives in defining and developing our concepts of the curriculum.

### **Inadequacies of evaluation**

Finally, he has characterised teachers' own ongoing evaluations of their work as both informal (as opposed to the formal evaluation used for public accountability and staff/school development) and insufficiently linked with theory and principles in education. His criticism is set in terms of student teacher support, but it is applicable also to the purposes of this argument.

**'Undoubtedly the mode of evaluation in most frequent use in primary classrooms is informal. Grounded in intuition and experience, it is subjective and idiosyncratic. Yet the student's preparation may have included on the one hand (in curriculum theory) an excursion into the world of publicly validated tests and scales, of debates about "classical" and "illuminative" approaches, and on the other (curriculum/method) the none-too-tacit advancement of, as criterion, "Did they behave themselves?" and, as method, "Was it OK?" The vital middle ground, which exposes and explores these self-same everyday evaluations of and with teachers and students, and which**

**thereby stands some chance of refining them to a point of greater consistency, reflectiveness and impartiality, was left untrodden.'** (1984, p. 129)

There are challenging gaps here which must be filled before we can increase practitioners' role in the evaluation and development of an appropriate curriculum for young children. For the purposes of this study, the move towards the underlying concern with finding out evaluation's impact on content of educational provision, and leading forwards from that towards an illumination of the nature of the curriculum as well as of processes of curriculum development, depends very much on finding some ways in which we can meet Alexander's criticisms. The move from the practice-based view to a more generalisable one, from the context-bound to the context-free, is dependent on clear, meaningful and well-thought-out language in which to debate the issues. This is something that we do not have at present; it may be that there are one or two aspects of this study which would be worth pursuing and improving towards meeting the need identified by Alexander for a language in which to participate in the educational debate - a language which, while it is accessible to non-specialists, can adequately reflect the complexity of educational undertakings.

In later chapters (Five, Six and Seven) some relevant issues raised by researchers will be discussed, including Eisner (1982) on the curriculum, Ross (1988) with Sherman and Webb on curriculum criticism in the context of qualitative educational research, and Altrichter and Posch (1989) on developments in thinking about educational inquiry and practitioners' professional knowledge.

## **The basis of all statements about the education of young children**

Before this is attempted, however, it is essential to affirm the basis of all pedagogical knowledge, principles and language in the observation of young children. Observation is the foundation of professional self-development and dialogue with others. I shall suggest that although much of practitioners' thinking about their observations is indeed intuitive, it is not as far removed from educational theory and principles as Alexander makes out, and that some of what he criticises as amorphous language can be sharpened up by reference to the practitioners' principles which often lie close to the surface in their judgements about their practice. It is interesting that although Alexander made use of observation in his fieldwork for the Leeds Primary Needs Programme, the researchers drew their own conclusions from the observations rather than using them as the basis for further work to explore the teachers' own analysis of the findings (1992). The professional dialogue depends on having information in common with the practitioners in order to establish shared meanings for statements. This does not seem to have been the case for Alexander and his team.

### **4.5. The implications of practitioner self-evaluation**

Choices about evaluation have been shown to be linked with models of the curriculum which, in their turn, have been shown to be drawn from views of the nature and purpose of education. Education as development through supported initiation requires evaluation on the basis of its appropriateness for the learners' stages of development and personal qualities and interests. Practitioner self-evaluation as a means of improving education has been described in terms which distinguish it from improvement through standardising measurement of quality and which

characterise it as giving practitioners both a tool and a motivation to improve their practice in ways which seem most appropriate to them. The generalisation of practitioner self-evaluation and the educational insights associated with it depends on having suitable language in which to debate educational issues. Observation is the foundation of professional self-development and dialogue with others. Although much of practitioners' thinking about their observations is initially intuitive, reflective analysis can sharpen up this response into a more argued critique of practice. From this critique can develop reference to the practitioners' existing pedagogic principles and the generation of newer understandings (Whitehead and Foster, 1984).

This is not to under-rate the immense gaps in our professional equipment which have to be filled before we can present a theory and discourse of early childhood education which will be accessible to all who are engaged in the profession. Subsequent chapters will examine some requirements of this developmental task, and draw some broader conclusions to show something of the way in which observation does more than just provide data for ongoing self-evaluation. In basing statements about ongoing education on observation that has been reflected on in the light of educational aims, practitioners demonstrate its role in providing a link between pedagogic principles and their practice, and open up the possibility of developing a language and a theory in which they can express their insights into this exchange between educational theory and educational action. This will be followed by looking in more detail at the generation of theory, and at the role of action research in this (Chapter Six). Lastly, Chapter Seven will examine some aspects of the relationship between practitioner and researcher in the research reported here to see what light can be thrown on collaboration between Higher Education and the actual settings over the training of practitioners.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **OBSERVATION - THE BASIS OF EVALUATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**In the early years curriculum observation has a key position in early childhood education, in that it provides the evidence on the basis of which practitioners plan a personal version of the curriculum for children. This research shows that this evidential role extends also to the evaluation of the curriculum, when the curriculum is seen as developmental. This chapter attempts to examine observation systematically, and to draw out its contribution, actual and potential, to practical and theoretical statements about education.**

**Observation seems to be involved in every process in early childhood education. In addition to its role in the curriculum, it is also the way in which teachers gather the material from which to make informed professional judgements about children's progress, and about how to help them best, and as we have seen, there is reason to think that it is an indispensable part of evaluation as well, both for its capacity to focus attention on real issues in children's learning, and for its capacity to stimulate learning and development in adults.**

**Lastly, an attempt will be made to explore whether authoritative statements about education in general can be built up from observational material in spite of all the difficulties noted earlier about generalisation from case study material.**

## 5.1. An example of a practitioner's use of observation

During work for the Principles into Practice Project (Phase Three of this series of research activities), the writer has been collaborating with a nursery nurse in an inner-city combined nursery centre. The research process has focused on supporting evaluation and development of practice along the lines of the action-research model mentioned earlier. The early findings suggest that one way to do this is to conceptualise the process of evaluation as follows:

As adults try to get to know children and understand their learning achievements and strategies there should be a three-part process. Information about individual children is gathered through every possible means, including observation; the meaning of the information is reflected on; and plans are made in the light of what we now understand. Ideas of appropriate activities, and the staff curriculum framework, can also be reviewed.

This process can be seen in the following example: it begins with the observational stage.

**Bob is concerned that Hayley, 18 months, spends a great deal of time sitting on her own in the middle of the floor, gazing vacantly ahead of her and paying little attention to the other children. This continues whether it is the normal everyday programme in the room or whether children of Hayley's age are participating in a session of Heuristic Play (Goldschmied and Jackson 1994). One day, she sees Hayley investigating the water tray. B goes to be near her and help her find what she wants to use, while observing her as she**



**fills and pours. Twenty minutes later Hayley decides she has finished; with B's help she takes off the apron and then on her own initiative goes to hang it on a peg. This involves her in climbing onto the shelf under the pegs, and she shows that she is able to climb in spite of the coats already hung there. However, she cannot hold on with one hand and hang up the apron with the other: with B's unobtrusive help she does achieve this.**

In the second part of the process Bob analyses what has been seen and heard, reflecting on the meaning of particular things that she has seen Hayley do. In the observation of Hayley, Bob said, she had seen how different she was in different circumstances, and how her energy and initiative over the water exploration showed up her passive behaviour in an even more worrying light. Hayley's mother said that she certainly was active and inquisitive at home, and that she communicated her wishes and needs clearly to her family.

In the third part of the process these reflections are used to help with decisions about what to do next. Adults have to develop appropriate responses to what children do, and these responses can enhance or deter children's learning. Plans have to be made on the basis of knowledge (derived from observing) and understanding (derived from reflecting on the information gathered). Bob decided that her plans for Hayley would include opportunities for her to explore both water and other natural materials, and that these opportunities would be involving herself as well, since she felt that her presence and her help had made a difference to Hayley's success. She also decided that although Hayley was technically too old for the Treasure

Basket sessions (Goldschmied and Jackson 1994) she ought to be given a chance to see if this kind of provision for babies, involving sitting and investigating a collection of carefully-chosen objects, would give her more of the experience she needed of making her own investigations of the world around her. Bob thought that perhaps Hayley needed a point of entry into the activities provided which was easier for her to manage than the busy and mobile atmosphere generated by children of her own age.

This change in plan, which meant a change in the adult's focus and role as well as changes in daily provision, would be carefully monitored for its helpfulness or otherwise. New information would be gathered regularly from observations and from Hayley's mother. Other kinds of information would be helpful too - Bob had already used a video-camera and found this effective; photographs and anecdotes from other staff would be added to the observations and the stories and insights from Hayley's mother.

Bob also thought about the other adults working in the room. She felt that the observation showed that Hayley's needs were different from those the adults were setting out to meet, and the the whole team needed to revise their ideas about provision, and what were suitable activities for the children, and also to rethink their own roles with the children.

## **5.2. Using observation to make authoritative statements**

Bob's comments on the curricular assumptions of staff working in the room are interesting. They illustrate how much can actually be said on the basis of careful observation and reflection. She remarked that she felt that adults often did things because it suited their way, rather than the children's needs. Large amounts of different provision were, in her opinion, unsuitable for such young children, causing them to move rapidly from one area to another. Hayley found this rapid movement overwhelming. Again, Bob had noticed that many children sought out the same equipment over and over again, day after day. She felt that there was a purpose in this to which staff should respond, seeing the children's repeated step-climbing, for instance, as them practising an essential skill and experiencing variations of height, etc, rather than as dull repetition.

She observed again that staff often felt uncomfortable about being quiet with children - they would often dominate with lively chatter and movement, whereas, from experience of Hayley and others Bob felt there was greater benefit from 'being quiet and keeping company' while children pursued their own purposes.

Both of these statements are penetrating analyses of curriculum and practice with very young children. How authoritative they are seen to be, however, is an important question. It is often suggested that the force of statements from case-study is greater as the number of such studies increases, and this must certainly be the case - a sort of 'common law' of educational

practice would be influential, and it is to be hoped that the publication of results from such research as the *Principles into Practice* Project will contribute to this among other benefits. And are there any other ways in which such statements can be authoritative beyond their own particular context? Might it be, for instance, that, while the occasion (Hayley's behaviour, for instance) remains particular, the general statement about children's needs as observed by Bob, and adults' practice as observed by Bob, and the conclusions she draws about changes that should be made, could be taken as both generally applicable and justified until proven otherwise?

Why should developmental educational research have to try to justify its conclusions in the same way as epidemiologists, when the aims of this kind of educational research are to meet the needs of individual children? Is it not rather a capitulation to the big numbers of easy audit to do so?

Perhaps we should think in terms of different methods for different tasks; Osborn et al. (1984) make this point very clearly in relation to their CHES work.

**'The point we are making is that although our statistical methods can separate out the associations between specific social factors and measures of children's ability and behaviour, the explanations for such associations remain implicit and sometimes open to alternative explanations. However, these cautionary words are only addressed to the assumptions of causality between these variables; the associations were describe actually exist for this**

**sample even though we can only speculate about the real life processes which produce these associations.'**

It is possible, perhaps, that the real life processes (in which the causes that underlie important patterns are located) may be accessible through a different kind of research, which is sensitive to the operation of these factors.

The kind of co-operative action research under discussion does have an inbuilt open-ness to the interaction of individual human purposes both with other individuals' purposes and with other powerful influences such as social institutions like schools and systems of education. Its flexibility and adaptability make it ideal for studies where the 'givens' are established by the people studied, yet the trends are much more general, as in the case-study work of Wells, for instance (1987).

### **Problems in standardising responses**

Recent work in the field of teachers' understanding and implementation of the curriculum for the early years of education (Pound, 1986, for instance) highlights the difficulties implicit in trying to apply standardised analyses to the data available. The range, and the potential implications, of the responses and insights render standardised codification either meaningless itself in that dissimilar criteria are being used in each situation, or prone to cancel out the meanings in the responses.

If each classroom is unique, and each teacher an individual, would it not be preferable to accept and employ a range of aims, methods, language and criteria in classroom research?

### **5.3. Observation and professional dialogue**

But there is one way in which we need to be wary about language. The objections raised by Alexander (1992) to the present justifications offered for early childhood practice have focused largely on the language used and, of course, the thinking that supports the dialogue. The previous discussion of the research in Chapter Three has suggested that it might be when practitioners are put under pressure to articulate their beliefs and principles in the course of analysing their responses to observational evidence that the quality of their professional dialogue is strengthened.

In order to see whether evaluation from unstructured observations (i.e. those not predetermined to give particular information) can help with refining the meanings and language in which we formulate our judgements, I shall examine some different cases of evaluation. In each case observation has been analysed, criteria for evaluation identified and judgements made about appropriate provision, but the circumstances differ. In the first example, the evaluations were made by students working in schools as part of a College-based mathematics course in 1988 (Appendix D). The work here presented took place in mixed-age classes of 6, 7 and 8 year

olds in an inner-city primary school; the group of students were gaining experience in providing mathematics for small groups of children (7 or 8 students in each class) during 6 half-day visits. Supporting evidence in every case included audio-tapes, student transcripts and evaluations, with tutorial evaluations and comments to students. Method of recording; a Sony TC-D3 "Cassette-Corder", similar to a personal cassette-player, was worn by one student, who then shared the recording with the others involved. Although the tape usually picked up most of the surrounding voices, that of the student wearing the Sony tended to be the clearest, though not necessarily the most dominant in fact during the activity.

**Maths work in Primary School A, autumn 1988.**

**Observation 18.11.1988; students Helen and Julia, pupils Dale, Lucy, Luke, Nicola and others.**

The activity was devised to meet the needs of Dale, Luke and Nicola by incorporating imaginative play into mathematical provision; the previous week's activity had not satisfied them and the students had found it hard to involve them in what was going on. They noticed that " all Luke and Dale were interested in was 'potion making'" with different colours of paints, so they provided for the next session a 'potion making' which could include mixing and measuring drops of food colouring, observing and discussing the resultant colour changes, measuring quantities of water, mixing a range of

**other materials and recording the recipe, and sharing the creation of a poem about the potion.**

**The students' comments are given in [square brackets].**

### **Tape numbers**

**000 Children are counting drops (into the thirties - Luke) and losing count, describing changes in colour, filling up ( with estimates of how much might be needed) a container, observing the bubbles that are caused by splashing, squeezing a sponge and measuring the liquid into a container. [On the last, Helen comments " wanted to help [Luke] realise that if the sponge was full once and not quite full another time wouldn't really be able to tell accurately how much water the sponge holds or how many spongefuls does it need to fill container. I still don't think Luke quite understood this."]**

**080 Emphasis on adding a measured quantity ("just one drop").**

**115 Observing bubbles coming from an inverted container, talking about what makes this happen. Helen explains about air being in the container.**



- 135 Dale "Anybody like my food.....just cooking it?" "What are you cooking, Dale? " (Helen). "A heart, a dog's heart." "Oh, poor dog!"**
- 143 Luke "Why don't we put this in the potion?..... one two three...potion....."**
- 146 Attention to how pieces of apple float on the surface - "it's because they're soft, no...,light" - Luke. [Helen "trying to think of word he wants. "] Search for something heavy that will sink. Discussion of how air also helps things to float and observation of bubbles. [Helen comments "This is a lovely e.g. of some real science being introduced. Luke illustrates his knowledge of why something floats/sinks. I was trying to get them to think about floating and sinking while they were playing quite freely with the materials."]**
- 172 Recall of 'magic rhyme' to go with potion. The children join in vigorously. [Helen notes "The chanting in the background, in time with the stirring, was interesting.....to add to the feel of this one potion I started to read out the poem they'd jointly composed...."]**

**General comments;**

**Helen "We were very much making our provision around Luke and Dale, because if they weren't interested, they were so difficult, but it seemed the only way, but evaluating the whole session's work, I think that the girls too did all benefit from the provisions we made. [VH - certainly the background noises of the children and Julia suggest that this is so, although it is not possible to hear them clearly enough to transcribe; also Lucy's exposition during the discussion is very effective.]**

**So, although not connected with houses and homes [the class theme which they had intended to contribute to] 'making potions' had great scope for maths and early science ideas. Julia and I made a recipe for the children to follow, both written and a pictorial one, as I wasn't sure of the children's standard of reading. I wanted to have a broad range of measures/quantities for the children to use, e.g. drop, spoonful, slices, A pint, 20 stirs, a quarter etc, for them to see how measuring doesn't just mean length. The activity was quite a controlled one, they were very keen to be precise with their measurements, perhaps they've seen parents at home cooking etc.**

**As well as maths ideas, a great deal of language came from this activity and fantasy play amongst others."**

**I feel that this evaluation shows Helen beginning to evolve some linguistic and conceptual**

tools for approaching the task of talking about how to reconcile individual children's learning needs with curriculum plans. She is not prepared to condemn the activity because it diverged from the class teacher's plans - she can assert the educational value that she perceives. She also uses evidence of the controlled and precise behaviour of two boys who were known to have been almost uncontrollable during the last session. On a modest scale, this is a kind of educational dialogue which could be generally understood, I believe, and which engages the reader or listener in an evaluation which justifies developmental practice. Helen is also developing the capacity to be reflective and self-analytical:

**Student's self-evaluation;**

**Helen used the tape to outline her pedagogical intentions, e.g. "helping them to look at something I feel that they may miss on their own" and to make a professional critique of her teaching style, e.g. "Unfortunately I ask them the question and then I answer it for them, instead of letting them think about it and answer it."**

If this student has developed self-critical faculties and vocabulary through reflecting on observations, might there be a similar process for practitioners?

#### **5.4. What would be the impact of more practitioners engaging in observation-based evaluation?**

In the above examples from Helen's work in school we have seen her engaged in the task of learning how to negotiate a curriculum with a group of children. She is already aware of the influences that direct her negotiation towards the two who will cause the most trouble if they are bored, and she tries to be conscious of what is happening to the other children in the group. In becoming more conscious both of her own reasons for particular decisions and of the impact that her decisions have on other children she is opening herself to an awareness that many qualified practitioners do not have. Experience from the investigations in schools and nurseries suggests that the early childhood emphasis on observation as a determinant of educational decisions is not relied on as much as practitioners often believe; it has been a common experience during the research to be told 'Well, of course, we're doing it all the time' yet in the hands of experienced and committed practitioners such as AC and HJ and Bob at Centre 1 and LB and J at Centre 2 the effect of observation can be revolutionary.

Observation, when it is done in a way that is appropriate to its focus, is the nearest thing we can obtain to a slice of real life, and when it is really used to influence planning it can have quite far-reaching effects. The reasoning behind the idea of observation rests on the learning theory that applies as much to adults as it does to children. Undertaking observation and engaging to analyse the material and to reflect on it is a commitment to learning.

## **Why practitioners need to learn, and what learning involves**

Effective teaching is not about the simple transmission of knowledge but about the exercise of professional expertise and insight in order to follow up and extend the pupil's existing knowledge and understanding. Building on the foundations of each pupil's learning means that teachers have to be able to say what each pupil has achieved and what it would be appropriate for the teacher to lead on to next.

Teaching, if it is to be effective, must be targeted at the learner's needs and stage of understanding. In order to target teaching appropriately teachers have to use a range of methods of assessing children's progress, relevant experiences and interests, all of which will give helpful information about how to extend their learning.

Teachers and other practitioners have to be good learners in order to find out how to educate their pupils most effectively, and they need to take a research stance to their classrooms (Bruner 1980, Rowland 1984). All learners learn by building on what they already know, and learn best through their own interests and experiences (Wood 1988).

Education is a complex and sophisticated business. It is not about just telling people what we think they ought to know, but about finding out what learning is already going on and linking this with new learning. All learners, whether nursery children or adult students, come to their teachers with ideas about the world which they have developed through their own experiences

and interests, and it is on these existing ideas that the new learning must be built (Bruner 1986, Paley 1990). When people have difficulty in understanding something new we have to go back to what they understand well in order to extend the understanding to the new material (Piaget 1933). In order to discover and relate to the learner's existing ideas we have to engage with him or her in a real-life situation where the ideas can be expressed in concrete as well as abstract terms. If there is nothing concrete to relate the discussion to it is much harder to understand the learner's existing thinking and to focus both minds on the same thing, as was seen earlier with the primary history seminar groups. Observation, shared with another practitioner, is like a maths problem shared with a mathematician - it is an opportunity to focus ideas and take thinking forward. But there are different ways of observing, and decisions need to be made about which is suitable for current purposes.

### **The observation of children and adults in educational settings**

The only way to gather evidence about how children are progressing is to observe their behaviour across different settings - in groups, as individuals, at play, in conversation, in structured teaching situations, with adults, and so on. Evidence is also collected in the form of stories, paintings, drawings, models and so on - these can often be photographed, photocopied, traced or sketched if it is important to the child to keep them.

Ordinary continuous observation is a normal part of the practitioner's work and is essentially a process which is carried out as an integral part of education. The normal, everyday,

kind of observation consists of a continuous awareness, carefully recorded each day, of what children are doing in the educational setting. Bob was not doing anything special when she noticed Hayley at the water tray. This demands sensitivity and alertness to everything that is going on around, and is a vital part of the practitioner's expertise. This is an aspect of early childhood education which does not always come right straight away, and, as noted earlier in this section, can often lapse if not maintained.

This kind of observation is often described as 'participant observation' to make clear that it does not involve the practitioner in withdrawing from interaction with the class. Relevant items of information are noted in the course of the day and jotted down at the first opportunity. These notes form the basis for assessment and planning for individuals and groups, and are carefully written into plans and individual assessments. Very often it is these notes which provide the growing points for evaluation, if the practitioner is able to maintain a questioning approach to his or her practice.

Quite often, however, something is required to spark off an evaluation of practice, and different approaches to observation have been used in this way during this research.

### **Focusing observation**

Senior staff have, in one or two cases, wanted to draw the whole staff with them on a specific issue which affects the whole establishment. At Centre 1, in Phase Two, HJ and AC had

been working on evaluation within the Centre and were concerned to emphasise the role that all staff played in supporting this, by sharing in discussions of children and by taking on some of their duties to enable them to observe and meet the writer for discussions. The Centre had for some time had a development project to improve the outdoor area, and it was decided that a whole-staff approach was necessary to carry out observations of children's use of equipment. This meant that the observations, instead of being informal, had to be formal in the sense of directing staff when and where to observe, and formal in laying out a structure which indicated what was to be observed and under what categories.

As a comparison, the headings from an unstructured sheet prepared for work with museum education staff at the Science Museum are also included.

#### **OBSERVATION SHEET**

**NAME OF CHILD**

**AGE**

**DATE**

**ACTIONS**

**SPEECH**

There may also be times when practitioners will want to make a more specific focus on certain aspects of children's behaviour or on classroom developments; in this case observations



can be structured in different ways. Observations may be made of a specific child, as with J's observations of Bonnie, or at specific times, as in Ruth's request for me to observe another member of staff in a home-corner play situation as part of her focus on supporting children's autonomy. In this kind of focused observation, a child's behaviour may be noted continuously over a period of twenty minutes or so, as in the case of the two boys observed in the nursery school for Phase Three, or for a full ten minutes every two hours, or the use by pupils of a certain area of the learning environment may be recorded, as happened in both Centres in Phase Two, for instance.

### **Evaluation through observation in these research activities**

There has been an interesting development in the writer's use of observation over the years since 1986. To begin with there was an unquestioned assumption that the way to observe was to record, as far as possible, everything that took place in the classrooms of Teachers A and B. But it has been emphasised that the early stages of Phase One were formative for the writer of the understandings and methods which were applied in later Phases, and also part of the process of acclimatisation to the classroom which was noted above in relation to Centre 2 (Phase Two) and associated with Eisner's emphasis on educational connoisseurship. Latterly, with the practitioner's initiatives in choosing a focus and commenting on the evidence, has come a greater confidence in the power of an observation of a single child or group of children to provide evidence that will stimulate change (see Chapter Seven for more details of changes in the writer's perspective).

These changes draw attention to the fact that observation is not a static process to be gone through in order to accredit the plans that follow. It should be part of the tools of evaluation, and reasoned out according to the evaluator's need for information.

### **The need for evaluation to interact with observation**

The essential point is that the process of daily planning must not proceed on a purely reactive basis. Evaluation must be built in to the process, because without the analysis and reflection that are part of evaluation it would be easy for early childhood education to become repetitive and unreflective. The discussion of evaluation that has taken place so far has not centred on classroom regularities, and it is important to record at this point that there should be a commitment to evaluation in developmentally appropriate practice which is not often there or, if it is there, is more like a checking off of plans decided in advance rather than a dynamic process. The curricular provision and the learning environment should be developed through weekly evaluation based on the daily observations, which enables staff to plan the coming week's basic classroom provision.

Early childhood practitioners commonly work closely with different groups of adults to whom they need to express themselves, communicating their intentions and articulating their beliefs. With parents, practitioners are required to do all this, in the context of listening first of all to how the parent perceives the child's progress and the school and classroom programme (Atkin, Bastiani and Goode 1988). This challenges practitioners to articulate and justify their

practice and, if necessary, to argue from their beliefs and principles. Another way in which practitioners are pressed into pedagogical dialogue is in shared evaluation. Where more than one adult is involved in the classroom this also offers the opportunity to make explicit ideas about the work through which professional views can be exchanged.

**‘In a nursery where action is determined in this way, all staff should be refining their skills (the more closely you look at something, the more information you are likely to gain), growing in confidence and becoming better able to withstand uninformed criticism and the whims of society.’**

**(Dowling 1988, p. 140)**

We may think as a result of this discussion that practitioners might develop both a clearer language and a more defined theory in which to talk about early childhood education because of the pressure to articulate beliefs and principles and to justify practice in a dialogue based on observations. The following pages will examine some more material from the research with practitioners to see whether there is any evidence that this is happening.

## **5.5. Observation, evaluation and the early years curriculum**

The two previous perspectives on observation have highlighted it as a central part, almost a pivot, of the main early childhood processes of assessment, evaluation and curriculum

planning, and have attempted to show how it can be the dynamic thrust in practitioners' self-development as well. The last part of this chapter will look at some of the most difficult, and even controversial, aspects of observation, and will lead on to a discussion of how practitioners' thinking about early childhood education is formed. This discussion will try to set out some points which may contribute to an investigation of how educational theories, particularly about the curriculum, are generated (Chapter Six).

The controversy surrounding the curriculum in early childhood education concerns how statements about its characteristics are generated and justified. There have been two major shifts in government perceptions of the primary curriculum over the last sixty years, and attitudes to observation have been fundamental to both of them.

The first of the shifts began when the Hadow Report (1931) based its views substantially on what they heard as Susan Isaacs expounded her vision of education in the early years. They were convinced by her argument that psychoanalytic insights and processes - in particular the role of observations of children in planning for individual and group learning - could enable teachers to teach with the grain of the developing child, rather than against it, and they accepted that there must be a new definition of education for children of infant age and younger. They saw that young children required a kind of education that was distinct from the education provided by previous models - the elementary and the grammar schools - and that this early childhood version of education should have its own 'canons of excellence.' The intervening thirty years gave opportunities for a few pioneering teachers to begin to build up a body of

expertise in the kind of curriculum which bases its planning on the experiences of the pupils and in which 'knowledge will be acquired in the process, not, indeed, without effort, but by an effort whose value will be enhanced by the fact that its purpose and significance will can be appreciated, at least in part, by the children themselves' (Hadow, 1931, Introduction). The basis of such an approach was observation of individuals, as can be seen from documentation of such pioneers as Isaacs herself and Dorothy Gardner.

This progressive view of education, so named at a time in British history when progress was looked for in a number of the humane sciences and confidently anticipated as bringing both practical benefits and advances in thinking, was celebrated and simultaneously undermined by the Plowden Report (1967). This report set out a descriptive version of the approach without a protective critical system - what the distinctive canons of excellence were, and how practitioners could ensure that they were securely orientated towards them.

What the Plowden Report left unspoken was how successful teachers managed 'deliberately to devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves and to develop in the way and at the pace appropriate to them' (Plowden, 1967, pp. 187-188). It also failed to specify how teachers and all concerned with children's learning could find out whether children were indeed progressing appropriately, and how provision could be improved where good standards were not being reached. Such a system, in the form of a process of appropriate evaluation, would have allowed truly progressive education and educational development to be clearly and publicly differentiated from poor teaching alleged to be or masquerading as

progressivism. The resulting confusion in public perceptions of what were the signs of effective education led before long to an association of formal education with high quality and informal methods with indiscipline and low levels of achievement - exactly the opposite of what should follow from the engagement of children's interest and understanding in educational processes and aims.

As a result, the development and expansion of progressive methods was restricted, and gradually confined to institutions of initial teacher education. There, the continuance of a progressive view of children as learners can be seen in the following excerpt from a seminal book on learning to read. The approach is outlined in a passage which displays both its characteristic child-centred strengths and (with hindsight) pedagogical hostages to fortune which were later to come under attack.

**Children spend the first years of life solving problems all the time. Probably more learning takes place in the first two years than in any similar period thereafter. Children are born learning; if there is nothing to learn, they are bored, and their attention is distracted elsewhere. We do not have to train children to learn, or even account for their learning: we have to avoid interfering with it** (Smith, 1980, p.8).

Much has changed since the 1930s, not least in popular and hence central government responses to economic difficulties. Education, now seen as the scapegoat for economic ills, is

increasingly urged to formalise what children are taught, thus reducing the power of teachers and other practitioners to develop a curriculum which involves individual children's interests and learning strategies. Nothing shows the size of the swing of public opinion so clearly as that the statement quoted above from Smith, at the time an original and thought-provoking one, is now seen not simply as a controversial approach but as untenable because of its warning against misguided adult interference in a developmental process. The relative importance of the child's experiences and concerns and those of the adults has been adjusted strongly to the advantage of the adult, and the emphasis is no longer on whether the adult is helping the child with her or his own approaches to learning, but whether all the children have learned precisely what the adult has been directed to teach. We have come to the point of seeing that the changes in educational policy described in early chapters do not just affect the adult's role and professional independence; they have changed the balance in thinking about education away from the individual learner towards group norms. There is no place for observation in this view of education except as a diagnostic guide when children fail to achieved the predetermined levels, and then the observation is only for purposes of identifying the child's weaknesses, not for showing where the teaching has failed to help the child become a partner in the process. The reaction against child-centred approaches has been intense, and hardly rational given that individual learning is what education is ultimately about. As the national training officer of the National Childminding Association has asked 'What else could be at the centre of the curriculum?' (pers.comm., February 1995).

So, to emphasise the essential nature of observation is to challenge the assumptions

behind the Education Reform Act 1988 and the National Curriculum, and any view of the curriculum which claims to be developmental is now under great pressure to show that it has any claim to 'rigour'. It is in fact not possible to justify a developmental curriculum in these terms as understood by those who put forward the National Curriculum as a model of rigour - there is a basic opposition of values and principles which renders links between the two impossible.

However, it is possible to discuss rigorous approaches to a developmental curriculum in developmental terms, and here it is the quality of the observational material and the quality of the practitioner's analysis and internalisation of what is learned that provide the indicators for rigour. Some comparisons from the content of this research will show how such criteria can be established.

### **CRITERIA OF EXCELLENCE IN A DEVELOPMENTAL CURRICULUM**

**Gathering of evidence of children's experiences and learning: criteria established either positively (seen as essential as a result of research interactions) or negatively (their absence during the research interactions concluded to be a hindrance to good teaching).**

**- effort to gather material about children's experiences and behaviour as objectively as possible: established with Teachers A and B.**



**- effort to gather material relevant to children's interests, experiences and concerns, not just to the adult's concerns: established through reorientation of focus in work with both teachers, ie with Teacher A dropping the agreed focus on children's behaviour in favour of recording the interactions they experienced with their teacher, and with Teacher B changing the focus from the teaching of reading to how children were making use of provision.**

**- effort to think objectively about evidence, including making use of an outsider view: established positively with Teachers A and B, the Workplace Nurseries Project investigations of Bonnie's preferences in learning and succeeding research with colleagues; established negatively with students where there was not enough opportunity to support them in their analyses (although Helen, for example, showed that a journal approach could enable her to be self-analytical.**

**- effort to overcome the anxiety and defensiveness felt: established positively with all staff and with students; the supportive role of the outsider identified as essential at several points.**

**- effort to think about the curriculum from principles appropriate for a developmental curriculum: a consistent factor - see, for instance, Teacher A's concern about children's language in the classroom, and Helen's analysis of**

**her methods.**

**- preparedness for change: established positively in most cases, eg Teacher B's readiness to alter her classroom provision and routine (p. , above), and Bob's autonomous rethinking of both curriculum and adult roles with her children (Principles into Practice).**

**- continuous research stance: there seems every reason to believe that this must be an essential of maintaining quality. However, it appears that it is extremely difficult for practitioners to be continuously self-regenerating in this way without outside support or some other incentive to challenge them. In the Workplace Nurseries settings, for instance, even the practitioners in senior positions who were most supportive to other members of staff, LB and HJ, found my absence through illness during the project caused problems for them as for staff. The Principles into Practice project has yet to establish whether practitioners can continue a research stance if they have other support, such as local research networks.**

There is strong theoretical and practical support for a continued focus on practitioners' investigative stance to their work, even if it is at present neither wide-spread nor widely understood. In the work of Athey (1990) the positive view of children as learners is explored through a wide range of case studies (again, observation-based) and developed into what she

calls a positivist or constructivist view of learning which is linked theoretically with children's ways of building up understanding and knowledge of the world. There have been modern exponents such as Rowlands (1984) in junior classrooms as well as those in infant and nursery education. There has been a parallel development among early childhood practitioners in the United States (eg DeVries and Kohlberg, 1987/1990). Observation of individuals, in play, free movement and socialisation, conversation, spontaneous exploration and representation, whether in an indoor or outdoor learning environment, at home or at school, is the foundation of all of these approaches.

The next task will be to examine how it is that these and other practitioners derive their insights, and how educational theory can be claimed to originate in their own and other practitioners' experience. Is it possible that, in early childhood, education has been slowly building up a corpus of knowledge from practical experience which is capable of contributing to the formation of theory?

## **CHAPTER SIX**

# **OBSERVATION, EVALUATION AND THE GENERATION OF THEORY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**Educational theory is at an early stage of development. Comparisons with longer-established disciplines such as medicine suggest that traditional research alone cannot provide a theoretical base - a sequence of study, experience, reflection, generalisation and discussion is important for the development of theory.**

**This chapter discusses how this might be approached in education, and looks to practitioner self-evaluation for some instances of the growth of understanding through observation and reflection.**

## **6.1 Introduction: the implications of early childhood principles**

Medical science has passed through many stages of development compared with education, and it is now unthinkable that there could be a body of medical theory based on assertions about how medicine ought to work and on a small and very partial research base. Yet this is how education stands at present. The experiences and insights of practitioners have not been drawn together and formed into a coherent body of evidence on children's learning and appropriate practice in providing for it. This thesis has, in focusing on evaluation by teachers and other practitioners, explored one of the areas where judgements are formed by those who are closest to the children. It is possible that this exploration may be able to suggest some parts of the process by which individual context-bound judgements can contribute to the formation of more general ones, and suggest again how these more general judgements may contribute to the formation of theory.

There is at present much publication of writing by practitioners in the field of early childhood education which draws on expertise and experience to assert principles. This is a process which has been in operation at least since the early 1980s, when a few practitioners began to put into publication the principles of their practice, beginning with Blenkin and Kelly (1981). Much of the current published material is generated through collaborative writing in one form or another. Almost every one of the local education authorities has produced early years guidelines since the end of the 1980s. The titles of these substantial documents reveal their assumptions about the importance of early childhood education and the LEAs' hopes -

*Foundations for Our Future* (London Borough of Newham) and *Great Expectations* (London Borough of Westminster), for instance. The Early Years Curriculum Group has, since 1989, produced three documents about quality in early childhood education: *Early Childhood Education: the Early Years Curriculum and the National Curriculum* (1989), *First Things First: Educating Young Children. A Guide for Parents and Governors* (1992) and *Early Education in Jeopardy* (1993), with more to come soon. The Early Childhood Education Forum, an umbrella group representing most of the major organisations providing early childhood education and care in the maintained, independent and voluntary sectors, has brought together representatives from its members to write a framework and guidelines for the curriculum in early childhood education (1994-6). What does this explosion into print mean? Is it purely a self-improvement - some would say a self-promoting - exercise? Or is it an attempt to build on the example given in the work of Blenkin and Kelly (1981) and Bruce (1987) by developing principles out of practice? And if it is the latter, are these principles any good? Are these principles that should be the basis of decisions about the curriculum, and about the education and training of practitioners? Should others, responsible for policy but not expert in the field, pay attention to what these writers assert and mould policy on this basis?

It has been suggested in this discussion that there is little doubt that practitioners agree that principles can be developed from practice, and that this has been shown with particular clarity in the works of writers such as Blenkin and Kelly (op.cit.) and Bruce (op.cit.) who have combined strong classroom experience with academic and research roles. But what of practitioners who are purely classroom-based? The impact on the field of early childhood

education of collaborative writings is a positive one: principles are clarified and asserted, important issues are identified, dilemmas are pinpointed. The impact on the writers and their associates is beneficial too: insights are strengthened by challenge, articulacy is improved, the capacity for self-questioning is enlarged, morale is heightened. But is this any more than could be achieved by the creation of a General Teaching Council? Valuable as that would be, what would be its contribution to the formation of a body of educational principles?

The answer to this question lies in whether the practitioner-writers are articulating their views only, or are articulating principles drawn from their practice and experience. Can we rely on these principles to be true in other settings than those in which they were articulated? Here the work of the Early Childhood Education Forum's project, Quality in Diversity, will be of interest, since its members are drawn from the widest possible field, ranging from childminders to preparatory school heads. Can anything worthwhile be said by such a disparate body? The belief of the ECEF is that something essential exists that must be said about the nature of young children's learning and what an appropriate curriculum is like, and that it is best said by a very wide-ranging group because this demonstrates the universality of the principles asserted. If these and other early childhood practitioners are correct in believing that normal classroom practice can generate principles we need to ask how this comes about. Here, it may help to look in some detail at the nature of early childhood education, which was briefly outlined in Chapter One.

## **6.2 Early childhood practitioners as learners**

There are certain characteristics of practice in this age-phase that have supported the action-research and classroom orientation of the research and that may help to show how principles are generated. One of the most influential qualities has been the one which makes early childhood education so difficult for newcomers to understand - the fact that it has to be a two-way learning process in which, as described above, the practitioner needs to be a good learner too. Meeting the needs of such very young children requires practitioners to engage in the emotional, social and cognitive challenge of trying to build supportive and stimulating relationships with children who are just beginning the process of learning together in a group. To do this successfully practitioners need to learn about many different aspects of each young individual's life and qualities, including their home and community-based experience, their achievements and difficulties so far, and the personal learning strategies they have developed.

This gives a special complexity to the early childhood educator's task. Yet she or he is not thereby relieved of the full challenge faced by the teachers of older primary children. For all effective education is a sophisticated process. On the one hand there are the kinds of knowledge, skills and understanding that society and schools value and wish to pass on to children. On the other hand there is the learner as an individual, with human patterns of learning and with individual qualities and experiences which are relevant to the learning process. These two parts are not separate from each other; they interact, and it is in the negotiation of learning with the learner that the teacher's contribution is made. This is true of education at all stages,



but it is in particularly high profile in early childhood education because of the learner's stage of development, lack of experience of the world and vulnerability. This puts a premium on the practitioner's capacity to learn about each child and each group of children, and this emphasises, as shown below, the capacity for observation and for learning from reflection on the meaning of what is observed.

The following is a fairly characteristic summary of the processes which are common to most writers:

**'The work of the nursery teacher is founded on observation and assessment of children on a continuous basis, which helps teachers to see how to provide for children's further learning in continuity with their present levels of understanding. This is the foundation for plans for future educational provision. It is a dynamic principle of the nursery curriculum, and one of great value because it looks forward to the kind of assessment envisaged for later stages of education in the TGAT Report. It is quite distinct from assessment after teaching a particular topic because it is interactive in intention. The teacher assesses in order to understand what it is appropriate to teach next. This approach gives nursery teachers continuous evidence of their pupils' levels of understanding, capabilities and interests to support their assessments of individuals; it gives teachers evidence to help them plan for learning; and it gives them evidence as to how successful their provision**

**has been, making sure that high quality nursery education has self-evaluation by teachers built into it.'**

**(Hurst, submission to Rumbold Committee, 1989)**

It will be seen that planning a curriculum on this basis, if it is to take into account the individuals' different rates and ways of learning, cannot take place entirely in advance. In fact, if it is to be successful in its aims, a developmentally appropriate curriculum has to be provided for the children on a planned and responsive basis which relies on the active role of observation and evaluation in directing its development.

This dynamic thrust for the creation of curriculum in the early years of education has always involved attempting a very close match between the learner and the educational provision; in order to relate to what young children bring to school in the way of achievements, experiences and concerns it is necessary to observe their behaviour very closely. These observations form the basis of a continuous assessment and evaluation of the children's progress and the suitability of the provision.

For example, the teacher begins with a broad curricular provision in the classroom and playground and then progresses to the stage where observation of children suggests what the next steps might be. Thus, for example, a wide range of materials for use with sand may be provided, but the further development rests with children's play and representation.

Again, observations of infant children are used in early years practice to inform the

teacher's development of the curriculum. Although the example given may focus largely on the work of one child, it is at the same time an evaluation of practice for the teacher.

### **6.3 Arguing theory through practice**

The common characteristic of these approaches is their capacity to reconcile within themselves aspects of education and of educational enquiry which have previously been thought to be opposed. Quality of curriculum knowledge is essential to the classroom practitioners, as is the elucidation of generalisations to the classroom researcher. Using observation-based evaluation to develop appropriate provision puts the practitioner into an action-research mode or stance, which is oriented towards the production of statements about what is appropriate and why.

It is as important for the classroom practitioner as for the researcher that evaluation should be of a high quality. The curriculum is affected by the quality and appropriateness of evaluation procedures in the same way the the evaluation procedures chosen reflect a curricular view. Development is often through debate arising from the examination of underlying values implicit in these choices.

Without the analytical and evaluative enquiry based on observation there would be no material for debate about what is appropriate provision for young children's learning, and no

means to build up the discourse to support the debate for which, as we will see next, many researchers and writers make strong arguments. What we need to know has to do with the contribution that the process described here makes to the debate, and how it influences people's thinking.

Before going further however, it may first be helpful to see if there is evidence of practitioners generating insights from experience, and thereby working from practice to a view of the curriculum.

The recent debate among practitioners has often tended to focus more on the management of the new responsibility for national curriculum assessment than on any practice-led insights. However, there are ways in which the experiences gained from classroom practice are used by some practitioners to determine their developing view of the curriculum. This has direct implications for the curriculum planning and the evaluation process that the practitioner uses.

As Blyth says in his introduction to *Informal Primary Education Today* (1988), insights derived from classroom practice and illuminated by theory require their own means of evaluation, both of pupil progress and of the effectiveness of the education offered. The kind of insights he has in mind, and which he characterises as informal education, focus on play in education, experimentation, problem solving, exploration, guided discovery and data search. The common denominator in all of these is their focus on what should be called the processes of education rather than any predetermined end product. That this approach, which is distinct from

the formal instruction approach, does indeed require a different form of evaluation is confirmed by Nias' interviews with teachers (in Blyth, 1988, above). She found that the teachers linked formal teaching [and consequently formal evaluation] with topics such as spelling where right answers were seen as inherent in the content. To them, formality implied a view of the curriculum and of the nature of knowledge.

The developmental curriculum has suffered badly from its failure to demonstrate publicly the process of evaluation which is built into it. In fact, it is surely because it is so fundamental a part of the process of the determination of the curriculum that it has not been trumpeted abroad as a separate process. There has thus been a tendency for the proponents of measurement to conclude that theirs is the only form of evaluation. As Blyth says, it is essential that the informal approach to evaluation continues to be developed and is documented. There is no way that this can take place except through the work of reflective classroom practitioners.

As noted in Chapter Four, a number of recent studies have focused, from practitioner or classroom researcher standpoint, on the connection between the view of the curriculum and the process of evaluation. The studies were discussed in terms of how each one adds some dimension to the idea that it is the view of what education is about that underpins both curriculum model and evaluation. We see here that there is also a distinction to be made between different models of the curriculum in terms of what it is thought possible to learn from practice in the setting. Broadly, some models anticipate learning about education from investigating the children's experiences, as in Stenhouse (1975), while others do not anticipate any learning on

the part of the practitioner apart from finding out how well children can perform set tasks.

The work of Bennett and Kell (1989) offers a useful example. In spite of an attempt to clothe themselves in a Brunerian cognitive development cloak theirs is an instructionist model of teaching. The following lengthy quotation shows the slide from one set of values to another, and towards an instruction rather than learning model of the teacher's task.

**'Basically our approach to learning is constructivist in origin, deriving from insights provided by cognitive psychology. In this conception learners are active and interpretive, and learning is a covert, intellectual process providing the development and re-structuring of existing conceptual schemes. As such teaching effects learning through pupils' thought processes, ie teaching influences pupil thinking; pupil thinking mediates learning.'**

**Intended classroom learning is embedded in the curriculum tasks or activities that teachers present to children (or allow them to choose), and as such the activities of the learner on such tasks are crucial to their development. Thus, in order to understand classroom learning, it is necessary to observe children's performances on their tasks.....**

**Our definition of assessment concerns the judgements of right and wrong that teachers tend to make, including ticking and crossing, written comments, and**

**the like. Diagnosis, on the other hand, we define as teacher attempts to acquire a clear view of pupils' misunderstandings and misconceptions through careful questioning.'**

**(pp.26-9)**

The example of assessment which follows the above passage shows how the curriculum model of the 'right answer' defines the processes undertaken in assessment. Geraldine, 4y 7m, has been 'doing shapes', using a card with defined areas to fill in and plastic geometric shapes. The observations of her work at this task are recorded, and followed by interviews with pupil and teacher. In spite of the fact that Geraldine makes a spirited attempt to talk about the 'My little pony' that she got for Christmas they elicit her evaluation. 'Nevertheless it was established that she had found it hard, it was not familiar work, and that she had enjoyed it.'

The teacher felt the activity had been a success. 'Geraldine had used shapes with which she was familiar and it had also introduced her to the word triangle, which she didn't previously know, and it gave her the opportunity to sort. In the light of this she would progress [sic] Geraldine to sequencing with beads and then pegboards.'

The analysis is under several headings; it is surely no coincidence that the first heading is 'Appropriateness of activities to teacher intentions'. The judgements made offer no kind of theoretical or empirical justification - it is simply stated that the activity presented was appropriate for the stated intention, and planned specifically for the group of part-time four year olds. The third heading is 'Appropriateness of activity to child', after 'Appropriateness of

presentation'. Geraldine's experience is judged appropriate in the same terms as in the first heading's assessment of the carrying out of the teacher's intentions. A comparison of the exact words is striking:

**'a. Appropriateness of activity to teacher intentions. In Geraldine's case the activity presented was appropriate for the stated intention of familiarisation with shapes, sorting, and development of visual discrimination. The activity was also appropriately differentiated, that is, planned specifically for the group of part-time four year olds.'**

**'c. Appropriateness of activity to child. The activity was judged appropriate. After some practice on familiar shapes the triangle is introduced and through careful teacher questioning and support understanding is reached. The child's responses in interview support this judgement.'**

The limitations forced on evaluation and assessment by the curricular model seem to be clear. The model does not include any idea of the child as active constructor of knowledge, and it is therefore impossible to discover Geraldine's viewpoint, without which there can be no new insights about her learning and how it can be supported. In addition to this, it is hard to see what incentive towards developing quality there could be in this model, since it offers no possibility for the introduction of an objective or descriptive approach to classroom phenomena.



The previous pages have tried to show that appropriate processes of observation, reflection, analysis and curriculum planning in early childhood education can allow practitioners to draw general conclusions about effective practice which can be stated as principles of how children learn. That this is not always the case must be agreed; the *Principles into Practice* research makes it clear that even with outside support not all the practitioners involved did this (Chapter Three). Yet there are those who are successful, such as Bob, and it has been suggested above that the process by which practitioners come to make these statements may be analogous to that of qualitative research, in that they are based on evaluation of practice through observation and reflection. However, the fact that practitioners in early childhood make these statements does not necessarily mean that they think this is the correct conclusion. Research evidence on the generation of insights from classroom experience can give guidance on what validity to attach to these statements. This exploration of how the generation of theory relates to practical experience will now try to match some definitions of valid evaluative research with the statements about principles of good practice emerging from the research interactions reported in this thesis.

#### **6.4. A view from research literature**

Recent work on qualitative evaluation in classrooms suggests ways in which there may be routes from individuals' experience and interactions to more general insights, in particular through the process of evaluation itself. So far the discussion has been of the association of

curriculum model with form of evaluation; it is now time to observe a certain predisposition in which influences which the more. It is likely that influence is, as has been seen, going in both directions as discussed above; there are however certain ways in which evaluative procedures set out guidelines which tend towards a particular form of interpretation of the curriculum. This idea requires investigation, since there is often concern that qualitative investigations may be less able to influence curriculum than the quantitative ones.

Sherman and Webb (1988) take an overview of progress in the field of qualitative research, noting that although it has 'come into vogue' it is in need of systematic analysis and discussion, and that a definition of its relationship to quantitative research is required. They note that there are many disciplines in which qualitative research has an accepted place, and that some similar concerns appear across the range from ethnography and history to curriculum criticism and philosophy of education.

They review a range of studies using this approach and produce some common results, which tend to suggest that there could be validity in statements from classroom experience if a high standard of evidence and analysis can be maintained. Some of the criteria for qualitative research in fact seem to demand a classroom setting and an investigator who is familiar with the children.

**1. context is crucial in that it gives meaning to behaviour and must be natural**

**- hence the value of naturalistic enquiry and the need for awareness of the**

**impact of the methodology;**

**2. the process of enquiry is one of discovery, not verification;**

**3. experience is to be studied as a whole and seen as unified;**

**4. those who are studied must be allowed to speak for themselves.**

**(op. cit.)**

Certain elements of these statements are close to a definition of early childhood education in themselves and give confidence in the integrity of the relationship between the curricular model and the method of curriculum evaluation and development. They take up some of the themes mentioned earlier - observation in a normal classroom setting is the source of reliable information about children (1), analysis of the evidence gathered must be as open as possible (2), the focus of the observations must be as broad as possible and the analysis on as many levels as necessary to reflect this (3), it is vital that both practitioners and children should be encouraged to react openly within the research structure (4). To relate these criteria to specific interactions:

evidence from observation was gathered in a **natural classroom setting** with Teachers A and B, the students working in schools, the workplace nurseries and the major research project pilot nurseries (1)

analysis of observations was **not structured in advance** except in the case of the workplace nurseries' investigations of outdoor play, where very specific kinds of information were required, and in this case it was only that specific information (which children had most access to the high-prestige toys) which was discovered (2)

a **broad focus** for both observations and analysis was maintained in almost all interactions, leading to new learning about the experiences of children for Teachers A and B and for Teacher Z in PiP's pilot nursery school (3)

the emphasis on **supporting open responses** enabled Teacher A and nursery nurse Bob to reorient their practice, and nursery nurse Jenny to challenge the researchers in the workplace nurseries project to give her the attention she felt she needed for her investigations (4)

In relation to the gathering of specific quantitative information on the playground toys used, mentioned under point (2) above, Sherman and Webb wish to make the point that in their view - and in that of Dewey from whom they derive the theory of qualitative enquiry - there is no need to exclude quantitative approaches, as long as the qualitative can have its place in setting out 'the questions about worth and intent [which] are as much a part of the discussion as are measurement and analysis.'(1988, p.11) There is, however, a need for a distinctive and comprehensive theory to be built up within which it would be easier to demonstrate which kind

of enquiry should influence the orientation of research. Their description of the role of qualitative research indicates that, where its own rigorous criteria are met, it relates precisely to the underlying principles with which we are concerned. In general, they see a broad agreement that qualitative research implies a direct concern with experience as it is lived, whereas quantitative research abstracts and adds together different forms of experience. A particular quality of feeling and appreciation of the realities of the situation studied are seen by many as essential to the successful communication of qualitative research.

This now leads us to consider some suggestions about how qualitative enquiries come to be in a position to identify these principles.

## **6.5 The formation of judgements**

Perhaps the critical point in the description by Sherman and Webb (1988) of the process of qualitative research is reached when they talk of how judgements are derived. They see nothing extrinsic in this, but rather assert that fully appraising the reality of the situation involves making judgements about the potential and actual phenomena and relationships involved; they refer to the work of Ross (*op. cit.*) in showing how a view of the values involved arises from this process.

Sherman and Webb trace a distinct line of development of theory in qualitative research

from Dewey's theory of educational enquiry. In his view, all enquiry arises out of the encounter with problems in the course of human active involvement in life. In the search for ways through problems different moulds and models will apply to different circumstances, and neither Dewey nor Sherman and Webb wish to make an opposition between qualitative and quantitative research; they would prefer to see the two as both bringing helpful perspectives and each needing the other. The main point that Sherman and Webb make about this is that 'educational research today requires a more comprehensive perspective in which the considerations that qualitative researchers raise, and the questions about worth and intent posed by philosophy, are as much a part of the discussion as are measurement and analysis.'(1988, p.11)

Two further papers in the same area offer some explication of how this theory of the dynamic link between evaluation and curriculum model might be built up. In these, the link between curriculum criticism and the making of judgements is examined.

Ross (op. cit.) explores further the way in which curriculum criticism enables researchers to elicit the values inherent in educational activities. She traces the pattern of data-gathering as the first step, the avoidance of predetermined hypotheses but the use of 'foreshadowed questions' to set a focus for the investigation, the collection of material on all observed phenomena, the avoidance of disturbance from the method chosen as far as possible and the attempt to maintain awareness of other critical perspectives, giving the example of using a behaviourist view if one was operating from a developmental position. Some of these criteria are familiar, some, like the last, are a new view of how the close focus of qualitative research can be counter-balanced.

She talks of a key quality of the process being the 'connoisseurship' involved in the appreciation and understanding of situations, and of the way in which this calls for accumulated expertise and experience, which distinguishes the process of qualitative research from other approaches where familiarity is seen as a weakness.

In the writing of the research she points to key processes on which the quality of the criticism depends, such as the reference to evidence in the course of evaluation, the structural strengths of logical development, and the awareness of theoretical constructs and other research studies both qualitative and quantitative which would apply to the situation.

In general the value of this approach is seen by her as being its contribution to understanding about the educational process as distinct from a focus on educational outcomes. As Eisner (1985) says, it raises questions that teachers might not know to look for. It may help to identify new directions for research through its generation of hypotheses but, most important of all, it opens issues of values to discussion through its appraisal of educational events, and it is the educational values which lead to the formation of educational goals. Here, might be suggested, lies an invaluable tool for genuine enquiry and development.

Ross's description of the development of curriculum criticism, its two-part process of data gathering and descriptive, interpretative writing share the same qualities of descriptiveness and non-intervention in the natural setting that others have noted in qualitative enquiry. The dynamic part of the process is in how it develops understanding about the educational process

without a focus on outcomes, and without more than a 'foreshadowed question' in advance to focus the area of enquiry, as with Jenny's concern to know what Bonnie most enjoyed, or Teacher Z's concern to know more about Derek's social and linguistic competence. Having drawn attention to educational processes, the enquirer is in a good position to appraise educational events, point out the basic values inherent in the determination of goals and show teachers issues of which, as Eisner says, they might not otherwise be aware. There is in this process of curricular criticism an incentive both to critical appraisal of internally-determined goals, and to a discussion of alternative values.

We have so far seen that classroom based enquirers are likely to be able to meet most of the criteria set up for effective qualitative research, and that in fact they may find themselves in quite a privileged position where 'connoisseurship' in the unique classroom setting and understanding of the educational processes involved are concerned. It is now time to see what suggestions there are as to the process by which this local knowledge can become the source of general principles.

The generation of theory from the classroom is explored in the context of grounded theory by several researchers, among whom Altrichter and Posch (1989) raise questions about the difficulties of deriving conclusions from inductive bases alone. Hypotheses are generated through reflection on pre-existing knowledge, for instance. They suggest that in fact both inductive and deductive methods are needed in research, and that this can be expressed in terms of an epistemology of practice, 'knowing in action', combined with 'reflection in action' (1989,



p.28). They believe that the conceptualisation of research as reflection in action would much improve the quality of professional research; they describe a kind of interactive process similar to the action-research model, in which what they call 'naming and framing' enables the researcher to reinstate the context of discovery when routine established procedures are obsolete and no longer useful. They thus resolve the problem of how the hypothesis can be generated by seeing the process as having two interdependent functions; in Elliott's (1991) analysis this is represented as a cycle of observation, reflection, responsive action, observation and so on, as described above. How this works may be seen from the interactions with Teacher B, when she refocused her enquiries towards the newly identified problems with certain children's experience of her provision.

This structure defines the background, the theory and the outline of an idea of curriculum criticism which is both analytical of practice along the lines of principle, and generative of principle through practice.

Having reviewed what has been said by researchers about how it is that theory can arise from classroom enquiry, I shall next examine the different research episodes systematically to see what information they may have to give about the generation of principle.

In this discussion I shall be trying to see what light can be shed on the question whether principles can be identified, through 'knowing in action' combined with 'reflection in action' as Altricher and Posch (1989) describe it. This much deeper analysis of practice is explored here

only in so far as it contributes to answering the question, and to validating or disqualifying the attempts being made by practitioners to establish defensible principles from reflection on their own practice. To investigate the wider implications of what Altricher and Posch have to say would be beyond the current scope of this work, although a very fruitful avenue for further exploration at later dates.

Another general point to be made is that this chapter, in its exploration of principles associated with my research, will tend to deal with material also relevant to the following chapter on the relationship between the researcher and the practitioners, especially as it concerns learning about principles by the researcher. I shall try to restrict the discussion here to whether such principles were being established, leaving to the succeeding chapter the issues about the implications of these principles and the other learning that took place.

The two levels which have already been referred to in Chapter Three will be a constant feature, in that principles that may have been established both by the practitioners and by the researcher will be considered. These principles may relate to the learning of young children and how we can provide for it, or they may relate to the process of researching educational settings. Both will be identified where they seem to appear, as a way of describing the inner journey in which the outlines of key aspects of the educational process have gradually become apparent to the collaborators. There is also a third level of reflection, in that in trying to decide whether valid principles can be established and asserted in this manner we are trying to evaluate this kind of classroom-based enquiry as a tool for developing insight into the education of young children

on a general level as well as in the individual practitioners concerned. Particular attention will be paid to the shifts in focus of the research, since it is a characteristic of action-research methods to allow a recently-established insight to redirect the focus - as Altricher and Posch (1989) would describe it, the 'naming and framing' process. The action-research focus of the investigation has made it possible to respond to growing insights by developing in particular directions. The form of the research has included some large shifts in emphasis.

The analysis of the data is linked to the questions with which I have tried, in very general terms, to shape my thinking. These questions are akin to Ross's 'foreshadowed questions' and as different as possible from predetermined hypotheses. Some questions were present at the beginning, some arose as the work went on, some are being provoked in reviewing the research together for some final conclusions on the three different levels of evaluation. These questions have not necessarily been provided with specific answers; it is possible that some kinds of educational questions do not get answered, in the sense of being finally tidied up and finished with. Questions such as 'how do I find out what's going on in this classroom?' are more likely to provoke further questions than to find answers. Yet these further questions are interesting and useful in themselves, because, if they do not resolve issues, they still lead to some statements about education in early childhood, some of which will be examined to see if they can be characterised as statements of principle.

## **Research in teacher self-evaluation**

As I have described above, I began the research in 1986 with the intention of looking at how teachers provide for children who give them cause for concern in the classroom. I spoke to Teacher A, who was opening a reception class, and we agreed to collaborate on the basis of this quite specific focus, which was in line with some of her preoccupations. However, although I had said that I would gather information about classroom interactions between A and the children with the aim of helping her to match her children's needs as they settled in to the class and thus learning about that process myself, I found that before I could make any contribution along these lines I had a lot of work to do first. I could not collect material on any specific issue until I felt that I had some understanding of what I was participating in in general. I was faced with the problem of finding a way to comprehend the nature of the transactions and experiences that were going on in the classroom. I had a fair amount of classroom experience as a teacher to draw on, from secondary teaching to infant experience to several years of nursery work, and was frequently in classrooms as part of my work as a tutor of student teachers, but this time I had a different focus to deal with - one to do with researching the nature of this classroom environment. Like any newcomer to a human social structure, I had to get to know it as a functioning system before I could investigate any particular aspect of it. I had to familiarise myself with it, its aims, its criteria for judgements and its methods of operation. I had also to get to know the major partners in its operation, its participants and their various agendas - the teacher and the children. I found that **classrooms and other educational settings must be studied as a whole.**

A and I had agreed to focus on particular children, but after I had recorded her talk with the class and asked for her comments she responded with alarm and professional concern at something else - the amount of managerial language she was using. I also felt that it was a painful experience for her to have her talk recorded in this way, and I put extra effort into trying to reassure her that the evaluations were for her to make, not for me as an outsider. I later developed a different way of handling this delicate issue.

In spite of this difficulty, we had discovered as essential fact about classroom research - that the process of enquiry must be one of discovery if it is a genuine enquiry, as Sherman and Webb (1989) have pointed out. This discovery led us to reflect on the educational importance of children's spontaneous talk and activity, and how we believed it should be given priority in classrooms.

She then evaluated my records according to the criteria of how well her efforts as a teacher supported children's own agendas, including the needs and purposes of individual children she had particular concerns about. As a result, she decided to change some of the patterns of classroom organisation she had established, so that children could manage their own needs better and she had more time to talk to them about what they were learning.

I would suggest that there was an educational principle involved here, to do with the implications of commitment to developmental approaches to the curriculum and to practice. It seems to me that A established that this commitment must involve a wide-ranging critique of

classroom practice, that **acceptance of a developmental pedagogy demands a reorientation of curriculum content and the practitioner's teaching, organisation and management styles as well.** The consequences of agreeing to such a principle would be wide-ranging and not such as to jibe with current attempts to promote reform of curriculum content apart from pedagogical considerations. The **principle of developmental wholeness** would assert that it is not viable to separate the content of the curriculum from the way in which it is taught; the term 'good practice' might be better considered as covering a kind of dialogue about providing for learning in which everything that goes on in the classroom must be considered as under review.

From this, I conclude that on the third level of this enquiry we have learned something about the process of decision-making in education: that being given some relatively objective information about the classroom enabled A to restate her developmental principles and establish that they must apply across the board: this was a contribution of the classroom enquiry in addition to its capacity to help her to evaluate what she was doing, and to develop new ways of providing for the children.

## **6.6 Developing educational theory**

The early stage of development of educational theory places a particular burden on all with a relevant expertise to contribute from their experience to building up a theoretical base. The sequence of practitioner experience, reflection, generalisation and discussion has similarities

with qualitative research and shares many of its criteria of reliability. In particular, research in the qualities which are necessary for insightful comment on educational interactions emphasises the main assets that practitioners bring to their own investigations - a connoisseurship of the social entity being investigated, and the capacity to 'ground' or base their hypotheses in inside knowledge of the situation.

However, understanding through observation and reflection, which is the inspiration for hypotheses as well as the result of practitioner research, has been shown in these studies to develop more effectively through the support of an outsider. The final chapter will consider the relationship between insiders in classrooms and other settings and outsiders who have another kind of educational role. Each has a distinctive responsibility, but each can benefit from collaboration in investigating educational interactions.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## RESEARCHING CLASSROOM RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS

### 7.1. Researching Classrooms

Certain kinds of educational research, particularly practitioner research, can seem very distant from the paradigms of certain kinds of quantitative research, say, medical research. Some of the technical criteria which apply to large-scale investigations may be absent from the interpersonal and microscopic focus of research into the meaning and quality of educational interactions. This, in turn, causes problems for education. It may seem as if the only trustworthy research is that which measures what can easily and credibly be measured on a wide scale. As a result, certain areas of the classroom may feature largely; the presence of, or lack of, real pupil-to-pupil collaboration can be measured, for instance (Galton et al, *The Oracle Project*, 1980). Other areas may go unexamined because in order to examine them the researchers would have to admit into their research factors which are hard to incorporate. Whether or not the teacher's intentions were accomplished, for instance, is much easier to ascertain than whether the pupil's needs and perceptions were responded to (Bennett and Kell, *A Good Start*, ?1982).



And yet, whether or not pupils collaborated, and whether or not the teacher's plans worked out, are only important factors in so far as they relate to the learning experiences of the individual pupils. This area of classroom experience cannot feature in the kind of research which focuses on what can be measured by tools designed for use across a wide spectrum; the resources and experiences of individual children and practitioners are too various for that.

I intend, therefore, to discuss this issue in depth, and to try to show that educational research should be regarded as a genuinely separate discipline of research in itself. Measurement has a place in it, but a relevant and central preoccupation of educational research must be qualitative evaluation rather than simple measurement. This will lead to a different kind of structure, and to the need to show that this different structure can qualify as genuine research according to generally recognised criteria. I hope to show that educational research has essential features in common with other kinds of research and that, according to its own structure, it can meet accepted requirements of reliability and generalisability.

From the previous discussion it will be seen that certain qualities of classroom research emerged as important if the researcher's contribution was to be acceptable to the practitioner. The following are some essential characteristics as defined in the literature:

- 1. Research must be participatory and acceptable to the practitioner.** Bruner (1980) stipulated that research should be genuinely participatory if teachers are to feel it as relevant to their practice, and Stenhouse (1975) added that it should be supportive of

teachers' intentions (pp.161-2). These two paradigms suggest ways in which the existence of the practitioner/researcher as partner for the practitioner may be a helpful phenomenon. The role of the researcher working in support of a teacher is not well known as yet, but it corresponds interestingly to the role of the teacher of very young children in negotiating purposes and meaning with children and in supporting and extending their learning by all the means at their disposal. The technique is quite similar in some ways, and suggests that the kind of research envisaged here would be acceptable and relatively easy to learn where researchers had this kind of professional experience to draw on.

**2. Research must be open to initiatives by practitioners.** Open-ness to participants' initiatives is a quality sought by many writers, including Bruner and Elliott. Fox and Stronach (1986) have warned against intellectual possessiveness on the part of researchers. Bruner also mentioned the need to keep time free for listening to individuals - a point which, like the points made by MacMahon in Bruner (1980), illuminates for the researcher the research relationship. Just as in a personal non-professional relationship there must be some degree of parity of initiative between participants, in this kind of research the co-operative goals demand that neither side have exclusive control of the agenda; each must leave space for the other's initiative, and the eventual structure must be the result of negotiation, whatever the level and nature of each participant's contribution.

**3. Research must allow for variations between classrooms/other settings.** Researchers cannot come with a prepared notion about what the classroom will be like - the fact that no classroom is like another means that researchers need to employ a variable sensitivity as a part of their research equipment. This suggests that questionnaires are less likely to be of use in this context, for they depend for their effectiveness on being able to enquire into what can be predicted about classrooms, rather as I.Q. tests are successful at measuring the sorts of capacities that can be forecast, but unable to measure what cannot be predicted in advance. The role of the questionnaire is to establish what can easily be standardised, ie standard information. Two questionnaires were used in Phase Two of this research. One was to establish the qualifications of staff in the two workplace nursery settings, and this one worked perfectly well (see Appendix E). The second questionnaire was to gather information about how the participants felt about the research so far but very few respondents felt like giving their personal views. It is noteworthy that one who did was the nursery nurse who later did the very interesting study of a young baby in her care.

There are other ways of trying to combine the assets of both approaches. Pound (1986) sought to examine the theoretical assumptions which underpin the classroom practice of nursery teachers by applying to focused interviews a Curriculum Priorities Coding (Bussis, Chittendon and Amarel, 1976). Pound quotes a range of support for the use of qualitative interview methods such as this, and found that it was, when used in conjunction with other analyses, more successful in drawing out the aims, concerns and understandings of a group of twenty-four

nursery teachers than previous studies on the same subject. The suitability of this method for establishing the views of a group of teachers has been confirmed by the *Principles into Practice* national survey. A further development takes further Pound's derivation of quantitative data from qualitative interviews. The national survey included several questions which invited replies in writing, thus enabling respondents to give qualitative answers. The responses to the qualitative questions in the questionnaire are being analysed through certain key words and phrases (Whitehead, M., 1994), using a computer programme (NUD.IST) designed for quantitative analysis of the qualitative connections between certain key words or phrases. The programme was first supplied with data as the text of interviews or written responses was typed in. Key words were identified by qualitative conceptual analysis manually; they were then entered into a structure like a family tree to enable them to be grouped logically according to the various conceptual structures identified. The programme then searched for the key words and recovered the lines of text above and below them, so that analysts could review the contexts and associations of the key words each respondent used. This allows for the creation of something like an ecology of the beliefs and principles of respondents across the whole field of group care and education for children under eight, and enables Marian Whitehead and her statistician collaborator, Yue, to give a statistical representation of qualitative data.

## **7.2. Suitable methodology for collaborative research - linking innovation with action through reflection**

The present research project sought a minimal advance structuring, relying rather on an explanation of the possibilities of recording and analysing classroom transactions (what the tool could do) and on an appeal to the individual teachers to demonstrate through their particular areas of focus how they evaluated their practice. In his 1975 survey of the implications of the Humanities Project (Elliott and MacDonald, 1975) Elliott discussed how innovations must be linked with action in the classroom so that they may be understood by practising them. The philosophical aspects of innovations were to be understood in this way as well as the practical ones, but he did not believe that this could be accomplished through instruction; the nature of issues such as educational research is concerned with is controversial and demands reflective discussion (p. 138). This imposes on researchers and practitioners the obligation to discuss with each other the philosophical implications of proposed courses of action as well as the practical implications and expected benefits. The first stage having been to collect evidence and obtain evaluations, the second stage of this research was therefore seen as having to do with working together to implement developments agreed on in advance to see whether they would bring about the desired change and explore their implications in terms of the teacher's principles. In terms of the analysis of Jack Whitehead (1986), this would be similar to the pattern of statements describing stages that he sets out with the addition of a further look at what has been revealed of the teacher's values and principles at the end of the five statements, as below:

**1. (Whitehead) Conflict between practitioner's principles and what is shown by the evidence to have happened:**

**Teacher A finds she is not providing opportunities for children's own talk - there is too much managerial talk from her in the observations and the children are sitting for 45 minutes around her on the mat first thing in the day. Teacher B finds two children are not making sense of the class activities at all.**

**2. (Whitehead) Solution to the problem imagined:**

**Teacher A decides to do away with the 45min session all together on the mat at the beginning of the day. Teacher B decides to change her plans and resources to include a workshop for creative activities.**

**3. (Whitehead) Implementation of the solution:**

**Teacher A does away with the session and has a staggered entry in the morning, with children coming straight in to activities they can do by themselves while she talks to the parents who wish to see her. Teacher B implements the workshop and is pleased with the response of one child in particular.**

**4. (Whitehead) Evaluation of the outcome:**

**In A's class, talk with parents is easier, children are calmer and A feels the**

**change is a success. In B's class the workshop is a success but it demands another pair of hands; she feels she can only provide it when she has the help of her classroom assistant.**

**5. (Whitehead) Re-formulation of problem in the light of the evaluation:**

**Unfortunately, a student teacher then took over A's class, so this stage was delayed or misplaced. In the case of Teacher B she reformulated her problem in terms of staff/child ratios being inadequate for the developmental needs of her class.**

**6. (Hurst) Additional stage for analysis of the teachers' values and principles:**

**When A got her class back she reverted to the morning mat session in order, she said, to reassert her relationship with the class. This suggests that she felt that the staggered entry was temporarily inadequate to the needs of the class, since the close relationship she aimed at was a higher priority than children's own talk for the brief period she needed to re-establish order after the long 7-week break. Although Teacher B was convinced of the importance of provision that was developmentally appropriate for a very wide range of ages and stages in her class of four to seven year olds, she still put manageability in a higher position, and restricted herself to play activities that she felt she could manage on her own except when she had help. In a positive sense, both were saying that order was the most important factor for them, and that**

unless relationships were such that teacher and children were able to communicate meaningfully the educational enterprise would not work. In a negative sense, they were saying that children's spontaneous choices and talk and their spontaneous creative and representational activities were not manageable unless conditions were ideal, and were not a curriculum through which they as teachers could communicate with the children in their classes. Given that these were infant children, in primary school before the early admission policy so that none were younger than five in the coming term, this is of interest, given the contrast with nursery education practice. Teachers in the nursery classes attached to both schools managed a play-based curriculum with younger and more dependent children (three and four year olds) with one extra member of staff and an outdoor learning area to work in as well as a classroom. My conclusion is that the infant teachers' concepts of the appropriate curriculum are likely to have been influenced by the school's idea of the primary curriculum and the pressure of the expectations of other staff. Teacher A was concerned that children should learn acceptable classroom behaviour, although she was also committed to the idea of fostering children's own interests and conversations. Teacher B expressed concern about whether Jeremy, the child mentioned in statement 3 above, was 'ready to go up to the Juniors' and wished him to make progress towards this for his own sake at the same time as being convinced of his need for playful activities. The picture which emerges is of practitioners who are convinced of the value of



**a developmental curriculum but are confronted with an infant curriculum which, even before the National Curriculum, placed a higher priority on turning children into pupils, on schooling them, and on preparing them for the next stage of education. In a recent publication I explored the idea that one of the effects of the National Curriculum was to legitimise the tradition of the narrow elementary curriculum of the three Rs and appropriate pupil behaviour for the youngest children in the compulsory education system (Hurst, 1994). The conflicts experienced by these two practitioners seem to bring additional evidence of this trend.**

Where such painful perplexities are uncovered, it is incumbent on the researcher to be particularly careful about the reliability of statements. Research which aims to elicit the principles, values and perplexities which underlie practitioners' self-evaluation has to be responsible. All the necessary qualities of research such as objectivity and reliability must also be seen as necessary, but as operating within the context of the teacher's perceptions of the task in hand and the philosophy which justified the task. The research might lead to a critique of the practice, and in so doing it might uncover deeper dilemmas for the practitioners involved. In so doing it should make it clear that it was not intending to lead to a critique of the philosophy which the practice was intended to implement, but rather to help the practitioner to think through and deal with the dilemmas. From this principle, one strand of the role of the research partner as developed in *Principles into Practice* begins to emerge. There is a difference of approach here between the research as established in these three studies and some pre-existing ideas about the

researcher's role.

### **7.3. Research and the role of the researcher**

If each classroom is unique, and each practitioner a law unto him or her self, would it be either possible or desirable to establish a commonality of aims, methods and language in research? From the views of contributors to the literature on research it seems that there is agreement that this is desirable from the point of view of the practitioner, the researcher, on behalf of the consumers of the education provided in the classrooms concerned, and in the interests of the objectivity of the research. On this latter point, which, being connected with the method of research, seems to have a claim to be considered first, it is worth examining the suggestion of Elliott that there should be an 'invisibility' of researchers, who should strive to eliminate themselves as far as possible from the data and analysis.

This issue is discussed by Fox and Stronach (1986) in a passage in which they establish that research itself can be seen as a process and should be described as such; they believe that the researcher should be 'bracketed' in the research - a process they call 'the hand drawing the hand' - and linked to larger issues in research in order to tease out more clearly the researcher's role, philosophical orientation and intentions. This process involves an analysis of the research itself as an ongoing process, in which the researcher's role as an active and changing force is demonstrated and in which the continuing evolution of the research goals and approaches is emphasised. Both Holt (1981) and Eisner (1979) describe the process type of evaluation as

avoiding the danger of overlooking much important development, and it has the added advantage of adhering to sound ecological principles in noting the impact of the research and the researcher's presence in the integral ecological setting.

It would, accordingly, be appropriate to this approach to discuss the early focus of the research on an examination of practitioners' strategies in class management and what could be elicited from this about the experiential curriculum, and also to discuss how exposure to the classroom of Teacher A altered this perspective to one in which the practitioner assumed a more active role in the determination of the research itself. This orientation was confirmed by experience with Teacher B, to such an extent that the session's tapes were handed to her to listen to before they were transcribed from the second session, so that the next session's agenda was determined along the lines of her reaction to the tapes before the researcher had listened to them. This development accords with the view taken by Stenhouse (1975) that educationalists should aim towards an extension of the professionalism of the teacher and push out the boundaries in many directions - towards other disciplines as well as towards the development of a common language for research in the classroom and the forging of a network of links for communication in order to generalise the experience of individual practitioners and researchers. This research project, in exploring ways in which practitioners may use researchers in the classroom, hopes to make a contribution to the role of the 'extended professional'.

One way in which the professional's role can be extended is through participation in classroom research, where the focus can be redesigned as insights develop, and where the role

of the 'outsider' is a challenging learning experience. The shift in the research perspective which has been remarked on already has brought with it many new insights, which will be explored in detail in Chapter Five. For now, the development of the research methodology can be seen through the evolution of Phase Two.

### **The workplace nurseries project: research methods applied to day-care**

The foregoing discussion has highlighted some of the qualities that seem to be fundamental to classroom research. The investigation of educational evaluation in day-care settings offered the opportunity to explore how these qualities translate into appropriate processes.

**Getting to know the setting:** It has been noted above that recognition of the essential individuality of educational settings is a necessary part of research (Elliott, 1975). Eisner has made the point that understanding educational relationships and intentions requires a kind of 'educational connoisseurship' (1985). The first step in the writer's share of the workplace nurseries project was to recognise the need to acquire a kind of connoisseurship of the setting: to begin with, one simply needs to learn what is going on - what are the practitioners' overt and unintended agenda, what are the children's purposes, how does the provision engage with their purposes. To support practitioners in their evaluation of their work requires an approach which enables the researcher to have access to the practitioner's information, insight and the reasoning involved in evaluation. A period of

time for acclimatisation was needed, during which written and audio-taped information was collected by the researchers.

**Establishing a collegial, not an inspectorial, relationship:** We were later told that this initial self-briefing was the cause of some bewilderment, since it had been assumed by staff, in spite of what we said, that we would actually be observing them and giving them feedback on how they were doing. In fact, experience in Phase Three shows that even where staff are clear that researchers are not there to appraise them there is a continuing anxiety ('It was not so dreadful talking to you after all - not as bad as I thought it would be, at least!' [Jessica]). It is perhaps understandable that staff will be somewhat anxious, since the very act of briefing oneself on their purposes and methods involves an insightfulness and street-credibility in connoisseurship that draw on previous educational experience through which comparisons may be made. There is perhaps also the factor that staff are being invited to start on a process of themselves bringing to bear again the professional judgements that they have used previously and will, it is hoped, continue to use, in order to develop their own professional standards. Uneasiness may be to some extent related to awareness of the need to make judgements in the future, therefore: judgements of one's own can be alarming, too, and may require a defence. 'I didn't learn anything I didn't know already' [Jessica, Phase Three] can be seen as a defensive statement of this kind in the light of the fact that this practitioner had self-initiated the involvement of parents in the close monitoring of their difficult children's behaviour.

**Stage 1 - establishing the basis from which to work:** Appropriate methods will therefore aim to draw in a collegial manner on the practitioner's inside knowledge of the classroom and to juxtapose this with research data gathered through observation of children in order to reach an understanding of how the practitioner evaluates the curriculum offered to the children - what criteria he or she brings to the evaluation will help to link with the principles that underpin such judgements. Because of the need for the researcher to learn from practitioners about their principles, their idea of the curriculum and, above all, the children for whom they have responsibility, such research methods as these tend to a high degree of collaboration.

**Stage 2 - responding flexibly to the practitioner's input:** Insights from the supported evaluation provoke new perceptions of the application of educational principles, so the methods need also to be flexible and capable of taking new forms in response to developments in understanding. The methods chosen for this project were based on an interpretation of an action-research cycle (Elliott, 1984) in which the researchers discussed with practitioners what their aims were for their groups of children, agreed a focus for the practitioners' observations, discussed the findings with the practitioners, and drew both specific conclusions about changes to make in provision and more general conclusions about their educational task. The data includes records of observations by practitioners, notes of discussions about the observations, and notes of more general conclusions.

## **Research methodology in Phase Two**

The research method was a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaires elicited data about the training and previous experiences of staff in the nurseries, and their views of the important links between their personal training and experience and the work in which they are currently employed. Subsequently, a second document in the form of a questionnaire sought an exchange of views and to give information on the progress of the research and developing perspectives on evaluation of the care and education of very young children. Simultaneously, an action-research approach was based on observations of children and interviews with staff about their reflections on the observations. In each nursery, this was followed by a development in which the staff took the process of evaluation further for themselves, both nurseries deciding independently of each other to focus on outdoor play.

**1990 Questionnaire 1 establishes staff training and experience, and what each participant feels to be the important links between their training and experience and their work with young children.**

**1990-1 Action-research cycle undertaken with individual or paired members of staff**

**1991-2 Questionnaire 2 on how staff perceive the impact of the research so far; how have they coped with a period of enforced absence of the writer?**

**Action-research cycle continues with staff; eg in Centre 2, one member, 'Jenny', undertakes observation and analysis herself, focusing on baby Bonnie, and head of nursery undertakes observation and analysis of outdoor play herself, following this with development of a new policy**

**1992-3 Drawing conclusions with staff**

**The action-research framework of the workplace nurseries research project**

**The action-research cycle as it appeared in this project may be outlined as follows:**

**Workplace nurseries project**

**1990-1 Action-research cycle undertaken with individual or paired members of staff as follows;**

**Cycle A.**

- 1. Interview - explain research purpose and agree what staff member will observe**
- 2. Staff member observes children**
- 3. Staff member and researcher discuss observation**



- 4. Discussions of developments in practice by staff member**
- 5. Discussions of more general implications, eg research, or staff training and development**

**For the individual staff member, this could be the end of the involvement. However, if s/he decided to continue to participate there could be another cycle in which the learning from the first cycle was built on. An example from Centre 1 follows.**

**Cycle A.**

- 1. Interview - explain research purpose agree staff will observe use of playground equipment**
- 2. Staff members observe children**
- 3. Staff members and researcher discuss monopoly of bikes by certain children**
- 4. Discussions of developments in practice, strategies for more equal access**
- 5. Discussions of more general implications, eg planning for outdoor play as focus for whole staff to link with overall planning**

**Cycle B.**

- 1. Staff take initiative to monitor impact of new planning strategies on**

**playground; staff agree to share observation of use of playground equipment**

**2. Staff members observe children on agreed rota**

**3. Staff members discuss among themselves use of the equipment on different days**

**4. Discussions of new strategies, decision to maintain these developments and monitor again**

**5. Discussions with researcher of more general implications, eg appropriateness of whole-team focus on evaluating outdoor play but value of having the researcher as an outsider to provoke, support and reflect on staff initiatives**

#### **7.4. Reflections on the research methodology**

For the research project, however, there was another strand of interest - the research methodology - and this would involve a parallel development of understanding. Another example follows, which shows how the collaborative action-research approach developed insights about the methodology, much as it did about the evaluations of staff.

**Cycle A.**

**1. First concept - research purpose to focus on staff evaluation by researcher comparing data from observations with staff aims**

**Method - agree what staff member will observe, researcher acts as 'fly on wall'/adjudicator**

**2. Staff member observes children, researcher involved in exchanges with children and with observing them**

**3. Staff member and researcher discuss observation, researcher drawn into elucidation and analysis**

**4. Discussions of developments in practice by staff member and researcher**

**5. Discussions of more general implications, eg role of researcher**

**This leads to the formation of a new concept of the research and hence a change in the methodology, as shown next.**

**Cycle B.**

**1. Integration of conclusions from Cycle a Forming of Second Concept - method of research collaborative, researcher participant**

**2. New focus agreed with staff**

**3. Researcher's own responses shared as part of data**

**4. Researcher informally observed by staff with children**

**5. Joint conclusions about children's needs, staff suggest ways to meet them.**

**6. Discussion of extent to which the research is a formative experience**

**for the researcher.**

This final point (6) becomes a new part of the methodological reflection. The opportunity to explore the 'outsider' role of researcher in a project where the 'insider' knowledge of the practitioner is the focus is an exciting one. There has been much work of interest in relation to the foundation of research in the 'grounded realism' approach which roots research firmly in the reality of the classroom and in the classroom expertise of the practitioner.

# **CONCLUSION**

## **A REVIEW OF THIS ACCOUNT, WITH SOME HOPES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**Various aspects of qualitative educational research have been touched on; in this Conclusion, they are reviewed, and the possibilities for further progress are explored, under the following headings:**

- The process of practitioner evaluation in early childhood education; what is involved, and is there anything that has been learned from the process which might be developed further?**
- The process of supporting practitioner evaluation, and its benefits for both the practitioner and the outsider; what might be the possible implications for developing quality in provision for young children?**
- Theory and practice; what are the relationships between them? Might there be ways in which we can draw on the process of evaluation to extend our learning about how theory is generated?**
- Educational research is a young but rapidly developing discipline; is there anything in this account which could through development in the future make a contribution to this development?**

**C.1. The process of practitioner evaluation in early childhood education; what is involved, and is there anything that has been learned from the process which might be developed further?**

It is an assumption of this account that the quality of children's early learning is of great importance, both for their present and for their future development and achievement. Quality is a word that is much used nowadays, and perhaps requires a word of definition itself. The quality of something is value-based, and it will therefore tend to differ from person to person, according to what values the person entertains. This aspect was discussed in relation to the evaluation of educational provision in Chapter One, and in relation to qualitative research in Chapter Two. It is not always possible to produce a definition of quality in education that will be generally acceptable, since people bring to the defining many different value-based judgements about what human life should be like and what education should be like in consequence. The account here presented is founded on value judgements which give priority to human personal development, to personal fulfillment, and to equal access to opportunity of all kinds as criteria for excellence in the early years of education.

In this view of early childhood education, which is a highly personalised one, quality is largely dependent on the ability of practitioners to provide and maintain a curriculum which provides opportunities for learning which are appropriate for each child. In order to do this, practitioners need to deliberate the interactions of various kinds of knowledge such as knowledge of child development and knowledge about the world with their current knowledge of the

children's personal experiences in the group setting. The process of evaluation as documented in this research will be examined to see how it might contribute to the ability of practitioners to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

I have suggested that the quality of provision for early learning depends to a large extent on staff and their capacity to provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum through different kinds of knowledge. The different kinds of knowledge include theoretical knowledge, and how staff acquire and maintain this knowledge has been discussed. However, there is another kind of knowledge that is a significant factor in quality of provision, and this is knowledge of what the children's experiences are like. This is the most basic, and the fundamental, knowledge of all for early childhood education; it is where practitioners must start if they wish their provision to have on children the effect they want it to have. How far, and with what impact, has the process of evaluation examined here sought, discovered and incorporated this knowledge?

The earlier analyses of the research interactions, and the detailed accounts of the different Phases of the research, have shown how evidence provided by the researcher or by the practitioners themselves has been influential in the practitioners' evaluations of what they have done so far. Teachers A and B, the Museum Education Officer, students such as Helen and some of the staff at the two Centres of the Workplace Nurseries Project have all allowed themselves to be affected by what they have learned about their children's experiences. Some, such as A and B, have changed their practice; some, such as the Education Officer and Helen (hesitantly in Helen's case) have been confirmed in their estimation of the value of what they have been

doing; some, like nursery nurses 'Bob' at Centre 1 and Jenny at Centre 2, have not only shown that a different kind of practice is appropriate - they have also been inspired to make statements about what principles should underlie provision for learning and to begin, in Bob's case, a dialogue about how staff should think about their work.

There are ways in which this is extremely encouraging. Influencing the minds of staff is the most effective way of improving what is offered in group settings for young children, and, at its best, it seems that the process of staff evaluation is adequate to this task. However, there are many staff who were involved who have not reached the stage of entering into this process at any level, or who have begun the process but seemed somehow not to gain from it the insights which could begin the transformation. There is also the question of how long staff could continue transforming their practice on their own; staff at both Centres have reported that it is very difficult to continue without support and encouragement from outside.

How the outsider provides the support, encouragement and challenges which seem necessary to keep the process going has been explored, and how it might be possible to provide substitutes within the management and support framework of settings providing for the under-eights has been discussed.



## **C.2. The process of supporting practitioner evaluation, its benefits for both the practitioner and the outsider - what might be the possible implications for developing quality in provision for young children?**

This section has to take two perspectives. The first is to explore what has been learned about how the outsider supports the process, and the second is to suggest ways in which this function might be performed without the involvement of a researcher.

Supporting practitioner evaluation has been explained in terms of bringing to the practitioners' attention the discrepancies between their intentions and their practice. It is now time to ask how far this has contributed to the success of those practitioners noted above, and whether it would be any help for those who have experienced difficulties.

In the cases of Teachers A and B there is reason to think that it was the discovery of evidence about children's experiences which altered their perspectives on their classrooms and helped them to transform their practice. In the case of Helen, the evidence was collected by her, but within the framework of tutorial leadership and support. In the case of the Museum Officer the evidence was collected independently and does seem to have had a positive effect on his planning for the future, in spite of the difficulties with getting adequate funding (his efforts did succeed to some extent in that the Bounty Exhibition was oriented towards children's exploration and play and staffed by students, even if not so well-resourced in other ways).

In the Workplace Nurseries Project, where we were dealing with staff whose training had focused on observation, the role of outsider appeared a bit different. There was a more collegial feel about the emphasis on observation, and several staff - those who were interested and confident - eventually undertook their own observations, analyses and evaluations. It seemed as if, once the first phase of getting to know staff and nursery procedures was over, and the way the research operated was more familiar to staff, the outsider's role became, in some cases, one of reminding staff of what they believed in and being a consultant to them in their exploration of how much they could achieve. However, there were many staff who, while interested in taking part, were not sufficiently confident to make such big strides on their own. Ruth, for instance, at Centre 1, did not feel comfortable about undertaking an investigation independently of her team. Unfortunately, when the whole team was involved, there was insufficient impetus to continue the research, which became incorporated into normal daily observations of children without a research stance towards practice. Others found themselves unable to continue the research activity because of staff absences and the pressures of management duties. As they were both already having difficulty in confronting issues about their provision which my observations had raised, it may be that this was also a way of refusing the challenge of debating change.

The question must be asked: would the role of the outsider, which has been positively identified with being the bringer of disconcerting news about children's real experiences, have anything to offer to those who are 'stuck', 'too busy', 'lacking confidence' or otherwise in difficulties?

It is entirely possible that the outsider, by being an outsider or by being a less than perfect outsider/colleague, was responsible for some of the practitioners' difficulties. As an outsider, I may have threatened the team that Ruth belonged to, and, in particular, might have appeared as a threat to the newly-established teacher in charge of the team. Evaluation is an effective tool which is very responsive to the insights of the professional wielding it, and the previous chapter has shown that the outsider plays a collaborative role in evaluation; the leader of a team would need to be secure in her/his practice and professional relationships before admitting an outsider's viewpoint into the evaluation of the team's work and aims.

Again, as an outsider with a certain amount of credibility in the field, I may have appeared to present my own agenda simply by being myself; this could have seemed overwhelming to anyone who was anxious not to lose control over their own practice and ways of working, or who felt that they were only just able to keep things running without taking up new perspectives. When morale is under pressure, the presence of an outsider can seem too much like an additional challenge. It is true that the staff of Centre 2, who were more hard-pressed than others in terms of work-loads, were able to be welcoming and enthusiastic, but this may have been because their morale was better in spite of their long hours of work. There may also have been an element of choice involved - there were several staff at Centre 2 who did not collaborate actively, and it may be that others would have preferred a less active role themselves, but had agreed to participate in order to help their Headteacher.

This discussion's drift is towards clarifying what the outsider can expect to achieve, and

what is not possible. Involvement with an outsider as in this project cannot be a cure for low morale, insecurity or difficulties arising from problems within the setting or institution. These have to be faced and resolved internally by management or leadership.

But is it possible that there might be a development of this project in the future which would build on what has been discovered about the usefulness of the outsider's perspective? Some features of the research involvements recorded here would be too costly to be recommended as a blueprint for professional development in the institutions and groups providing education for the under-eights, and it might be, in any case, that a homespun version would be more acceptable to staff. The essential features could be identified and built into the staff development policies of settings, organisations and authorities. For instance, the definition of an outsider is essentially that of one who is not working in the group being studied. Heather at Centre 1 and Lynn at Centre 2 were both able, as Deputy-Head and Coordinator, to act as outsiders for staff working in their settings. Both helped with observations and analyses of outdoor play. However, it is my feeling that issues of the agenda of senior management, and of the practitioner's control of the process, might become a problem if this were to become a permanent part of the role definition of leaders, as in my own attempts to play this role with students. It seems more appropriate for there to be a peer element in the outsider's role, which could be supported, encouraged and monitored by senior management, and made a part of the planning and evaluation process of the whole institution. In one nursery school involved in the Principles into Practice Project the Headteacher has given over the regular staff meetings to a focus on what is being learned through observation, analysis and evaluation of practice.

In suggesting that peer collaborative approaches to practitioner evaluation could hold some ways forward, I have in mind to commend in particular the benefits of being the outsider in this kind of relationship. Being an outsider challenges one to come to terms with a range of ways of interpreting shared early childhood values and principles; it helps one to look below the surface differences and similarities; it imposes on one the requirement for a critique of practice which can lead to an evaluation and critique of curriculum models underlying practice. Being an outsider makes one reflect on one's own as well as others' failings, and it helps one to become more aware of them as an ever-present influence on practice that has to be guarded against.

### **C.3. Theory and practice - what are the relationships between them? Might there be ways in which we can draw on the process of evaluation to extend our learning about how theory is generated?**

The recent debate among practitioners has often tended to focus more on the management of the new responsibility for national curriculum assessment than on any practice-led insights. However, there are ways in which the experiences gained from classroom practice are used by some practitioners to determine their developing view of the curriculum.

The process of observing, analysing and evaluating practice would not only have value in enabling staff to reflect on their own practice and on any discontinuities with the values and

principles they adhere to. It would also enable them to review these principles in the light of the principles emerging from their reflections. The reflections of Bob on Hayley, or of Jenny on Bonnie, or of Teacher B on Jeremy, are all capable of leading to general theory on what is appropriate provision for children with these learning needs. Bob states that children under two, Hayley included, like a little familiar equipment to be available so that they can practice and play according to their concerns. She says that staff put out too much provision and change it too quickly according to their own ideas of what is interesting, and do not learn from the children's behaviour what will work best. Jenny says that babies like Bonnie learn from other human beings most of all - children and adults are much more interesting than any other form of provision. Teacher B says that Jeremy and quite a few other children in her mixed age class need play and workshop provision to be part of their learning opportunities if they are to make sense of the educational content they are offered.

Lastly, this ongoing experience of being their own evaluators and helping each other as outsiders in the evaluation process would give practitioners greater confidence in their critical analysis and evaluation of curriculum models and practice. For instance, Teacher B was concerned that although many of her children needed developmentally appropriate learning opportunities, she was not able to provide them except when she had a classroom helper - she was in conflict with a school staffing policy which did not make provision for the learning needs of young children. Teacher A decided that the curriculum model which suited her children best was one based on the nursery curriculum, although her children were in a reception class.

As teachers and nursery nurses find increasing responsibility put on them to train the next generation of teachers, they will find themselves increasingly working in the areas of educational theory and curriculum critique. At present, they have only their recollections of their own training days to look back on. If there were an ongoing professional development system for them, in which they were continuously honing their skills of observation and analysis, they might be better equipped to teach others how to be early childhood practitioners.

**C.4. Educational research is a young but rapidly developing discipline - is there anything in this account which could through development in the future make a contribution to this development?**

The earlier discussion of classroom research highlighted certain features which are agreed by researchers to be important if the researcher's contribution is to be acceptable to the practitioner and effective in terms of exercising influence of practice. Research should be genuinely participatory, and supportive of teachers' intentions; we must acknowledge the importance of educational connoisseurship in this kind of undertaking; it is important to accept the need for different kinds of approach to hypothesis, to evidence and to proof, however much standards of objectivity and of reliability may still obtain.

There is a growing interest in action-research as an educational tool which meets these criteria. However, much of the work that has been reported has been in secondary education.

As a small-scale example of action-research in early childhood education this study may have some interest in showing that early childhood is a suitable field for this kind of approach. This account may also be among the first to note the influence of the values and principles on which early childhood education is based as being a source of congruence with the principles of action-research itself. The essentially democratic nature of action-research would, I hypothesise, sit less well within a more authoritarian model of education. Practitioners' contributions to the orientation and focus of the research demand the avoidance of advance hypotheses: they also require educational concepts that expect practitioners to take a determining role in the direction of the curriculum. The present research project did not determine hypotheses in advance, but explained the possibilities of the method to convey to practitioners what the research was about; even among those who provide for the under-fives there were those, as in Centre 2, who were used to being controlled and directed and found it hard to get used to the idea that they were expected to do observations and analyses rather than to be observed and commented on.

The idea of intrinsic criteria of success may also be a useful dimension for the work of future researchers, particularly if they are currently practitioners themselves. These research interactions have looked to the practitioner to define the field of focus and of the pedagogic aims associated with it; from this definition of the aim of the investigation which would come the criteria for success or failure of that particular part of the research. Such a starting point gives to the investigator the criteria of value that are within her or his grasp, and might encourage more grass-roots research of a kind which would be valuable to practitioners themselves and have the authority of being rooted in the intimate knowledge of real children in real settings.



This would indeed meet an obvious gap at present. Where medical personnel, whatever their status, have a great body of research material which is clearly based on real medical interactions, practitioners of education, and particularly early childhood practitioners, have no such body of evidence and ideas to refer to. This imposes on each active practitioner the task of thinking out in isolation principles and processes which others may be working on near-by. Unfortunately, it is also only too easy for the less active or the discouraged to take the absence of challenging and inspiring material to mean that challenge and inspiration are not an important part of the task of educating young children. Examples of work by practitioners in similar situations would be of great benefit, and to judge by some of the contributions made by nursery nurses and teachers to the research activities reported here, there would be a wide range of work to learn from.

There is much here that is purely exploratory; there are many blind alleys, and often opportunities missed have only been discovered at a later date. There will surely be many ways in which these procedures can be improved upon and extended. My own particular hope for future development is two-fold; that it may prove possible to make some use of this way of supporting evaluation to help students learn from their own and others' practice more efficiently, and that evaluation of the kind investigated here may be tried out with an even wider range of settings, to include playgroups and social services nurseries, childminders and private schools.

For the first, I feel that there will be opportunities as schools begin to take a greater role in teacher education, whether as training institutions themselves or as collaborators with Higher

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For the second, I must recognise that this is not likely to produce generally reliable standards of provision - I do not believe that this is possible until we have a more generally reliable level of qualification, training, resources, accommodation and professional support for all who work with young children. But the achievement and maintenance of standards that would equal those to be found anywhere is not the only purpose that one can have in commending collaborative evaluation to practitioners. In spite of those who found the process threatening, there is no shortage of evidence in this record of the way in which working with another to reflect on and improve one's practice can meet a range of important needs. It can encourage a person to become more self-aware and self-confident professionally, as it did Helen; it can enable a person to become more professionally self-critical, as it did Teachers A and B; it can confirm a person's belief in the value of developmentally-appropriate provision for early learning and give material for articulating and justifying this belief, as it did the Museum Education Officer; it can help staff to move forward into the process of learning from observing children, as it did the staff at both Centres who focused on outdoor provision; it can give a strong practitioner the words and the evidence to challenge others to be more aware of children and more self-critical, as it did Bob and Jenny. Even practitioners who might not feel able to be self-critical at the time of the research have been able to learn more about children and to involve parents and grandparents in their learning.

If we believe, as I do, that there is a broad agreement among early childhood

practitioners about the aims of early childhood education, then I think we should hope that research will help us to find ways to enable these practitioners to have access to procedures for developing their expertise and their insights, so that the opportunities for access to educational benefits become more equitable both for children and for those who work with them.

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# **APPENDIX A**

## **S C H O O L I**

**January 1986 - November 1986**

SCHOOL 1

TEACHER A (AG)

Note of preliminary discussion 21.1.86

7 girls/23 boys in reception class. AG's concern is for children who cause your attention to wander from other children - testing adults.

**Emmanuel** - lively, into everything and everyone's concerns.

**Dean** - hurting?? other children.

Getting in touch with girls is also important to AG especially the quiet ones.

Monday aims - ? start Feb 3rd.

School 1 Initial visit 24.2.86 Teacher A.

Document 3

Summary of action:

Introduced to children as visitor who would be working with them once a week for a period. Circulated briefly to gain impression of room then settled at a table where contact could be made with children while being able to see and hear interactions Child-Teacher and Child-Child in most areas of the classroom. Used brief notes to record general impressions and verbal/physical interactions; noted Teacher's descriptions and analyses of class, individual, her intentions etc.

Class programme: At present children enter in ones and twos with their adult companions, greet A individually and settle on mat to read/talk quietly while others enter. A sits with them in position such that each child greets her and then passes to group beside her while adult has the opportunity to talk to A. The group stays in position until after dinner requirements have been collected by Mrs P., each child asking for what is needed and handing in the week's money (the latter presumably on Mondays only.) The activities available are outlined with the number of children there is room for at each, and children are asked to indicate whether they would like to go to each activity as it is mentioned; if too many show interest the unsuccessful ones are asked to choose something else and wait for a turn later. Work continues with a break for group time followed by outdoor play, and is resumed until group time before dinner.

General impressions:

The aim seemed to be to provide a calm and orderly environment within which children would have opportunities for emotional and social as well as academic development. Generous provision for fantasy/domestic play and for contact with sand and

water was made both in terms of physical space allotted and in terms of being identified as an activity on offer in the introduction to activities. Much of the group time was spent in relating to individual children's processes in relating to the home/school transition after half-term ('news from home', pictures done for school, birthday invitations, spare clothes brought for the school stock) and in learning to be members of a group (quietening children so individual speakers can be heard, encouraging them to look after children feeling uncertain, reminding them of previous group discussions about reasons for rules such as quiet talking, explaining that smarties used for set-work should not be tasted until everyone had had a turn at set-work, reminding the class of group undertakings in connection with Chinese new year and linking it with the current creation of puppets.) Instructions during the morning referred to the group need for quiet talk, to care of equipment that all use, and to the responsibility on users to tidy carefully what they had been using. Restrictions on individuals' activities were in terms for danger to people and equipment (no running/chasing), noise, and room available at activities.

#### **Interactions observed (chronological order):**

- 1) Group time on entry - Charlie (absent since before halfterm) was 'reintroduced' to group -

A: When you've been away a long time you feel very strange when you come back, don't you? Will you look after him for me, Katie? You will? Thank you."

- 2) Group time on entry -

Charlie: I want to go a wee-wee.

A: Yes, you can.

**Charlie:** I want someone to hold hands.

**A:** Tom, would you like to go with Charlie - he wants someone to hold his hand? Yes? Good. Tom will hold hands with you, Charlie.

3) Group time on entry - Children's news from home -

**A:** Just a minute, Charlie, I didn't hear what Jeremy said because you started talking.

**Jeremy:** My Mum's in hospital.

**A:** Oh, is she? Was she in hospital over the holiday?

**Jeremy:** No. (puzzled). She wasn't on a holiday...

**A:** No, was she away in hospital during the holiday?

Jeremy looks uncertain.

**A:** You can tell me and Mrs H. about it afterwards, Jeremy.<sup>1</sup>

4) Group time on entry - news from home -

**Charlie:** (restless, not attentive to teacher/child exchange (3)) I want to tell you something.

**A:** No, I'm going to ask Dean now. (Charlie attempts to speak) No (with extra emphasis and leaning well forward to make direct eye-eye contact exclusive of other factors) I'm going to ask Dean.

5) Group time on entry - news from home - Dean has been bursting to make his contribution, wriggling, waving hand. Now his bag of spare clothes are unpacked, sorted into sets and counted. Family members are mentioned and named and Granny is thanked.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy's mum was taken into hospital to await the birth of her baby - due in April. She has had an 'extremely difficult' pregnancy and has spent much time in hospital. Jeremy has been cared for at home by step-father.

6) Activity time -

**Suhail:** O-o-o-w! You're not allowed.(to child reaching for felt-tips on table.)

**A:** Yes, you are. Everything on the table is for you to use.

7) Activity time -

**A:** (mentions big bricks, Lego, sand, water and home corner in conclusion of activity list for those who have not already chosen) Now will you go and organise YOURSELF, please!

8) Activity time -

**A:** Charlie, stop please! You've forgotten what we do in school - you're going to knock things over. Look, you've knocked that over, pick it up and put it back. [Charlie does so, then returns to game of circling rapidly in room with Emanuel, then becomes involved in Lego on the mat with him.

9) Tidying before playtime -

**A:** Please tidy the home corner so that other people would like to play there. People who've been on the carpet put away the Lego. [looks towards Emanuel who is beginning to drift away] Put away the Lego please.

10) Group-time before playtime -

**A:** Charlie you've been away so long you've forgotten the rules! If you shout we'll all get a head-ache.



11) Group-time before playtime -

A: Dean, we can't have people sitting on the carpet who aren't kind- have you forgotten what we said before the holiday? [Sits Dean on chair beside her; he wriggles in chair, stamps feet to attract attention] We won't look at you if you're going to be silly.

12) Group-time before playtime -

A: [to Dean] I don't want your boots on my chair- they're going to make it dirty. Sit down here so you can see. You don't want to? [Shortly after Dean indicated that he did want to and was re-seated]

13) Group-time before playtime -

A: [to Charlie] I'll do your shoe up in a minute- it doesn't matter while you're on the carpet.

14) Group-time before playtime -

A: [to Charlie; he asked to go to the toilet] No, not now.

15) Group-time after playtime -

A: [to Dean; he complained of not having had a turn at the smartie-sorting activity] You're in the middle of doing something else. Perhaps if you're sensible you can have a turn this afternoon, but you haven't been the most sensible this morning, have you?

16) Group-time - allocation of activities -

A: Charlie, you go and sit down.

Charlie: I want to see my mummy. [Sad face, seems near tears]

A: You're going to see your mummy at dinner-time, I think, aren't you? Come and sit on my knee. [Charlie cuddled, while A speaks to other children, looks reassured, gazing vaguely around room.]

17) Activity time -

A: (to Grant) Grant, are you listening to the taped story or not? If you don't want to we'll ask someone else if they'd like a turn.

18) Activity time - Dean, who remained on the carpet when group time ended, screams and knocks over chair to attract attention.

A: Come and see what we're doing. (goes to him, takes him by the hand and encourages him over to the smartie-sorting table) just come and see, I want to show you... (Dean shows some interest.) Now, stand the chair up. (knocked over earlier to attract attention) Dean, can you put the chairs in under the table for me... no, they go over there, don't they... under the table. Now you can come and sit down and see what we're doing.

A works next to Dean, showing him how to begin. She asks him to fetch something from a shelf behind him. He makes a wild lunge for it, falls, knocks chair over - she reaches over to catch his arm and steady him and helps him return to chair having fetched what was needed.

19) Activity time - while 18) is happening Selim and Grant are still at the table with the taped story. While adjusting the volume

they turn it up very loudly; they look round the room, hold hands to ears and turn it down without any persuasion.

20) Activity time - tidying up before dinner -

A: (to Charlie) No, you can't go to the toilet again - you've just been. (The construction by older children of two snowmen in the playground is suggested by A. as a factor in Charlie's repeated requests.)

21) Activity time - tidying up before dinner -

A: (to Dean, who has asked to go to the toilet) Just a minute, did you put the felt-tip away? Yes? Then you're going to walk

22) Group time before dinner - Selim read with help to the class from a book he had enjoyed -

A: Well, Dean, you went to the toilet [when the group assembled after tidying-up 21)] Maybe after dinner you could have a turn.

23) Group time before dinner - Katie goes with her mother who explains she has to go to hospital for an ante-natal check -

A: Katie's Mummy is waiting for her baby just like your Mummy is waiting for her baby, isn't she, Jeremy?

24) Group time before dinner -

A: Now I wonder who's got a good memory. Dean, have you got a good memory? Can you remember were we first dinner or second dinner before half-term

Dean, head bent down to knees, says nothing, only shaking head from side to side.

A: You can't say? (Discusses with other children.)

25) Group time before dinner - children lining up in twos to go outside to play - Dean refuses to seek a partner, refuses another child's offered hand. Goes quickly to hide at rear of carpet area, cries audibly.

A: What's the matter? (She takes his hand and encourages him to stand, cuddles him, then kneels to talk to him on his eye-level.

A: Come and get a tissue... What is it? (No answer) Just sad today, are you? Takes him with her (after asking whether he would like to) to do an errand, then to find his coat and rejoin the others. In cloakroom - Dean will not find his coat but as A. searches for it he taps her on the back while still holding her hand and points to it silently.

Teacher's interpretations

Dean - 'has very mixed-up feelings about home circumstances. He is very immature and can't cope with his feelings. He needs a lot of help; he can't always come first but he has to learn to fit in or it will get completely out of hand.'

Other children to watch - Charlie, Emanuel, Maya, Nadia, Jeremy. Charlie has had an ear infection 'still doesn't seem

well - doesn't seem to know what's going on since he came back.<sup>1</sup> He's young - only 4½. Emanuel 'very boisterous', Jeremy 'was very tricky last term.' Hava and Katie - 'you have to watch for them, you think they're quiet and it's all right but it's not - Hava's very good at drifting off to the home corner with Katie.'

A.'s aims for the class - should be moving gradually towards independence, co-operation (with another and with whole class), high personal standards of work rather than rivalry, a chance for everyone to contribute. She notes that it is hard for such young children to wait (for a turn or for permission to move freely); the group are 'quite good, most of them, at finding something else to do when there isn't room and they have to wait their turn', but she wonders whether it might be more appropriate for them to start on activities as they enter the room in the morning rather than sitting together until all are present and the dinner requirements notified.

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In fact D. gradually calmed down during the week becoming much more positive.

J. is much more settled in school although dad says he is v. mixed up at home.

Charlie was unhappy all week and cried for mum. Still unwell? Friday - better.

## RESPAPERS:1

SCHOOL I:2

### **Teacher's strategies in assessing children's classroom behaviour and progress.**

Progress Report Feb.1986

Vicky Hurst

#### 1) Definition of area of research:

The initial focus was towards 'problem' children but it may be more in tune with the ethos and philosophy of primary education today to approach teacher's strategies towards children's behaviour in terms of the whole-class focus, in which class management is seen as a part of the general educational strategy and planning of the teacher.

This widening of the focus will tend towards a holistic overview of the teacher's curriculum, classroom organisation and management strategies which will have the advantages of:

a) integrity in relation to the current philosophy of primary education, in which the individual child is at the centre of curriculum, organisation and management:

b) integrity in relation to the individual teacher's personal focus, since strategies of management will be developed and pursued in concert with curriculum and organisation of the classroom.

c) integrity in relation to how the child experiences the strategies, since these will be a part of the whole educational experience to which the child is exposed and will be responded to within the whole educational context, not simply as management strategies on their own.

The consequences of this holistic approach to management strategies seem at present to be most noticeable in relation to the breadth/depth issue. In order to get to grips with the

totality of individual teachers's strategies in their educational setting it will be necessary to spend more time with fewer practitioners. Without pre-empting future options for further development and exploration of issues it may be realistic to play initially for a small range of in-depth contacts, seeking as far as possible to encompass contrasts in school environments, school organisation and teacher styles within the classrooms studied.

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### 3.a) Method of research proposed

It is intended that the initial undertaking will be to set up in-depth case studies of four or five teachers, each study to last between one and two months in the first instance, with the option of returning for purposes of longitudinal comparison after a period of, say, six months. Negotiations are in progress with schools in Brockley and the Elephant and Castle area, and it is planned to approach at least one more inner-London school, ideally one where there is a wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds.

(Evans, K.M., (1978), Planning Small-Scale Research, NFER, Windsor.

(Richman, N., Stevens, J., and Graham, P., (1982)

(Rowen, B., (1973))

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### The researcher's role in the classroom

It is envisaged that it will be necessary to gain an understanding of particular classroom factors, the children as individuals and in groups and the teacher's plans and methods of working in order to set strategies of management in their proper context. The research will therefore consist of gathering general information initially by means of participating in classroom work after exploring with the teacher what will be the most helpful way to do this.

Subsequently it is hoped to find time (after the second session probably) to discuss with the teacher what strategies are employed for assessment and management, and whether there are any projected developments the researcher might be involved in.

It is intended, both for purposes of the research and in order to



make a return to the teacher for giving time to this project, that the researcher shall be active in the classroom where this is desirable and active in furthering the teacher's actual or proposed strategies of management - for example by sharing discussion of alternative possibilities, by working alongside the teacher in the implementation of strategies and by providing background information where required. This involvement will form part of the research and will be recorded; it will be explained in advance that this is to happen. The teacher's comments will be invited and will form a part of strategies during the project. Differences of opinion will be incorporated in the research conclusions.

(Elliott, J., (1985), Goldsmiths' College research Seminar;

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### 3c) Issues of confidentiality

These are bound to arise both in relation to pupils and to teachers. It will be important to agree the best ways to safeguard personal interests, and to emphasise that teachers will be able to incorporate their own comments into the findings. An initial 'contract' between researcher and School/teacher will be explored as a possible way of minimising possibilities of misunderstanding and disappointment.

## RESPAPERS 2

Research update May '86

Vicky Hurst

### Summary:

From January to March the initial concentration has been upon developing a method of recording classroom interactions between teacher and pupil, and on beginning to work out ways of processing the raw data so that teacher and researcher could see what areas would be fruitful ones to explore. As far as possible each of the four data-collections and all of the discussions of potential avenues of development have been undertaken jointly with the teacher. This would have been important even if the only level of exploration had been along the lines of attempting to describe what strategies the teacher employed towards each child in her reception class; as it is, the teacher is in the position of having the initiative for structural reasons, since it has become apparent that what is being hammered out here is not a research project into teacher's management of groups and individuals but a research tool which both Teacher A and other teachers could use to assess their effectiveness in any particular direction and to assist them in redirecting their efforts so as to improve their practice.

### Context of the research:

Without undertaking a summary of the current state of philosophy of education in relation to the Curriculum it seems necessary to locate this study within something resembling a theoretical context. The definition of curriculum employed is a broad one which includes all educational activities organised by the teacher for her class, bearing in mind the particular importance for learning in the early years of giving recognition

AIS

and priority to the emotional and social aspects of childrens' development, to the home-school transition and to the psycholinguistic dynamic between teacher and child.

The planning of a curriculum within so broad a framework imposes heavy demands upon teachers particularly in so far as the need to adapt provision to individuals, whether child or adult, is acknowledged. There is also increasing pressure from a range of sources for teachers to accede to the demands of external forces and structure their provision accordingly, which cannot be resisted without justification by both theory and evidence drawn from classroom practice. Teachers therefore need to be researchers as well as curriculum planners and innovators and it is to assist the teacher as a researcher of her own classroom and an evaluator of her own practice that this study has been initiated.

## **Methodology**

As this research project has developed the emerging structure has indicated some requirements of the method to be employed. At first, recording the interactions in a classroom of up to 25 young reception children would seem to presuppose some technological means of covering the entire classroom at once, and indeed if the interactions between children were the focus of study this would be the case. However, in relation to teacher-pupil interaction the situation is not quite so serious in that the teacher, as focal point for the researcher, can be at the centre of the researcher's arc, while those children upon whom the teacher focuses at a distance will usually not be much further distant from the researcher. One recording position has therefore been found to be reasonably adequate in that so far neither researcher nor teacher have been concerned about the accuracy of the resulting record. How to record from this one point has been the next question; one tape-recorder located close to the teacher's initial position has been considered but

unfortunately would not be able to cover the teacher's movements about the room in response to demand and necessity. Another possibility would be a tape-recorder attached to the teacher with a throat-microphone; this has so far seemed to be the only mechanical way of recording which is likely to be successful (apart from the importation of a film-crew with a sound-unit which would rule out any spontaneity or experiment on grounds of expense alone). However another issue, of the structure and purpose of the research, here imposes a requirement with priority; if this work is to prove of any benefit on a wider scale, if it is to stand a chance of becoming a tool in the armoury of all serious teachers, it needs to be based on methods which will be neither expensive nor technically demanding to operate. It seemed therefore that it was more in the true interest of the research to employ a simple pen and paper recording method on the grounds that this time-honoured method, with its attendant weaknesses of pressure on the resources of the simple observer, would be within the bounds of the possible for any teacher who could make arrangements for a colleague to be free to help with a project of self-evaluation.

An evaluation of the method of recording has been built into the record from the start in that each page of the record has at the base a space for the teacher's comments and also for the researcher to indicate areas of uncertainty or confusion. Teacher A. has to date read and corrected the first three sessions' records and has expressed herself as reasonably satisfied with the accuracy of the method although she has made some helpful corrections/elucidation. These, however, amounting as they do to less than (very approximately) one word per 1,000, would seem to show a tolerable level of inaccuracy although there is no doubt that for a complete and accurate recording a tape-recorder would be indispensable.

From the researcher's point of view the method is tiring, demanding and requires a minimum of efficient organisation in advance; the children's names had to be well-known, and distinctive abbreviations of them prepared so that for instance, Nicholas and Nicola can be quickly noted down as perhaps 'Ni' and 'Na' to save time; at the suggestion of Teacher A. (before Session II) the time was noted at intervals and symbols were evolved to indicate whether she was close, medium distance or far from whomever she was addressing (symbols to which one for a one-to-one exchange was added as being potentially an important distinction to note); the organisational context was indicated (i.e. 'on the carpet before break', 'clearing up for dinner') and, because of its bearing on the teacher's strategies and verbal interactions, any classroom development such as an argument or a particularly strong expression of a mood by a child or children was noted. This, although a poor substitute for the panning action of a video camera, would it was hoped help to indicate the salient features of the classroom from the management and personal relations point of view. Teacher A. had, in preliminary discussions, indicated her intention to observe the quiet children as well as the more demanding ones and where she was noticed to interact positively with children in an attempt to increase their participation in educational activities their response was noted as far as possible.

The session's record was then transcribed (as soon as possible afterwards since confusions or abbreviations could be best resolved while the events and conversations were fresh in mind) and a copy sent to Teacher A. for her comments; when her copy was returned any corrections, additions or suggestions were copied onto the researcher's copy and her copy returned for her to keep.

Future developments of the method will be undertaken in the light of Teacher A.'s comments - and initiatives after she has evaluated this summary. One possibility, which has already been suggested by her, is that the nature and functions of her

language might be examined in the light of recent research on classroom language; she has also indicated a wish to use this opportunity to restructure her entry-procedure in the morning. There is no inherent obstacle to her doing both although each might require a different approach to the data which could subsequently be combined once examination had been completed - an evaluation of her use of language might indicate how much was spent on directed questioning techniques for instance and could lead to her experimenting with different ways of focussing children's attention; on the other hand a restructuring of the beginning of the day might lead to fewer large-group interactions at this stage, and there would be the option of doing either singly or both at once, perhaps trying to assess the validity for her practice of recent work on the value of teachers' interactions with large groups of children. This is of course an example rather than a proposal since an assessment of all four sessions and Teacher A.'s conclusions will be needed before the next step can be discussed.

#### **Teacher A.'s comments**

So far Teacher A. has expressed interest in three areas of the curriculum as broadly defined:

- 1) In discussions before the first session (21.1.86) Teacher A. mentioned that as hers was a new reception class into which children were currently being admitted one of her concerns was to find ways of meeting the individual needs of children while helping them to develop insights and interpersonal skills which would help them to learn how to be successful members of a group. Certain children were mentioned as being very lively, some as having quite severe difficulties at home which had a bearing on their classroom behaviour, and some as having a tendency to seem quiet and conformist but who would bear watching to see what they did in fact spend time on. This perception of her role was

subsequently confirmed during all discussions and in her observed interactions, where support for social development was seen to form a large proportion of her utterances.

One avenue of development which could spring from this would be an analysis of both the occasions for intervention that she chose during the four sessions and the utterances used with their underlying psychosocial constructs which the children would absorb. The Vygotskian subtext of her remarks might be analysed as in Maureen Shields's work but examining the adult's role to see what children are being offered. There might be possibilities of following this up later via an examination of the children's behaviour and utterances to see if any learning could be shown to have taken place. In view of the importance of this aspect of the work of the reception teacher for all school learning, of its importance in the context of the child's cognitive development and of its relation to the approach to the curriculum as a broad-based process-model. This would seem to be a very fruitful area of study.

- 2) Teacher A. has also expressed, when commenting on session I verbally and session III in writing, her wish to re-examine the beginning of the school day. In its present form it might be described by the onlooker<sup>3</sup> as a clusterin-time, when children come in with their mother, are received individually (often touched or assisted to sit by hand by A.) as she sits in front of the carpet where the growing group also sits. Each child's arrival is thus signalled to the entire group and each child is fitted into the group both with instructions to individuals to make room and with observations on any outstanding feature such as a new jumper or a return after illness. Due to the (as presently structured) requirement to wait for the Monday morning

dinner money collection before the group disperses there is a 30 minute (approximately) period during which the home-school transition is celebrated and eased by the broadcasting of news, the showing of treasures from home and the return of borrowed books. it is a good time to direct the attention of the class as a whole and is often used by A. to focus on the need to give help and support (e.g. to returners after absence or ESL pupils or to celebrate important events such as new babies or to recognise the seriousness of having family members in hospital).

While there are ways in which this period seems to fit well into A.'s scheme of priorities there seem also to be ways in which she is not satisfied with it. She may be concerned about the length of inactive time, the possibility of easing the entry more with an unstructured beginning where children can pursue their interests which they bring to school without interruption, or the opportunity to allow parents to be in the class while settling their children without feeling inappropriate - or other angles may interest her. There are again many good possibilities to explore which would link up with work on, say, the integrity of children's home to school transfer of play and learning experiences, or the issue of authority and control in the classroom setting.

- 3) Teacher A. has also expressed an interest in evaluating her linguistic interactions with the children, particularly in the light of the work of Gorkon Wells, Tizard and Hughes, and perhaps also work on the sociology of the classroom. There is no doubt again that some extremely useful work could be done here that would be of current interest.



## Future proposals for action

As the value of this work is currently perceived as having to do with the evolution of tools, both cognitive and methodological, for self-evaluation by teachers it seems appropriate that the initiative in focusing the study should lie with Teacher A. and that procedures should be jointly developed in the light of her decision. This interim summary will therefore be copied to her for her comments, both on the specific issues where a request for comment has been made (e.g. page 9) and on the conclusions and proposals here embodied.

A time to meet and discuss further action will then be suggested, from which it is hoped a new phase of this research will be developed.

V.H. May 1989

8.45 Brief talk with A. General confirmation from her of the accuracy and suitability of the record; she commented that she must make her own comments as soon as she gets the copy as the immediacy is important - issues tend to blur or be forgotten as the week passes.

The record would be improved, in A's view, by the addition of the time of events and her position in relation to the child/children she is addressing. We agreed that time would be noted and that distance would be recorded as follows:

<< = close,

<> = middle-distance (e.g. from one table to another), and

>> = far (e.g. right across the classroom.)

The advantage of noting how far A is from those she is addressing seems to me that the close/far axis can provide detail which may be relevant to considerations of teaching style (the group vs. the individual style of address) and to the quantification and qualification of issues of management in individual classrooms (whether the behaviour of the class as a group or the behaviour of individuals is seen as the focus of attention.) Individual teachers might also find it helpful to be aware of the distance dimension in assessing their response to particular children. As this may be a crucial issue in the future I would like to add to this group of symbols the sign '1:1' which would indicate that at the time indicated the teacher gave the child, however briefly, her undivided [attention??].

At the end of the session we also briefly discussed the recording technique - this will be summarized at the end of the record of this session.

8.55 A list was made of children's first names and dates of birth; it was noted that without the list it had been possible to identify

all the children present on that day and record their names (with one spelling-mistake.)(v. data-sheet 2) This has positive implications for this kind of evaluation<sup>1</sup> in that it implies that a teacher-evaluator assisting a colleague would not need to allocate significant amounts of time to the stage of initiation into the group as a whole.

A code of substitute names was devised for use in the record-sheets to preserve confidentiality and copied to A, in part after Session 1 and in full after Session 2.

9.00 Small group of children and parents come in; good-bye is said and children gather on mat, unpacking returned books. Charlie, tearful, is gathered in with a hug.

A: Oh, Dean, it's a good thing you've brought your book back - look, there are hardly any left on the shelves. 1:1 Birthday congratulations to Richard.

A: (Now seated on large chair with children gathering to sit on mat by book-shelves in front of her) Yellow class children, can you just settle down for a moment, can you listen... First <>/Oh! hullo Christopher! << (He is in tears, clinging to his mother who is firmly but calmly saying that she must go but will see him this evening.)(to Christopher) You were going to tell us about your party... << (Christopher, holding to mother with his back to A, is transferred to her by a well-synchronised handing over/taking over movement between the two adults and sits without protest on her knees, facing her, one leg either side of her knees for the next 15 minutes approximately.)

A: (To group) NOW (emphatic, not loud) I wonder if Alex could move backwards then Tom could move into the space... Tom, do you want to sit by Richard? [Tom: Yes] Good! Lisa, yes, you've got saoes, you change into them. << Dean and Emanuel

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1 Teacher: any comments about this?

leave corner with Richard; they are carrying a parcel for him (from another child) and help him put it in the Home Basket. They repeat several times: It's your birthday (tones of respect, excitement.)

**A:** (to group) <>I wonder if we could all come and sit down... <<Richard, it's a letter!... <>Come and sit down, not too excited... Oh yes Suhail, you've got laces, if we make them bigger like this you can do it... Oh, would you? Mrs. H. will do them up, Suhail. <<

**A:** (To group. Sings, children join in) 'I know a Teddy bear', then 'I wiggle my fingers'.

**A:** (To group, still using a 'singing' voice to retain their attention) Still like a statue!... Not even a whisker!... Oooh, look at Lynda! She's so still! <>

9.15 Children are still arriving in ones and twos and coming to sit on the mat with their bags; most have brought something - a book to return, a letter to a friend, a picture done at home, a toy, a comic. These are all shown and commented on before being put in their appropriate places.

**A:** (to group) <>Now we're going to see what Katie's brought... You've brought My Little Pony, and a comb for its mane!... Has your pony got a mane?... (Katie strokes the mane) Now we've got to look at Lynda's... You've brought a panda! My son had a Teddy, that's like a panda, but it's not the same colour, is it?... I've still got my Teddy that I had when I was little. Susie, what have you got?

**Susie:** A book, I found it.

**A:** Where did you find it?

**Susie:** At home.

**A:** Oh, in the bookcase at home [Discussion as to whether it was younger brother Timothy's book] Look, would you like to put my diaries in the shelf, they're getting in the way and we don't need them... Christopher, 1:1 would you like to with Robert? [He nods and gets off her knee; after putting the diaries away he is guided to sit on the mat with the

others.]

Now, Hara... What a shame that two people are being rather noisy and making it hard for me to talk to Hara!... Oh, your cousin Helise in Pink Class?

A drawing is put on the wall, Charlie choosing the spot and holding it while the tape is stuck on, and a comic is looked at.

A: (to Suhail) Oh, could we put this picture up? We've been feeding the birds, haven't we, and it shows some of the kinds we might see and then we'll talk about it. <<

Dean: (to A, standing) Is my lip bleeding?

A: (to Dean) No, no, you'll need some cream on it, you're getting very dry. 1:1

9.22

A: (to group) Now, Mrs. Patterson's here for the dinner-names and I'll take the register. [She asks children to move so dinner-money can be brought up to the front for Mrs. P.]  
(to Mrs. P.) We don't call him Chris, we call him Christopher.

(to Ahmed) >Are you having dinner at school today? [Ahmed nods] >>

A: (to group) What a pity Omar isn't here today, he would be able to speak to Ahmed. (Ahmed is guided by gesture to give in his money).

9.29 Activities are presented to children; those who did not make coconut dragons last week are to have a turn - their names are read out and confirmed. One child was on the wrong list and makes this clear - he had no cooked. He is added to the list. Dean makes reverberant clicking noises - no response. The full range of available activities is enumerated including Home Corner and natural materials, with the exception of paint, which is not available today.

A: (To Group) Two children can work with water, three children can work upstairs, and sometime today I'd like you to work in your big book, to do me a picture to show me what you did at the week-end <> (to Christopher) I know Christopher was very busy [discussion of who came to the party] I know, I think that's why she's not here today, she's tired from her party! I think it would be nice if you would start with your book, Christopher, with Julie who came to your party...

9.34 Charlie, I didn't say your name. << (She gradually settles children to activities by a mixture of direction and negotiation within limits imposed by allocated 'spaces' at activities.)

9.37  
A: (to group) Now please remember some children are listening to the taped story and they can't hear if you're noisy.

9.40 <>Stop, please, everybody, stop, please, STOP! [Dean has been the only child making a noise since the second 'stop'; he is still laughing an undirected theatrical laugh.]

A: (To Dean) Dean, I know you like to listen to the tapes and  
1:1 you wouldn't like not to be able to hear so can you please talk quietly... I know you've got lots to say but WHISPER (said very quietly but most emphatically on a carrying note)

9.41  
A: (to group) WHISPER (Same emphatic carrying note)<>

9.41.5  
A: WHISPER (as before)

9.50  
A: (to Tom) Tom, please don't, Emanuel's working there and there isn't room for you <> (from cooking table to sand-tray where Tom is.)

A: (to two children holding big books) Girls, have you finished your pictures? Oh I don't think so! (The two return to the table without need for further explanation)

9.51  
A is at plasticine table demonstrating to Terry how to roll plasticine 'worms' to lay over card with his name written on so

that he reproduces the letter-shapes.

A: (to dragon-making group) One more spoonful of sugar each, remember? <>

Goes to their table. Dean, at plasticine table, screams briefly. A goes to overlook the group's work there and discuss letter-shapes.

10.01

A: (to two girls as before) Girls, let's see your pictures...  
(to dragon group) How are you getting on with that stirring?  
(A at drawing table) Now that's beautiful, Charlie...<<  
Emanuel's quite a tall person, isn't he? [this refers to Emanuel's picture of himself which fills the page]

Dean brings his plasticine letters to A.

A: (to Dean) Dean, that's very good, now shall we put it in a safe place? Where shall we put it - over here? 1:1

10.06 Hava is in tears. A rubs her back vigorously

A: Did you hurt yourself?

A continues to rub Hava's back until she is calmer 1:1

10.10

A: (to Terry) Terry, don't give milk to anyone who isn't sitting down.<>

10.12

A: (to Dean) Take care, don't rush about.<>

Dean runs, then slides along the floor; A approaches him from behind, catches him kindly but firmly round the waist and whispers in his ear the same message 1:1

10.13 Dean gives a milk to Mrs H., who retails??? the joke to A. A looks at Dean, shares the joke and laughs.

A: (to Dean) Dean, let's come and tidy where you were working because you forgot.<>

Dean: Miss, I done it.

A: (to Dean) Good, now you can leave it on the table.<>

A: (to group) Now let's think what we're going to do - People who've been cooking wash your hands.>>

10.17

A: (to Dean) Dean, that's not helpful (he is spreading sand about on the floor as another child is sweeping up.)

(to Emanuel) That's very good, we didn't know you could write underneath the letters and such nice small writing too. <<

(to Dean) Have you chosen your book to look at? <<

10.22

A: (to group) Finish tidying up now and put the chairs under the tables before you come onto the mat.

(In group on mat)

A: (to group) We're looking at Emanuel's work. Selim, that's not kind, Selim, put it away. Selim, put it away<sup>1</sup> (very emphatic, not loud) Selim! <>

Charlie's done a beautiful picture and we'll look at that later... Look at that work Emanuel did just a few weeks ago when he had just come to school! Now we'll see what he's done today and you'll get a big surprise... Dean, that's not very fair if you don't listen to what Emanuel's done and then you'll want to read to us... It's a beautiful piece of work - would you like to take it into assembly this afternoon and then your friends in the nursery can see what you can do <<

Dean: (to A) Can I tell you something - it's not long.

Dean: We haven't really time [the class is going out to play] You can tell me when we've got our coats. <<

Dean, one of the last on the mat, waes arms and legs wildly and falls onto the book-shelves that are at floor-level.

A: (to Dean) Oh Dean! <>

Dean looks very angry and punches the air furiously.

A: (to Dean) Dean, will you look after Ahmed for me and hold his hand <>

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher: Shades of Joyce Grenfell!



Dean: (to A, pointing to Ahmed's face) Look!

A: (to Dean) Oh, that's where he hurt his lip last week but it's getting better, isn't it? <<

10.32 Jeremy and Emanuel are on the mat still finishing their milk. As Dean is tugged away by Ahmed he turns back to them and says: "Bye-bye, finish your milk as quickly as you can!"

In the cloakroom Dean told A that he had wanted to say he'd had a bad dream about being shot by the A-Team last night.

10.55 A directs children coming back from playtime to 'sit on the mat while we sort out who else is going to do things.' A discussion takes place about Suhail's comic and the birds they have been feeding from a bag of seed.

A: <> (to group) Let's see [holding up the picture from the comic] what kinds we might see in the playground, not not when all the children are there because that's too noisy, but if you come early or if your Mum is a bit late... sometimes your lady who comes to get you is a bit late Lisa isn't she, you might see some then. Grant, if you turn round this way you might be able to see... [Discussion of names and kinds of birds] A starling is a sort of blacky-green colour, JEREMY! [He is talking.] Shsh, Emanuel, I'm just trying to hear Lisa.

Lisa: I've got one of them in my garden.

A: What, a bird like this?

Lisa: No - like that.

A: Oh, a container for nuts.

Lisa: But it's empty.

A: You could get some nuts when you go to the shop, then you'd see the birds come.<sup>1</sup> The blue-tits can hang upside-down like that one.

Emanuel, sitting by A's feet, reaches a hand up and touches her knee. Without interrupting the conversational exchanges A holds

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher: I find it quite painful to read. My constant chatter seems quite banal!

his hand with one of hers and strokes it with the other, Emanuel gazing at her as she talks.

A: (to Dean) Dean was telling me about a horrid old dream he had - would you like to do a picture of it for us? And Lisa, you made a snowman at the weekend - would you draw it for us? And Alex, will you do a picture?

The children disperse to the activities after places have been allocated.

1.06

A: (to group) <> Stop for a moment! I'm getting a head-ache - don't shout.

Tom, who has been wandering about, kisses Emanuel who has already protested once about this.

A: (to Tom) Tom, go and make some plasticine sausages. <>  
(to group) Cooking Children who washed their hands, where do we put the towels?

Dean goes to show his picture to A, then returns to the drawing table. He shouts; A ?????es him from the cooking table <>  
Dean gets up again to go to A

A: You'll have to do the van yourself. 1:1

1.13 Dean takes his book to A. again.

A looks up to raised Home Corner and catches the eye of an excited child:

A: Julie! (to Charlie) Charlie, hold the bowl for Robert.<>  
She is at the plasticine table.

1.18 A. moves to cooking table, Dean goes to the toilet.

1.23

A: (to Emanuel) Oh, you're not being quite as sensible as you were.

Dean, having returned, is crouched by her knees as she writes the story that accompanies the picture. Returns to table to do his writing.

A: (to cooking group) Hava's going to read us her story [inaudible reading] Now she's going to read it in a loud voice so we can all hear.

A. to tape, Dean goes to her, remains there when she leaves, arranging shapes on board.

Dean is sliding on the floor, flailing his book around.

A: (to Dean) Dean! <>

He goes to her, then rushes away, and goes to the sand where he settles with his drawing-book clamped between his knees.

A: (to cooking group) I think we're ready to shape it - no, we don't need any more sugar, Emanuel.

11.32

A: (to Dean) Dean, put your book on the table and do it later if you don't want to do it now, you'll spend it. <>

A looks towards mat where Alex and Richard are involved in a brief episode of rough-and-tumble play; Alex pretends to punch Ahmed, then runs and jumps around Susie and Richard who are now reading.

11.38

A: (to Selim) Selim, you've left a towel on the floor.

Dean takes a small plate filled with sand to A.

A: (to Dean) Have you made some dinner? [Goes with him to sand-tray] You'd better sweep up or we won't have any sand left.

Emanuel shouts "Doo-doo-doo-doo", and jumps up and down. A. touches his cheek and gathers him to come and stand by her.

11.42

A: (to group) AND (emphatic) stop and listen, standing vbery still and quiet... very quiet, Alex, you're not listening, and Emanuel you can stand like a statue. oh, people on the carpet, you're being becy rude! Selia, will you come and tidy the table, no Selim, we're tidying up, will you come and help us please, we were working here. I don't think Christopher's listening because Charlie's not letting him.

[Dean and Emanuel are running and sliding on the floor.] everybody, just stand still once more right this minute because one or two people are being very, very unhelpful. if you were making biscuits go and tidy the table. Dean, go and sit down and be choosing a book. 1:1 Go and sit down quietly on the mat [holding his hand]. [Emanuel and Terry wave arms and legs about - she catches their eyes <>] Charlie, I think you'd better sit in the chair and read a book - you're being rather silly <>. Dean has chosen a giant-sized book to read to the class.

A: (to Dean) Just go and sit on my chair with that... (to group) Now can you just stop because Dean would like to read to us and can I just remind Christopher you use your very big LOUD voice for the playground. It's lovely to see you reading together but you're shouting and sometime's HAVA if you're shouting the books can get a bit spoiled. Everyone except Dean and Richard put your books away. Charlie did <> you hear what I said? [Yes] Well, put it away please. Emanuel, there's one little job tyo do, there's a tissue on the floor, please pick it up and put it in the bin. Jeremy, finish the lego table, Christopher please help. Emanuel, since we said you'd done beautiful work you've gone a bit mad! You'll get hurt if you fly around the room. Dean and Richard, would you like to bring your books and Richard put your book on the table over there a minute. Emanuel 1:1 I'm going to ask you to SIT DOWN and if you can't to go and sit right away from us! Dean, would you like to choose two people to hold the book? [Katie refuses his invitation] You can't say no, Katie... hold it so we can see the pictures... I don't think I know this book, I'm glad you're going to read it.

Dean reads the book with help; he seems to enjoy it very much.

A: (to Dean) Well done!  
(to Richard) Well now, Richard, I don't think we've got time

for yours now - it's dinner-time. Would you like to read it when we come in - I like that one!

12.01

**A:** (to group) Have we got time for a big clap? Dean wants a big clap! [Group claps enthusiastically.]

(to Dean 1:1) Could you go and pick up the plasticine from under the table? (Her hand is on his chest and she is speaking very quietly into his ear.)

(to group) Grant, you're being very quiet, would you like to line up? Anyone else who's being very quiet/ Alex, you're not, Ahmed won't know how to be quiet if you're not.

**Tom:** Someone broke my starfish (a sticklebrick model)

Children line up by the door.

**Tom:** (tearfully) Someone's broken my starfish.

**A:** Oh dear! Can I just remind everybody that when the models are put on the shelf nobody touches them - that's very unkind... I don't think we've got much room, I think we'll put all the lovely models down here, I think that's the problem... A surprise! Look, Christopher and Jeremy, you'll get a surprise! Tom's made this other model, there's somebody in there... .

(to Dean, who has bumped a child) Now that happened because you were bouncing around - are you alright Lisa? [They leave the room.]

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**Discussion of individual children with A.**

**Katie** - one of the two girls addressed at 9.50 (v. record sheet no.?. Not as easily upset as she looks, tends to avoid areas such as drawing/writing.

**Hava** - In tears earlier - had been embarrassed by slipping and falling. She tends to avoid talking but is now feeling up to reading to the children (v. record sheet no.?)

**Tom** - a loner but requires talk and attention. he is becoming more content to be a member of a group.

In general the differences in personalities are emerging and developing - the class should be more settled by the end of this short and illness-dominated term.

**Dean** - seems to welcome the security of school - he is very loving and positive to the other children although earlier he used to hurt them.

**Emanuel** - much calmer now - it's valuable to look back at your records.

**Charlie** - immature but he can do very good work, especially for his age. Toilet last session? Cold in tummy?

**Alex** - I'm surprised he is so noisy - I expected him rather to be quiet. He's just moved here - it's a very nice family.

**Christopher** - perhaps has a problem with the playground - it's often hard but they don't like to say. And it's a very long day for them.

Records - I've deliberately not read the nursery records this time, I want to form my own opinion.

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Teacher: A very fair recording I think - A.

Research method

Mrs H., paper and pen in hand, sits at convenient table, able to talk to and assist children in intervals of recording A's talk with children. First two sessions at drawing/writing table.

Children's observations

**Lisa:** Why you doing a lot of writing? [explanation - my work is to write down what A. and children say and to see all the beautiful work they do.]

**Lisa:** But that's a LOT

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**Lynda:** We was listening to the tape - was you listening?

**Mrs. H.:** No, I can't hear it from over her. [No response]

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**Suhail:** Why are you writing Peter Pan? [Peter Pan is in the comic discussed at beginning of session - he must have seen me recording the talk.]

**Mrs. H.:** [explained as to Lisa - no response]

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**Tom:** Why are you writing?

**Mrs. H.:** [explained as to Lisa - no response]



SCHOOL 1:7

4.3.86

A.

Sorry about the huge number of pages - Was it an especially busy morning or was I just noticing more?

I was really shattered afterwards but I can't see that much could be left out because your style of management applies over the whole field - or at least I think so!

I enclose a full list of code names.

Best wishes.

Vicky

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A38

School 1:9 Third visit 10.3.86 Teacher A.

9.05 Large group of children enter and go to sit on the mat. Alex gets up urgently, trips and falls, then bursts into tears.

**Alex:** (to A.) My Mummy got my (inaudible)... (He is gathered up to sit on A's knee while the rest are settled.)

**A:** <> Yellow Class if you've got no problems SIT DOWN. Suhail, do you want to put your picture on the wall? Yellow Class, SIT DOWN - I can't talk to everybody at once.<sup>1</sup> Have you got a new sweater on, Dean? You look very smart today. Sit down then for a moment, hang on to it, sit down... Suhail, would you like to put that on the wall? (Suhail goes to choose a place for his picture.) Emanuel, don't wander about, sit down, Suhail's looking for a place... Would you like the tape? Alex, what were you trying to tell me?

1:1

1:1

**Alex:** (to A.) My Mummy got my dinner money (tears)

1:1

**A:** (to Alex) Oh, it doesn't matter, I expect she'll bring it at home-time and say 'what a silly Mummy to forget it!' Suhail, please help him to get a tissue, and Alex you can help Suhail to put his picture up. (Alex is still tearful) Is there something else you wanted to say? (He is picked up again and repeats the statement about the dinner money.)

1:1

**A:** Yellow Class, let me see you round THIS way, please. Selim and Jeremy stand up please. If you come and sit at the front of the mat I think you'll be able to hear what I say. how's your head feeling today Selim? Is it better? [Yes] Then you will be able to hear very well with it.

<>

<> (to Jeremy) Jeremy, how's your mummy? Did you go to see her in hospital? Did you take her your biscuits or did you eat

---

1 I definitely feel that I need to review the start to the day. - free activities perhaps? allowing children who need to talk the time and opportunity.

them? [I saved them for her.] Oh, good! [She doesn't like being in hospital... she has terrible feelings... when she has a baby she'll let me have packed lunch]

Dean, what do you say to Charlie? [Sorry] I'm surprised at you! (to Jeremy) Do you want a packed lunch then? [I like school dinners] You want school dinners? [I don't like them.]

<> Now a few people are feeling strange after the week-end and we'll help them to feel better. Alex is only unhappy because his Mummy forgot his dinner money, he's not hurt. In fact you live so near we can almost see your house out of the window and she might run back with it later. Lots of you have forgotten your dinner-money, haven't you, and  
<< you've brought it later. Nobody's cross with you, Alex.

9.10

A: (to Charlie) Let's see what you've brought... ooh, SpiderMan needs a bandage I see [It's sellotape] Yes, so it is. You'd better put him safely in the Home Basket.

A: (to Nadia) You look as if you've got a big bag! (The contents are unpacked and the place for the umbrella is pointed out by Nadia.)

(To Dean) Be careful, what are you trying to do? Flatten it? Put it over there by the mirrors, they're ??? too.

<< (To Nadia) What's this, does it need a flat surface? [No, it doesn't stand up] Are these all My Little Pony? Oh no, it's Rainbow Bright. Are they cut outs, did you cut them? [No, I pressed them out and I took off the stickers]

<> (To Suhail) Did you ask Emanuel to do that? [No.] That was your back he was banging! Emanuel, I know you were being friendly but you must be careful - rub him better.

Alex is quietly established on a chair at A's feet.

A: (to Charlie)<< Would you like to go and sit over there, Charlie? [I want to go home] When Mrs. P. comes I'll need to

sit there. You'll make other people cry if you do that, look at Malcolm, he's been away a long time and he's smiling. [sobs] You're trying to squeeze out tears but they don't want to come. [Bellows] Wait a moment and I'll give you a cuddle. << Hava, what have you got to show us? Are these new shoes for you?

<>(To group) Hava's got new high-heeled shoes, are these for playing in the house? Has your Mummy got some like these? [No I have these shoes in the summer. Alex, put my ??? in the sink please - hold it with both hands... Put this bag in the bin too please, [No, I want it] oh, in the house basket the - Dean wants it.

A. sits on Charlie's chair at the front with him on her knee.

1:1

A: (To Charlie) You'll have to sit still or I shall go wrong. (Takes register) Malcolm, we are pleased to have you back! Ahmed, say Yes, Mrs. A. [children chorus of Yes, Mrs. A.] No, that's confusing. I daresay one day he'll say it. (Ends register)

While we're waiting for Mrs. P. let's think about the song we're learning with the other children - 'My hair is black and your hair's yellow' (They sing) Oh, we'll have to start again I've begun too low, I'm running out of voice! Suhail, how does it begin? Well done!

Mrs. P. arrives, and asks Suhail to come and hold the bag. Selim moves his feet to let him through. (unasked)

A: (To Selim) That's a good boy, Selim. Lisa, no dinner money? (To Alex) Lisa hasn't got hers. Here's Malcolm, we are pleased to see him back, aren't we?

A. explains Alex's money was forgotten:

A: Mummy will probably bring it tonight.  
 (to Ahmed) Ahmed say 'School dinners please...' <>Grant, come here and sit by Hava... Grant's getting worried, some people aren't being very helpful.  
 <<Alex, please bring me one of those mirrors... Thank you. Now you're going to sit down with everybody else... Look! (the children make a space unasked)  
 <<Charlie, sit down too, you're making my legs ache. He didn't mean to step on your finger, did you Charlie? Suck it for a minute.

A: (to group) <>Now you know our song we were singing, let's have another try, that was a bit feeble! (They sing) We said 'My eyes are brown and yours are blue, well, we're going to look in the mirror and see what colour our eyes are... (They discuss eye colours) You might hear that someone has got HAZEL eyes, that's browny-green, and sometimes people have grey eyes - in the song it just says brown and blue. Your friends will help you know what colour your eyes are... Alex and Nadia, you go over to the window and see what colour Nadia << thinks Alex's eyes are... (Alex peers into a mirror) No, over here and Nadia look.

9.33 / Nadia: They're brown.

A: I thought it might be hazel. We can't find the plastic mirrors, these are glass.  
 <>Now you must all take care of the mirrors mustn't you?

Dean: We mustn't drop it, we might break it.

A: Yes, if a mirror is dropped don't touch it, ask me, or Mrs. H., - we won't touch it, we'll use a dustpan. I think the round bit of the eye would be brown on me, and the little bit in the middle is black isn't it? (They discuss eye lashes) What are eye lashes for? (They belong to our eyes.) Yes, but why have we got them, Nadia? (To keep you comfortable.) Just right! There's dust flying about in the air and it could make your eyes sore, so the eye lashes keep it out. I like that - to keep your eyes comfortable! Now feel your eyebrows - how many have we got?

**Alex:** Weetabix went in my eye.

**A:** Weetabix went in? When you were opening the packet? I hope you got it out? [Yes] A little girl at school here, in Purple Class, got something in her eye and it hurt a lot - she cried and cried and she cried it out - we've got water in our eyes to wash things out!

9.40

**A:** (to group) <>Now I want to start work so no more talk - Dean you can tell me on your own in a little while. (Description of how to play number game on one table.) There are books for your news of what happened yesterday when you gave your Mummie's the cards and presents. Do you remember that we took Emanuel's work into the hall last week? I wonder if we're going to be able to do that with someone's book this week? (The other activities are described.) Now the children with their hands up can go very carefully to the table but don't start yet.

**Charlie:** I want to wee-wee first.

**A:** Yes, all right.

**Charlie:** I want someone to go with me.

**A:** Well choose someone then. Number game children, you'll need to find room on the floor to throw the dice. Who'll paint - no-one painted much last week? Malcolm? Good. Omar and Ahmed asked to play together as Omar's Bengali will help Ahmed  
They go to bricks on the mat. Dean is clowning, pretending to throw the dice and reacting exaggeratedly to a stubbed toe, waving his foot in the air.

**A:** (to Hara) << What colour have you got on your book?  
(to Dean) It's Alex's turn isn't it? (He protests, wailing.)  
<< Dean, you're going to go and get one fork.  
(To group) <>Now stop please Yellow Class, stop and listen. People at the number game you must be quiet or you'll disturb the others. (30 seconds pass.) Gracious me, people at the number game, you are making a fuss! Some people are listening to a tape, the people in the house don't need to

make a noise. Jeremy and Malcolm aren't making a noise, we're trying to talk and I'm sure Mrs. H.'s table are trying to talk.

Right, I'm coming to the number table to see how you're getting on... You don't need to sit down, stand up and you can help one another. (Helps with counting dots on face of dice - Dean explodes with gross motor energy, his feet pounding the floor.) <<Dean!... How many, Dean? yes, five! Richard's turn. (She goes to the book table.)

(To Dean at number table) <> Hello Dean, what are you doing?

**Richard:** There aren't enough things. I was the winner.

**A:** I think someone's picked them up, Dean, I don't think you're being very kind - Richard's trying to find the knives and forks and spoons, please will you put them back.

**Richard:** There aren't enough!

**A:** Dean, put them back please.

**Charlie:** (To A.) Go to wee-wee.

**A:** (to number group) <>Find your number books, please. Put the knives, forks and spoons back - forks in here, spoons in here.

(To group, sings) >>Point to the ceiling, point to the floor etc. Start again please, some people aren't doing it. (They sing again to the end of the song.) Now can you listen ery, very carefully. It's getting very muddly in here. Jeremy and Malcolm Shsh! Jeremy and Malcolm SHSH! Omar! People are making a lot of noise and not being very sensible, moving from one thing to another like now and making me use my VERY LOUD voice. Omar, how will Ahmed learn to be quiet when somebody's talking if you talk? Number children tidy up the spoons and forks, if I'm not ready to talk to you Hava and Emanuel. Would you like to be choosing a book to take home? (A helps to find the correct number books.) Emanuel sit down here... Lisa have you done your eyelashes? << Oh! isn't that lovely, peace at last! Well your book can only be in the green drawer then... Julie did you give Dean his milk? Well, he would like one... Let's look in the green one then

1:1 Alex... did you do your eyebrows as well, Lisa? Well, I'll come and see. Well, that's beautiful. Now could you write what colour your eyes are?

Emanuel comes to say Dean is blowing bubbles in his milk, slightly spattering the number table.

A: (To Emanuel) You're not doing it, are you? Well, don't worry. (No reaction to Dean.)

10.17

Charlie: (To A.) Can I play with the bricks?

A: (To Charlie) << Can I have a look at your writing first?  
(To group) <>Listen please, we had 20 milks this morning, three children are away and Lisa doesn't have milk so 20 should be enough. Please use your eyes to see if there's another, spare, milk aound the room. Yes, Julie's given Lisa a milk and she doesn't have milk.

10.21

A: (To Emanuel) <<Oh dear, Emanuel, you're not going to be able to go out to play if you've not had your milk are you? (30 seconds) Emanuel, go and drink your milk, we're going out to play.

10.23

(To group) We're going out to play, listen to what I want you to do... Big bricks people put them away just in case we need to sit on the mat... people in the house just make it a little bit tidier... other people stand behind your chairs... well done, Nadia. Now put the chairs under the tables. Dean, get a cloth for your table... Well, what a lot of wriggling about, nobody's really standing very nicely. Robert, can you hear the tap running, can you turn it off? No, Selim, I chose Robert because he's tall and he can reach, some people can't reach it... <>Stand very quietly and I can chose some people to come to the door (A's voice is very quiet as she says the names.) Oh, I might have to send someone back - that would be a shame! There are



three unfinished milks, will those people stay and try a little bit longer - sit on your chairs... Oh well, I shouldn't bother if he isn't kind, Ahmed will hold your hand.

10.55 (After playtime, on the mat, looking at Malcolm's picture.)

A: (To group) Oh, look at that - What a lovely painting, Malcolm. (Dean is grunting very loudly - catches A's eye and subsides somewhat though not completely.) Is there a story for your painting Malcolm? [Noah.] Oh, clever boy, do you remember the story we had long ago? [That's Noah, that's the rain, that's God.] What did God say to Noah? [Build the ark.] Yes, why? [Noah was a goodie.] Yes? [So he could sail across the sea.] yes, when there was a flood and the other people got drowned. Isn't that lovely? Dean, no! I think you know the story but you don't know about Malcolm's picture. Malcolm, what shall I write? [The boat's not floating yet.] In a moment you can tell me exactly what to write. Dean, have I got to ask you to come and sit by me - that would be silly! We've got some lovely work here, let's have a look... Ahmed, come and sit by Julie, you can see better - Julie, put up your hand so he can see where you are... You people at the table with the mirrors have been working very hard - the pastels are very hard to use. Nadia, you've got brown eyes and eyebrows; <>Lisa, what's round the white bit? [Pink] Yes, a little bit of pink. Yes Nadia you've drawn that, and the little centres where the tear-duct is, where the tears come from, Salim!... Lisa, you've got lots of eye lashes!

Charlie: My eyes are blue.

A: Now let's look at the books... Susie's Mummy said 'Thank you!' for the biscuits, Julie, let's see what you've been doing; it's a picture of her birthday (reads the narrative.) Sootica wants a piece of cake, who's Sootica? [My cat] 'and so does my kitten.' How many kittens have you got? [Four]

*Sch. Act 3 ends here*  
And how big are they? Make the size with your hands. [A bit tiny] Very tiny! Hava, what are we going to say about your picture? [It's my/party, I'm playing with Katie.] I can't hear what she's saying!

(To Dean) <<When I ask you what you want to say I hope the other people aren't going to make a noise (repeated with emphasis)

(To Emanuel) <> What shall I write for you? Which way up should your picture be? [It's upside down] Which way? That way? (A. looks at Dean) Oh dear!

(To Emanuel) The monster's getting you? Where did he come from? [Out of the tunnel]

1.07

A: (To group) If you haven't had a chance to do this wording your book put up your hand. Oh! Malcolm are you all right? Malcolm's legs just collapsed then, they went like a jelly. (She rubs Malcolm's chest, he laughs.)

Children are chosen to go to the activities, including Charlie who asks to go to the toilet first.

A: (To Charlie) Again? Look Nadia Charlie wants to go so Maya needn't go with you.

Charlie: Can I go upstairs after?

A: Yes, of course.

Emanuel attempts to straighten a big cloth and card dragon on the stairs but it falls. A. turns and sees his dilemma, laughs. Dragon is restored.

A: (To group) Ahem! Charlie has just arrived and suddenly there's a fuss in the house! (Shouts from the house.) >>What a noisy pie you're making, Susie! Shsh! I wonder if we might start to whisper this morning... [Dean: YEAH!] I wonder if the number table might start to whisper.

(To Charlie) Charlie, Charlie, can I speak to you? You're shouting<sup>1</sup> and we can't hear. (30 seconds elapse)

A: (To Charlie) Mr Fireman, WILL YOU BE QUIET!

Jeremy: Two, I've got two mirrors.

11.20

A: (To group) Oh goodness, show me your hands please, and click your fingers. Oh dear... (in rhythm)... oh dear... (voice getting very quiet) put your finger on your lips. I don't want to have to ask people upstairs to come down but they're shouting and Charlie I think it's you. If we have to stop again I'll have to ask you to come down.

(To group at mirror table) That was very fortunate that the mirror didn't get broken.

(Dinner money queries are raised by Mrs. P.) Julie, ooh, that's lovely... and also when Christopher was putting his coat on (1:1 briefly with Christopher) he found this (dinner money)

(To group) If you're drawing a picture can you come back and sit down please. (Over to painting area). <<Who wants white and who wants green?... Right, right... NOW you're all sorted out. (Dean stamps wildly but is ignored.) Jeremy - it will show up... Hava, get a pencil...

(Moving around) <>Charlie, (catches his eye) quiet (very quietly) Christopher, sit down, I'm coming... Dean, sit down and make it look really nice - you can't show that to anyone... Hava, what colour did you think your eyes were?

(To the book table) You ARE patient!... Go and wash your hands, Selim... Lisa, can you put your paint down then the other people can use it... Charlie, what's the matter? [she's got the cover???] You're shouting again and I asked you not to. (Arm round him, rubs his chest.) Jeremy, that's coming along, what about your (points to eyelashes) underneath? Just a moment, Selia! (Repeats message to

1:1

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1 Teacher: this is conjecture

Jeremy.) <<But I am talking to Suhail - you finish it off.

1:1 I wonder why Lisa? (to a complaint) Were you being a nuisance? You sometimes are!

Julie: I've washed my hands.

A: Now what are you going to do? A book?

Charlie: I don't want you going up there for a while because I've told you so many times... (enumerates possible activities) What do you want to do? [Taped story] (This was not among the choices offered.) Julie, were you going to do that? (taped story) [No] Well then Charlie, turn it down low so it doesn't disturb anyone.

(Dean falls off his chair). You all right? Julie, help Dean up for me please and make sure he's all right (1:1 eye contact with Dean.) Lynda, shall we have a look at Lisa's picture with her? (Rubs Dean's leg for him while talking to Lisa.) Now what did I say to you?

1.33 I said 'get a pencil and write your name.' Jeremy, now get a mirror and see if you've got any of those tiny eye lashes... Lisa, put your painting to dry - shall I help? Jeremy, please come and finish it, then we can put it on one side out of the way, otherwise it'll get spoiled... Yes, Ahmed, go on! ...Come and sit down here, Dean... Suhail, are you going to read it to Lynda? (Alex is singing as he draws - she catches his eye.) Noisy beastly over there! (They grin at each other.) Grant, would you like to put your name on it.. Malcolm, this drawing looks like your painting! - Would you like to leave it on there and take Ahmed to the toilet - I don't want him to go on his own.

Charlie: The tape's not working!

A.: Was it working a moment ago? Does it need to be turned over? Let Lisa have a go at it... Jeremy, put your name on it... Selim, you're waving it in my face! Let's listen to Lynda. Oh! Did you write this all yourself, Lynda? You clever thing!

Lynda: I done a bit wrong.

A.: Which bit? Oh, I see, you did the 'u' and the 'n' wrong and

then you made them right... Now, what do you want me to write for you? ... Robert, yes, you may play with the magnets but put them on the mat so they don't get lost... Yes, Omar, that's lovely, but make sure the sand goes back... Ahmed, bring me your paper... Jeremy, put that by the chair... Selim, what were you going to say? Actually come down here...

Charlie: I can't hear

A.: (very seriously) <>Charlie asks if you might be quieter - he's listening to the tape! (1:1, to Charlie) Remember when you were noisy? Do you realise now how annoying it is?

(To group) I'm sure everyone will whisper for Charlie and Lisa... Ahmed, paper, your paper... Dean, are you looking at your eyes? Nadia, give him some paper - you know what to do... Ahmed! finish your eye-lashes. Emanuel, shsh... Nadia, you're not doing it FOR Dean are you? He can do it!

Charlie: I can't hear!

A.: I think they are being quite quiet for you.

Charlie: But I can hear them upstairs.

A.: << Not too much, Charlie... Malcolm, it's the Noah story in your drawing - you do like that story!... Now, listen to what Selim's going to say [narrative about Selim's drawing]

1:1 Oh dear, is it a sad story? I don't like people getting hurt. Oh, it's just pretend - does that make it all right? He's just a toy... does that make it all right? Yes, Maya, you can, but can you organise the paper - I haven't time to get it for you.

Do you want to go upstairs, Ahmed? Good boy for helping him, Dean, thank you! ...Omar - well ask someone, my dear! Have you been waiting all this time? Richard, you are so quiet we don't know you're there! Would you go with Omar to the toilet, he's been waiting a long time... >> Emanuel, Ahmed's coming to join you in the gouse; look after him - remember, he can't understand so look after him.

(To group) Everyone, Selim's just said 'everyone's shouting'. I think Selim's right - it's rather annoying. If

you shout, people have to say things again and again.

l:1 (To Dean) Did Nadia do that for you? (laughs) It's lovely. I thought so! Are you going to do yours this afternoon? You cheeky thing! l:1

<> (To group) Stop, please, it's time to tidy up for dinner.

l:1 (To Selim) It's very very difficult for me to know what to write, Selim, so much is happening in your picture I don't know what to write. If you want me to write some more this afternoon I will but we're running out of time now.

(To Malcolm) We'll leave it open and you can draw some more later... Charlie, leave the tapes tidy - did you realise how annoying it is when people are noisy? [The people upstairs were shouting!] And so were you when you were there!... Nadia and Dean make the table tidy but don't put things away...

**Charlie:** Mrs A., I was at that table.

**A.:** Do you want to tidy it? Off you go then... Grant, they say the house is tidy - do you want to have a check? ...No, we're second dinner today... no, we're not going to, it's dinner time now... Lisa, would you like to put that away, and let me see everybody coming... Alex, there's a chair on the floor, would you like to push it in... and when everybody's sitting down we might... we MIGHT have time for a story... Jeremy, put those books away... put those books away, Jeremy. Jeremy, we won't have time for a story unless everybody sits down quietly... I'm waiting for Dean to come... No, no-one will read unless we're quiet... Emanuel, would you like to choose a book?... No, we're working round, lots of people haven't had a turn yet... Can you use your loud voice please... (Children chorus the story with Emanuel) Just a minute... would you like us to help or read yourself? [Read myself] Use your loud voice, please.

A mother enters with Katie who has been absent.

**Mother:** The doctor says to keep her in.

**A.:** (To mother) I suppose you've got to take her out?

**Mother:** yes, I've got to get John and all that.

**A.:** (To mother and Katie) We wish you better soon, Katie.

<< (To Emanuel) You did read that well, Emanuel. (There is a spontaneous clap for him.)

(To group) Is anyone going home for dinner? No? Then we've time to read another... hands down my dears... Malcolm, you know which one you're looking for? Julie, hold the books while he's looking... I love this one! [Children chorus the story again.] It's Malcolm's turn... if Charlie (helping to hold the book) stands back a bit I think you'll be able to see the page - that's the next page isn't it? (Malcolm finishes, A. leads a clap for him.)

(To Omar as they line up) We're last today, yes, second dinner.

## Discussion with A.

Lots of activities at once because of the risk of boredom? - Must recognise their short concentration span. They also want attention instantly!<sup>1</sup> Teachers must respond to the children's interests but also have an over-all plan - she has a theme of 'ourselves' (paintings, cut-out drawings, booklets with photo, drawings and child's commentary, called 'I am A???), a theme of Chinese New Year and possibly a newsagents later next term. Dean introduced a plane interest and kites were a potential next term to continue flying theme. A. uses term 'work' for all activities as she believes all are important; school expectations influence provision as does pressure from parents and other sources. Records are time-consuming and must be relevant - would rather note child's emotional state day to day and have a summary of other areas e.g. language to observe and record. Blank sheets with broad headings would be best for these. Meeting individual needs can sometimes seem to go against exact 'fairness' e.g. ignoring Dean but this class seems unworried by this and accept 'give and take' principle. Children are especially anxious on Monday mornings - they should also be observed later in the week - research note to be followed up.

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher: must gradually learn that this is not possible or desirable.

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School 1 - 10

10.3.86

A.

Another very interesting morning! Do you think that Mrs. Do as You Would be Done By would enjoy working with 'Charlie'? What fun he is.

I'll put this in your pigeon hole by the Registry, and I hope you'll get the other one somehow. I left messages for Mari and Gill. Could I possibly have your home address in case I have something to send you over the holidays?

Do ring if you need to

Best wishes

Vicky

A54

9.00 A greets children in school hall as they come in with their parents, sees returned library books, discusses any weekend events with parents, notes any dinner-money problems.

9.05 (In classroom)

Nadia: (To V.H.) Was you in the nursery?

V.H.: Yes, but it was another nursery, in another school. That's why it's nice for me to come and see what lovely things you older children can do.

Charlie parts tearfully from his mother:

A.: (To Charlie) << Come on, m'dear. (Takes his hand, holds him beside her).

(To children on mat) <> Oh! It's lovely to see everybody here this morning (Words very emphatic, slowly - spoken and much spaced-out) but could you sit down and talk quietly!

Grant: Jeremy's got a new jumper.

A.: (To group) <> And a new coat AND A NEW SISTER!

Emanuel: (To A.) I hurt myself.

A.: (To Emanuel) << Were you bouncing about?

Emanuel: No, I fell over

A.: (To group) <> Now, let's see what we have to do here...

(To Charlie) << Pop this in the box...

(To Emanuel) No, Charlie can do it, you've got your book to put away.

<> Oh, some people have forgotten their book envelopes - I can't sit down if they're left on my chair.

Dean has been standing by stairs close to A. waiting to say something to her

Dean: (To A.) Miss, we've got (unclear)...

A.: (To Dean) Wait, I've got to talk to Katie.

9.10 Charlie is standing on A's other side, looking at her.

A.: (To Emanuel) << No, it's better if you go and sit down then we can all talk.

(To group) Right, now let's see who we've got here today. Katie, you're back - are you better? (Nods)

Dean: That's what I was telling you!

A.: <> Oh, that's it! Katie will feel a bit strange today after being away so we've got to help her - will someone look after her? (Hava puts up her hand.) Hava.(agreeing)

Emanuel is still by A.

A.: (To Emanuel) << Emanuel, sit on the carpet next to Grant... Charlie, I think if Dean and Emanuel can sit down so can you. (Sits silent and watches the children for 30 seconds)

(To group) <> Right now Dean's done that for Christopher (passing a book) I think we're ready... Listen carefully because we have some music playing (a classical tape is often played from before school until the end of this first meeting period.) Alex, if you moved back you wouldn't be so crowded against Omar...

Alex: Mrs. A., he's putting my book somewhere...

A.: (To Alex) You put it where you want... Really, right there, Omar? (The book is retrieved by Alex.)

Register is taken

A.: Maya, you were very quiet today! Tom's not here is he, perhaps he'll be back during the week - he's getting over his chicken-pox (A buzz of interest and excitement) No, don't shout at me, I haven't quite finished... Jeremy, I expect you were very excited on Friday when you got your sister from the hospital! Did you go to get her or did you

see her when she got to your house? (Tony went) So you saw her when she got home? (Nods) Terry! How rude! Let's finish talking to Jeremy... Is she good? Does she cry? (She sleeps, she drinks a lot!) I expect that's why she sleeps, her tummy's full of milk! (A. laughs, Jeremy smiles.) Has she got a name yet? (She doesn't talk... you have to hold her head) Oh yes, I know what you mean, babies are all floppy, you have to put your hand under their heads like this when you hold them... (Her skin is coming off her lip...) <> I expect it's not very strong because she's new... Has she got a name? (Eleanor) Oh, that's a lovely name, my mother's called Eleanor, I'll have to tell her.

**Jeremy:** John, differnt John from Blue Class, he's got a sister...

**A.:** Your Mummy's going to bring your baby to see us one day this week - won't that be lovely? Then we can all say hello to her.

**Julie:** << It's my birthday...

**A.:** That's lovely!

**Terry:** I went to Jeremy's house.

**A.:** When did you go? (...the park...) Did you meet him in the park and go home with him? (...No...) Did you call in on the way back but he wasn't there?

**Jeremy:** Not this week-end but the other one...

**A.:** The one before, the past week-end, I see.

**Malcolm:** I've got a friend called Eleanor... I've got a new coat.

**A.:** (To group) I think a lot of you have got new coats. I think it's because of the lovely<sup>1</sup> spring weather - you've got smart new coats to wear in the sunshine.

**Dean:** A ghost gut busted - I was closing my bedroom door and turning the light off and the ghost was coming, (sudden change of tone from dramatic narrative to low comedy and release of tension) and it did undo my trousers! (laughs, children giggle.)

**A.:** Funny ghost!

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1 Teacher: Everything seems to be "lovely" today - ugh!

Dean: It was a dream...

A.: <> Oh, we don't need to be frightened of ghosts because they're not real... I know why you have these dreams, Dean; it's because you watch television in your bedroom, and then you fall asleep and you dream about what you've been watching. How many of you have televisions in your bedrooms? ...I see, not many...

(To group, holding hands over her ears) Ooh, ooh dear! I can't listen to you all at once... Maybe it might be better to watch television downstairs with Granny, Dean.

Dean: Sometimes Granny sleeps with me and then I turn on the light and she's gone and I had another dream...

9.25

Suhail: I got something to show.

Hava: I got something to show...

A.: <> Oh, what a lot of wriggle-bottoms we've got this morning! (sings) I wriggle my fingers etc. (to end of song, children joining in.) We'll look quickly at what people have brought in and then we'll talk about something else... No, very, very still... (to Suhail) You've got a pencil box and some paper - are you going to do some drawing? (No, I'm going to do tracing. << Oh!... did your sister do this? (Yes.) I thought so - it's lovely, isn't it? Can you put it in the Home Basket please? <> And Julie's brought some letters for you all for when you go home - we'll put them in the Home Basket and you can have them in the evening - No, Emanuel, I'm not going to listen!... John and Hava and Katie come out...

Hava: I'm making something with my Easter Egg box.

A.: << Oh! What's inside? (Roses!) You've not been eating Easter Eggs already? (Yes.) You are early in your house!... Put it in the Home Basket please... And Katie, what have you brought? (A Rainbow-Brite book) <>...and I am trying to look at the book and you are being very rude - that (piece of Lego) would have been quite all right on the carpet...

<> Katie's book has got a maze in it - you have to go round

these little paths until you can find a way to the centre, and Katie's managed to do the maze. We'll read something out of the book later perhaps... << It's lovely to see you back, Katie... And John? Can you show us all what you've brought?

**John:** It's the A-team!

**A.:** Oh, that's what the picture is. (It's from a book.) You didn't tear it out, did you? (No, you have to cut it out and stick it on the wall) The other side is what I thought you were going to show us - <<that's interesting pictures of planes... in the Home Basket, please.

9.30

(to group) Now, let's have a look at something while we're waiting for Mrs. P... (fetches a box of greenery.) Well, I've got something to show you... <> This morning when I came to school the postman had been and he'd left us this box. There are lots of lovely things to look at inside. Don't stand up, I'm getting them out... These are branches that were growing on bushes and trees a long??? way away and they were cut for us to look at (these were cut from a willow).

**Lisa:** Wind in the willow?

**A.:** A pussy willow because it's soft here... the book and the play are called that because the wind blows in the branches of the willow... Can you see, here are the branches and here are the buds, these are the buds... can you see what's happening? Put your hand up, don't shout... Robert, what's happening? (They're growing) Christopher? (They're growing white) Lynda? (They're opening) What's making them open?

**Malcolm:** water.

**A.:** Well, when they were still part of the tree water helped them to grow when it rained but why are they opening now? Emanuel? (The wind) Any other ideas? (John: the sunshine) That's a good thought! (Suhail: the spring) Yes, it's the time of year when the sun shines more. They've had water

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Teacher: Don't I talk a lot it's awful!

from the rain and they've been growing a long time and they're opening and now it's spring and what's going to happen? Julie? (They're going to be opened by the wind.) I don't think so, I think they'll open when they're ready. Do you know what's going to happen when they open? (Selim: the buds are going to grow into flowers) If we do what Malcolm was thinking of (give them water) we'll see what happens. Do you remember, we were watching the forsythia last week, and first came the flowers and then when they died what came? (Leaves) Yes. I'm not sure if that's going to happen with these... <> these are from a lime, a lime tree... We'll put them in water and put them on the table so you can look at them...

9.37 Mrs. P. arrives to collect the dinner-money.

A.: Mrs. P., could you wait just a moment please?  
(To group) Can you make a big space here so children can get out... <> I know it's boring, it's nearly the end... Emanuel, do leave the books alone, please...  
Now, Lisa and Nadia have said what about the seeds - the beans we planted. We won't look yet - people are not listening and anyway we're going into the playground... you can do your wriggling in the playground instead of the classroom. (The children laugh)... << Oh, no! Charlie come out here, and Dean. Dean, why did you do that? What was the reason? You wanted him to get the Lego out for you? Is that a good way to get someone to give you something? I'm surprised at you being so unkind. Julie, please pass it to Jeremy and Jeremy put it away.  
Today I want you to be careful because I'm moving the phone box and the wire is on the stair-rail - I'm going to fix it under the stairs later. (question) The other end is upstairs, Charlie.  
<> Now Red Class are in the hall and we're going to creep through the hall without fussing... without any noise.

Grant and Colin go to the door... (someone speaks) Oh dear, ...all quiet... Chatting by the door? Oh Susan, goodness me! (in quietest possible voice) No, not even a whisper... Oh, Hara and Katie!... Well, you're standing very nicely apart from you Omar... I'm going to ask Katie if she'll carry that - funny thing, isn't it? I'll carry these and we'll get some balls and hoops from the hall. Suhail, if you're walking with Dean please be quiet... very, very, quiet.

9.50 (in playground) I'm going to ask Emanuel, Charlie, Dean and Suhail to come and help me bring out a few things... >> Go and stand in one of the coloured circles while I'm getting the things... Emanuel, Charlie, Dean and Suhail << You don't need to, Lynda I didn't say you were to come and help me... Charlie, are you going to come and help me... Charlie come and help me (emphatic).

<< Thank you!

>> Stand like statues while I'm getting the things... Grant, stand in the white circle... everyone else stand very still...

(In the hall) Don't disturb the others... wait... when I bring the big hoops close the door for me please Dean. Dean, I want you to close the door when I've got the hoops... Mind your feet... gently... not too fast with the baskets... Suhail's got to move... Dean and Suhail lift, and carry the top basket right over there... (as they walk together across the playground Dean says to Suhail:)

Dean: I keep calling you Glen.

Suhail: Glen's your brother.

Dean: I know.

A.: (To helpers) This one a little bit further, just past Mrs. H. - there's Mrs. H.

(To group) >> Stand in a circle... good... I must say you were very helpful... Christopher and Robert run down and close the gate. Keep things at this end of the playground not by the flowerbed. That's hard to do because the



playground goes down hill - if the balls roll down just bring them back.

>> We could all bounce round the playground... (bouncing) ... and... STOP!... again... STOP. And hop!... STOP. Balance... now try on the other foot... STOP!

When I ask you to go to a basket I want you to find a ball like this... (holding up a coloured air-flo ball) Listen for when I call your name and tell you a colour, then you find your ball and stand in a space...

Dean: (To Julie) Come here, Julie!

A.: << No thank you, Dean... >> I'm not going to ask people who are wandering about Emanuel, not yet anyway, and good for Charlie, he's the only one who listened - I said when you've got your ball stand in a space - well done Charlie! Now I want you to do what we did last time, rolling your ball and running round and catching it... >> STOP! It's more difficult out here isn't it - there's more room for the ball to roll... Let's do that again and remember to use both hands to catch it... STOP. Terry's lost his, can anyone see it? No? Look again Terry... You can't find it? << Well, if you can't get another and we'll find it later when we put them away... Hold your ball and come up here please... no, just hold it... Now when you find a space see how many times you can catch it. Hands together!... STOP! and wait for Hava to catch hers... >> Bounce and catch, and count how many times you can do it... Balls to the coloured basket you got them from... <<Omar, did you really get yours from the red basket? I think the balls are muddled up in there... No, I didn't ask you to get a bean-bag. >>The hoops are for the people at the yellow and blue baskets... the bean bags are for the others... were you really all at the yellow basket? Oh well, perhaps there are enough hoops for everyone... no, you were at the red basket weren't you? <<You have a bean-bag first, and you, Dean. <<Dean, be careful, don't get mixed up with the hoops... >>People with hoops find a friend and come over here to keep

out of the way of the hoops... We're going to throw them... go a bit further back...

10.30 Hoop people put your hoops down and stand in the middle of them... bean-bag people hold your bean-bags tight... now swap over... bean-bags over this side so you don't get muddled up with the hoops and hoops try and keep over that side... Dean, over that side...

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10.50  
A: <>We're going to stay out in the playground a little bit longer and dig up some of the garden... Let's just walk... <<Dean, you're going to hurt someone if you do that, Nadia's right next to you and you don't want to hurt her - put your arms down... <>We've got containers for what we find so we can take them into the classroom... we're going to loosen the soil with the big fork and dig with the trowels... we're going to dig down deep and find some roots of things that are growing... I've got the big scissors to nip off some branches...

By now everyone has arrived at the garden area of the playground.

A: First let's walk around and see what we notice... here are some crocuses coming through - can you see the points of their leaves? ...look, there are new leaves coming on the roses... some plants are coming up here... quite a lot of plants... this plant's got lots of old leaves... oh, look! Look at these - these are strange... Can you come round to this side and we'll move back so some others can see - this is a funny plant like pampas grass. It's got spiky leaves - they'll hurt your fingers so don't touch them. There may be snails underneath - we'll try the other side... Here's a plant with snails... if you're careful you might find some but not everyone can look - snails are fragile and they

might get hurt. I'm choosing Maya and Richard, and Christopher get the metal bucket. Be very careful and if you find anything put it in the bucket. (Jeremy: I've got snails at granny's) Oh, have you...? The rest come over and do some digging... Oh no, no! I just said come over, not touch anything. Emanuel, leave them...! We'll dig down here and try not to disturb the crocuses. I'm loosening the earth... Dean and Suhail fetch one bucket and one trowel... no, the trowel... no, the digger by your foot - that's right... everybody else come here - we'll dig somewhere different... <>Dean we're sharing it! ...Yes, Susie and Emanuel, bring the big box and the digger. No, Susie, Emanuel's got the digger, you bring the box... (Julie: I've got a worm!) >>Good girl, put it in the box... <>If I haven't asked you to do some digging walk round the flower beds and see if you can find something interesting. I'm going to snip off some bits... lift up the leaves and look - right... No, you're not going to use these, they're too big for you... <<Malcolm, you hold these, look and see if you can see others for me to cut off... Have a look under these leaves, Richard... (Julie: >>we've found something interesting!) <<Was it lying on top of the earth (to Maya and Hava who have found a bulb) - it hasn't really grown properly. (Julie: we found another!) (To Maya and Hava) >> Let's dig up another - I want you to see the roots - see they're growing. What are these? <<No, we don't want to pull any more up - I'll just press the earth down gently round them.

(To Julie) <<Good girl, pop it in the bucket... Here now let's just see, Richard - <<could you hold that for me - oh, that's very sharp, go and put it in that bucket... <<Charlie I know, but they're a bit big for you... <<Some of those, Malcolm? I don't know what those bushes are until they come out... <>Some people could very carefully look under here where the dead leaves are... Sharp? Then pop it in the bucket... <<This bit's prickly, don't put your finger on

it... Charlie, this is a funny plant, these are like roots... here's a bit. (Lisa: Miss, Miss, Miss!) Two snails! Oh you are clever! Where are you finding these...? Omar, go and fetch me the big fork lying over there - Maya, go and help him... I'll loosen the earth, I wonder if we can just... (touches Maya to draw here attention) ...<<look! Look at those roots on the bottom there, that is interesting... Just press the earth down, we don't want to spoil the plants... (Selim: We've got lots of things!) <<Have you? Where? Oh, so you have! ...Some people might find some interesting stones... <>Now, if you've finished... (Hava:Mrs. A., Mrs. A.!) <<Just stand there and we'll see what Hava's found... <>We're going down there because Malcolm wants me to clip a plant... (Dean: Miss, we found a snail down that hole!) <<What a big hole! Is it a snail? I'm not sure - shall we dig down further and see? You dig the soil away - a great big hole... <>Susie, those are very precious, you'll drop them if you rush about with them... (Suhail: a worm!) Don't hurt it, we can put that in... oh, that is ...yes! We've got to be very careful... You've got to dig deeper - <<I don't think itis a snail, I think it's a stone... (Dean: Miss, can I do that?) Yes, of course... but I think we'll... (You've got that one, you don't need anything else) ...go into the classroom... <>children can you come down this end, stop digging except for Dean and Suhail and Ahmed, Dean's just trying to find what's at the bottom - first he thought it was a snail... Right, let's see if we can organise ourselves to carry things back into the classroom... (Dean: Miss, we're looking for the snail!) ...Children, we're going to carry the equipment... Stop! Come and stand on the square... Stop digging for a little while and bring your things over here... Can you bring your things in now... maybe it's too heavy... never mind. Terry can help Grant and Lisa... take care... can you help one another to carry things in... Is it too heavy?... Omar, run down and help... two hands! ...Oh, Mr. W., we've ... Put

11.30

your things down here and take off your coats. Well done!  
You did that very carefully... Yellow Class, Red Class are  
in the hall... oh, come on! (Waiting for children to be  
quiet.) We're waiting for Jeremy... You're going to squash  
my foot, Emanuel... let me see who I can ask to carry things  
in; I can't ask noisy people, I can't ask wriggly people.  
Red Class are using the apparatus and we can't go through  
unless we're quiet... We'll move the big bowl in a minute -  
we'll have our milk and some sensible people can come back  
for it... <>I can see you can't carry it through the hall  
with Red Class on the apparatus and Luke and people nearly  
sat in it when they went by just now... I think I'll ask  
Emanuel to open the door... No... ready to creep! Sit in  
your chair in the classroom - off you go, not rushing...

11.34

Dean, I don't know that I can ask you anything if you are so  
noisy... Please can you put the straws in the milk<sup>1</sup> (in the  
classroom)... I want some people to help carry things - who  
can I ask? I can't ask Richard and Omar! Omar, sit here  
please. Lisa's sitting nicely, Grant, Robert and Susie,  
leave the big green bowl and carry the other things...  
(There are magnifiers on all the tables) Take CARE of them,  
take care... and is there anything left behind? Did you  
take care? (Lynda: Mrs. A.!) I'll come to you.... Only  
when everybody's sitting down we'll have milk... Dean and  
suhail, would you give out the milk?

(In the course of delivering milk Dean tries taking 3 bottles at  
one time, seeking Mrs. A.'s eye to see what her reaction is)

A:

(To Dean) 1:1 No, no, only take one in each hand.

(To group) <>Now on each table we've got magnifying glasses  
but can you put them down and have your milk because it's

---

Teacher: It all sounds v. confusing from this distance.

1 Teacher: [Did you ask 'Dean' to do this?]

Yes, I think so

A66

nearly dinner-time. If you sit quietly some of the creatures might come out. (Earth and minibeasts have been disposed on sheets of paper on each table.) (Lynda: Mrs. G. - Look!)

(To Lynda 1:1) Shh!

A: <>These were Jeremy's lovely plants he collected so carefully - are you going to have a look through the magnifying glass? Dean! And there's a snail - don't hurt it if it's alive. (Dean: Miss, the snail changed!) Look Dean, you're not sitting down. (Susie, watching a snail's progress across a sheet of paper: As they go along they leave little dots so you know where the snail's been.

This remark, which she has addressed to anyone within earshot, attracts A.'s attention from another table - she looks and identifies the speaker and the observation.

A: (To group) <>Now if you've got something that's alive be very quiet and watch it carefully - we've borrowed them from the garden... If you've got soil you could keep your eye on it... I'm trying to get out a little creature in the bottom of this bucket here... if we spread some paper out we can have a little bit of soil on the table... Does it? well, I don't know if you have a worm, just watch it, it doesn't want to be touched... let's put soil on here and you can have a look and see if there's anything living... <<hold it (the magnifying glass) like that and look very carefully... (Across room) >>Mind it doesn't get hurt up there!... <<I think you've got some roots in yours there, Maya - roots? There are roots, Terry, that we dug up with the plant. You won't see anything - if you put it down just look or you'll frighten everything... Ooh, isn't he lovely! Be very gentle... Have a look in the bucket and see if you can see yours, Hava... is nothing happening to your one? <<Something might happen if you turn him over - I know what we could try... (Jeremy to Dean: if we watch the inside [of

11.50

the shell] very carefully he might wake up) <<I'm going to try giving him some rain... >>Stop, Stop for a moment Dean... Hava and Charlie, if you're getting noisy you might hurt something on the table... <<The snail looks like he's dead but we're giving him a bit of rain just to see, just a little... (To next table) <>You watch the worm and see if he likes the rain... Oooh! What? What? Oh, he's walking around... we're just... (Malcolm: it's dead) Oh, is it? Do you think it's dead or might it be asleep? ...Oh, Ahmed's found something very interesting - you can look later but could you listen... Ahmed has got a snail but when we watered it the mud washed out and the snail shell is empty - there's no snail. It's empty, Ahmed, empty.

(To group) er, now, now can you sit on your chairs and listen very carefully... put everything down... put everything down... find a chair to sit on... put your hands under the table so you're not tempted to touch anything... (Julie: why?) Because it is dinner-time and we are going to be late for dinner if we don't stop. <>The things are going to go away, no, put them away and get your hands washed... put the things in the bucket... This table are very sensible - Nadia and Malcolm go and wash your hands, Emanuel go and wash your hands and line up... (Jeremy: My snail's coming out all the time!) <<Is it? Do you think it was asleep?... <>and when you've washed go and sit on the mat so we can sort ourselves out... it's not dead I don't think - it's something different. I need to look it up in a book to see what it is... (Julie: Dean squirted water at me and I'm all wet (tears)) We've had a lovely morning - let's try not to spoil it. Have you washed your hands? Go and dry them then. (Dean: Miss, this one's broken!) 1:1 You're picking things up and you've washed your hands? <>...Wash your hands if you haven't washed them yet... (cuddles Dean) 1:1 We'll see if he's there after lunch... <>You haven't got time for a book... (Sits by mat, Dean on knee) Go and wash your hands and come back and see what's happened... Dean, sit down...

Emanuel come and sit down... (Sings: 'there's a worm at the bottom of my garden' through to end.) We've got some plants to water, Grant... Jeremy, wash your hands again, once you've washed your hands don't pick up the worms and snails again - you don't want to get dirty again, we're going to eat dinner... Jeremy can't reach the tap - Susie, go and help him... (Sings: 'The snail creeps out with his shell on his back...', which is new to the children - they begin to join in.)

Now there's no time for anything else - when you've put the books tidy we're going to line up... (Jeremy: Mrs. A., my snail's coming out!) What made it come out? (I think it was the water.) Do you think it wants something to eat? ...Would you go and put it down please... <>People having packed lunches go and get them - remember not to frighten the creatures... Alex and Dean you can look at them this afternoon - I'll put the worms and snails back into the big bowl during lunch time. O don't worry about them... We're ready so quickly we can have our dinner first - off we go!

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Teacher: After reading this I feel that I talk far too much and don't listen to the children nearly enough.

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## Discussion

We mentioned different kinds of language used in the classroom - how parents and children talk. A. has managed to get three quarters of the parents to come in for half an hour, to talk and read with children as well as seeing work in progress. She feels parents are inhibited by her presence and would like to overcome this. Vicky wondered whether taping them reading stories would provide a class resource and a record of natural language. A. was interested in teachers' use of leading questions which can take the initiative away from the child (cf. Wells, Donaldson) She finds this record sometimes causes her to wonder 'why did I say it like that?'

School 1:12

26.3.86

A:

Here we are - the completed last record.

It's very long - do you think the same purpose could be achieved by recording shorter amounts of conversation? I'm anxious not to overload either of us!

It may be that when I've done some analyzing after Easter we will feel that the next stage could be to focus more narrowly both in terms of the kinds of questions we ask and in terms of how much material we use to supply answers.

In the meantime have a lovely break. -

Best wishes and thank you for letting me come to your class.

Vicky.

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A71

School 1:13 (also Respapers 2)

RESEARCH UPDATE MAY 86

Vicky Hurst

Summary

From January to March the initial concentration has been upon developing a method of recording classroom interactions between teacher and pupil, and on beginning to work out ways of processing the raw data so that teacher and researcher could see what areas would be fruitful ones to explore. As far as possible each of the four data-collections and all of the discussions of potential avenues of development have been undertaken jointly with the teacher. This would have been important even if the only level of exploration had been along the lines of attempting to describe what strategies the teacher employed towards each child in her reception class; as it is, the teacher is in the position of having the initiative for structural reasons, since it has become apparent that what is being hammered out here is not a research project into teachers' management of groups and individuals but a research tool which both Teacher A and other teachers could use to assess their effectiveness in any particular direction and to assure them in redirecting their efforts so as to improve their practice.

## Content of the research

Without undertaking a summary of the current state of philosophy e.g. education in relation to the curriculum it seems necessary to locate this study within something resembling a theoretical context. The definition of curriculum employed is a broad one which includes all educational activities organised by the teacher for her class, bearing in mind the particular importance for learning in the early years of giving recognition and priority to the emotional and social aspects of children's development, to the home-school transition and to the psycholinguistic dynamic between teacher and child.

The planning of a curriculum within so broad a framework imposes heavy demands upon teachers particularly in so far as the need to adapt provision to individuals, whether child or adult, is acknowledged. There is also increasing pressure from a range of sources for teachers to accede to the demands of external forces and structure their provision accordingly, which cannot be resisted without justification by both theory and evidence drawn from classroom practice. Teachers therefore need to be researchers as well as curriculum planners and innovators and it is to assist the teacher as a researcher of her own classroom and an evaluator of her own practice that this study has been initiated.

## Methodology

As this research project has developed the emerging structure has indicated some requirements of the method to be employed. At first, recording the interactions in a classroom of up to 25 young reception children would seem to presuppose some technological means of covering the entire classroom at once, and indeed if the interactions between children were the focus of study this would be the case. However, in relation to teacher-pupil interaction the situation is not quite so serious in that the teacher, as focal point for the researcher, can be at the centre of the researcher's arc, while those children upon whom the teacher focuses at a distance will usually not be much further distant from the researcher. One recording position has therefore been found to be reasonably adequate in that so far neither researcher nor teacher have been concerned about the accuracy of the resulting record. How to record from this one point has been the next question; one tape-recorder located close to the teacher's initial position has been considered but unfortunately would not be able to cover the teacher's movements about the room in response to demand and necessity. Another possibility would be a tape-recorder attached to the teacher with a throat-microphone; this has so far seemed to be the only mechanical way of recording which is likely to be successful (apart from the importation of a film-crew with a sound-unit which would rule out any spontaneity or experiment on grounds of expense alone). However another issue, of the structure and purpose of the research, here imposes a requirement with priority; if this work is to prove of any benefit on a wider scale, if it is to stand a chance of becoming a tool in the armoury of all serious teachers, it needs to be based on methods which will be neither expensive nor technically demanding to operate. It seemed therefore that it was more in the true interest of the research to employ a simple pen and paper recording method on the grounds that this time-honoured method, with its attendant weaknesses of pressure on the resources of the

simple observer, would be within the bounds of the possible for any teacher who could make arrangements for a colleague to be free to help with a project of self-evaluation.

An evaluation of the method of recording has been built into the record from the start in that each page of the record has at the base a space for the teacher's comments and also for the researcher to indicate areas of uncertainty or confusion. Teacher A. has to date read and corrected the first three sessions' records and has expressed herself as reasonably satisfied with the accuracy of the method although she has made some helpful corrections/elucidation. These, however, amounting as they do to less than (ery approximately) one word per 1,000, would seem to show a tolerable level of inaccuracy although there is no doubt that for a complete and accurate recording a tape-recorder would be indispensable.

From the researcher's point of view the method is tiring, demanding and requires a minimum of efficient organisation in advance; the children's names had to be well-known, and distinctive abbreviations of them prepared so that for instance, Nicholas and Nicola can be quickly noted down as perhaps 'Ni' and 'Na' to save time; at the suggestion of Teacher A. (before Session II) the time was noted at intervals and symbols were evolved to indicate whether she was close, medium distance or far from whomever she was addressing (symbols to which one for a one-to-one exchange was added as being potentially an important distinction to note); the organisational context was indicated (i.e. 'on the carpet before break', 'clearing up for dinner') and, because of its bearing on the teacher's strategies and verbal interactions, any classroom development such as an argument or a particularly strong expression of a mood by a child or children was noted. This, although a poor substitute for the panning action of a video camera, would it was hoped help to indicate the salient veatures of the classroom from the

management and personal relations point of view. Teacher A. had, in preliminary discussions, indicated her intention to observe the quiet children as well as the more demanding ones and where she was noticed to interact positively with children in an attempt to increase their participation in educational activities their response was noted as far as possible.

The session's record was then transcribed (as soon as possible afterwards since confusions or abbreviations could be best resolved while the events and conversations were fresh in mind) and a copy sent to Teacher A. for her comments; when her copy was returned any corrections, additions or suggestions were copied onto the researcher's copy and her copy returned for her to keep.

Future developments of the method will be undertaken in the light of Teacher A.'s comments - and initiatives after she has evaluated this summary. One possibility, which has already been suggested by her, is that the nature and functions of her language might be examined in the light of recent research on classroom language; she has also indicated a wish to use this opportunity to restructure her entry-procedure in the morning. There is no inherent obstacle to her doing both although each might require a different approach to the data which could subsequently be combined once examination had been completed - an evaluation of her use of language might indicate how much was spent on directed questioning techniques for instance and could lead to her experimenting with different ways of focussing children's attention; on the other hand a restructuring of the beginning of the day might lead to fewer large-group interactions at this stage, and there would be the option of doing either singly or both at once, perhaps trying to assess the validity for her practice of recent work on the value of teachers' interactions with large groups of children. This is of course an example rather than a proposal since an assessment of all four sessions and Teacher A.'s conclusions will be needed before the next step can be discussed.

### Teacher A.'s comments

So far Teacher A. has expressed interest in three areas of the curriculum as broadly defined:

- 1) In discussions before the first session (21.1.86) Teacher A. mentioned that as hers was a new reception class into which children were currently being admitted one of her concerns was to find ways of meeting the individual needs of children while helping them to develop insights and interpersonal skills which would help them to learn how to be successful members of a group. certain children were mentioned as being very lively, some as having quite severe difficulties at home which had a bearing on their classroom behaviour, and some as having a tendency to seem quiet and conformist but who would bear watching to see what they did in fact spend time doing. This perception of her role was subsequently confirmed during all discussions and in her observed interactions, where support for social development was seen to form a large proportion of her utterances.

One avenue of development which could spring from this would be an analysis of both the occasions for intervention that she chose during the four sessions and the utterances used with their underlying psychosocial constructs which the children would absorb. The Vygotskian subtext of her remarks might be analysed as in Maureen Shields's work but examining the adult's role to see what children are being offered. There might be possibilities of following this up later via an examination of the children's behaviour and utterances to see if any learning could be shown to have taken place. In view of the importance of this aspect of the work of the reception teacher for all school learning, of its importance in the context of the child's cognitive development and of its relation to the approach to the



curriculum as a broad-based process-model: This would seem to be a very fruitful area of study.

- 2) Teacher A. has also expressed, when commenting on session I verbally and session III in writing, her wish to re-examine the beginning of the school day. In its present form it might be described by the onlooker<sup>2</sup> as a clusterin ???-time, when children come in with their mothers, are received individually (often touched or assisted to sit by hand by A.) as she sits in front of the carpet where the growing group also sits. Each child's arrival is thus signalled to the entire group and each child is fitted into the group both with instructions to individuals to make room and with observations on any outstanding feature such as a new jumper or a return after illness. Due to the (as presently structured) requirement to wait for the Monday morning dinner money collection before the group disperses there is a 30 minute (approximately) period during which the home-school transition is celebrated and eased by the broadcasting of news, the showing of treasures from home and the return of borrowed books. It is a good time to direct the attention of the class as a whole and is often used by A. to focus on the need to give help and support (e.g. to returners after absence or ESL pupils) or to celebrate important events such as new babies or to recognise the seriousness of having family members in hospital.

While there are ways in which this period seems to fit well into A.'s scheme of priorities there seem also to be ways in which she is not satisfied with it. She may be concerned about the length of inactive time, the possibility of easing the entry

more with an unstructured beginning where children can pursue their interests which they bring to school without interruption, or the opportunity to allow parents to be in the class while settling their children without feeling inappropriate - or other angles may interest her. There are again many good possibilities to explore which would link up with work on, say, the integrity of children's home to school transfer of play and learning experiences, or the issue of authority and control in the classroom setting.

- 3) Teacher A. has also expressed an interest in evaluating her linguistic interactions with the children, particularly in the light of the work of Gordon Wells, Tizard and Hughes, and perhaps also work on the sociology of the classroom. There is no doubt again that some extremely useful work could be done here that would be of current interest.

#### **Future proposals for action**

As the value of this work is currently perceived as having to do with the evolution of tools, both cognitive and methodological, for self-evaluation by teachers it seems appropriate that the initiative in focusing the study should lie with Teacher A. and that procedures should be jointly developed in the light of her decision. this interim summary will therefore be copied to her for her comments, both on the specific issues where a request for comment has been made (e.g. page ??) and on the conclusions and proposals here embodied.

A time to meet and discuss further action will then be suggested, from which it is hoped a new phase of this research will be developed.

V.H. May 1986

SCHOOL 1:14

Discussion with Teacher A.

10.6.86

Method of gathering information

We talked about the comparative usefulness of tape recorders as compared with pencil and paper. A. mentioned the issue of naturalness - she was not sure whether her practice and general behaviour were affected by the researcher's presence. I felt that although she had adapted well and quickly to the presence of the researcher, saying that it was only on the first session that she felt uncomfortably conscious of it, it would be valuable to compare the pencil sessions with some taped ones, It would also have a value in that it would indicate whether this was a more discreet method of recording which might therefore be more acceptable to other teachers, and whether this was in fact a more effective tool in itself, giving a greater degree of accuracy and allowing the researcher to allocate time and attention to ongoing classroom events in whatever way seemed most appropriate. We would therefore undertake three more sessions with the tape recorder, and compare the results with those obtained with previous records.

Teacher A.'s evaluation of the first four sessions

She felt that the amount and functions of her own talk were something to be considered - she would like to develop her practice towards talking less and listening more, and towards a smaller role for controlling language. [The main theme of her written comments on the records had been to this effect.] I gave her an outline I had prepared of the different language functions detectable on a quick analysis of her speech in the four sessions, and asked whether she would like me to count up the

number of utterances or words used for control. She said please would I not as she felt unhappy about the control function - it made her feel that she was not putting into practice what she believed was essential for children's education. We discussed the need to use different language strategies for different ages, stages and situations and A. said that a prerequisite for lessening control was having trust and confidence in the children, which had to be gradually built up especially with reception classes. We agreed that this issue (of control) must be common to the experience of most reception teachers.

### A.'s proposed development of her practice

A. identified two areas of development where she could facilitate independence in the children and make it easier for her to adopt a listening, responsive role.

- 1) **Organisation** - she pinpointed this as underlying language strategy alterations. She had altered entrance procedures and was increasing the level of choice for children, working with them by building on their choices and drawing them on further in their chosen activities; when necessary individuals or groups could be drawn to her for any particular purpose.
- 2) She would examine her own use of language and try to be aware of the way she was using it, particularly in relation to the children's own initiatives, verbal input and choices.

### Points to be considered

The role of the 'non-writing' researcher would have to be determined in line with A.'s aims for her practice - the researcher could be briefed in advance to focus on particular issues, contexts or children. The fact that a few notes would

probably still be taken would possibly make a link with the children's office area she had devised; so would the making of tapes of her voice possibly link with the taped stories and children's own taped voices for educational purposes.

### Future of the project

A. would be able to continue to draw on the researcher in following terms but at her own initiative and less intensively. It should be possible therefore to continue the work of development at her own pace.

### Relevant Literature

I was interested in approaches to language as seen in Donaldson (adults's 'bizarre' questions), Wells and the Rosens, especially in the transcripts.

I suggested the issue of 'the floor' as analysed by Jane Ashdown and in (much American) research. (Booklist communicated to A.)

We agreed that issues of power related to control and organisation in the classroom.

V.H. 10.9.86<sup>1</sup>

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### Teachers comments:

It always surprises me that you manage to capture so much of a conversation in your notes and it is as usual accurately and succinctly expressed.

<sup>1</sup> I think this must be an error for 10.6.86 as that is the date elsewhere. V.H. 31.8.88

**Features of A.'s use of language February - March 1986**

Exercise authority, reinforce wanted behaviour, control behaviour, direct movements, choose children for tasks or jobs, get tasks completed at end of session ('rapid fire' technique).

Determine ethos, encourage behaviour (co-operation, perseverance, kindness), maintain standards of work, declare social rules, encourage psychosocial awareness (people have reasons for actions) 4/7,

Set group focus - cognitive/emotional involvement with certain aspect of the environment, enunciate purpose of activity, enunciate and discuss problems, direct attention to specific features, seek for answer known to Teacher (buds e.g.), initiate children into 'real world' value of their word-adult language e.g. 'fragile', proper names for scientific procedures  
Set organisational and purposeful context - time and structure of day. Why do certain things, enunciate process 'thinking aloud'.

Maintain emotional contact and narrative thread with children nearby and at a distance, incorporate their language into own teaching style (4/11), incorporate children's redirection, incorporate and expand children's statements into teaching for individual and group, seek for children's suggestions and hypotheses (melting time of the snowmen e.g.)

5045

Schdata 1.15 Visit 5 30/6/86      Teacher A      R/M<sup>1</sup>

**Initial note:**

The class had been taught by a student until the previous Friday, and this session was seen by A as being largely concerned with re-establishing her relationship with the children. For this reason, and because she conjectured that the student had been working this way also in the last few days, she had decided to return to gathering the children on the carpet as they came in, although this had been dropped following the first group of visits and discussions.

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**TAPE 1, SIDE 1, 001-096<sup>2</sup>**

- 9.00-9.10 Outside classroom, greeting children briefly and making extensive contacts with parents.
- 9.10 Moves to gather children, who have been standing around the door area and the carpet area.

1/1/097

A: Right, let's all come and sit down and say hello to start us off: it would be nice, I think. Right, come and sit down dear, just for now. Yes, oh isn't that love...Well, lets... Well, let's all come and sit down and have a chat. We haven't seen one another properly for such a long time, have we? Emanuel, shh... Emanuel, can you go and put that... pop it in here, for now, go and put those away for me please... Good, stand it up on here, that's it. Come and sit down.

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1 Radio mike

2 Hereafter, tape position notated **Tape number/Side number/Counter position.**

first, just a moment. Shh... Come and sit down, Nadia, there's a good girl, Nadia. Look, go and sit in the middle...there's a space. I've dropped the lid down there, ...wait a moment...

**1/1/123** Emanuel, could you please put those away for me my dear. Thank you very much... Let's sort this out, shall we? Right...

**Susie<sup>1</sup>:** My Mummy's gonna have a baby next week.

**A:** Yes, has she gone into hospital yet, Susie? Sh-sh...(deters attempted interruption by another child)

**Susie:** The doctor said, the doctor's gonna make it...

**A:** That's right, so she hasn't got much longer to wait. She must be really tired of all this hot weather.

**A:** Richard, it's lovely to see you, you look awf... really well.

**Richard:** I went... I went to the...seaside, there was a funfair<sup>2</sup>, it was really hot, and I went to the fair also, and there was (inaudible...)

**A:** Right, er... Oh, it is lovely to see you this morning! It's... Shh...I haven't seen you early in the morning like this for such a long time, and some of you have been away on holiday. Richard looks so well, where did you go Richard, can you remember?

**Richard:** (inaudible)... don't know where I went near ...[A: near ?] Saxmundham.

**A:** Saxmundham, that's right, that's Suffolk, nearly; between Suffolk and Norfolk, I'm not quite sure whether it's in Suffolk or Norfolk.

**1/1/157**

**Richard:** and I went to this cottage called Rose Cottage

**A:** Oh, how lovely, Rose Cottage, did you go with some friends?

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1 Hard to hear-?Correct?

2 Correct?



**Parent:** (Apologises for lateness)

**A:** Don't worry that's quite all right, I know the feeling. Nice to see you. Jeremy, you look very smart this morning.

**Jeremy:** (inaudible)...went away, staying...

**A:** You went to stay with some friends didn't you? Did they have children? [silent shake of head] They didn't have any children? So it was just you and Bess. [Jeremy: Just us] You look awfully well, really well. You had lovely weather, you had a lovely time I can see that. Malcolm, you went on holiday, but you weren't very lucky on your holiday were you? I saw Malcolm on Saturday at the school fete... Malcolm did...

**Various**

**voices:** (references to seeing Malcolm at the fete)

**A:** That's right, at the School...Malcolm, are you all right? You look very well...did you have nice weather on your holiday... you did?

**Malcolm:** I had some stormy weather.

**A:** You had some stormy weather as well, and Daddy wasn't very well, was he?

**Malcolm:** We went to the beach every day.

**A:** Oh, you went to the beach every day, did you? Same as  
1/1/175 Richard.

**Malcolm:** There were pebbles.

**A:** It was pebbly... was there any sand at all?

**Malcolm:** Yes.

**A:** There was, some sand. Did you have fun?

**Malcolm:** I went in a rock pool.

**A:** Oh, there were rock pools were there...did you have a net? Did you go dipping with your net?

**Child 1:** Did you find any colourful pebbles?

**Malcolm:** My daddy found some shells.

**Child 2:** Mummy...

**Child 1:** Did you find any colourful pebbles?

**A:** Did you?

**Malcolm:** We found some with patterns

**A:** You found some with patterns? Did you bring any back, Malcolm? [No] ;You didn't. I was just going to say, just a little while ago Charlie came back from his holiday and he brought lots of shells, and he's brought them into school. I just wondered if you'd brought yours home.

**Malcolm:** I left them down the beach and.... (inaudible)

**A:** Did he? (to child 2) And Mummy found some prawns? Where did she find the prawns?

**Malcolm:** My daddy did.

**A:** Your Daddy did? Where? In the rock pool? or underneath? Where  
1/1/190 do you find prawns? I don't think I've ever looked for prawns.

**Malcolm:** (inaudible).. they were swimming about in the pool.

**A:** They were swimming about? What, in the rockpool? I see, with his net he scooped them up?

**Malcolm:** Mummy found some quite big crabs.

**A:** Oh goodness me.

**Child 3:** I know what crabs are like.

**A:** They're good fun, aren't they?

**Child 3:** They nip you.

**A:** Well, they don't nip you if you don't tread on them or you don't get too close, and they're lovely to watch.

**Several**

**voices:** [about crabs]

**A:** Ooh, just a moment, I can't hear everybody when you're talking at once, Terry and Charlie.

**Tom:** (inaudible)

**A:** Tom said something... Tom, what have you noticed about a crab?

**Tom:** Well, they walk sideways.

**A:** They do, don't they, did you notice that, Malcolm?

1/1/203

**Malcolm<sup>1</sup>:** My Daddy found a dead seagull.

**A:** Did he? Goodness, you did find a lot of things on the beach.

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<sup>1</sup> Was this him?

Oh, isn't it a shame that Lisa and Nadia and Charlie and Terry just aren't listening at all.

**Malcolm:** I wanted to go on the beach but it was too cold but a man got in there, and swam right down to the rocks.

**A:** A man got in there did he and swam right down to the rocks? My goodness! Perhaps later on you might like to either do a drawing for us, over on that table, or a painting of your holiday Malcolm and Richard (louder), that would be nice.

**Voices:** [Various observations, over-ridden by last words of A.]

**A:** Good morning, Dean. Come and sit down.

**Dean:** I went somewhere and I saw real... woolfies. Big..?

**A:** Move back Susie, and cross your legs.

**Dean:** An' I saw...

**Malcolm:** [Has been talking, or trying to talk to A during last 3 or 4 exchanges]...drawing a picture of a dandelion...

**A:** No, I'm talking to Malcolm at the moment, good morning my dear but I'm talking to Malcolm.

**Malcolm:** ...transport...

**A:** So it would be lovely if you could do some drawing for us, so that we could see what you did, and Richard, and Charlie, have you done any pictures of your holiday yet because I haven't seen any, maybe you would like to do some for us today?

**Hava:** (Inaudible)

**A:** Hava, you went to the seaside? What, this weekend?

**Hava:** (Inaudible)

**Another**

**voice:** ...shells...

**A:** Er...on holiday? You haven't been on a holiday yet. Perhaps last year you went to the seaside on holiday. And you are hoping to go again this year?

**Hava:** (Inaudible)

**A:** You might. No? You don't think you will? Dean what have you been doing this weekend? You look smart! [3 second pause whilst Dean beams and wriggles with pleasure]

**Dean:** I went to um see some animals and, but I saw some wild animals and they were real and I saw a real crocodile and he was in the water.

**A:** Where did you go? Do you know? You're not sure? Was it a safari park or a zoo?

**Dean:** A zoo.

**A:** Mmm.

**Dean:** And it had lots of fishes and it had big fishes. [Various voices comment, including one cry of 'Shark!']

**A:** Were they dolphins?

**1/1/234**

**Dean:** No, they were...[Various comments e.g. 'shark', 'whales']... and there was lots of fish and it was a big tank.

**A:** Very exciting.

**Dean:** And I saw a woolf...saw a wolf as well and it was real.

**A:** Oh dear...[Various conversations going on]...I...let's just see. Well, lots of people have had very exciting times this weekend. I think I'll just have a chat to a few more of you and then we'll see if we can get on around the classroom. No, I'm not going to ask anyone who's shouting at me because one or two haven't really listened very carefully to other people ...Alex!... Well, first of all I'm sitting here holding these beautiful roses... Alex has just brought me a present, aren't they lovely? Absolutely lovely! Are they growing in your front garden, Alex, or your back garden - are they in your front? I thought I'd seen them in the front. Alex just lives across the road here; sometimes I see him in the evening when I'm going home, in the garden helping Daddy.

**Various**

**voices:** ...

**A:** Oh, just a moment Alex, nobody's listening. Oh, oh dear. I think Alex has come all the way out here to tell us something very important to him.

**1/1/251**

**Alex:** I'm sad about going to the seaside. [?]

**A:** You're going to the seaside on Saturday? For the day? Very nice. 'Cos Mummy's just siad she'd like to come with us when

we go to the seaside. We're going in a week's time aren't we?

**Alex:** And I've got some red bits inside.

**A:** Oh, have you been to the seaside Alex? No? Where were you when you got your red bits? In your garden? Ooh!

**Alex:** On Sunday...next door people gave me some cream...for the sun.

**A:** The next door people gave you some cream to put on the fire, or to rub in when you got burned?

**Alex:** Cream when you get burned.

**A:** Oh yes, to make it cool again, it's very sore isn't it? You'll have to be careful when you go to the seaside because ...the sun reflecting off the water makes you really burn if you're not careful. It's very fierce, so you have to be careful and put lots of cream on before you go. Suhail, [whispering] can you just stand up there, my dear, and show us what you've got? You've brought a book and a tape: what's it about?

1/1/268

**Suhail:** [inaudible]

**A:** Can't hear you!...Transformers? Is it the story, is it a story and music on the tape?

**Suhail:** They've repeated it.

**A:** They've repeated it? What do you mean, they've repeated it?

**Suhail:** [inaudible]

**A:** Can't hear you. [inaudible]...did it with a machine? What, on the tape when they've recorded it? Is that what you mean? Oh, I see, is it like electronic music? Do you want to go and pop it on the table? [inaudible]...Well, perhaps we will later. Lisa, what have you been doing?

**Various voices:** .....

**A:** Oh, oh. [reprovingly] I think we'll make Lisa's turn the last then. Alex, we've just listened very nicely to you and now you're not listening at all. Can you move forward a little bit my dear? Just listen to Lisa and then we'll talk about what we might do today.

**Lisa:** ...to the museum and we did see real animals that live there.

**A:** There aren't usually real animals in a museum, are there?  
**1/1/286** They're usually models or dead ones that have been stuffed.  
**Lisa:** Me and Lisa, we saw gorillas and animals...we saw tigers...[inaudible]  
**A:** Where was it? In the Natural History Museum in London, or was it the Horniman Museum in Sydenham?  
**Lisa:** Here.  
**A:** Horniman! Yes, that's a lovely museum to go to, that's very close, it's not very far, is it? Doesn't take very long to get to and you can see all sorts of models of animals on the ground floor...Charlie! oh...  
**Child 4:** I've seen stuffed animals  
**A:** Yes, I expect lots of you have been there. I'm...(to helper) you crept in so quietly! (Counting children for dinner) Mrs Dumford, you can't find me quite a tall vase? Haven't I got beautiful roses? They are beautiful. Thank you. Right my dears, I'm just going to lie those down. Alex's Mummy was very clever, she put newspaper, damp newspaper, round the ends, maybe if I put them back that will keep them a bit fresh, otherwise they're going to want a drink and they're not going to be very happy in this warm atmosphere, so if I wrap them a bit like that and pop them over here and we'll put them in some water when we get the vase.  
**1/1/310** Right, let's talk about what we could do today... [Pause - a voice, another child says 'Shh']  
**A:** First of all , I went to the fete on Saturday, and I saw some people were dressed up in fancy-dress, some [interruption]...  
**Lisa:** I saw you!  
**A:** Did you, Lisa? I didn't see you. Were you there? Who did you come with Lisa? Mummy? Put up your hand if you came to the fete...who came to the fete? Alex, you came to the fete, I saw you with your Mummy. Emanuel, were you there? Were you at the fete? On Saturday, were you at the fete? No? Put your hand down, then! [laughing]. The summer fair, the summer fete, it's the same, that's right... Right, put your hands down again..

Lots of you were there, so that's one thing you could do, you could draw some pictures..... [chatter]

Child: [Miss!...Miss!...]

A: Oh obviously lots of people have got lots of things to tell about the fete, can you not tell at the moment, because in a moment, if you want to paint or draw a picture, thats fine, or if you just want to chat to your friend about it, or come and tell me something about it, in a moment, but if we're all sitting chatting we won't get anything done, we can't hear what's happening if everybody just sits and chats... Right, that's one thing you might do, you might show what you've  
1/1/335 been doing this weekend and there's some very special paper on that table...and there are pencils and crayons...We're not going to have a very sensible happy day if you keep on chattering, Charlie. You won't know what to do. That's lovely- thank you very much. On the table over there where the paints are, there's paper. If you want to paint a picture of what you did at the weekend that's fine... On the table here, do you remember when we went to the library last week and the men in the library were putting up some very very special pictures for an exhibition- they were made of a material weren't they? Do you remember? And what had they got on them: do you remember what we said? We talked about them for a bit, didn't we and looked at them? They were made of a material and what had they got? They'd got... [interruption] [Child: felt-tips!]<sup>1</sup> Wasn't felt-tips was it? They had felt on them or paint, they'd been drawn on, hadn't they, and then they had bits of felt on them and all sorts of different types of material to make a collage, to make a picture in material and paint and crayons. Did they have anything else om them?...Dean?...[Shiny!] Shiny, I think they were sequins weren't they, and did they have anything else? Buttons, I think didn't they and bits of braid, all sorts of things

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher's note: The interruptions are a good sign-participation.

[concurrent talk] I've put out some material [Dean: ...buttons.] there were buttons and sequins, shiny sequins.

1/1/358

I've put out some material on the table and I've put out some material on the table and I've put out some very special crayons, Emanuel, called Fabric-crayons that you can draw on material, and I've started to draw a picture, I've started to draw a clown. I might finish that one later, I'm not sure, I might finish it, if I get time today, I might come and sit down and do some more...If you want to have a go at making one of those pictures like they did at the library there's material and all sorts of other bits -good morning Mrs Pearson- and you can have a go. Right, let's wait while Mrs Pearson does the dinners and then we'll get started. [Interlude while dinner money is collected- transcriptions will only be made of verbal transactions beyond the administrative]<sup>1</sup>

A:

Right, now, where were we? On this table, I've brought in the lovely little frogs that we've been saving from the tank. I think Mrs O'Dee and Orange class have put some little frogs in, and Pink class have been getting some frogs as well and so they're all in here, and later on this week we'll go to the park and put them in water. So if you'd like to come and sit and look at the frogs, and I've also brought a book called 'The Tiny, Tiny Tadpole' that you might enjoy reading if you go and sit there. At the... also this morning- yes in a minute we'll do it, it's Jeremy's - he didn't know it was there - and also this morning we've got the plasticine and we've got the water, and we've got the sand, and we've got the tape-table ...Right, Nadia, would you go and like to find something to do? And Susie? Dean, would you like to choose? Christopher, would you like to choose something to do? Um, Susie would you like to put that back on the fabric table for me please? Tom, would you like to go and sort something out?

1/1/408

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<sup>1</sup> Note to teacher: please modify if you feel that important material is being missed.



Dean: Miss, Miss! I've got some [inaudible-any help?]<sup>1</sup>  
Omar, would you? Jeremy? Emanuel isn't listening- I shall just leave you to last!... All right, just go and have a look... Lisa, Julie,... Hava,...Maya,...walk round and have a look ..err, Lisa, Lisa, please don't leave that on the floor..['Miss! Miss!', has been heard at intervals throughout the last 20 or so words]

A: Have you? ... Yes, what are you going to choose to do? Are you going to sit and look at the frogs? Right, Suhail and Ahmed, Malcolm: Lynda, Lynda, you're upstairs, up you go! [Mrs Carmody, Mrs Carmody!]<sup>2</sup> Hava, up you go if you're going! [Do you know where my book is?] Pardon, your sand? Well, you're not at the sand! Well, ...who..? Lisa, Lisa, LISA, Susie was already there I think, come and chose something different. And the other people - are you going to do - Richard, are you going to do me some pictures of the holiday? [Miss! Miss! etc from various children during last  
1/1/430 [10 words or so]. I'm sure you didn't hear because everybody's talking at once... Like to do me some pictures of your holiday, please?

Tom: Mrs Carmody, where's my um...

A: I've got no idea, Tom, because I haven't been in here. I really don't know... Ahmed and Suhail may, yes.

Child: Can I do it on the fabric table?

A: No, I should do it on the... not really, I don't think, it'll... no I think in fact, maybe go somewhere else if you're going to do something about your holiday, Richard...go on to where the paper and pencils are and things, on to the painting... Right, Alex, you're going to come and look... Emanuel, what do you want to do? Charlie, what do you want to do? [Interruption for 9.30 time check] No, Charlie, are you going to go... what about some pictures of your holiday,I

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1 Note to teacher: Can you fill in the missing words please?

2 Do you mind?

haven't seen, either drawing or painting. What are you going to do?..No, not this morning, I didn't say the shop.... Not an assembly, no... Terry, what are you going to do?..Pardon?..[I will do some drawing] There you are then, on the table over there.

A: Um, that's nice, go and chose somewhere else...I'll come and sit... You don't need to do some drawing first... Where were you sitting? Come and sit round here next to Omar and I'll give you another piece of material. Come and sit next to Omar...What are you going to do, Emanuel? Go and get an apron and go and do a painting... No, not upstairs.. No, you may do a painting, you can work with the water with Malcolm, there's space on the drawing table if you want to go, there's a space here... Yes... Right, pull your chair in... Jeremy, come and sit round here, because there'll be... er Dean move so that Emanuel can get past you, there's a good boy... Jeremy come and sit round there 'cause nobody can get past you... No, you'll have to wait until this morning...[Tom: inaudible] I said 'No, I did not say the shop this morning'... Not at the moment - with all the other things to look at. Shh... very quietly. Right, now we've got some special fabric crayons and you can draw with them - they're new and you have to look after them. We've got these, and we've got these, and when you've drawn there's all sorts of different coloured materials for you to cut and to stick. I started to do a clown but when we were at the library the material was in just a pattern, wasn't it, all the different bits and pieces were stuck, so it's up to you, you could look at all the lovely colours and use all the different colours or maybe stick with one or two of the colours. Right, I'm just going to do some. I'm going to put the crayons - oh: I've borrowed them, is that - sorry, I forgot to say to you... Right, I'm going to put the crayons... Oh, Yellow Class, Orange Class have got some more frogs to pop in the... aquarium... were they... Suhail, could you turn the tape recorder down a bit, it's very noisy... can you be very care-

1/1/476

-ful please, be very quiet, we might frighten them... Going to start? Are you going to draw? And then you can stick all sorts of bits on here with your glue; here's your glue. OK? You going to draw first? What're you going to do? [Me] You? You're going to do a picture of you? Lovely! You're going to do a big picture? Right, a big picture...[...draw the sun coming up] You're going to draw the sun... well, think about... Yes, that's it, go quietly [response to another child's request]. Right, you can either draw a picture or you can make a pattern with the materials like they did at the lib/[interrruption - Dean: I'm going to make a clown!] - you're going to make a clown? Right, are you going to use some of the crayons - look, we'll put these here, and let's put these here for Omar to use. Think about your colours. [They're magic! (Dean)]<sup>1</sup> They're lovely, /aren't they? Ooh, now, are you going to use some materials to stick on?.. Where, where are they? Have you put them in? Oh, you haven't? Shall I help you? Tiny tiny frog. Did you see, I bought Orange Class a book as well. did you see your book? You'll have to be careful - what might he do? [Jump out!] He might jump out. Come on then, Bill, let's open that. Ooh, I can't - Mrs Bennett has secured it very well, so that the frogs who are already on there can't get out. Here we are, Bill, are you going to pop him in here? Be very gentle with him... ooh that's lovely..does he want to come out? Or is he a little

Sch...SAA  
S...S

1/1/499

bit frightened? Put some of the water, push it down into the water and see if he'll swim out, will he swim out? Is he swimming out Tim? [He's getting out!] He's gone! well done, that was very gently done, was that, have you got any others? [No]. You're spoiling the paper, Dean, take care. Right, Jeremy, you going back to the fabric table? I've given you some... this is beautiful, Christopher, beautifully done. [Mummy showed me how to do them] did she? Alex, Alex! would you like to help me put the flowers in some water? Come and

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1 Teacher: ?Correct?

A96

help me. Have to be careful 'cause thay're rather prickly. [I know they will hurt you.] Well, that's a good start isn't it, what else was happening when you were out? That's very nice, ... what else was on the beach? Can you remember? Was Mummy there? (To Alex) Be careful you don't hurt yourself... Yes look, and see if you can pick them up where there aren't any prickles. You see if you can put them in the water for me..... Hold your hand...that's right - well done... Oh! Wait a moment! I thought Mrs Dunsfold had put some water, but there's no water - I'll go and get some water - it's a bit heavy for you... Um, Dean, you're here aren't you - pull your chair in... Don't shout, Emanuel, please don't shout. Mind you don't get too much on the floor... Dean!... Wipe your hands because you're going to make the material wet, and the crayons... Dean, those are new crayons, be careful with them please, won't you? We don't want anything to happen to them... Yes... Oh, Terry, what a lovely picture you're doing!... Are you on the fabric table? [The prickles are very hard, the prickles are very red] [Look at my clown!] Yes, it's a good start. Let's come and see if we can do a bit more. Right, now you people are making a lot of noise and they can't hear... What are you going to do, Tom? Let's put this on the shelf... what about a drawing? Nobody's painting - you usually like painting. Would you like to come and sit over here where we are on this table? Or Christopher is on his own, why don't you go and sit with Christopher, look, he's where the frogs are; have a look at the frogs, look at the new book. Come and sit with Christopher, look, he hasn't got anyone here to join him. [No, I don't want to, I think I'll go upstairs.] No, I don't think so. The girls are upstairs at the moment and they're quite happy. You come and sit. Come on, either sit here or go over to the painting table, or there's no-one at the sand now, or there's no-one at the drawing table...  
Now, can we be very careful not to drop the new crayons on

the floor... [I (inaudible)]<sup>1</sup> Come on, have another go. What are you going to do?... Yes, there are, there's a whole lot of paint brushes!... Beautiful! Shall we do some writing to go with it? Beautiful. Are you going, go and see if you can find your Breakthrough, Christopher. I imagine you could do some writing of your own... [Roses] Gorgeous, aren't they? Where shall we put them? shall we put them on here? We'll have to be careful people don't ... don't get prickled, won't we here? Right, good boy, Alex... Ooh good, aren't they lovely? Beautiful colours. Do you think the buds will... [Alex: That one's closed] That one's about to open isn't it?... it's just ... the bud's about to open. What about all these buds that are tightly closed? Do you think they will open? We'll have to see, won't we? Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't open - sometimes if they're cut from the bush they don't open. We'll have to watch and see. [Malcolm: inaudible] What did you do, Malcolm? [Malcolm: I was running in my garden and I scratched it.] Did you? Perhaps come and do some, come and keep Christopher company at this, or do a drawing of your holiday...

1/1/549

Mmm, now what about these people- did they have swimming costumes on?<sup>2</sup> Or are they going to have some feet, are they going to have some hair? What else is happening on the sea? Were there any boats? No? Were there any other people playing with you in the sand? [?: Yeah, I was playing on my own.] Well, go and have a think- did you have a bucket and spade? [?: I didn't play with them.] Go on, go and see what else you can put in your picture... Yes, of course I will... Malcolm, are you going to come and look at the frogs or are you going to do a picture of your holiday? What are you going to do? Well, come round here then and you can have them all to yourself... There are some scissors on the table otherwise go and look for them...

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1 Note to teacher: Help?

2 Note to teacher: Any idea who?

Ah...Yellow Class, can you stop and listen, can you turn off the tape please...Oh well done, Owen. Jeremy, well done. Stand still please. Now Red Class are in the Hall and they're going on the apparatus. Mrs Simpson won't be able to talk to them, Emanuel, if we're all making a noise. Can you have the tape recorder really quiet, and can everybody remember to whisper please - and then we can keep the door open and we won't get too hot in here, otherwise we're going to get very hot and stuffy if we have to close the door... Right, quietly... You have a look and see, you can see them if you stand on the floor and look through the top here... That's nice, what's this? Is this the frogs? Is it a plasticine of the frogs? No? What's happening here? This looks a bit like the frogs' tank to me. Have another look and see if you can add anything... Susie, which table are you going to now?... I see... No, not at the moment, will you do some writing to go with your plasticine please? Well, can you bring it over and come and sit here and tell me about it... Come on, look, finish these people off please...that's coming on nicely...Can I help? Of course I will. Oh I am sorry, I've had to close the door. I don't want to disturb Mrs. Bakewell and you are very noisy this morning. Shh...that's coming on, can you add some more bits and pieces? No, you can't have finished, Maya, not yet. See if you can add some more material... Beautiful! Well done! Right. What is it, Lisa? Are you going to do some writing to go with it? Come and sit at the table here with Julie and we'll do some writing... Maya, let me see... Oh Maya, that's lovely, come and use some material now - Look, that's beautiful... look, where are you? Are you out in your garden? You could do some flowers couldn't you? With some...some green, you could make some plants, what about your dress? You could stick some little bits on your dress... Beautiful, come and see if you can, look, use the scissors and cut up some bits of material, remember Maya, were you at the library, do you remember the picture? It was beautiful,

1/1/572

wasn't it? Maya, if you want some more green material there's some in the basket... Pull your chair in a tiny bit that's lovely... Alex, go and get yourself a stand... Lisa, would you like to come and do your own writing? You can have a go at doing your own...

1/2/000

'The frogs are jumping!' Right, now can you find 'the' on the grid- you've got it... Emanuel, what are you going to choose to do now, either here or at the painting table? No, there isn't, not upstairs, not at the moment. [Emanuel: I want to play with the cars.] Right, right, good boy. Have you got 'frogs', Christopher? Have you done about the frogs before? Oh, I can see what you've got! What have you got here? You haven't got frogs here but you've obviously done a picture before about the... [planned pause for word to be supplied]... Tadpoles. Have we got some tadpoles still but not that many now... frogs... you've got 'are' and it's on One Blue, see if you can find it... good boy, right - 'the frogs'. Julie, do you think you might do yours with Breakthrough, your writing? No? Do you want me to do it for you? Would you like to find me a yellow felt-tip from over on that table please... 'The frogs are...' Now go and look on the big frame and look on Four Blue and see if you can find 'jump' - it begins with 'j' ...Were there any waves on the beach? Never? What was around the beach - were there any trees? Were there any deckchairs or chairs for people to sit on on the beach? Were there any umbrellas to keep the sun off people while they were lying on the beach? Come on, see if you can add any more.. Good, that's fine. No that's fine, that's OK, Carry on, I don't mind if you do it wrong. Oh, I'm going to get a headache on here this morning... Stop please! Stop please everyone, stop the tape and just stand very quietly. Shh. Now we've already had to shut the door and it's getting very hot - Emanuel - it's very hot in here with the door closed but we can't have it open if you're going to shout. You don't usually shout, do you? You've forgotten how to be quiet, see if you can be a little bit

1/2/049

quieter please. Everybody's so busy this morning - it's lovely you're working really hard. Emanuel, can you sort yourself out please and decide where to go? Good boy.

This is coming along beautifully - oh, that's lovely. Some arms, and some feet, well done... look, Julie's book.. Yes of course go and get an apron.

Good!..Yes you may creep Yes, now when you come back see if you can use some crayons to do the ground, and to finish... is this you? Lovely! Where were you, Terry? On your holiday? What about... did you have swimming trunks on?... I'll come and have a look... Go to the toilet quietly... Shh! Well, right, now... you need to find 'ing' on b. You're got 'jump' and you need to find 'ing'. Well done! And then you can find the full stop. Well done - good boy.

Well, what have you made it say? Read it to Julie. Read it to Julie... that goes there... read it to Julie - what does it say? 'The frogs are jumping.' Well done. Can you find a full stop to put at the end? And then you've just about got room, Christopher, haven't you, if you do your very neatest writing, to get it along the bottom here. Well done! That's coming along very nicely... what are those? [Deck chairs]

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Deck chairs! What, were they stripey deck chairs? Did they have stripes? See if you can think about the umbrellas? You told me there were some umbrellas. [No, they were shut up!] You haven't done them though - they're still there, weren't they, even though they were shut up... Right, let's see...[Malcolm/Emanuel<sup>1</sup>: can I play upstairs?] If you can be very sensible and quiet - you can, can't you?... They're sticking on the glass of the aquarium.. [inaudible] Just a minute, listen to Malcolm. What did you say, Malcolm? [inaudible] They're going to jump on the glass? ...No, you're busy here at the moment: just a moment. Wait a moment - are you sure you've finished? Can you think of anything

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1 Teacher: Any views?



else to say?... Think of something else just to finish off.  
Now what are we going to say, Julie? (inaudible) Say it  
again, I didn't hear you. [inaudible.] I am? [letting the  
frogs out at the park].. letting the frogs out at the park...  
I .. am.. letting.. the .. frogs.. out.. at.. the.. park.  
Now you see if you can show me your very, very, very neatest  
writing like you can sometimes do when you're really  
thinking. Shh - Alex, quietly. Right, now let me come and  
help you with the writing...

(sings) Point to the ceiling, point to the floor, point to  
the window, point to the door, on your hand go tap tap tap,  
lay your fingers in your lap.

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Let's see if we can play a game.. let's see how very quiet  
you can be, for the next five minutes, because I'm trying to  
listen to people, they're /I'm writing things down... Jeremy  
... people are talking to me and I can't hear what they're  
saying. Malcolm was trying to tell me all about the frogs  
and even though I was only on the other side of the table, I  
couldn't hear what he was saying. As we're going to be quiet  
for the next five minutes, Suhail and Ahmed, would you like  
to chose somewhere else to go? We won't have anyone there  
for the time being... so can you leave it for now and go  
somewhere else, we won't use that table for the time being.  
No, you can leave it just there because you can go back  
another time but we'll leave it.. just for five minutes.  
Let's see if we can be really/Shh!/ really quiet just for  
five minutes.

Use some material now, Jeremy, no, use some material... If  
you're got someone to play with, yes. Oh! Emanuel isn't  
very good at this game - he's rather noisy! Shh! Whisper!  
Shh, that's coming along beautifully; well done! Sometimes..  
clowns have dots on their clothes, don't they?... and  
sometimes they have red noses... if you're... oh, you want  
some glue - let me just go to Jeremy because he asked me for  
glue... Just a minute... use some crayons first. Shh,  
Christopher, you needed to start here really, didn't you?

...because you're not going to get it. Oh dear! Emanuel really isn't remembering that we're playing a game! Shh! We're trying to whisper Emanuel, let's see who can be best at whispering. Shh, get a rubber and we'll rub that out and you can start again... Look, Jeremy, while I'm getting the glue you pick up the bits off the floor... Well, it's got nothing to do with Maya, has it? How funny. This is going to be lovely, Jeremy- can you go and get an apron on please m' dear?... Yes...go and put on an apron for me please, Owen, could you? Get an apron please. Now we're being... Oh... Shh... Right, good boy, thank you... Dean, this is the quietest table you know. These people are working so hard, they really are thinking... See if you can use some more material, Maya, beautiful work on this table. Tom...oh! Tom, where are you going? Are you going to come and do some writing to go with your painting? Bring your painting over and come and tell me about it, please. [Tom: One day I went on holiday...] Bring it over so I can see- I'm just going to sit at this table here... You've forgotten to use a writing pencil, Julie... That'd be nice... Start here now. Good girl. Neat writing, small writing, remember how. That's coming along beaut... Oh I like his red nose! Is he going to have some funny hands? And is he going to...what's he going to be doing- is he going to be juggling with some balls, or what else? That's beautiful- you are working hard. Right, let me see what's happening here... Before I do anything for this, could you please put the lids on and put the pens back... What's happening here? What a lovely painting! [Tom: I went on holiday one day, you see, and I'm going to collect the eggs from Grandad's hens. He only has two now because a dog killed the others.] Oh how sad! [Tom:...so we've only got green eggs.] You've only got green eggs? That's right, you were telling me about green eggs - that's a funny thing, you weren't here, Richard, Tom was telling us that his chicken laid green eggs, his Grandad's chicken. That's very sad, though that a dog got in. Didn't Grandad lock them away

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at night? [Tom: Well, it...they...the dog got them in the morning.] Oh dear, how sad, Tom. [Tom:... You see so...] Would you to like me to do some writing for you? [Tom:...and only these ones escaped.] And those are the two now? [Tom: Yes.] Is that Grandad there? [Tom: No that's me,...] That's you... [Tom: ...collecting the eggs.] It's a lovely painting, well done! I'm going to put it...[Tom: inaudible simultaneous speech.] ...over here to dry, - Tom! Go and get a tissue, you've got a little bit of black paint on your chin. Go and get a tissue and see if you can wipe it. [Emanuel shouts in dramatic play in the Home Corner.] Emanuel, would you like to go and put the straws in the milk for me please?... Take care!... This is beautiful, take care you don't spoil it. Maya, haven't you got your own glue? I think you...er... Be careful... But bring your... I should go and wash your hands if I were you... Lisa, would you like to come and read me what you've just done? [Emanuel: There's no straws!] Would you like to go and find one of the ladies - go and ask Mrs O'Dee if she's got some straws- I think we took them out on Friday into the playground, go and ask in Orange Class if we can borrow.

What have you written, Lisa? Let's listen to what Lisa's done. [Lisa: Me and Julie are going to the park with a pond. Julie was wrong and I was right...] Julie was wrong and I was right? What did Julie say then? [Lisa: She said we must let the tadpoles out and I said...um...] [Interruption by Tom. A:...and then I'll ask you to come and do your writing...<sup>1</sup> Never mind, it doesn't matter.] Very nice, are you going to put your name on it for me, please?... Can I have a look to see what you've...[?: Why have you got that on?] I've got a little microphone on, because we're making a recording. Can you pop those in here for me, Terry, and I'll be able to do your writing. Now, what are we going to say?... Did you say you want to go upstairs, Tom, and I'll call you down to do

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<sup>1</sup> [Tom: inaudibly demurs, with reason why he can't do this.]

your writing when I've got time?... [inaudible] Well, I, you'll have to wait 'cause I haven't quite got time yet... Lisa, would you like to put your plasticine and your writing over on the shelf, please - good girl... Now, what am I going to say? [Charlie<sup>2</sup>: I am on the beach with my bucket and spade.] I... am... on... the... beach... carrying my bucket and spade, carrying it, is that what you said? - Tom, please don't go to that table at the moment - oh, that's fine - carrying... my... bucket... and... spade. Just wait for a minute, Jeremy, I'm talking to Charlie and he's been waiting so patiently for such a long time for me to come, and then I will look. Ten o'clock, isn't it now, and I think we should have our milk... Oh, that's funny, isn't it? What is it? [Jeremy: I don't know.] What do you think it is, Charlie? [A car] What could it be? Where was it?...[several voices at once] Ooh, listen, what do you think? [A bicycle] A bicycle! It soes look a bit like a bicycle. [It was near to the aprons] It was near to the aprons? I thind it's come off your table. No, not yet, Omar. Oh, the people playing snakes and ladders are forgetting that we're being quiet!

1/2/2?? I think it's come from the buttons on your table... No, Omar, I'm coming to see what you've been doing. Eman/er, children, can you sit down where you're working, con you sit down where you're working and Emanuel and Suhail will bring the milks around if you're sitting down... [Charlie: go wee wee] Yes... No, I'd rather you didn't ask Terry, he's already been hasn't he once this morning and I want to talk to him... Ask someone else to go with you, please... Omar, could you just sit where you were - in fact Omar if you look on the floor where you were working - Omar! Of you look on the floor where you were working there's lots of tidying to do. Can you pick it up for me please? [Child: Mrs Carmody, Jeremy treaded on my paper] That's much nicer writing than that, isn't it? Look, you were really thinking here what you were doing! There/you

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1 'Charlie' or 'Terry'?

weren't really. Well done. Now see if you can write your name under here really neatly - just like this writing, really really neatly... If you find somewhere to sit please where you were working then they will bring the milks to you... Jeremy, you were not sitting there, you were working at the table over there. In fact would you kindly go and help Omar to pick up the bits please? Good boy, Terry. Emanuel, can you give this table some first, please, they're ready. Emanuel, Emanuel, will you please give the milk to this table first - they're ready... Never mind, I'll help you, just a moment... Can you help Omar - look Omar, we'll have them in here, Omar, pop them in here look, pop them into there with the buttons. That's fine, yes.

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Oh, this is lovely! My, you have worked hard! Well done! Sit down then, and you're going to have your milk - go and wash your hands.... Can you put on an apron for me please - just in case you get the glue on your trousers. Can you go and .. [Dean: I only have to do one more thing!] Well, no, leave it for now and to and pop an apron on please, then, just in case you get glue on your trousers. [Child: Mrs Carmody, Mrs Carmody!] Just go and slip an apron on Dean and then you won't get glue on your clothes. [Child: Mrs Carmody] Yes, m'dear [can I get my (inaudible)] Yes, of course you can. Julie, would you sit down please. No, Julie isn't sitting down, is she, so please don't give it to people who aren't sitting down. I should go and sit down with it if I were you, then you can have your milk. Jeremy's sitting down look, waiting for you, Emanuel - this is going to be lovely, Jeremy. Maybe you could stick on some more material later - some buttons might be nice, or some of these strange bits of polythene might look quite... ooh look you could make very funny hair, couldn't you, if you wanted to, or they could be [Jeremy: Guess what I found out, I took the things of the bicycles off, and I found I took them off I thought you took them off and they were buttons!] They were buttons, they're strange buttons aren't they with like a wheel in the

middle, it looks a bit like the spokes of a wheel in the middle, that's right. Um, Susie, can you sit on a chair please; Nadia, can you come and sit over here in case it spills on the carpet - O well done, girls, that's it, there we are.

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Shh. (Loud)Well, I think we were much quieter for the last few minutes. (Quiet) I think we've been much quieter for the last few minutes. Oh, Omar, you were there, go over there please. You were there!

What did you write on your picture? What does it say? [Child: I am letting the frogs out at the park.] Right, in a moment you can put this over on the shelf - over there with the writing. How are you getting on, Malcolm? [Dean: inaudible ] Oh, yes, you did! This is lovely, I like it. Is that four frogs walking up the glass? [Yes] I like that, that's super... Charlie, be careful of your milk m'dear - it's going to spoil your work 'cause it's going to spoil your work, isn't it - it's wet, isn't it on the bottom. [Tom: Mrs Carmody, can I do anything?] Yes, I've got a few minutes, I can do your writing for you. Would you like me go? Would you like to use your Breakthrough, Tom, see if you can do your own?.. Come and sit over here next to Malcolm and you could have a try, couldn't you. Here we are. [Tom: I could try and do my own writing, couldn't I?] Oh well, that would be lovely - would you like to try to do your own writing? Yes that/ [Tom: Me's I think I../] would be fine. You know what you could do - have this out in front of you, 'cause you could - some of the words might be useful to you. You don't [Tom: Yes] have to use the green stand but you could try. Come on, then, I'll give you some paper. Oh, Dean, please don't... that is very foolish, please don't... [pause] Come and sit next to/look/come and sit next to Malcolm... [Tom:(inaudible)]... behind my ear.

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How strange! That was a good trick - here we are then, come and sit here... Tom... have a go... Chtistopher, what did you want me to do - rub out a word for you? What did I do with

the rubber? What did I do with the rubber - did you see?... Oh dear, children can you help me please... children, can you look to see if I've left the rubber on the table where you are - I've left it down somewhere and I can't see it... Oh, thank you Terry, thank you very much... Alex, would you like to get out your Breakthrough now you've finished, and Richard when you're ready you could get your Breakthrough - that's... that looks like the funfair, is it? Oh! Oh my goodness!... there we are Christopher... you're falling off the end of the paper, aren't you? (chuckles) There we are... good boy... have a go, have a go at just doing it... [pause]..[to Dean] I think you've finished now haven't you? You've made everything very wet here, and I don't think that the girls like being wet. And are you going to come and finish your beautiful clown? [Done it.] Is he going to be juggling with anything? Do you want to draw? I know what you could do - use those lovely crayons and draw some things around him. Where is he - is he at the circus? [Yes] Is he? Come and have a look... It is a bit creamy, isn't it?... No, Charlie, I haven't seen what you've been doing/this is coming along beautifully... come and have a go at using the crayons... No, you can't, I'm afraid, you haven't quite finished, have you? [I don't want to do any more!<sup>1</sup>] Well, see if you can finish it off [disgruntled moan] See if you can... well, you can chose something else - not upstairs at the moment, 'cause there isn't... I don't want anyone else up there at the moment, and you come back to it later, so you go and think what you might do... [pause] No... right, we'll start using it again but we'll take this one out because that's/Suhail and Ahmed will probably want to listen to that one again, so let's put that on there so they can come back and you chose something else to listen to for the time being... um, what

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher: is this 'Dean'? 'Charlie?'

about one of there, you haven't heard these for a long time... the Monsters - to town and the Monsters' party - here we are - to town and the Monsters' party... [I don't want this] Don't you? Go and put it away, then... To town comes first... Yes, to town, and then the Monsters' party comes after that... There we are... Charlie... come and just/that's lovely, be careful, hold it like that/well done/Alex... yes, you go and sit down and you can drink a little drop? Oh dear! Emanuel and Ahmed, go and sit on the chairs over there, please... come down and go and sit on the chairs, you're going to have an accident... Thank you... now, this is absolutely beautiful. What are we going to say here? - I love the way you've coloured this in. [I want some magic when I go to the seaside on Saturday] 'I want some magic?' Do you? What do you want the magic for?... Please go away, I'm talking to Alex. [Alex repeats the message] Why do you want some magic? [I want it to be at the seaside] You want some magic to be at the seaside. Are you going to manage to do that with your Breakthrough or would you like me to help you write that? [I want you to help me] You'd like me to help you. Would you like to go and get a smaller piece of paper from over there because I don't think we'll fit all your writing on here... no, I don't think there's very much space, is there?... What did you say? Oh, please go and sit down and drink your bottle.. on the table where the frogs are - go and have a look.. Go and put it away then... er... [I've finished my picture] I think this is quite a good time for us to actually look and see what everybody's been doing. Go and try to drink some more please, Omar, don't wander about - go and get yourself another straw. Go and put your milk bottle away, go and put your milk bottle away... [inaudible child] I can't read it at the moment.. Er, children, can you stop what you're doing... and can you listen very carefully...? can you stop the tape for a moment please... Shh... listening... Shh... Oh, Emanuel! that isn't listening, go and sit down with your milk please. Hava and

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Lynda aren't listening.. Shh!... can you make a space for us please on the carpet.. If you haven't finished your milk can you stay where you are to finish it, if you have finished your milk can you just come and sit on the carpet with your work. If you've got a wet painting don't bring it, but Tom, I think yours might be dry - you could come and bring your painting, I'd like to look at your painting with everybody.....

Bring your work and sit on the carpet... Jeremy, bring your work, come and bring it over... I've put it safe, I've just taken it out - you can listen to it in a moment...

Bring your work - push your chair in, Alex... You're not listening - sit down, please [O, very quietly]... Can you put the playpeople away please... it goes in there... Go and hang up your apron and then bring your work... Just sit down a minute... No, if you're drinking your milk sit down a minute... Please put the playpeople away so we can come and sit down... Malcolm!... oh no, it's wet - sit on the chair, Tom,... never mind, just bring it... can you hold it please, Maya, hold it, somebody's going to walk on it... Jeremy, pick it up, someone's going to tread on it and spoil it... Malcolm, come/bring it over and come and sit down a bit... Hava, that's a silly place to sit, please move out of the way, m'dear, nobody can get by, Maya, move to the back... That's lovely, right, bring it carefully please so that we can look [Dean - it's got balls around it - balls around it!] Um, Charlie, did you finish your milk, my dear? Is that yours, Terry? Charlie, bring your work on to the carpet - no, bring it onto the carpet, for a moment please so we can look... [pause]... Sit on your bottom please... I asked you to sit on the chair, Tom, because it's still a bit wet... Shh... Julie!... Put that piece/oh/sit down... nobody's ready... come and sit down with us, it is beautiful... Now, I think you've forgotten how to come and sit quietly on the carpet since I've not been in here. It's very, very tiring for people to make noises all the time... very tiring. Shhh!

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Could you all turn around this way please - girls who are sitting in a long line can you turn right round this way so I know you're listening... I don't think you are at the moment... Oh! Shh!... I'm waiting for Dean to come and sit down.. Dean, I'd quite like to look at [your work (inaudible)] but we can't do that until you come and sit down. Jeremy, we won't be looking at your work if you're not going to be quiet... Lisa, where's your work? Lisa, go and get your work. Pick it up off the floor, please, um, Dean ...Shh!... [inaudible child] No, you can manage, come on, pick it up... Now... Right now, we're going to look at the work you've been doing 'cause it might give other people some ideas for ?????play - you might decide that you'd like to do something... er, Jeremy, could you put it away, please - go and put it on the table... First of all I'm going to ask Tom to come and show us his painting... Emanuel, please come and sit down, sit down. Er, I hope you're going to listen carefully - we haven't got time to look at everybody's work and the people who aren't looking and listening when we talk about someone's work, I'm certainly not going to look at their work, however good it might be... We've got the door open, we're being very [quiet and enjoying it (inaudible)]... Put your milk bottle away m'dear and then you can come and join us... Right, first of all, Tom's going to show us his painting... This has got a very nice story to tell you about the painting - can you hold that end for me... Right, off you go, Tom - what's happening in your painting - what's it about?

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**Tom:** I wish that the eggs were there [A: No, first] and my Grandad [A: Tell them where you were, first of all.] I went on holiday one day, you see, to my Grandad's house and he only had two chickens... [inaudible] killed them, so nobody got green eggs.

**A:** Why do you think the eggs were green, Tom? [Tom: Well...]  
Were they green outside or green inside?

**Tom:** Well, my Grandad told me they eat grass

All

A: They'd been eating grass...

Tom: And they always don't eat chicken food<sup>1</sup> ... No, it was all green.

A: Inside as well as outside?...

Tom: Yeh

A: When you went to eat it... did you go to eat it, did you try it? And it was green inside as well?

Tom: No, it wasn't green inside, only the egg-shell.

A: Only the eggshell, oh, I see, as though someone had dyed it.

Tom: You, you can't, you can't um, um, eat green, the green bits [A: No.] inside it.

A: No... I wonder if, I don't suppose it would hurt you, would it, I don't think I'd like the look of a green egg. We're not used to green eggs, are we, usually eggs are white and yellow, I don't think I'd want to eat it 'cause it'd look strange. [Tom: (has been interjecting during A's talk preparatory to speaking) Yeh, but they taste very nice...] They taste very nice?... how many chickens did your Grandad use to have? Do you know?

1/2/491 Tom: He used to have ten. [A: He used to have/] He used to have THOUSANDS you see!

A: Oh dear! And then he used to have ten.

Tom: Yes, and they used to get killed by a dog.

A: How many have been killed then? If there are two left?

Tom: Se... quite a lot of them died and now a dog killed the others/[A: Oh dear] and we've only got two.

A: If you look very carefully in Tom's painting - move back a little bit Tom so they can see - do you see how carefully he's painted the hens? Maya? Can you see? How carefully he's painted the hens, and this is Tom - is this the chicken house here Tom?]

Tom: Yes. And and at the top the [inaudible<sup>1</sup>]...

A: And does the sun always shine when you go to visit your

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1 Teacher: Correct?

2 Teacher: Any ideas?

Grandad Tom?

**Tom:** Yes, and we always go to the seaside.

**A:** Does he live near the seaside?

**Tom:** [speaking firmly over A's voice] Yeh, and I found some very colourful pebbles... Yes, actually he does a very important job...

**A:** Does he? What does he do/just a moment (to a call of 'Miss!') What does he do?

**Tom:** He goes to the lighthouse.

**A:** He goes to the lighthouse! And what does he do there?

**Tom:** Well, he, he switches the light on at nighttime. [Does he?] Yes.

**A:** Is the lighthouse on the land, it's not off the land?

**Tom:** It's on the rocks.

**A:** It's on the rocks? And he has to go and make sure the light is shining at night?

**Tom:** Yes, he has to have a boat, you see, otherwise he can't reach it, and there's a string thing, so he can get his dinner...

**1/2/505** see, it's a bit of a made up story sometimes people think!

**A:** Is it a made-up story?

**Tom:** No!

**A:** It's not? Sounds very interesting, we'll have to talk some more with your mum about that, won't we?

**Tom:** (breaking into A's line of talk) No, I'm only joking!

**A:** You're only joking? Oh well, it's a good story, anyway, isn't it...Right (cutting across Tom's continuing talk) could you go and hang this back on the wall, can you remember, look, over there on the Breakthrough with the clip, then it will dry. While we're waiting for Tom to come back... er, Omar, would you like to just stand up and hold up your beautiful work you were doing?... Can you turn so that you can see Omar's work... Omar's making a crayon and fabric picture. He has worked hard... If you've got paper in your hand be careful...It's beautiful, Omar, what did you start off by doing...? Never mind, it'll be all right, we can stick it on in a moment... Put it down on the floor flat, Omar, and

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then you can stick that piece back... It's beautiful... lie it down on the floor flat... on the carpet... yes, on the floor, that's it, and stick them back where they should be. Omar, what did you start off by doing on your picture. [Omar: inaudible] First, well, what did you do first? Did you stick first? What did you do? [Omar: inaudible] It's lovely... I think we'll have a good look at it when it's really dry because we don't want it to get spoilt... Take care please if you've got papers! Oh, I'm not going to ask these people, they're not listening at the moment... Er, Christopher, would you like to hold up your picture, please? And can you read us what you've written - Christopher was sitting looking at the frogs... can you look to see what Christopher has been doing, it might give you some ideas... Good boy, come and sit here... Oh, I am sorry, Christopher! Nadia! Did you hear what Christopher said?... Did you hear what Christopher said? I don't think you did! You were chattering... Right, read it in a loud voice... Can you show your lovely picture... Aren't they beautiful!... [Christopher inaudible]... Beautiful. Malcolm, you haven't finished yours, but stand up and show us your drawing... Tom! Oh, Tom! We've just listened to you telling us a beautiful story, we expect you to listen to other people... Tell us what's happening in your picture, Malcolm... [Malcolm: inaudible] A: That's right, Malcolm was sitting looking at the box of frogs and he was very quiet while he was sitting there, and he said, 'They're climbing up the glass.' If you look at his picture, you can see how they're hanging on to the glass with their legs... He must have looked very carefully, 'cause I think that's just what they would look like, they look like their feet are stuck on the glass... That's going to be a lovely piece of work when it's finished... Right, we'll have a look at one more piece of work... We'll have a look at Dean's because he's quiet now, he did listen... You look at this, this is really special - it's not quite finished yet but it's really special... [Dean:

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inaudible] Lovely... Well, when it's finished we will, it's beautiful. Do you think it's finished already - don't want to add anything else to it? What about some feet? Do you think he might need some feet?... I thought those were the legs?... Well, perhaps when you come in have a good look and see if you think you might want to add anything else... Might you want to do some stitching on it, do you think?... Think you might like to? If I brought out a needle and some thread maybe you could have a go, when we come back after play. Would you like to try? It might be a good idea - it's beautiful.

Right, now, we'll put our work somewhere safe while we go out to play and then when... when we come in we'll sort out where we've got to and what we're going to do after play... Terry, I don't think we'll look at yours or Charlie's work because you really are very chattery this morning, and you're just not listening... First of all, if you've got a collage, a fabric collage like this, carry it very carefully back to the table where you were working and leave it to dry... very carefully... No, Jeremy, not at the moment... take care, watch where you're going... well done, children... take care... Susie, your legs are in the way... No, Malcolm, I didn't say you yet, not yet.. Um, Emanuel, help Omar to take his for me, please... he's finding it/oh, help him... If you've got some paper can you go and put it back safely where it was, so we know where to find it, and can you come and line up at the door. We'll look at it again later, Lisa. [Lisa: Didn't even look at it once!] Well, we haven't had time - go and pop it back where it was please, don't just leave it around, go and put it back where your work is... Well done, Christopher... I put it on the shelf in the tape corner... Yes, it's up there, don't worry, leave it there... Push it in... Yes, they're all just sitting [the frogs].. push the chair in for me, Malcolm, 'cause you'll fall... Yes, Emanuel, was this your milk? Don't you want it? Go and put it away, don't leave it here, please... Shhh!... Dean, could

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A115

you go and hang up your apron before you go out, please, you've left it on the/ [Dean: I hang my apron!] No, it's /that's on the floor, can you go and push the chair in and hang it up... Right... I'm ready... Shhh!... Well, I'm ready to go out but you're not! Shhh!... Well done.. Charlie, you're not ready... Oh, that's better... Shh, yes, come on then, come and be Tom's partner... then I'll be Tom's partner... um, Jeremy, would you like to go to the back because you're just keeping us waiting... [Alex asks several times: Are you in the playground?] Not today, Alex. Richard! Richard!... That's better... come on then, out we go... Don't walk on the mats, please, not with your shoes on - go round the mats, well done... Take care!

1/2/587

TAPE 2 SIDE 1 032

A: Creeping in quietly please, Tom and Emanuel... let's come and sit down for a moment... [just come and sit down, well] you come and sit here... Dean, would you like to bring me your work so that I can show you what we might do... not today, my dear, no... Mrs Bakewell's class were using it, didn't you hear me saying to you?... No, not at the moment, no, because you're going to do something different, ...not today, no... no, no, I don't want anyone else to bring their work at the moment, not just yet...

Sit down, please, Tom... aren't they beautiful colours, that's what I thought, Mrs H. and I chose these colours while we were having our coffee - come and sit down, please... waiting for you, Dean - sit down, 'cause I might need you. Right, let me see - oh, you look as though you've been rushing around in the playground, you look so hot, Malcolm!... Lisa and Nadia can you turn round to me... course you can my dear, um, Tom, would you like to look behind the shop, in one of the boxes that's behind the shop... oh, you

5/1/094  
have forgotten how to come and/sit quietly... Shhh! ...and Omar's forgotten that you should be this way round... Hava, can you turn this way round... leave it in your lap for a moment Terry, you can put it on the chair in a moment. Shh! Just before we get on with our work we'll look at /Lisa, would you like to move away from Nadia and to over there because that's twice that you and Nadia haven't been listening, and I am getting rather tired of you being so rude, and it's not like you two. You've forgotten haven't you since I've not been in the classroom that I do like you to listen when we're sitting together and talking together... Jeremy!... right, now, Julie's got a book for us to look at - maybe we'll read a little bit of it in a moment, and then we'll finish it off later today. And... well, we'll have, we'll see, we'll see if we can, either we'll read it... well, we might not read it now, we might read it just before we have our lunch. We'll have a look, I'll have a look in a moment. Now, the people who were doing collage with the fabrics and the crayons, [Crash] oh dear! I said just before you went out to play you might like to do some stitching - let me just put this, rather dangerous, thank you, Julie, did it hurt you? I'm just going to pop it on the floor under there, that's a good girl, put it there, that's right. This colour would look rather nice, but you might like one of the other colours, 'cause I thought those - is he juggling, it looks like he's juggling, your clown [Dean: he is juggling.] Well, this goes quite nicely with that colour and you might like to do some stitching on here. Shall I start and show what you might do? I mean, I don't/it's up to you - you might like to do some/I'm just going to do this and then I'm going to undo it, this is my idea that you might do. You might go across the circles like this and make the balls a bit/look stripey. I think it will work. - Mrs H. and I have made the thread double - can you see? Look! You might like to make them look stripey by going across like that... [Dean: you mean how we sew?] Just like that - we sew with

2/1/094



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the other material. do you want to have a go? The only thing is, you mustn't pull - stand up Jeremy please - you mustn't pull the thread too tight. Leave it a little bit loopy because it'll bunch up - can you see? You might like to have a go. Or you might like to do something in his hat - let me undo that part, I'm just going to cut the knot, and then the thread will come through. There we are - if you make a mistake you can just cut it. Jeremy, I was hoping you might watch 'cause I thought you might like to do some stitching on yours - could you stand up at the back, please, so that Lisa can see - you're being rather foolish, aren't you... Right, or else you might like to do something on his hat - no you can't 'cause you've just come in from the playground; let's see, you might like to make a pattern on his hat, like this, just in and out, making some stitches. don't pull it too tight, can you see? You might like to make some stripes, you might like to make some pattern on here, on his tummy, on his... yes... on, it's a bit hard to pull the needle through there, you might like to do a big stitch. Oh, you'll have to really work hard to get it through there... you might like to do something like that, and some big stitches. I'm going to just pull it through - OK, would you like to have a go? And the other people who were using the material to make their pictures? Let's think where you could sit... I'd like you to have a try, like you just to have a try, 'cause you're good at sewing, Omar, aren't you? I think it would be rather nice if you stayed on the mat and you could sit round in a little group on the mat together... I'm going to give Dean that colour... Dean/well just stay there for a moment, dear - 'cause the others/I'm just going to do that with your/OK/ just like that. Julie, you let Dean come and sit here, swap places with him just in case that needle/you go and sit down in his place, just in case that needle spikes someone, come and sit down here in his place, just in case that needle spikes someone, come and sit down here in his place, come and sit down here, that's it. Right,

A118

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um, Maya, go and get yours, and Jeremy and Omar go and get and we'll sort out a colour for you. Bring it over onto the carpet. Now if those people are going to be sewing, people who've been working with tapes or working in the house or the sand, I want you to think now whether you could maybe do a painting or a drawing or whether you'll come and do a fabric picture, Suhail, what are you going to chose now? ...No, no, you've already been working with the tapes and you've been working upstairs now what are you going to chose - a fabric picture or a drawing or a painting? And I'd like you to do some writing at some time. Would you like to go and get an apron... Um, Emanuel, that are you going to do now, you've not been... No, I've/you're in the same group as Suhail, now what are you going to do, are you going to paint, are you going to do a fabric picture, are you going to do a drawing and some writing - what are you going to do...? Emanuel, will you go and think, could you go and chose please - not the tape, not upstairs now, not the water or the sand, you go and think... Because I would like you to work either at the writing table or at the fabric table or at the painting table now... well you haven't quite finished your... Julie... in a moment... Susie and Jadia, would you like to go and sort yourselves out now either at one of the tables either drawing or painting or doing fabric?... No, you're not listening, either doing a fabric picture or at tne drawing of the writing table or painting... Go on then over you go, and I'll get some... Is anyone else/Lynda, where are you going to be - oh, you've done a painting, perhaps you'll do some writing to go with that in a moment.

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Right, can you very quietly go back to where you were working and make sure that you've finished what you were doing... Well, can you just... yes of course you can... what colour would you like, Jeremy?... Are you sure, have a look at the box and see if you can add anything. Are you going to chose something to do... yes... you'll have to wait for a moment... yes you do... wait a tick... what colour would you like,

Jeremy?... yes of course you can, yes of course, I'll come and sit down on the carpet with it... Omar, what colour would you like..? These two... Red, good boy, sit down on the carpet... Yes, leave your book and we'll sort it out in a moment... look carefully at them... Are you going to sit here or there?/Come and sit on the carpet, yes, of course I will, oh I see, come and sit down on the carpet and have a go - there, come and sit together... it needs, look, you haven't finished colouring it in very carefully, go and finish it - Ahmed, where are you going to sit? Are you going to come and sit with the frogs? Where are you going to work? You go and think where you're going to work... Oh, they're very nice, er Lynda, you haven't quite finished yours, have you/ it is too long, come on Julie, Lynda get your apron on/see if you can add something else now it's dry. Hava, you could paint a bit more on top now it's dry, see if you can, 'cause you could... just a moment, just a moment, sausage... there isn't really (inaudible) Charlie, no, because they're sewing on the carpet at the moment. Just a minute and I'll have a look. Right, well go and pop it over where we keep the paint... Um, Emanuel, could you hang the aprons up for me, please - could you write your names on them, please, Hava and Lynda, could you come and lean on this table and write. Emanuel, will you please hang up the aprons - look, here's the paper, here. Um, push it up a bit... Suhail, you're not going to be able to sit there I'm afraid you're going to have to put your paper here - OK..? I'm coming over to you now to help you do your writing, Terry - well done! Oh well done!... There! Right - where are you going to go? No, there isn't room for you at the moment - are you going to come on here? Come and sit here and have a go. Come and try. Ahmed, come and sit/I'm coming to the writing table, Charlie... when you've put your name on you can come/Put your paper here... Yes... not today, we'll sort out... Charlie, would you like to have a go here..? Oh yes, of course. Ahmed, come on, come and try... come and try. Ooh, that's lovely, and see what else

2/1/232

you can do, that's beautiful... they're lovely, that, you can share, going to use the crayons? This is beautiful..Careful, Alex, <sup>1</sup>[inaudible] What does it say? 'On... the... beach... carrying... my... bucket... and... spade.' Can you hold your pencil and I'll help/you've finished have you m'dears? Just a moment... Um, Hava, would you like to come and have a look on this table now with Lynda, please... Christopher, Christopher, you've forgotten to put your things away m'dear, come and do that for me/where are you going to go now?... Well, there's sewing on the carpet, there isn't room for you - you can go across to the water or the sand or you can go across to this table here or you can go upstairs quietly... very quietly... well when Tony's finished, yes, he probably will come and join you ... what shall I write for you, Terry? Let me get some paper... just a minute, m'dear... Lynda, bring a chair and I'll move round with Terry - there you are m'dear, you have a good look. Look, there's the/what about the rocks and things, Malcolm, that are in the bottom here?... Just a tick. That's fine, what's the matter? Yes, of course you can... That's fine, it's just that you've done a huge stitch, it's much too big, haven't you?... Bring me some scissors, and I'll help you - and you've pulled it really tight... no, you haven't, that's lovely... I'll have a look for you and see - no, you haven't, that's fine, carry on... there we are Terry, sit down and carry on, that's fine, that's coming along nicely... go and put that/no, that's dangerous... look, go and put, go and/go over and stick those on carefully... yes, go and stick them on... Christopher, put your Breakthrough away, m'dear, and put your picture over on the shelf over here... this is going to be fine but you can't do huge stitches without thinking what you're doing... have another try, put the scissors back for me, there's a good

2/1/274

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1 Teacher: ???

2/1/300

boy... that's it, Maya, that's fine, what's wrong with that? Let me see, don't pull it too tight... there you are... Jeremy... Um, be careful with your work... oh, I see... bring me the scissors again, Maya, and I'll just/over on the shelf, Christopher, with the other pieces of work, just here, look, just here on the shelf here... there, oh, I don't need them, I've managed to do it for you... there, you've just got to remember to come backwards and forwards - there you are, that's nice... there, good girl, there's your needle... I'll take those...oh, now, are you going to use the material? That's beautiful, go and use some of the material to stick on now - go and cut out and use some of the material, and let me come/Lynda, you could sit, you could... here we are, um, Lisa, here's a piece - you can use the other side, mine's on the back, I won't/I'll do/I'll have another one later... here, pick it up - oh, be careful with them, cause they're all new - look, there's one in your lap here. Make a space for yourself... Let me see/I'm come/I'm here, I'm here... you are being patient... Richard, are you ready for me to do some writing for you...? Course you are..! Alex, and you are waiting for me as well, aren't you? Let me do, um/well why didn't you go at playtime, Charlie? Can you wait please, you should really have remembered to go at playtime, shouldn't you?... Can you wait? Not very much longer... No?... Go quietly... oh look, you're doing, that's lovely... That's nice... you're pulling it a little tight, that's the thing... well creep quietly please... that's lovely, that's fine... don't pull it too tight - leave it, leave it like that, that's fine, go on, see if you can go along there, just do it like that, right, well done... come on then, what shall I write for you...? just a moment, I'm trying to talk to Richard, Julie... 'I... went... to... the...fair... and... I... went' /Julie, Tom might like to hear your story/ 'I went to the fair and I went to...' to where? Oh, Two times? Oh, that's a differnt two, I'll have to do... there we are, that's it, you just have to give it a tug, now don't pull it

A122

too tight, that's beautiful, just... well, well done, that's lovely, that's it, there you are then, now you're going back again, go and sit on my big chair because it's rather difficult to sew isn't it while you're walking round the room... yes... oh... yes... I'm going to have to cross this word out, I'm sorry, 'cause it's a different spelling. T... W... O... 'two times'. 'I went to the fair and I went two times and... and... first... time...

**Richard**

First... time... I... went... on... the... train.

**A:**

Right, can we stop there 'cause this is going to be such a lot for me to write, I wonder if you'd like to record what you've got to say about your holiday onto the tape recorder.

**2/1/355**

Would you like to try? Maybe Alex could sit with you and let Richard tell about his holiday, and then you could talk about your picture, couldn't you, 'cause this is going to be such a lot for me to write and for you to write, and then maybe I could type what you say off the tape - I could use the tape and maybe type what you've said so that everybody could read it. Would you like to have a go? We'll have to ask Tom if he minds coming go do some, in fact I'm ready to help Tom do his writing about his Grandad so maybe if you bring your picture to remind you/Terry, you are being patient - would you like to go for a moment, m'dear? Where were you going to go to work next? Where were you going to work next...? Right, would you like to go there and when I'm ready, I'll call you down 'cause it's very boring for you to sit here... Tom, Tom, can we ask you to move now - can we stop? ...Well, that's it, it saves it just like that, and we'll put it here, 'cause I'm going to ask the boys to do something for me... [Tom: But can we put the tape in the page so I know where I am?] Yes, you can do that, can't you? Let me find them a tape to use while you're doing that. (to self) No, not that tape. Now you're going to let Richard talk about his holiday first, aren't you? And then you can listen... ooh, that's lovely, are you going to add/put some more material on... see if you can use some more material... well done... OK, I'll

come over to help you in a moment... yes, that's a good start... Right, Tom, can you move please... and let me just see if this tape's going to be the right one for you to use... what's happened to all my little tapes... where did you put your work, Jeremy?... Where? No, I'd like you to put it on the shelf where we put/not yet, Maya, I want to talk to you, just a moment... where are we...

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Um, children, can you listen for a moment please - want to ask you if you can be very helpful... Charlie... Shhh... I want to ask you if you can be very helpful, Tom - Richard's going to make a recording, and if you're making a lot of noise we won't actually hear what he's saying when we play the tape back, so do you think you could be very, very quiet, and just remember to whisper... Charlie... can you whisper please, very quietly...

Right, let's get it sorted out... now we're going to use these, this tape, because we've now got the, doesn't matter that we're taping over the top of the tape because we've got those stories on another tape... right, so I'm going to press 'Record' and 'Play' and you can talk into and tell us all about your holiday... I'm going to leave it with you - there, off you go... right, come on, Maya, Maya, can you bring me your work over here? ...yes, what else can you see?... have a look. Lynda, go and finish what you were doing. Maya, bring me your work so I can see what you were doing... Tom, would you like to come?... Omar, can I look at your work...? Can I have a look to see how you got on? I must say, it is hard isn't it...? You've forgotten to... Jeremy, can you leave them please? Richard- you can talk, you don't have to just read it, you can talk about your adventures... and tell us all about it, all about what you did... come here, let me help you, it's quite hard, isn't it?... There we are, it's beautiful, come and sit here and I can help you... there, you've got to remember to go up, there... shall we leave it... in a moment, when you've done your sewing, you can stick these back, because they're not holding... go and put

2/1/410

it on the shelf, Omar... over on the shelf there so that it doesn't get spoiled and when it's really... go somewhere else please 'cause you're putting them off... what did you say?... No, no I don't, no, not upstairs, not at the moment, there isn't room for you. There's plasticine, there's water, yes you may go in the shop if you're quiet. Do you want to go in the shop, Jeremy?... Yes, you may... Right, this is beautiful, would you like to do some stitching on it?... There, yes, up the... there you are. Susie, you've got to remember to go up and down - which part, where are you going to sew?... Which part are you going to sew? Shhh! Oh, you're forgetting about the tape recorder. Jeremy especially isn't being very helpful... and Omar... Terry, leave them please...

Right, where are you going to stitch? Are you going to do any more material on it...? What, with the sewing, or with the crayons? ...With the sewing? You're going to sew round? All right then, just go round.. there you are, there... Maya, Maya... that's going to be nice, now what about here - you going to stick on some bits? You go and have a look and see... good boy, good boy, that's coming on, there, this is going to be lovely, you going to stick that down... um, shall I write down about your, for you, now, about your painting, 'cause that was a really good story, wasn't it? Do you want to put that back where it should be: I think it should be round the smooth things shouldn't it...? Well done, Tom, good... Jeremy, did you... um.../what shall I say for you...? Wait a minute, stop stop stop... No... Yes... There you are, Maya, you've got to remember to come up and then down... what shall I write for you, Tom...? 'A dog killed Grandad's chickens' (They recite the sentence as it is written down.)

2/1/440

Tom:

You could do a picture of a chicken and a dog, couldn't you?  
A: You could do, yes... Is that it?

2/1/450

Right, would you like to run the tape back now - you have to/let me show you which one to press. That's right, it says 'Review', doesn't it, that's right, and when it stops you can



press 'Play' and you can hear if it's recording... (Pause)

A: Is that it? 'A dog killed Grandad's chickens'?

Tom: Yup.

A: Anything else?

Tom: Er... no.

A: No - that's it, is it? You going to write underneath for me? Right, come and sit next to Maya... Oh, go and put an apron on, girls, if you're sticking. This is beautiful. Go and put an apron on. Dean, let me see what you were doing, m'dear. Lynda, be careful... Jeremy, come and have a sit and look at the frogs... Are you ready for me to help you do some writing, Malcolm? Beautiful, what's... yes, of course you can/Dean, let me see your sewing, let me just have a look at it... It's quite hard, isn't it, to sew... Good boy, are you going to sew? Would you like to do some sewing on it?... Are you in a muddle? You've gone round the wrong way, excuse me, Jeremy, don't spoil the paper please, I'm just putting it down. You've got to remember to go in and out, haven't you; you've gone... [Child: Out and in, out and in...] [Child: I saw Dean at Sainsbury's] Did you? There we are Susie. You've got to remember to go, look, up that way, and then in that way... all right? In and out. Dean, let me see... It's quite hard to do - oh, you have done that beautifully - you are trying hard. It's quite hard to do it, isn't it - are you going to have one last go? Just use up your thread - well done... I know why it's hard - it's got itself into a bit of a knot, hasn't it? Use some more fabric, please - stick on some more fabric, Ahmed, go and try... Here we are, Dean, that's it, you sit with Susie, and you show Susie, 'cause you've managed to remember to go/come and sit here with Susie/you've managed to remember to go in and out/don't pull it too tight, Susie, just gently, no, you've done it again Susie, you've got to remember to go in one way and out the other... otherwise it loops up. Look, let me just show you, perhaps if we put it down on the/put it down on the floor so you can see - look, you've got to come through this

2/1/480

A126

way now, haven't you, and when you've come through you've got to then go down - you see, have it on the floor like that. That's it, Dean, don't pull it tight - you show Susie, help Susie for me... Right, can I use/right, can I have that please and you, you have me/Oh, I don't need it, I'm all right... That, er Jeremy, use that one to draw with, you'll be able/it'll show up much better... Shhh!...

These are going to be beautiful paintings, you're doing them so carefully, you going to put something else in your painting, Christopher? Let's push this up out of Suhail's way so he can put the paper on/oh, this is going to be beautiful - you're doing it very carefully. Come here, let's/put it down, Emanuel, please/to finish it off. Have a good look at it and see if there's anywhere else you could... Beautiful... [Child: I just need to do the side] Beautiful - are there going to be any people in your painting? No? It's just your house? Lovely! What about the number of your house - what number is it? Number 10, right... Ahmed, look, there are buttons here - would you like to use some buttons? Would you like to? See if you can... Is it working? [The tape] Can you hear it?... Did you talk about your holiday? You did?... What about you - are you on it?... Right, would you like to record/[Child:we have to record it again/]Do you? Well, run it back and record on the top, then, it doesn't matter if you record over that. Run it back to the beginning, that's it... Oh, you're getting all/your writing's getting all big, shall we start again, 'cause you can do better than that, can't you? Shall I write it again for you?... Yes... No, that says 'At the weekend' and nobody wanted that writing in the end... Now, see if you can remember to do your small writing, you can do it, can't you, if you're really thinking... Yes, there are some water snails in there... [Child: Mrs Carmody, I've got water snails in my tank at home!] Have you? What have you got in your tank besides water snails?... Can't you remember? What have you got - fish? Fish... It's half past eleven - we'll carry on

2/1/500

2/1/527

for a little bit, then we might go out to play some games... Come and tell me about the frogs... Let me see... let me see, bring it to me. Let me see... Dean, aren't you going to do any more? Go and put it on here, then, safely... That's coming along nicely... Look, Susie, I don't know that I've got any more material at the moment - you might have to wait until this afternoon. Dean, don't leave it like that, go and pop it on the shelf... Have you finished? Leave it to dry on the table, Ahmed... Susie, bring a chair and come and sit next to me so I can help you... Um, first of all, go and pick up the books that are left on the... that's it, Susie... Oh Tom, you won't do your best writing if you're wandering around away from it... He's painting, no, he won't want to go/leave it on the table, Emanuel... you going to write your name for me...? Right, come on, Susie, have a go on the table here, pushing it through... pull it through, be careful with the needle, that's a clever girl, pull, pull... there, pull it through... what shall we say, Malcolm...? [Malcolm: The frogs are climbing up the]/er, Dean, Dean, I think Ahmed might go with you, Ahmed will go with you - he's ready... there's a good boy, take care, look after one another/he's climbing up into the corner - he's got one arm on one side of the glass, hasn't he, and one arm on the other... look at Susie's beautiful work, Malcolm, look... Just a moment... It's very noisy up here in your house, and it's getting very messy, boys; No, Omar, could you please look after our things - look, pick up the chair, to make it/keep it nice, take care, look, look after the things, be careful, take care. Look, you're going to trip over the things - well, it doesn't look a very nice party to me if everything's everywhere, take care, pick up the broom, Charlie, you're going to fall over it. That's it, take care... Maya! Maya, if you come and sit by Susie you could help one another - come and sit next to Susie here... Now, would you like to put yours over on the shelf until we're ready - or go and pop it on the writing table until I'm ready - I've got yours and Terry's to do.

Lynda's ready, ask Lynda if she'll come and read with you...  
Look, now, what are we going to say, Malcolm? [Malcolm: the  
frogs are climbing up the wall and, and, they're being silly  
swimming about...] The frogs are climbing up the wall.../  
[Malcolm: repeats, expands] one hopped off a rock? [Malcolm  
expands] Just a minute, I can't write as quickly as that...  
one hopped... off... a... rock and what happened?... and  
bounced into the water... [and climbed up the glass] people  
who are upstairs are not being very sensible... Shhh...  
bounced into [Dean: Can I do my sewing?] Yes, go and find  
it... The frogs are climbing up... Well, we haven't got any  
more space - I think that'll have to be it for now, starting  
here... let me see... Oh, I see, can you put your name on  
here... no, we can't do that sewing at the moment, we're  
going to tidy up ready for dinner - perhaps this afternoon we  
will - no, know what you could do, you could put the sewing  
box on my chair for me and you can have a go this afternoon,  
I'll get it out and do it for you. Mind, you're spoiling  
Omar's work, take care... let's put them somewhere safe...  
Um, right, and stop what you're doing please everyone,  
standing still - can you turn off the tape recorder please,  
Richard. Listen carefully, please. Omar, stand still. It's  
very, very hot in here. I think we'll tidy up, and we'll go  
out for games in the playground for two minutes before  
dinner. Can you go back to where you were and tidy up  
sensibly... Dean, Dean, can you come and help to tidy, Ahmed,  
come and help to tidy, Ahmed, come and help to tidy up,  
Julie, come and help to tidy up, m'dear... Put your name on,  
Hava. Susie, can you put your sewing on the table over here  
for me?... Can you just make it a bit tidy on this table,  
make sure there's nothing on the floor, it's OK itself...  
What... [Alex: the tape's spoiled again] ...Why? ...Well,  
maybe we'll play it back to them later and we can tell them  
that they were too noisy, and maybe they'll be quieter this  
afternoon for us...

Right, just make it tidy, there's nothing on the floor...

Susie, where were you working? Have you brought your...? What have you done with your sewing? Go and bring it over - it's here... No, no, no, just leave it there like that...that's it... Can you go and help to tidy over here? If it's tidy where you were working can you come and sit down... It doesn't sound very tidy - you were... were you up here? [reference to home corner.] No? Down you go... Emanuel, come up please...you can tidy over there please can't you? That was a silly thing to do. Come and tidy this up. You weren't even working up here, were you? What a mess! And then you can go down and leave that mess - that's very unkind. Come and help them to tidy up. Terry and Charlie, come and see if you can hang up some of the clothes - look, on the hangers... hang up some of the clothes... come on! Emanuel, over here... Charlie, Charlie, be careful...be careful! Well, goodness me, I don't think I want all these things on the floor - look, Charlie, you come and help, Emanuel to put some of these things up off the floor - they're going to get broken... No, Ahmed, not upstairs, on the carpet... Jeremy, there's a dustpan and brush, sweep the sand please... If it's tidy, sit down... Come and sit down. Julie, take care... Oh dear, not on the carpet, please, Dean you nearly kicked Julie, be careful. I know you don't want to hurt Julie, take care.

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Push the chairs round the table, girls, and come and sit down on the mat please... you can finish it later, finish it this afternoon... We need some more water in the paints, don't we? Right, let me see who's sitting quietly here... Can everybody come down from upstairs, please, and sit on the mat, now... Everybody, stop! Dean, sit up please - you're going to hurt someone and I know you don't want to hurt anyone today because you're being so kind and helpful, sit up please. I don't think I want Charlie and Emanuel and Terry and Omar up in the house if they are going to make such a muddle - could you all come and sit down please, because things are going to get broken... That is a lovely picture- put it back on the table... Emanuel, come and sit down... Jeremy, I asked you to

go and sweep the sand please, that's not very helpful, not very helpful... Er, Omar, come and sit here; that was very unkind, right down here, where you can sit by me... [Child: I've got my own room now.] You've got you're own room? Where did you get that room from? Who moved out? [inaudible] Have you moved then Suhail? No? You've got a desk? [Suhail: Yes and when I sit on the chair I can put my feet on the desk!] Can you? Right, actually, Tom, I'd quite like you to come over here please... be quick, we're waiting for you... Malcolm, leave that for later...come and sit down... [Child: That's what I did this morning!] That's what you did this morning!... "I wiggle my fingers..." (song) Stop. I'd quite like everybody to join in- could you put book away Dean, and sit up, because you are spoiling our big book story about Mrs Wishy-Washy... could you sit up, please, you're spoiling the book - and you nearly kicked Tom, er Malcolm, then, and Malcolm hasn't hurt anyone today - you're not being terribly thoughtful at the moment- could you put the book away and be careful... Right, let's see if we can start again. Can I see everybody's hands? Nadia had better go and sit over there by Suhail. This is getting very silly, Lisa and Nadia, Lisa right round to the... that's the third time this morning you've been chattering... Two chatterboxes... (sings) I wiggle my fingers, I wiggle my toes, I wiggle my shoulders, I wiggle my nose, Now there's no wiggles left in me, I shall be as still as can be... Very, very still, oh Richard's forgotten how to sit still since he's been on holiday... Richard and Alex were trying very hard to make a tape recording - Richard was going to talk into the tape recorder and tell us all about his holiday - you did that Richard didn't you? When you played it back was it... could you hear it? Could you hear it at all when you played it back? Not at all? Didn't it work? ...It stopped? Why did it stop, do you think? Did you stop talking? Could you hear everything that you spoke into the tape recorder? ...Go and hang up the dustpan and brush... No, wait a moment, wait a moment... When

2/2/208

*10 of 500  
end, here*

2/2/248

you were talking into the tape recorder could you hear everything that you said into the tape recorder when you played it back - you could? So the fact that people were talking in the background didn't really spoil the tape - you could still understand what you were saying? Perhaps later on today, perhaps this afternoon we'll listen to the tape and see how it sounds, but some people weren't being very helpful to Richard and Alex... Dean, be careful because we're going to trip over it - Charlie and those people upstairs - not just Charlie, Omar - weren't really very helpful upstairs. You were banging and thumping about... making a bit of a noise and it's come out on the tape. We'll listen to it and you see what you think, maybe you'll decide that it would be kinder to be a bit quieter when people are trying to tape a story - you'll have another go. If you throw things about, Emanuel, when you're upstairs things are just going to get trodden on and broken, and will we have anything left, Emanuel...? No, things will get spoilt, we won't have anything left in the house! ...It's ever so hot in here, isn't it? Julie, can we save your book for this afternoon? I can't bear it in here any longer, is that all right? I'm going to go...we'll play a few games in the playground just before dinner.. Well done, Jeremy, thank you very much. Jeremy, can you hook the door open do you think?... Yes, so am I - it's just what I said - we'll go out into the playground, and play some games... [Tom: Why don't we open the windows?] We've got all of the windows open Tom, it doesn't seem to be making much difference... Right, I'd like Suhail to line up with Jeremy because he's sitting so quietly, Tom would you like to line up...? If that was a game I don't think it was a very sensible game to play - what do you say to Ahmed...? Yes, take care Dean, please don't spoil a lovely day, we're having a beautiful day, please don't spoil it. Right, see if you can come very quietly... oh, it's unbearably hot...(etc. to staff in hall) Oh dear, you're both hurt, you've got to be much more careful - well, it was

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an accident I expect, but both of you aren't really thinking very much this morning- you're getting a bit too excited- take care... that's OK, Julie... Right, come on then... no thank you Dean, go back into line please...

**END**



School 1.15a

30.6.86

Technical note on mike - Selectivity of hearing! But still valuable [i.e. from my note of A.G.'s conversational initiatives]

'Pack for Ts' use

O???'s reactions to V.

Meaning of '???' in terms of floor

Amount of T. talk by time/class prog. e.g. A. talks more in gathered times

Directing children's attention to others talking.

Context of children's speech at school may be important e.g. 'Suhail' finds public speech hard and others tool?? Subbest may like next time free entry for comparison.

Tone when distractible ??? P.12 also uses child's name

Interruptions?

Retaining floor and children's techniques of getting and keeping it in conversation with A.

Analyses possible

- addressed to boys
- control/directive function a) admin generally  
b) social/psychological
- whole group, small groups, individuals
- What am I actually saying - what principles are being most often enunciated
- serving children's linguistic purposes
- No. of individual children interacted with
- Whose conversation is it?
- Negotiates with children for activities etc. e.g. Julie's book

Value of exercise is in Teacher's dynamic interaction with own performance as recorded

Number pages with tapes

Use of / and ... and []

How many M's in Emmanuel

Section for FS could be 310 intro to activities byt ends 365ish  
???

401 restarts - 470 or so (green eggs)

Physical position or distance with group not always done

Tape shows facilitating language very clearly, not just messages,  
T.

School 1:16

Radio-mike recording 30.6.86

30.7.86

Dear A

At last the transcript is completed! I look forward to your reactions and to your views on how we might use this method in future - it has distinct assets in accuracy (I notice it picks up a lot of your supportive and facilitating talk which I missed in my hand-written records) but it has taken around 15 hours to produce 6 sheets so a whole-session record would be out of the question for general teachers' use - I couldn't possibly transcribe a whole session during one week in term-time, let alone do several for purposes of development and comparison - I doubt if anyone could!

I've found it very thought-provoking to sit and listen to the tapes with the transcript - lots of different ways of analysing the transactions suggest themselves. I hope you can read this copy (I have the carbon for reference so you will be able to keep this one, although I'd be very glad of your help with some of the uncertain areas that I've indicated and with any mistakes that have crept in. Luckily you have a very clear voice!)

Another good thing about the RM is that it picks up quite a few of the children's voices and I've been able to include some of their conversational initiatives where I thought they contributed to understanding the way you spoke

Otherwise I've tried to indicate by dots (...) where something intervened before your next remark, by an oblique line (/) where a child's speech or your own change of direction cut across what had been the flow of your speech, and by square brackets where something that bears on your speech had taken place. I'm afraid there are heaps of inconsistencies just the same!

In spite of the length I've found it rather spell-binding, listening to all that going on - I hope you enjoy it too!

Best wishes,

Vicky.

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SCHDATA. 1:17a

University of London GOLDSMITHS' COLLEGE  
School of EDUCATION  
New Cross London SE14 6NW  
Telephone 01 692 7171  
Dean A V Kelly MA

2nd July 1986

Mr. Headteacher,  
Infant School,  
London S.E

Dear Mr.

This is to confirm that I have talked to Mrs. Head about the proposed visits by our students and that she has kindly agreed to receive them on the basis that you outlined on 27 October, 17 November and 9 February. I will be in touch with you both nearer the time to discuss details of the visits. Thank you very much for your help with this.

As you know, the work I have been doing with Andrea has aimed at helping her to focus on areas where she would like to evaluate and possibly develop her classroom strategies, and I think we have both found it a stimulating and fruitful exercise. She mentioned to me that one or two other members of staff had expressed an interest in the research; the transferability of the process so that it can be used by groups of teachers in self-evaluation is an important element in what I am doing and I would be glad to provide an outline of the technique if staff would find it helpful. As I have told Andrea, I shall be working in another school next term but will consider myself 'on call' to her when she feels that a return visit would be helpful in any way to enable her to continue the evaluation and development, and I could if you wished also collaborate with other members of

A137

staff who were interested in applying the techniques we have developed, although this would only be in the form of an occasional contact to discuss issues or technical problems.

Please let me know if I can be of help to staff in any way - I am extremely grateful for the help that you and your staff are giving to me in my work, as well as being interested in the further implications of my research.

I look forward to seeing you next term,

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Hurst

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School 1:18

29th September, 1986

Dear Vicky,

At last I am returning the tapes to you. I enjoyed listening to them and have in fact used your notes extensively in my long essay. Thank you for your help.

Your help has been invaluable and I hope I might continue to develop the skill of listening to myself in the future.

Did you enjoy your holiday? I was feeling very envious of you.

A138

There is one coincidence to relate. I have a friend working at Primary School and her colleague was telling me that she was to be your next "guinea pig". I was able to re-assure her that you are an extremely sympathetic person, very positive to work with. I see from my diary that you will be coming to Gordonbrock soon with your students.

I look forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely,

A.

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School 1:19

2.10.86

Goldsmiths' College

Mrs. A:

Infants' School

SE

Dear A

Many thanks for your letter and for the return of the tapes. Did you feel the transcript was accurate? I see an amazing difference between that transcript and the earlier ones; I shall spend a little time trying to discuss these differences and evaluating the two methods, when I do my summing up of what we've done this last term.

A139

Another feature I'd like to discuss is your evaluation of the project, as you see it so far. You mention 'the skill of listening to myself' in your letter - I think that's very interesting. Perhaps it might be possible for us to meet some time when you're not too busy and talk about how you see that aspect, and any other ways you've found to use this process.

I'll be in Gordonbrock three times this year - Oct. 27, Nov. 17 and Feb. 9. If convenient I could stay on after school either day this term, or I could come and meet you during half-term - I'll be at Goldsmiths' as usual that week. You may feel it's a bit much to contemplate any lengthy discussion after school and actually I don't think we need to talk for very long -  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour or 30 minutes would be fine. Looking forward to seeing you.

Vicky

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School 1:20

11th October, 1986

Dear Vicky,

I am sorry I didn't reply immediately to your letters.

Of course you may use the tapes in any way you wish - I think of them as your tapes and I know that you would be discrete.

I hope to be in school on the Monday 27th October when you come in with your students - perhaps we could arrange a suitable time for discussion then.

Best wishes,

A.

A140

School 1:21

A 5.11.86

Outside person easier to trust with a colleague each doing each might be different - need relations redefining and the arena widening beyond ???'s usual perspective.

Would colleagues not notice one's foci?

Would RM obviate need for another person

RM gives equal weight

Transcribing helps to make connections

Teacher needs to do something with the research - incorporate in notes on ???@: or child, write up for school as method, use for own self or colleague, turn into article etc. Future approach to research via Pat.

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Vicky Hurst  
November 1986

**School 1:22**  
**also**  
**Respapers 3**

M. Phil. - Teachers define the Curriculum: classroom self-evaluation in the context of the primary curriculum.

**Interim assessment of the first stage of the project, January-October 1986.**

Outline of the project

The use of techniques of self-evaluation as a part of the process of professional development is one that is increasingly relevant to the task of teachers today, with constant pressure to justify their work being exerted by powerful forces in political and administrative circles, and with the challenge of an increasingly heterogeneous and demanding society whose requirements influence classroom provision as well. In these circumstances teachers may perhaps turn to self-evaluation as one way to reassert their professional control over the content and methods employed in their work.

From the researcher's point of view the use by teachers of a technique of self-evaluation would be of interest because it would demonstrate, through the particular focus, the teacher's view of the curriculum and of the priority areas within it -0?? a practical demonstration of the professional's concerns.

The project originated in a scheme to study teachers' strategies with children's behaviour in class but it soon became apparent that, important as this area is, it would be more valuable to leave the evaluations completely unstructured in order to obtain the greatest possible freedom from contamination by the researcher's views of classroom priority. It is important however to be aware that the presence of the researcher in the

classroom and the discussions about the teacher's concerns with the researcher are bound to have an influence on the teacher's own perceptions and that the research findings cannot be considered 'pure' in that sense - they are to this extent the result of a collaborative review of classroom practice, in which the teacher takes the leading role. As the ethologist accepts that the researcher's presence is a part of the ecological setting for research, so, in this research, the teacher is reviewing practice in the presence of the researcher who tries to be as little intrusive as possible but knows that the ecology has inevitably been altered and tries to allow for the fact where it seems to be an observable factor.

Inevitable as the researcher's presence in the ecological setting may be, there are ways in which the research methods used may enlarge or limit the influence of the researcher's aims and personality. Initially the method to be employed was designed with the needs of teachers in mind - something that a colleague could use to help a teacher evaluate classroom practice. For this reason availability and economy of time and money indicated a pen and paper method based on the Sylva Roy and Painter 'target child' method, where the teacher's talk and actions would be the target. However, not only was the strain of trying to note every instance of teacher talk during a three-hour session considerable, particularly in view of the need to note children's conversational initiatives as a stimulus for the teacher's talk, and the contextual setting as providing the underlying rationale for both action and verbal initiatives, but in fact the method also imposed on the researcher the need to anticipate and interpret the teacher's observations in order to get the gist written down in time to be able to cope with the next development. The first three recordings, which were pen and paper records, show a clear, goal-oriented, record which focuses, understandably enough, on the teacher's enunciated intentions. When compared with the fourth recording, which was a transcript of a radio-microphone tape-recording, important elements are seen to be missing; most noticeably, the written record differs in its

limiting of attention to the teacher's own conscious strategies, so that verbal initiatives by the children are seen as tangential to the real business, whereas the radio-microphone, innocent of any such presupposition, gives equal weight to whatever it can pick up from its position on the teacher's throat and therefore includes large amounts of child-teacher and teacher-child exchange which might have been summarised or omitted previously in the interests of the "real" business of the classroom.

Teacher A., who believed that the interaction between child and teacher was a large part of the "real" business of her work, was happier with the radio-microphone method for this reason. She observed that the written record gave the impression that she "never stopped talking" and that the radio-microphone method provided more of the children's talk and a far better interpretation of the setting for the teacher's talk. It would be appropriate here to mention that the radio-microphone is also seen as more appropriate from the research point of view because of its capacity to pick up much of the children's verbal contributions (except in a group when the child speaking is at a distance of more than approx. 300cm. from the teacher's throat-microphone.) Even with its inevitable limitations the radio-microphone registers so much more of the conversational and cognitive or psychosocial setting that a human recorder can gather in the split-second available that its use is clearly preferable. Teacher's talk cannot be considered in isolation from the setting, in particular the children's conversational initiatives and contributions, and the preferred method has to be the one which provides the most information about the context in which it occurs.

Unfortunately the very richness of the record obtained from the radio-microphone, and the need to work over the tape repeatedly to glean every fragment of children's discourse, means that its transcription is bound to be a very lengthy and exhausting business. "...it has distinct assets in accuracy (I notice it picks up a lot of your supportive and facilitating talk which I missed in my hand-written records) but it has taken

around 15 hours to produce 65 sheets [of transcript from a 3-hour session] so a whole-session record would be out of the question for general/teacher's use - I couldn't possibly transcribe a whole session during one week in term-time, let alone do several for purposes of development and comparison - I doubt if anyone could!" (V.H. to Teacher A., 30.7.86) For future use, the radio-microphone will be employed to register an entire session at the outset of an evaluation so that the teacher concerned can focus on what aspect of the session is particularly striking, with perhaps a partial transcript of teacher-designated sections; subsequently a selective focus will continue to be employed, with the reinforcement of other methods such as the "Target Child" technique where it is decided that this would be helpful. Since that aim of the project is to evolve a method of self-evaluation that teachers might use as a normal part of their professional expertise it is important to retain the goals of economy of time and flexibility even if the technique has to be modified in other ways in the light of experience. The present cost of a radio-microphone is approximately £600. Most schools now have at least one tape-recorder; if this kind of self-evaluation is seen as appropriate to the school's aims the purchase of a radio-microphone would not be disproportionately expensive when divided between all the members of staff who might be likely to use it.

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### The results of the research so far

In assessing what has been learned from this stage of the project it will be important to put the conclusions into the settings of the teacher's aims for the class from the beginning of the reserach.

**Autumn 1985:** before the project began, a preliminary discussion took place between Teacher A. and V.H. in which Teacher A. outlined some of her present preoccupations with her

reception class which was at present gradually building up with a staggered admission. At this point the focus of the research was seen by V.H. as being the teacher's strategies in dealing with children's classroom behaviour and it was on this topic that the conversation focused. Teacher A. mentioned that this was important in particular for the teacher of a reception class, and it was agreed to meet early in 1986 to talk about working together.

In January (21.1.86) a more detailed discussion took place during which Teacher A. indicated that there were two kinds of children's behaviour about which she was concerned: the kind of behaviour "which causes your attention to wander from other children" (testing adult rules, seeking adults' attention, hurting other children) and the kind of behaviour which evades adult attention, "the quiet ones, who might not be taking part in the classroom activities all round but who get on with their own ploys without being disruptive so you don't notice them."

In February the first (written) record was made (24.2.86), with subsequent written records on 3.3.86, 10.3.86 and 17.3.86, followed by the radio-microphone recording on 30.6.86 after the completion of a final teaching-practice in Teacher A.'s classroom. Evaluations took place briefly at the end of each session and before the beginning of the next. Teacher A.'s comments show, whether delivered in conversation or in comments on the transcript, that her attention focused instantly upon the amount of talk she herself used - "Shades of Joyce Grenfell!" (3.3.86) and "I find it quite painful to read. My constant chatter seems quite banal!" (3.3.86) Teacher A.'s sensitivity to the importance of allowing children time and opportunity to develop their own talk led her to comment (10.3.86) "I definitely feel that I need to review the start of the day - free activities perhaps? allowing children who need to talk the time and opportunity." She was at this time (second session) still concerned with children's understanding of appropriate classroom behaviour - in discussion we noted that the children tended to want her attention instantly; on the record of this she

noted "must gradually learn that this is not possible or desirable" (10.3.86). During the fourth transcript she was, as ever, alert to the conversational balance, noting again "After reading this I feel that I talk far too much and don't listen to the children nearly enough" (17.3.86). By the time the fifth recording (with the radio-microphone) was made she had experimented with a more free entry, replacing the "news on the carpet" half hour with a free-activity entry, during which she was available to talk to parents and children - an especially important feature, since the recordings were made on Monday mornings when the transition from home to school would be rather an anxious affair. However, after the student had completed the teaching practice, Teacher A. felt that it would be helpful to gather the children on the carpet again in order to signal the return to their old relationship. However, she noted that her previous changes in practice had been more supportive of children by making the organisation of the classroom support their independent activity and free them from having to come to her for everything. She felt that she had "seemed to dominate the scene totally" and that much of her speech had consisted in strategies of management, organisation and control, while as the children took more responsibility for their own activities she could decrease this and engage in more sustained and purposeful conversation with them.

### The Curriculum

Teacher A., in her responses to the tapes, set out how strongly she believed that classroom language is an integral part of the primary curriculum. She "wanted to create an atmosphere in the classroom that was sympathetic to the child and his needs, where each child would be valued for himself and his contribution to the whole learning environment would be treated sensitively

and with genuine interest."<sup>1</sup> She hoped to nurture independent and enthusiastic learners by this means - "children who were considerate of one another, willing to listen to one another and who value their peers - children who take an active interest in their environment and care for their surroundings."<sup>1</sup> She felt that the curriculum leant on language as a major instrument of these children's learning and that the quality of Teacher/child interaction was crucial. She was concerned that the work of Donaldson (1978) Wells (1981) and Tizard and Hughes (1984) indicate the types of teacher/child interaction that will best support children's learning, in particular types of conversation that the teacher engages in with children, and that it is the ability of the teacher to have meaningful sustained conversation with a child that best supports learning. She found the taped record more helpful than the written one in the search for evaluation of her classroom talk, and through it evolved a new organisation of the classroom that would give her opportunities to increase the desired kind of talk with children.

### The nature of the curriculum

The overall importance of Teacher A.'s view for a general understanding of the nature of the curriculum is that she sees language as fostering and enabling the child's own purposes in the classroom. It is a tool to increase the child's awareness of the relevance of educational provision to his or her own concerns, and to enlarge the child's autonomy in response to the educational environment. It is, therefore, valued as a part of the process of education and it is as a process that

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<sup>1</sup> Teacher A., written comment, 30.9.86, unpublished Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of requirements for the Advanced Diploma in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, Goldsmiths' College.

teacher/child linguistic interactions form a part of Teacher A.'s idea of the primary curriculum.

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School 1:23

13.10.86

**A on impact of research:**

Interest in language development of child and role that adults lay in child's acquisition of in particular type of teacher/child interaction that might best encourage linguistic ability in child.

Major instrument of learning in infancy.

A. wished to create atmosphere in classroom sympathetic to child and his needs, where each would be valued for self, and contribution to whole learning environment treated seriously and with genuine interest.

Hoped children would be confident and willing to express themselves and that their contribution would be valued. Hoped to ??? independant enthusiastic learners - children considerate for one another, willing to listen to one another, and who value their peers - children who take an active interest in their environment and care for their surroundings.

Had been fairly confident of creating an atmosphere in classroom but became less certain. Notes Donaldson 1978 Wells 1981 Tiz. and Bughes 1984 indicate types of Teacher/child interaction that will best support child's learning in particular types of conversation that Teacher engages in with child - ability of Teacher to have meaningful sustained conversation with child that best supports learning.

Was own ? and type of situations ?? of verbal ??? conducive

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to achieving aims?

Tapes and transcripts more valuable for providing instant recall of situation and more of children's contributions than could be by a written record. Written record records her as never stopping talking (but remember I was focussing on her) However can ??? measure her talk except in relation to children's input?

Analyses type and function of speech and found five broad areas:

- 1) exercise authority
- 2) determine ethos of class
- 3) set group focus
- 4) set organisational and purposeful context of???
- 5) maintain emotional contact and narrative thread with children.

Seemed to dominate scene totally and much of speech was managing organising controlling type and not sure how conducive this is to aims of independent confident learners gradually taking more responsibility for themselves and their learning!!

More flexible start to day gave more genuine choice and chance to talk to parents and children.

As children took more responsibility for own activities could organise manage and control less and engage in more natural sustained and purposeful conversation with them.

Realised value of conversation with small groups and individual children. Value of listening and how "to my ??? chagrin" how rarely it appeared to happen.

**A : View of curriculum**

pp.1-5, 62-72

The way the teacher fosters child language a most important aspect of curriculum. Therefore type of teacher/child interaction crucial - curriculum leans on language as a major instrument of learning therefore her concern to evaluate her interaction with children and classroom provision and organisation to see how far they actually were supportive of children's own language and of children's independence in learning. (Initial classroom needed to lay deown ethos and guide children.

Changed her practice towards less control by making organisation more supportive of children so they did not have to come to her for everything. e.g. flexible entry in morning.

Notes types of language and which predominate.

Prefers tape. Value of teacher listening.

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Nov. 86

Dear Vicky,

This seems to be a very fair and accurate assessment of our co-operation.

You must not under-estimate the part you played in the success of your visits to my classroom.

Your sympathetic, non-judgemental approach did a lot to put me at my ease and gave me confidence in your presence. I came to value your observations and the subsequent discussions have been useful.

I think that I have made my opinions known to you already - verbally and also in my dissertaion, and I don't want to repeat myself.

It has been particularly useful to me to look at my own practice and to try to evaluate it in the light of my reading, and discussions at Goldsmiths.

So little of educational writing is of this type i.e. practising teachers evaluating their own everyday experiences - it has proved very useful to me and I hope to my colleauges in the future.

Best wishes

A.

A152

# **APPENDIX B**

## **S C H O O L   I I**

**July 1986 - January 1987**

**School II:1**

University of London GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE  
School of EDUCATION  
New Cross London SE14 6NW  
Telephone 01 692 7171  
Dean A V Kelly MA

2 July 1986

Ms.  
Headteacher,  
Infant School,  
Street,  
London S.E.

[Similar to letter sent to

Dear Ms.

Thank you very much for allowing Pauline Boorman and me to visit your nursery class on 23 June. We both enjoyed meeting the staff and children very much, and felt a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere. We are very grateful to Mrs. for giving us her time and for her explanations of the many interesting things that are going on in her class, and look forward to being in touch again.

On another topic, may I ask you if you would be interested in some research I have been doing in assisting teachers with self-evaluation? As a part of the M.Phil. work I am engaged in I have been offering my services as a recorder/observer of teachers' classroom interactions to enable teachers to take a more objective view of areas of their practice, evaluate what is happening and focus on areas they wish to adjust or develop. I have used both pen and paper recording and taped records with a radio microphone attached to the teacher, sending a transcription after each session for the teacher's use and comments. I have found that a term's intensive work (four initial half-day recording sessions, a gap for the development of ideas, and

B1

approximately four more sessions) gives opportunities for assessment and change, which can then be pursued by the teacher with occasional contact with me when the teacher wishes. I would emphasise that I wish to leave the decision about where to focus the evaluation in the teacher's hands - I cannot be totally neutral but I would like to be seen as a tool for classroom use as far as possible.

If there is any member of your Infant staff (I am working within the 5 to 7 age group to avoid too many variables) who would be interested, I would be available during the spring term, and would be delighted to hear from you.

With thanks again for your help,

Yours sincerely,

Vicky Hurst

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School II:2

INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Primary School

Headmistress: Mrs.

Telephone:

11-6-86

Dear Vicky,

One member of our infant staff is interested in taking part in your reserach project next year.

Her name is \_\_\_\_\_ and she is just completing her probationery year this term - very successfully, I might add. She was a mature student and is very interested in continuing her own development as a teacher.

I also would be interested in this kind of activity going on in school as it would serve to raise people's consciousness aobut methods and the rationale for self-evaluation. Opening up the discussion with practical examples would be very valuable.

I am sure \_\_\_\_\_ will be cooperative and will enjoy the experience.

Best wishes,

B3

School II:3

Goldsmiths' College  
Faculty of Education

11.6.86

Dear

I'm delighted to hear that you and [redacted] are interested in my suggestion and look forward very much to our collaboration. I would like to propose that we start work next term if that is convenient to both of you. This would mean that I would visit Pat for four half-day sessions when her talk would be recorded - subsequently transcribed, and copied to her or her comments, corrections and elucidation where necessary. The four session-records would then be analysed by me along lines which Pat had indicated would be of interest to her, and we would discuss our findings and how she would like to proceed. We would later that term have a second period of recording her talk with her children followed again by transcription and analyses. This would end our term's intensive appraisal and during the following term or terms (as many as required) [redacted] would be free to contact me as she wished. Within the skeleton of this plan I intend to work as much in response to [redacted]'s interests and concerns as possible and hope that she will look on me as a tool for her own use.

If possible I would like to visit [redacted] for a preliminary consultation session. My timetable for next term gives me Wednesdays for my reserach. Would you like to name the first Wednesday that suits you after term has got underway (not Sept. 24th please) and I'll come at whatever time you suggest.

Alternatively I could be available on some Fridays so that's a possibility too.

With all good wishes,

Vicky.

B4



SCHOOL II:4

28.10. [Sch II, Teacher B (P.W.)]

9.00	Register
9.30-9.40	Let's go Maths
10.25-10.50	Break
11.45	Finish

---

SCHOOL II:5

28 October 1986 [Sch II, Teacher B (P.W.)]

Tape counter

Side 1

45 Caroline arrives late

333 Stop for 'Let's go maths'

516 return to class.

Assignments for morning

Sorting leaves - Stacey, Joanne, Billy

B5

Number Work - David, Claire, Hayley, Matthew and Jeremy  
Writing - Caroline, John O., Wayne, Michael D.  
Collage - Mark, John P., Michael H., Richard

- 607 Group of children sorting were v. quiet - Joanne and Stacy particularly seemed inhibited by the tape although later in the morning they seem to forget about it.
- 627 Jeremy talks about his number activity
- 625 David is telling me that his number activity is too difficult and I sort out some different cards for him and get him to read the numbers off the cards before he begins.
- 678 Jeremy interrupts

## Side 2

- 24 Jeremy interrupts sorting activity.
- 86 checking Jeremy's ??? activity with him.
- 106 David explains that V.H. has looked at his work.
- 172 Joanne asks for some help in sticking the leaves onto the sets.
- 184 Wayne asks for help with his writing.
- 233 Billy shows me a picture of a car he has drawn.
- 251 Caroline thinking - Hayley giving some ideas!

- 288 Claire indicates Multilink - similar to ???
- 304 Joanne asks for some help with her pattern picture.
- 337 Michael H. made a lovely collage of a tree with the leaves but had drawn a picture of Tarzan swinging from the rope on the tree!
- 350 Stacey and Joanne having difficulty sticking the shapes down.
- 379 Michael D. asks for '???'
- 381 Joanne asking for help.
- 400 Joanne
- 422 John O. - writing.
- 460 story tape
- 483 talking to Hayley making a collage.
- 484 (to Ilene) Cook-boxes for dinner money
- 495 Joanne had filled the large space in her picture with lots of small shapes.
- 558 John O. writing.
- 595 John is reminding me that last year I dressed up as a witch for Halloween.
- 677 Caroline's ??? is found in my desk tidy!

Side 3

- 001 Identifying leaves from chart.
- 140 helping Hayley make a sentence with Breakthru'
- 162 Wayne and another reading a Story Chest book
- 231 Talking to a group working with Helta-Skelta construction.
- 290 Jim bringing a new roller towel!
- 319 Stacey - developmental writing.
- 347 Stacey having written her Sentence freely wants help to make it in the sentence maker.

---

SCHOOL II:7

[School II, Teacher B. (P.W.)]

12.11.86

Tape Counter

- 000 Story - Tilly's House
- 021 Caroline arrives late
- 125 discussion of pictures relating to story.

B8

- 219 after 'Let's go Maths' - sorting out assignments with the children.
- 238 John O. asking to work with Michael H.
- 365 I think the microphone had come off my sweater as there is quite a bit of distortion.
- 488 break in recording? - nothing on rest of tape.

### Side 2

blank until...

- 337 tape resumes with recording.
- 345 Jeremy screeching.
- 523 Stacey clearly enjoyed the story about the baby and was able to relate to many incidents in the book.
- 570 Incident referring to David's taking other children's work - something he often does.
- 627 Conversation with Michael H.'s mum who had called in with an 'I'm 7' badge for Michael.
- 644 Jeremy anxious for me to see his group's work.

### Side 3

- 183 Joanne reading (Joanne is 6.10 years, she is experiencing great difficulties in learning to read - needs lots of encouragement to boost confidence and sensitive and patient

treatment. Mum is over anxious and tends to get cross when Joanne gets things wrong).

- 273 Story tape interruption
- 295 Michael asking about Junior Assembly.
- 321 Claire showing her model.
- 355 Jeremy shows me his model.
- 535 Claire gradually takes over the reading of her chosen book.
- 617 Jeremy shows me his lego model.

---

SCHOOL II:8

12.11.86

Activities

Number Wayne, John O., Caroline, Billy, Mark.

Sorting (With Irene) materials into sets summer/winter.  
John P., Richard, Michael D., Jeremy.

Writing/  
drawing (stimulus Tilly's House)  
Claire, Stacey, David, Hayley, Matthew.

Joanne/Sarah - drawing dolls (this proved to be rather difficult so the girls traced dolls and dressed them in clothes for summer/winter.

B10

Michael H. was drawing pictures from 'Paper Bag Princess' onto acetate for use in Junior Assembly.

After completion of assigned activities the children were allowed free choice of activity.

SCHOOL II:12

Observation: Jeremy

NB. Other children indicated as - Child 1, 2, 3, etc.  
Adults as Adult 1, 2, etc.

30 secs.	Activity	Language	Social status
1.	Cutting material up for collage, to be sorted into winter/summer sets.		1 of 4 children at collage with help of Mrs. Cook
2.	Perseveres with cutting, concentrating on physical skill, frowning, lips pursed. Child accidentally pushes him.	<b>Jeremy:</b> (>generally)" Oi-oi, oioo!"	
3.	Takes up another piece of cloth, begins to cut.	<b>Jeremy:</b> (>Adult 1) "Have you got this? Have you got this?"	
4.		<b>Adult 1:</b> "Jeremy, if you look to see what we've already cut... choose a piece we haven't	

B12



30 secs.	Activity	Language	Social status
		used... well, have that one..."	1 of 4 with adult
5.	Cutting third piece of material, again most carefully, working to cut out a very small piece, which he lays on the nearest piece of paper without any sign of thinking whether it is appropriate.	<b>Adult 1:</b> "Jeremy, where do you think we might put that one?"	
6.		<b>Child 1:</b> "We've done all the bits" <b>Jeremy:</b> "'cept me, 'cept me!"	
7.	Cuts into fourth piece of material.	<b>Jeremy:</b> "Now I've got this!"	
9.	Cuts into fifth piece.	<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss, Miss!"	
10.	Holds material, cuts at it wildly. Holds material in scissors, waves it.	<b>Jeremy:</b> "Ah, aa, aha, ha!"  <b>Jeremy:</b> "Ow!" <b>Adult 1:</b> "Jeremy"	
11.		<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss! Miss! Er, What shall I do now? I think this ...aah, aah!"	

30 secs.	Activity	Language	Social status
12.		<b>Adult 1:</b> "No, bigger"	
		<b>Jeremy:</b> "Ey, look, I'll cut this off!"	
13.			
14.	Concentrates on cutting big piece off. Returns main piece, takes another.	<b>Adult 1:</b> [Talking to 4 children about the sorting activity - material for cold weather - which section of collage it should go on etc. Three other children contribute to idea of thicker material for colder weather.]	
17.	Shows his cutting, occupied with scissors.	[No talk by Jeremy]	
18.		<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss, and we haven't got..."	
		<b>Adult:</b> "Are you sure, Jeremy?"	
19.	Cuts material, focusing hard on		
20.	exact performance		
21.	hands material back,	<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss, Miss!"	
22.	waves scissors		
23.	around his face.	<b>Adult 1:</b> "Jeremy, don't play with scissors"	
24.	Watches as material		
25.	is distributed to		
26.	winter section as it is 'too hot for		
27.	summer' (Adult 1)		

30 secs.	Activity	Language	Social status
28.	Preparation for glueing material to paper.	<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss, Miss!"	
29.	Adult passes over brush. Jeremy gets glue on hand in accepting brush.	<b>Adult 1:</b> "Yes, Jeremy, I'll get some more brushes, sit down ...Here you are."	1 of 4 children with adult
30.	Inspects glue, spreads it over hand with brush, leans		
31.	over and takes large		
32.	amount of glue.	<b>Child 1:</b> "Miss, Jeremy's got lots of glue!"	
33.	Jeremy sticks material carefully, spreading glue all over the		
34.	piece of material.		
35.	Pushes the material (leather) down very hard on the paper.		
36.		<b>Jeremy:</b> "Squash the glue, squash the glue. I want to squash the glue!"	
37.		<b>Adult 1:</b> "Can you see any pieces we missed?"	
		<b>Jeremy:</b> "Miss, that's the piece what we missed!"	
38.		"Eh, Miss, look! I can	

## SCHOOL II:12a

School II Tapes 1, 2, 3, report written 14.11.86 to summarise discussion between Teacher and V.H.

### Teacher's comments (P.W.)

Generally in area of the educational tasks of the class-children's completion of writing assignments, number games, sorting etc., any problems, any interruptions. A particular awareness of one child as needing attention for work in process and for interruptions for social relationship issues with other children. (v. PW's annotated analysis.)

### Researcher's view (V.H.)

Gives an impression of a busy, organised and effective class in which children are largely able to cope with their own needs or to work co-operatively, leaving PW free to concentrate on 1:1 or group work. There is no evidence from either teacher or children of any alienation of interest between the children and the teacher's purposes in the classroom - there seems to be room for what each individual seeks for his or her own self, and the emphasis on maths games and the close enjoyable relationship between members of the group seems to ensure that neither maths nor language/literacy work run counter to children's genuine interests.

A specific focus of PW's attention as discussed with VH after the session is the behaviour of a child, "Jeremy" (the name is changed to protect the child) whose behaviour is giving cause for concern. A "Target child" observation of 20 minutes' duration was undertaken during the session of 12.11.86 for this reason and some aspects of his behaviour (continuous attention-seeking, preoccupation with the performance of physical tasks to

30 secs.	Activity	Language	Social status
39.	Pressing down on the material to stick it.	do this!"	
40.		[Adult 1: discussion of leather, connection with shoes. Two of the children cooperate but Jeremy does not though asked about what shoes are made of.	
41.		NB. Only child to answer said "shoe-polish!" but	
42.		Jeremy did seem distinctive by his preoccupation with physical activity.]	

END

B16

**PAGE  
MISSING  
IN  
ORIGINAL**

the exclusion of the cognitive rationale of the activity) were thrown into contrast with the behaviour of other children.

VII suggests that one way to use the tapes would be to evaluate the teacher's interactions with Jeremy to see if there are ways in which he could be drawn more into the cognitive context of classroom activities, which are apparently shared by other children whose ages range from rising-five to seven (Jeremy is 6 1/4).

Another area of interest might be the development of a "workshop" approach to children's representation in which an area of the classroom would be continuously available for children's painting, drawing, junk modelling and work with malleable materials. This would link well with the existing synchrony of writing and number work with children's interests and would enrich the provision for the wide range of needs and developmental stages present in the class. It would also add a broad-based foundation of children's ways of embodying their thinking about the world which would support the maths games and literacy work. It should also give opportunities for the sensitive and sympathetic teacher to "key in" to the children's personal concerns and preoccupations and obtain the deeper understanding of their qualities and home backgrounds which she is constantly seeking.

This would be a context within which the behaviour of specific children such as Jeremy could be appropriately studied, with plentiful opportunities for him to contribute through his spontaneous play and representation. It would not militate against the examination of the teacher's interactions with Jeremy as a separate study.

V.I, 14.11.86

B18

approx. ??

- P.W.:** Right, John, can you tell us what these two sets of things are?
- John:** This is summer and that is winter.
- P.W.:** So these are all the things that would keep us warm in the winter, and these are all things that would help to keep us cool in the summer.  
How did you decide where they would go?
- Jeremy:** (inaudible)
- John:** We feeled them.
- P.W.:** Michael?
- Michael:** We just feeled them and if they was stiff that was hot.
- P.W.:** So you were going by the feel of them? If they felt stiff...[inaudible]
- P.W.:** I see. What did they have to feel like to go in the winter set?
- John:** Quite fat.
- P.W.:** Quite fat? What else?
- John:** And hot.
- P.W.:** Hot to the touch? And what about the summery ones? What did they have to feel like? To make you decide to put them there?
- John:** Very thin.
- P.W.:** Very thin... Do you know what some of these materials are?
- John:** Cotton? That one's cotton.
- P.W.:** Is it? What about this one? Actually that feels quite thick, why did you...?
- John:** The ladies wear that and they can wear it as a jumper.
- Mrs. B.:** Towelling beachwear.
- P.W.:** That's right, yes, beachwear. It does feel quite thick though, but you still decided it was summer rather than winter? Mm.  
What about this one? What did this feel like?



Child 1: Miss, drink of water?  
P.W.: Yes Claire.  
Child 2: Miss, this feels like cotton.  
P.W.: Would you all agree that this feels like cotton?  
Jeremy: [Silence]  
P.W.: Mm...  
Jeremy: Cotton wool.  
P.W.: Cotton wool? Oh, I don't think it feels like cotton wool -  
I think it feels like a suitcase.  
John: That's cotton wool.  
P.W.: Well done!  
Mrs. B.: Some of them have decided on the type of clothes you want to  
put but John had that on the summer one [inaudible]  
Michael: Miss I done a tracing on the paper.  
P.W.: Can you rub it out with some tissue then, Michael.  
P.W.: What would you make out of this Jeremy?  
Matthew: Can I have another milk?  
P.W.: Yes, Matthew.  
P.W.: What, what do you think they would make out of this,  
John?  
John: A coat, a leather coat.  
P.W.: A coat, yes, a nice leather coat, it's suede isn't it, that  
side, I think leather's the smooth side, isn't it.  
Child 3: Miss, can I get another milk? (twice)  
P.W.: Yes, you can.  
V.H.: I missed the beginning of the sequence...?  
P.W.: I think he [Jeremy] knew what the sorting basis was, but he  
couldn't justify what he was...  
Jeremy: Can I see the photos?  
P.W.: Jeremy, Mrs. H. missed the beginning of our conversation,  
can you tell her which is the set for summer and which is  
the set for winter?  
Jeremy: I don't know.  
P.W.: I don't know? [attends to another child]  
Jeremy: I haven't done this before.  
P.W.: You haven't done it before? All right, Jeremy.

The recording of the session 12 November does highlight the difficulties of listening to children read in a busy infant classroom.

Perhaps the workshop idea may help to provide the children with an area in which they could work freely and to an extent independent of me allowing me some uninterrupted time for individual reading. Obviously supervision in the workshop area would be desirable - perhaps necessary - and Irene Cook could be used in this way during some of her time with me ( four half day sessions per week).

I like your suggestion of using the tapes to evaluate my responses and interactions with Jeremy and I would welcome any suggestions you might have.

I think too - I hope you agree - that it will be possible to follow both the aspects of

- 1) Jeremy - drawing him into the cognitive context of classroom activities and endeavouring to modify his behaviour.
- 2) Approaches to listening to children read.

I feel both will be possible because after listening to 12.11.86 tapes I do not think - but please to feel free to offer constructive criticism - that my approach to listening to children read and encouraging progress in this area actually needs changing. The real problem is, as I have already outlined, providing the right sort of context for children to read.

SCHOOL II:16

- P.

Wednesday 3 December

Workshop - Set up for children to use when they had finished set activities.

Number work - Tiffany, John O., Mark, Caroline.

Problem solving: How many ways can you make a pattern using only six multilink cubes.

- Wayne, John P., Michael D., Richard

Sewing: with Irene Cook - felt stockings for Christmas.

Billy, Joanne, Sarah, Michael H., Jeremy

Writing - Jeremy, Louise, David, Hayley.

Small World Play using Playpeople, Farm (made by children) and Doll house (furniture made by children).

- Victoria, Claire, Stacey and Matthew.

[Unfortunately the tape didn't work.] - V.H.

B22

Workshop area prepared, helper to sew Christmas stockings, PW reading with individuals and with Jeremy and Matthew especially, VH to service workshop.

?When do they use sand and water-covered during morning? Clay H/C?

PW concerned for the reading - is she wrong to try to get uninterrupted time with each child rather than using wrong methods? (V listen to tapes and check) (Jeremy met V. in playground, showed cigarette cards of Glen Hoddle, came into classroom, left when asked, rushed to other children 'Mrs. Hurst is here! Mrs Hurst is here!')

No Maths break - prog finished.

Group time used to expound issues in task provided - six multilink combined in as many different ways as possible.

Intro to workshop. Child asks: 'What you gotta make ?' PW explains to VH: We don't usually have it/Children: We do in Blue Class

PW: Yes but Miss M's classroom laid out differently - more room Asks children not to interrupt when reading being heard. Workshop for when set activities finished.

PW: interested in play in classroom - could workshop etc. be used unsupervised? V - ??? if they were taught. Also workshop should have a normal place in the classroom routine as one of the options available. Will suggest P. directs children to wide range of opp??? at outset, enunciating each and not making play/work distinction either all '???' or 'be at' or 'do'. Rules for workshop need to be worked out and enunciated to children.

Need: **store** for paintings, **easier aprons** (replace cloth with elastic ties) **easy clips**, **thicker paint** for easel, **rubbish bin**, some way to write or affix names, **clearing up** and **washing up** routine.

SCHOOLII:18

Teacher B. (P.W.)

10.12.86

Side 1A

Taped counter begins

- 107 Registration
- 190 Measuring the very long paper chain the children had made  
the day before -  
estimation of length comparison  
encouraging children to verbalise about  
their understanding of length

[Instructions for how workshop and clay and other activities to  
be used - V.H.]

Side 1B

This side of the tape is much clearer.

- 165 on the playground dealing with a squabble.
- 188 after play - milk
- 416 Jeremy's mum came to collect him for dental appointment.
- 466 Talking to group working with polydrons.  
(Wayne, Michael, John O., and Richard?)

B24

SCHOOL II:19

P: Primary School.

10.12.86

Starting activities

- 1) Christmas decorations. (with Irene Cook).  
Tiffany  
John O.  
Mark  
Caroline
  
- 2) Number - ??? and ones (with me)  
Wayne  
John P.  
Michael D.  
Richard
  
- 3) Workshop  
Billy  
Joanne  
Sarah  
Michael H.
  
- 4) Clay  
Jeremy  
Louise  
Stacey  
Hayley
  
- 5) Number - addition  
Victoria  
Claire  
Daniel  
Matthew

B25

SCHOOL II:20

\* ~~R~~angefield

10.12.86

Parents determined they can leave children in classroom and I was going to leave daughter if I left classroom "OK on her own." (!) PW wondering whether she could fit some readers in this morning - possibility she may find it easier if she spread her teacher-intensive activities out through the day and adds more self winding activities eg. sand and water which could assist with other activities, as could ?? if replanned.

The very clear description of the day's activities each morning could include sand water malleables and workshop activities in the opportunities. The loss of tables would be made up by fewer [unfinished - ? 'activities requiring table space']

B26

SCHOOL II:21

Tape 1 side 2

Teacher B. (PW)

Tape no: 327

P.W.: Is that somebody to go in your house?

Tiffany: [inaudible...] cage.

P.W.: Are you putting children in the cage?

Tiffany: ...They fell down.

P.W.: Why did they fall down, Victor Tiffany?

Tiffany: [inaudible]

P.W.: And how are they going to get out?

P.W.: [inaudible]

P.W.: That doesn't sound a very nice thing to happen to someone on the way to school does it?

Does it all end up happily ever after?

Tiffany: [inaudible]

P.W.: Well I'm glad of that.

V.H.: We've got such a lovely problem here Mrs W. Caroline did a lovely printing with the Nescafe lid. Can I show what you did? That side's flat now isn't it? You did that didn't you. You pressed it down ever so hard and [PW joins in on these words] the writing came out... but it came out [V.H. only] upside down, and so Caroline very sensibly turned it round, and it still wasn't right... isn't that funny?

P.W.: Why is that, Caroline, can you think... Why that happened? Leave it like that for a minute and I'll show you a trick... Caroline, If we look in the mirror... does it come out the right way in the mirror, can we see?...  
If doesn't does it?

V.H.: What about if we turn it round this way? Actually it's such a bad print that I've done it's very difficult to see, does it look the right way that way? Very hard to see.

P.W.: Yes it does doesn't it?

????????????????????line illegible the writing on it again...?we'll see.

P.W.: How are those children going to get out of the cage?



**Tiffany:** Break it

**P.W.:** They break out...

**V.H.:** all sticky and lovely is it? What does it feel like?

**Jeremy:** Like tomato soup.

**V.H.:** Like tomato soup, does it?

**Jeremy:** That's what I made (to V.H.) I can't get it off the table...

**P.W.:** Right, Caroline, if we hold the mirror up there now... I think it does, doesn't it, does it make it the same as that?

**Caroline:** Yes.

**P.W.:** Yes, it does.

**V.H.:** What about if we put the lid, now the lid's got it the right way up, if we put the lid in the mirror?  
Isn't that funny, that's a real trick.

**P.W.:** Shall we look at some, some other writing; we shall see that all writing...Oh!

**P.W.:** Hello

**372:** Um, Haley, could you go across to Mrs. Dougle's class for me and could you say that Laura's Mummy is here now...  
Yes, you can both go.  
Dry your hands properly... dry your hands properly...  
Show me how you dry your hands properly.  
I think you've still got some clay in there - shall we try washing it off with some soap.1.. rub the together.

**Jeremy:** Soap is strong.

**P.W.:** Soap is strong? Good at getting the dirt off, isn't it.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, my soap is brilliant, it's super soap.

**P.W.:** Super soap - it gets more dirt off than other soap, does it? [What's the matter with it, John, what's the matter with it?]

**Jeremy:** Yes... it gets all the dirt off.

**Jeremy:** Mummy, what is that?

**P.W.:** let's brush you down a bit, mu goodness you've got a lot of clay over you, wait a minute...

**Jeremy:** That's clay on my jumper, lots of clay... they're playing with my clay!

P.W.: Well you can play with it another time as you've got to go to????

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Principal: Miss G.M. Redford BA. MPhil.

7th January 1987

Dear Vicky,

I'm enclosing your interim assessment. I found it extremely interesting. I am so much in agreement with your thoughts on self-evaluation and so on.

Your points about ecological issues are also close to my heart. I found Helen Roberts' book Doing Feminist Research (1981 R.K.P.) very supportive - particularly as time and time again in that collection of articles the point about the power issue connected with teacher or??subject/researcher comes up.

I hope you've enjoyed reading my efforts. Perhaps at some point we can make arrangements for a less constrained meeting than the last - my apologies! Is your phone-in on the 14th on LBC - I forgot to take a note when you mentioned it?

Happy New Year

???Name????

Also Early Childhood Research Quarterly  
Vol.1, No.1 1986

B30

## SCHOOL II:23

29.10.86 Observation of Anthony and Matthew not transcribed but observations sent to P.W.

12.11.86 PW's analysis and reflections

3.12.86 Recording disaster. Workshop introduced - PW's note of activities, my note

10.12.86 Yet to be received from PW [received]

**Issues:** Power (v. Linda's references to add to method section)  
Way A and B use tape  
Identifying sections of tape for transcribing.  
Children's enquiries and responses about tapes and radiomike

### Tape 2

11.12 Interruptions to PW's programme of hearing reading.  
P-337 ??? for interruptions to Caroline's story  
P-345 Anthea??? screeching.

Vicky - do I need to transcribe whole tape, part tape with not purely supportive description of rest? Justify by including evidence relevant to foci arrived at jointly.

-Would it be a good idea to write each stage up as an article - ie Andrea and supporting children's language Pat and ???'s role in the vertically grouped classroom, perhaps in collaboration with Andrea and Pat.

## SCHOOL II:24

14th January 1987

Dear Vicky,

I'm returning the last tape. The extreme weather conditions have provided the opportunity to go through it. I didn't make it into school today - well over a foot of snow on the driveway and a severe cold has kept me at home. I've just learnt that school has been officially closed until Monday as there has been flooding in some classrooms, staff absences and only 10 children turned up for school today!

I have listed the children's starting activities and from the tape we learn how many of them spent the rest of their time that morning. You will remember that Hayley and Joanne did some excellent work in the workshop (race track and restaurant) and Michael with some other boys - can't remember who now - made a castle. A group of boys went on to work with Polydrons (a selection of triangles and squares which fit together to make tessellating patterns or 3D shapes). Matthew, Caroline, Victoria and a number of others enjoyed the day activity.

I think the workshop idea worked very well. You will notice - as I did - from listening to the tape that the number of times Jeremy sought attention throughout the morning is considerably less than on other mornings. It worked too for other children like Louise who is prone to be very demanding.

Of course, I have always included junk modelling and clay among classroom activities but these work areas are not available on a daily bases. I have tended to use them as, perhaps, afternoon activities, keeping to the development of more basic, cognitive skills in morning sessions. That doesn't mean I am devaluing the

B32

importance of creative activities but that the notions of accountability and the importance of enabling my young learners to become literate and numerate juniors I do feel very keenly.

However, I believe the workshop idea could augment the development of cognitive skills by providing a creative outlet for a number of children and leaving me free to work with individuals or groups. But, if I work with groups on language or math skills then I'm ignoring the valuable creative work that I intend as part of the children's learning programme. And, I do feel it is important to talk to the children about their creative work - E.g. Joanne who is a very slow learner but was able to put a great deal of thought and understanding into her model and to elucidate on what she had done. Hayley, whose race track was a mixture of 2D and 3D - isn't there a myth that the concept of map - 2D map - is very much on an upper junior level of understanding! And, children like Jeremy who still need a great deal of concrete/tactile/practical experience.

The real problem for me as a teacher is one of organisation - organisation of my time, the children's time and perhaps some rethinking about organisation of the classroom. The workshop worked so well when you were there to help me, but I can't be two people and I do think the workshop needs some supervision and teacher support and recognition of what is achieved in the area. Irene Cook is a very valuable asset and I know I will be able to use her, when she is in the class, to help me provide the experiences I want for the children as an ongoing part of their school day.

My time, the children's time and Irene's time is something I can begin to deal with. I'm holding back on reorganising the classroom for several reasons - 1) the children are used to the set up as it is and 2) this term I have another four children (three from our nursery and one from outside) making 24 children in total, The extra four make it very apparent how much Claire

and Matthew have absorbed on the organisation of the classroom and how well they have learned to organise their time and to interact with the other children. The idea of another 3/4 children for the summer term I find quite daunting!

In considering classroom organisation and the provision of a wide range of experiences for a vertically grouped infant class, it occurred to me that a team teaching situation in perhaps, an open play classroom set up would provide a very pragmatic answer to the dilemma of which areas of learning should be given emphasis. It is certainly a working experience that I am keen to try at some stage in my career.

Well, Vicky, I hope all this helps. I've written my thoughts and discussions with myself much as the arguments, counter arguments and solutions occurred. If you need anything more from me, do let me know - anyhow it would be nice to meet and conclude our discussions.

It was lovely to have you in my classroom - I really enjoyed the Wednesday mornings. The sessions were very valuable in helping me to think constructively about organisation and classroom practice - thank you.

Finally, I'm so pleased you could make our carol concert - hope you weren't too squashed! My very best wishes to you for the coming year.

Sincerely,

P

B34

SCHOOL II:25a)

20.1.87

Dear A.

How are you? I'd love to hear your news. I hope you're getting lots of rest.

Here is another stage of my research. I hope it embodies the importance of your role, and I'd be ever so grateful for a note, long or short, of your views which I would like to incorporate as your side of the picture either as Teacher A or under your own name as you wish.

Best wishes for 1987

Vicky

[same to P

B35



SCHOOL II:26

21 January 1987.

Dear Vicky,

Thank you for your note and enclosure which I received today when I returned to school after my absence. My cold developed into flu with a secondary sinus infection - oh for some warm, spring days!

I hope that my screed (14.1.87) provides you with the response you wanted from me. I do feel after reading your research that I could, perhaps, have been of greater help by evaluating more critically the tape material - I'm sorry. By all means use my name if you would prefer it to Teacher B!

Thought you would be interested to know that since the new reception children joined the class, Claire seems less intent on organising Matthew but concentrates on the younger children! Also, Jeremy's Mum expects another baby in March - can't help feeling that Jeremy is going to need a great deal of support and understanding over the coming months.

Sincerely,

P:

B36

# **APPENDIX C**

## **EVALUATION OF THE HISTORY COMPONENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES OPTION, YEAR THREE**

**October 1986 - March 1988**

# EVALUATION OF THE HISTORY COMPONENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES OPTION, D.O.G.I.T.E. Year 3.

THE COURSE IN ACTION : YEAR ONE, 1986-7

## Session 1;

This was our first meeting for the history section of the course since the general introduction to the whole course two terms ago; due to a misunderstanding I had not been able to meet the students face to face as a group, although the preparatory material, including that for the use of T.P. work, had been sent to them and I had visited as many as I could on teaching practice.

We used the time to begin to get to know each other and catch up on the T.P. experience; we discussed what each student had done in class, what kinds of history they had been aware of during the work, and how the children saw history as important in their lives. The students had become aware, in various ways, of the personal meaning of history in each individual's life, and we were able to relate this to the idea of narrative being a primary act of mind (include reference here); as far as history is concerned telling a good story was important, but telling

a story about oneself had a very particular meaning. It was interesting to contrast this approach with other successful ones, where children had studied the lives of people of other times and other places, such as the Ancient Egyptians, or followed the development of a topic over time, such as aspects of social history.

There did not seem to be any one way to provide for history with primary children, but rather certain elements which could motivate them to awareness of what history was about. These elements appeared to be concerned with children finding some common ground which would support their venturing into whatever new way of looking at the world was introduced to them - this could be their own or their families' history, some place, function, task or item of daily use known to them already, or it could be the possibility of their imagining themselves into a situation, such as what it would be like to build a house out of logs or to write a letter using hieroglyphs.

We discussed what might create problems for children in studying history, and found that relationships in time were, as usual, a difficulty. Some students had dealt with this in the short time at their disposal by not worrying the children about it; others had been concerned to try to give children some way to relate blocks of time to each other. The very wide developmental range of the children involved necessitated an extremely flexible approach but we did succeed in establishing that even for very young children it was possible to relate happenings to events in their own or their parents' or grandparents' lifetimes. Beyond that no-one felt confident that time relationships perse would be firmly established even with upper juniors, except where some motivating element allowed for an imaginative "fix" - the lifetime of Henry VIII, for example - or where the development of a theme over time allowed the study of sequence and causation in relation to time - the evolution of the steam engine, for example. We related these insights to the old-fashioned but reliable time-line, and experimented with various ways of presenting this information.

We also talked about the students' personal study, and related this to the impressions of school history that they had brainstormed earlier. The results were an impressive argument for a new approach to secondary history, which has fortunately been evolving since these students left school. There was a wide range of personal topics chosen, which the students of the first year-group are asked to describe and evaluate if they would like to, in whatever detail seems appropriate to them. This summary of the first day's work inevitably gives a much more organised impression than any of the participants had at the time, and yet, by drawing together points from various people's contributions it was possible for me, acting as a sort of verbal minutes secretary, to bring to the notice of the group some very sound ideas and insights which they already possessed and which, when shared with each other and combined in context, provided a beginning of the developmental outline which must be the foundation of all approaches to teaching history. I would like to emphasise that I would not describe this as an example of the Socratic method - there was no element of questions designed to elicit certain answers - but a synthesis of genuine and spontaneous contributions from different members of the group.

## Record-keeping in the course:

A difficulty of which I have been aware during both years is that students may not initially realise the general value and professional implications of the whole group's ideas and impressions when they are drawn together and reflected upon; I hope that this record will go some way towards giving groups of students confidence in the value of their work and experience so that as teachers they may be able to use their professional expertise and observations as the basis for development of good practice, whether working as individuals or in professional support groups. An integral part of this self-evaluation is continuous record-keeping, and it is hoped that students will be able to use this record as a support for their own developing skills in record-keeping; this record is to be adjusted in the light of their comments and reflections just as their records will be adjusted in the light of what they learn from their pupils.

## Lesson 2:

During this session we carried further some of the work of the last session, in discussing ways in which one might give young children experience of the passing of time as a support for their awareness of the meaning of history; students formed groups to devise time-lines for their own personal studies and for the kind of historical learning that

might be suitable for children of specific age-groups. We also began to confront certain of the very important current issues to do with the conflict between content and process in recommendations for the history curriculum, and contrasted the suggestions which were at that time being made by the Historical Association with those which students had made last week on the basis of their T.P. experience. (Students will be interested to see how the points which were made then about taking children's developmental needs into account relate to the revised suggestions of the H.A. as they are now (4/1988) under discussion; the highly democratic and professional approach of the H.A. to this vital area exposes the thinking of experienced and committed practitioners in a most thought-provoking way.)

In preparation for some practical work in the local environment groups of students were given collections of postcards of paintings and photographs depicting scenes in London from the C18th to the C20th, and asked to range them in date order without looking at the back; they were to discuss their reasons for the order they decided on, and to point out the visual clues (transport, clothing, architecture etc.) that they had used. This was an exercise which required time and concentration, but after a period of about ten minutes an impressive rate of success was recorded - only one painting proved to be misplaced. Students had found it necessary to use a variety of clues, of which the buildings and streets, where they could be identified, were the most influential in giving orientation and a background against which the unfamiliar could be assessed.

In the afternoon students were to go out in self-chosen groups to explore the immediate vicinity of the college for items that might

provide "markers" for change, such as the architectural styles of houses and the street furniture. I was aiming here not so much at an accurate dating as an awareness of what might indicate "oldness" or a lack of continuity with modern surroundings to the eye of a child - clues which could provide the starting point for an investigation. This proved to be a difficult exercise, in that it was hard for students to feel confident in their powers of observation and investigation unsupported by a precise knowledge of the ages of whatever confronted them, and yet I felt it was really valuable to recreate in their experience the way a child might form impressions of the local environment. This approach, which I now describe as an "innocent eye" experience, seemed to me to be one to be pursued but with more tutorial support, perhaps sacrificing something of the spontaneity but gaining in confidence and in understanding of children's experience of the world around them.

The first-year students, in spite of their feelings of uncertainty, made, in particular, some useful observations of the shapes of windows, doors, roofs and sky-lines which proved, when they came to work with children in the following term, to have alerted them to factors which were definitely of interest and relevance to children. It was my hope that it might be possible to achieve a similar result with rather less anxiety, although some feelings of uncertainty are an unavoidable part of this kind of experience - in fact essential if one is to share children's experience of exploring the world.

#### Session 3:

This took the form of a talk with slides given by the librarian at Rachel McMillan College on the lives and work of the McMillan sisters. In the course of the talk, and of the time afterwards when the primary evidence could be examined, students were exposed to a wide range of historical topics and evidence; one student, however, commented that she was sure it was useful but would have liked it to have been made plainer how this session would be helpful to them; the following year the librarian and I talked more fully about what we felt students could draw from this experience, and we will be interested to see if this has been effective. I felt at the time that this difficulty reflected the awkwardness of talking with non-specialists about historical work without having enough time to support their own learning and development, but hoped that it might be possible to remedy it in future sessions and through a record such as this, in which there would be more opportunity to reflect and examine the work.

#### Session 4:

A visit had been arranged to the ILEA History Teachers' Centre where students were introduced to ideas about providing for young children's interest in the environment, and about how to be alert to bias in history, whether in contemporary accounts or in present-day presentation. The speaker, an advisory teacher attached to the centre, focused in particular on the "hidden history" of black people and of

women. Afterwards students were able to see a wide range of books and other classroom materials. No student has so far mentioned this visit, either formally or informally; I should be interested to know whether it was found to be useful, or perhaps it was rather too early in the course, in that some students might have not been ready to imagine themselves using this material in class? Unfortunately, the advisory teacher is no longer attached to the centre but I would still draw students' attention to the invaluable opportunity to look at the materials collected there.

#### Sessions 5 and 6:

Due to my own illness both these sessions were missed by me, but fortunately the latter session, which was a museum visit, was able to take place and was kindly supported by my geographer colleague. Session 5, which was to have been a study of the history of the village of Wrotham, has reluctantly been dropped from the present year's programme because of the shortage of time, and the greater need, as I perceive it, to prepare students for inner-city and suburban environments. However, it is acknowledged that in general it would give a much more rounded picture of local history work to include some rural studies as well.

#### Session 7:

The follow-up of the museum visit; we discussed in general what the students had felt about their visit (to the London Museum) and how it could support their provision for children. Subsequently we drafted, in small groups, the construction of a museum visit, including the curriculum context, the preparation and the follow-up work, and then presented the proposals to the rest of the group. This was followed by reference to some H.M.I. comments on the use of museums (1986a, A survey of the use some schools in six local education authorities make of museum services, H.M.S.O., and 1986b, A survey of the use some Oxfordshire schools and colleges make of museum services).

During the latter part of this session we examined a range of materials for use with schools, including schemes, stories and games, and each student chose one item to present to the group. This prompted a student to suggest that, since time was short, and there were many interesting books on the booklist, we should in future have a session or sessions where each student took one recommended text and reported on it to the group; it was not possible to do this in the time available but it will be born in mind for the future.

#### Sessions 8 and 9:

Environmental studies work with schoolchildren was pursued over the two sessions at an East End Primary School; children and students experimented with mapping, with street-surveys for use of buildings, and with the search for the age of buildings. Back at school the results were represented in a range of tabular and artistic ways, bearing in

mind the need to present work in the classroom in such a way as to support the children's further learning. Although it was not possible for students to work with the nursery children on this occasion, we visited the nursery class and were delighted to find several large-scale representations of the local streets, houses, shops, roads, transport (including aircraft), weather and notable humans such as police and lollipop ladies). This seemed like a most encouraging start, and made the prospect of a whole-school approach to environmental studies a much realer, if more challenging, prospect.

#### Session 10:

This consisted of seminars conducted by two experienced practitioners who were able to demonstrate ways of providing scientific and geographical work with children, making use of the local environment.

#### Session 11:

From this point on it was necessary to engage in revision, although in the course of this we were able to discuss general aspects of the curriculum and to develop key ideas, such as the distinctively historical ways of thinking.

#### Evaluation of the course:

Two students sent in detailed formal evaluations, and others made informal comments and suggestions, all of which have already been discussed above; it is hoped that this will be of benefit to the next group of students, and that more students will contribute to the development of the course.

As I reported in my review of the course, I feel that in general, there is difficulty in providing for " an input that contains the minimum necessary to have an idea of the nature and scope of this subject area while trying to ensure enough time for students' own development of understanding and experience. I propose to try to resolve this next time by having a stronger focus on the coursework and on students' evaluations of what they have done..."

The external examiner noted the personal input that many of the students had made as shown in the coursework files, and recommended, as above, that T.P. work should be included since the other opportunities for work with children were limited.

Looking back on the course, I feel that, as a first attempt to provide a meaningful experience of history for non-specialists in a short space of



time, its strength lay in the emphasis on each person's capacity to contribute to the work on the basis of his or her personal experience, and their experience of encountering children coming to grips with ideas about time past during teaching practice. This is something I would want to continue and develop, not only because I believe it makes sensible use of previous experience, but also because I believe that this is how one should teach students to teach children. I am drawing here not only on my experience of early childhood education and on the massive body of recent research on the importance of teaching to young children's strengths and achievements, but also on my earlier work in history teaching throughout the secondary age-range.

In spite of the formidably complex and abstract nature of historical thinking, or perhaps because of it and because of the support that concrete examples give to abstract thought (see, for example, Donaldson M., 1978) it is my belief that the experience and interests of students of whatever age or stage are the most effective vehicle for their growing understanding of historical processes, whether we are speaking of adults, of 16 year olds or of nursery children. Just as the young child's home experiences form the material for a sophisticated level of thought and language that may not easily be reached in school unless teachers build on the child's home life and achievements, the older child can reach to comparatively advanced levels of expertise (see, for example, Booth, M. "A recent research project into children's historical thinking," in Nichol, J.ed. (?1981) Perspectives 4: Developments in History Teaching, University of Exeter) in handling historical material and processes which have sense and meaning because they connect in some way with previous experience.

The most important insight that this first year of the course has given me is that of the role of record-keeping for both teacher and students; this has led me, as I said earlier, to see a practical as well as a research use for this record and to offer it to both the first and the second group of students in hopes that this would be useful for them during their studies and even more valuable in the longer term as an incentive to professional development. As a study in co-operative evaluation this record will be examined in the light of the use all participants make of it to see what it may have to contribute to the growing debate on how education should be evaluated, and by whom.

CLIODATA 1

University of London GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE  
Internal Memorandum

BE3 Env.Stud. 1987-8

BE4 (Evn.Stud. 1986-7)

13.5.88

Dear Students

As you will see from the enclosed papers, I am evaluating the first two years of the History component of the Environmental Studies Curriculum Option for BE3. This is in connection with my research in strategies of evaluation as well as being an integral part of the planning and provision of the History part of the Option.

I should be most grateful for any comments you would like to make about the course as you now view it; informal notes, ideas, views and suggestions are all welcome, and I hope you will find my evaluation something you can relate your comments to - the more exact you are in saying which session you refer to the better. Replies by end of term please.

With thanks for any help you can give,

Vicky Hurst.

P.S. Please add details of your experiences of history before beginning the course, whether in or out of school.

CB

**Evaluation of the Environmental Studies Course 1986-87**

June 1988

**Background**

Before beginning this course I had little experience of history which was one reason for taking the course. At school I only studied the subject until the third year as my option choices meant that history was one of the subjects I dropped.

**General Points**

One point that I feel still needs to be addressed is very general. The course is titled on 'environmental studies' course but is split into two quite separate areas of geography and history. Apart from the fact that Environmental Studies could include more than these two areas, I feel it would be helpful to make links between the two more explicit. They seemed to me to be quite separate except on the visits and then the balance was far from even.

**Evaluation on the sessions - numbered as for  
'The Course in Action: Year One, 1986-7****Session one**

As a general introduction it was interesting to see how different people had involved history in their T.P.'s and illustrated that a wide range of methods were possible.

**Session two**

Working on the time-line in groups was valuable in so far as it helped us to be aware of the thought necessary in constructing such an item. However as we were in groups it was difficult to

choose a topic that everyone considered relevant so some were working on ideas they had no intention of ever using. I agree with your points on the work carried out in the vicinity of college. I felt that I needed more historical knowledge to make informed choices showing change although it was not difficult to find examples of time passing. The problem was more one of being able to identify the examples that were found.

### **Session three**

The information on the McMillans was interesting but, as your evaluation has highlighted, the relevance of the session was not immediately apparent.

### **Session four**

The teachers' centre visit was helpful in that it showed us the type of facilities that are available and the resources produced for teaching history. Linking this to TP experiences may have helped to make it more relevant at the time but now that I am preparing to start my first teaching job, I can look back on this visit as being a useful pointer to the facilities I can use.

### **Session five**

Referring to your comment on 'the greater need' being 'to prepare students for inner-city and suburban environments' I would argue that this may only be true in the short-term. Not all students will be teaching in these situations on their first posts and I think some mention of things to consider in a rural situation should have been included even if the visit could not be rescheduled.

### **Sessions six and seven**

Visiting a museum with the specific focus of how it could be

used to help children with their historical understanding was an activity well worth doing. However, if any members of the group had in mind a museum they would rather have attended I feel this should have been permitted. Pooling experiences back at college would then have been helpful in providing a broader picture of museums and various ways of using them.

### **Sessions eight and nine**

It was helpful to try some ideas in school. However, I feel that one session would have been sufficient and that it was rather artificial given that we had very little experience of the area and so the children were likely to know as much, if not more, about their environment than we did.

### **Session ten**

I felt this was valuable, especially the work conducted around college, searching the back field etc. Generally I found the sessions conducted by visitors extremely helpful for ideas, as well as being from a different view-point. Visits and trips beyond college were also beneficial but I feel that sufficient background must be given within college for these other activities to have maximum effect.

I hope these comments will be of some assistance to your research.

Evaluation of Environmental Studies Curriculum Option  
(History part) 1986-7

I enjoyed the environmental studies option; in fact I pursued the subject further in my education report. I studied history up to A level, prior to starting the course.

**Session two**

Having read the evaluation, I now fully realise the importance of the study carried out in the local area and how this helped us, as adults, to recreate historical experiences as might be seen by children. At the time however, I was not really aware as to all of the reasons why we were carrying out this work. Perhaps a discussion between the group and tutor would have helped.

**Session three**

The session at Rachel McMillan College was interesting and the collection of historical resources impressive, as they added to both my knowledge of the local area and the development of nursery education. I agree with the student who wondered how helpful the session was, particularly as regards topics covered in the exam.

**Session four**

The visit to the teachers' centre was a valuable experience, as it alerted my attention to the wide range of historical provision

available for use in schools, The visit was particularly good as regards the emphasis placed on historical teaching in a multicultural society.

### **Session six**

Our visit to the Museum of London furthered my own knowledge about certain aspects of social history. However, I feel that the visit would have been even more worthwhile if a general discussion beforehand had been carried out. It was quite daunting to try and get a general overview of the museum in one visit. Perhaps if we had been given some idea of that the museum contained, it would have enabled us to have concentrated on specific areas in more depth. It would have been illuminating to have compared this museum with another, although I realise that time was limited.

### **Session seven**

The follow up work to the visit was useful and gave me some helpful information about using museums with a class in future. A student suggested that a recommended text be taken and reported on by each person. I have never found this to be a particularly useful exercise. In other curriculum areas, the exercise became a conversation solely between student and tutor, with those reporting first taking up the greater part of the session. Perhaps key texts could be taken by groups of students and the reports divided between the sessions or discussed if particularly relevant to a specific session.

### **Sessions eight and nine**

It was valuable to work with children, as it enabled me to put all my ideas and thoughts about environmental studies into practice. It was a particularly valuable experience as I found that environmental work on teaching practice had been limited. It was interesting to work with older children, although I would have also liked to have worked with children under eight.

### **Session ten**

The outside speakers widened both my geographical knowledge and the ways in which children come to understand their environment. Their insights added another dimension or perspective to the course.

Overall I found the course to be useful and interesting. The essay we were set was very relevant and encouraged me to research into the whole area of history more widely than I might otherwise have done. The essay enabled me to examine more fully how and why the study of history should be an integral part of any school curriculum.



25.5.88

Dear Vicky,

I hope I can be of some help in your evaluation of the course. Naturally, though, Environmental Studies' impressions are a bit 'cobwebby' now and I expect they have changed over the year. Generally I really enjoyed the course and personally felt I came away with more understanding. I am very interested in the role of environmental studies in school as in the past I enjoyed the active 'in the field' experience myself, having attended numerous field courses over the years. I must admit though that geography is my forte and I was more intrinsically motivated in this part of the course.

Having not studied History since 'O' level days I found it very interesting and was referashed to learn that History isn't dusty books and long past, meaningless dates which I seem to recall from my own experience of school. I feel now, as I am soon to embark on my teaching career, that I am more qualified to introduce children to History which is undoubtably an important element to the curriculum. Having worked on this course my insight into teaching History is very different and hopefully more conducive to the facilitation of children's learning. On my final teaching-practice I worked with the children on an environmental study which was without a doubt motivated by my experience of the course. I must confess, however, that History didn't play a crucial role of this study as it was very much tied to the 'here and now.' The children studied a row of local shops. If I had been working with the children for a longer time I would have made them aware of an Historical aspect, be it what the area was like in past years or a closer study of the architecture. If I had conducted a similar study, having not worked on the course I know I would have approached the study,

less aware of the possibilities and probably I would have totally neglected even the possibility of an historical element.

Now to look at the elements of the course in some detail (a little of what I can remember). Discussion was in my opinion important and through talking through our ideas. I feel we considered possibilities more critically (for history teaching/topics). Discussing the problems that children have in studying history was enlightening, especially when these were reinforced by our own experiences. Looking a different time??? reinforced the need to 'start with the child', his/her experience. It's always reassuring on other courses to find ideas, generated in Professional and Foundation Studies from Years One and Two, being reinforced. The personal History Study was good in the fact that it gave me a greater insight into the History of my local area and I found out interesting facts which I had not known before. I know the idea of the study was that it was to be ongoing and very personal but I feel it would have been informative and interesting if we had each presented our study, in whatever form it was in, at the end of term, to the whole group.

The "innocent eye" exercise to which you refer in session two was very difficult but, though we did not realise its value at the time, it was a valuable insight into how the children which we worked with in Sessions 8 and 9 had problems with interpreting the environment. To really notice details and search for historical clues in buildings is perhaps something which even adults have difficulty doing - to really stop, notice and record observations are undoubtedly skills which we would hope to develop in children and perhaps refresh for ourselves.

The visit to Rachel McMillan was interesting but I personally felt the time could have been spent doing something else, more related to the course. It would have been interesting to 'do' a rural study and I am aware that we would have if circumstances

had been different. I feel, however, it was sad that this year's group also did not carry out a rural study. I'm sure many of the students will eventually find themselves teaching in the country and for those particularly who have not lived in the countryside obvious approaches/items to pick up on and bring to children's attention may in fact not be obvious to the teacher.

The visit to the ILEA Teachers's Centre was in contrast, in my opinion, very worthwhile and the approach of 'hidden history' gave us yet another repertoire to add to our approaches to meaningful history teaching. It was interesting to browse through the materials available for teachers to use, but as you suggested I personally didn't note down any books which I thought, at the time, may be useful in future teaching. From what I can remember, many were very junior orientated and inappropriate for the nursery/infant class.

The museum visit was informative at my personal level - building my knowledge of history and also the fact that I could observe 'in action' many school groups using the museum. It was enlightening to see how the children used the museum. It seemed most groups had worksheets and often 'completing the sheet' was the ultimate goal imposed upon the children rather than the active exploration and investigation. Undoubtedly the amount of information was so great that it would seem most appropriate to take children to see a particular section/display and give them more open-ended tasks rather than filling in worksheets.

I personally was unhappy about the amount of space given to artefacts of war. This is a very personal opinion which I have formed from my experiences of museums. I am aware of the prevalence of war within our history, and war brings change, but often I have wondered what impression a young child might come away from a museum with. I would prefer to encourage children to find out about everyday life and implements used in the past rather than focussing their attention on weapons. The visit to

Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood was a wonderful comparison and well worth the morning spent. I believe some of the Nursery/first School department felt it did not justify a second visit (as we went in Professional Studies) but I don't know whether successive years have been.

The work in schools nicely brought the elements of the course together and working with the children gave insight into children's responses and the need for time to develop ideas and to establish relationships. It gave some valuable experience which could be drawn upon in the final exams. Finding examples 'from your own experience' is always such a difficult thing to do in exams but working in schools near the end of term meant experiences were still fresh in mind.

The visits by teachers who had tried different approaches to environmental studies in school and had successful results was reassuring and perhaps inspired us to 'have a go' on teaching-practice.

From what I can remember from the exam it was very fair and though everyone was very anxious prior to the exam it wasn't as frightening than, well at least what I had anticipated.

I would like to say something about the course files. I'm not sure how much it directly applied to the history element but certainly where the geography was concerned I felt it was frustrating that we were requested to remove everything from our files which did not directly relate to the college sessions. Myself and many others spent ages building up our files with resources and these were not given credit. I am aware that perhaps their insertion would have been biased towards those students who had a greater background knowledge of the subject (from past school experience/study).

The balance of the course as far as informal tutorials, visits, outside speakers etc. was good, especially the 'hands on' experience.

C19

An evaluation of the Environmental Studies Course 1987-8

I would firstly like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed aspects of the Course, such as the Geography field trips and the construction of our History files.

Within History, I found the personal project also very enjoyable and very interesting. I felt very motivated to actually investigate the topic and travel to the different areas within the community. For this reason, as was mentioned in the last week's discussion, it seems a shame that we were not able to look at each other's work and to develop ideas together. It may also have been a way of ensuring progression was being made.

I thought it was lovely to have so many resources available for History and we certainly did use most of them within class time, but the books may have been better examined in our own time or reviewed by one or two people for the following week. In this way, again, the most would have been achieved in the shortest time.

With Geography, I found parts of it hard to relate back to work with children as it was discussed in a very abstract manner. For instance, Bloom's??? taxonomy and the articles we looked at ("New Ways in Geography", for one) didn't relate back to the classroom and I was also unsure as to their inclusion in the syllabus. However, after reading further into the subjects it does become clearer but I would have liked to have read the article myself and have Charles explain possible ways of applying the theory.

On the course as a whole, as I have said, it was very enjoyable and interesting, all the information was obtainable and ways of developing ideas were encouraged.

But, is it necessary to split the course into two distinct parts as they do relate very closely and we would be able to hear

two opinions on any one subject. Perhaps in this instance, it would then appear more as environmental studies and an education through the environment would be heightened.

I don't know if it would be possible, but a method of teaching much I have experienced which worked very well was in science where we looked at a particular topic, worked through it, as children would do, and then discussed the educational merits. And, having had first hand experience, the discussions were always very lively.

In environmental studies, an example would be "The street" Through this, we could concentrate on mapping skills, social aspects and homes perhaps. Other fields of environmental studies would then creep in which the present style tends to eliminate.

I hope this evaluation gives a positive run down of the past year as I feel the course has so much potential and enthusiasm behind it.

P

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Environmental Studies 1987-1988Group Evaluation

The course has been enjoyed by the students who took this option. It was a course which lead to an understanding of the development of both history and geography, with the students bein involved in a variety of methods of study.

Aspects of the course particularly enjoyed, with ideas of how to develop these further include:

The Geography based field trips.

The visit by an outside speaker on environmental work undertaken in an infant classroom.

Personal history work, but it would have been nice to hear from other group members about what was being 'discovered'

The museum visit, but a sheet prepared on observations made at the different museums would have been useful.

Other ideas for future development of the course include:

More emphasis on Environmental Studies rather than Geography and History, and a progression of teaching the subject throughout the whole primary age-range.

A visit from and Environmental Studies Post-Holder and other outside speakers E.G. how to use Manor House Library resources.

Theoretical foundation from the outset on the course so that these can be built upon as the courses develop.

More scope should be offered for individual work within the Geography part of the course, and more examples of practical ideas within the courses e.g. student



presentations of different aspects of environmental work,  
like ideas for transport, houses etc.

More thought on a visit to a school for examples of  
children's work.

The setting up of a permanent resources room which should be  
available to the students.

Clarification of coursework from the start and perhaps  
making the discipline a compulsory part of the third year  
teaching practice.

After receiving a base of Environmental Studies we feel that  
it would be helpful to then look at History followed by  
Geography and this would also mean that the field trips  
could be done perhaps in the 'better' weather.

I would aslso like to thank Mr. C. Halfyard and Mrs. V. Hurst on  
behalf of the group for all their hard work in running the  
option.

CLIODATA: NMM 1989  
VH

Provision of tables for drawing story books

Causing children to stay for longer - more indepth and active

? Weighing out food from pantry in ship as in Armada problems were space/health and safety

? imaginative cooking - need access to scales and griddle (too high at present: maybe put down within reach with ship's biscuit and ? dried peas)

Display pictures?

CLIODATA: 1989 HELEN

Name: Luke  
Age: 3-4 years

Noted interaction between child's drawing and play. Luke was seen to draw a picture of a shark which he later incorporated as part of play involving the canoe. He attached the drawing of the shark to the hooks daggling from the outriggering - this provided a "live" fish in Luke's imaginative play. (sketch attached)

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**Boy 3-4 years. - with family - (2 children + m + d)**

They had lived in Malawi and so knew about the breadfruit. I found the boy in Capt. Bligh's cabin - lying curled up on his bed. I sat on the bed and asked him if he knew whose cabin it was. He didn't - but he did tell me that some of 'our' ships from Malawi had won one of the battles depicted on a painting he had seen earlier in the exhibition. I asked him if he knew what had happened to Capt. Bligh - he didn't - and so I told him a story - I focused only on the initial act of mutiny - One morning... and so on.

I asked the boy what he thought Bligh should have done when he heard the knock on his door - he replied - after a few moments - that "he shouldn't of answered, and opened his door" - This response - was part of a conversation we had about a character in a story, and which we could express opinions about with the safety of - to the child, distance - or rather the events being a story - illustrates the use of the form of a story as a tool for understanding and from this further thinking - in this case - a historical theme/???

The conversation etc. took place in a secure environment - which supported the use of the story tool. The cabin provides a child with a secure feeling - it is a very appropriate place for 'thinking about things' - because of its associations with children's own bedrooms and - size. It is an accessible starting point and environment for further exploration - and play.

It contains familiar elements which can be linked - to form a process - like the canoe - not the pantry - lacks the 'process' element. The designed and provided for process - or 'action' linking the objects I presume in weighing - yet the scales are inaccessible - and the most obvious process - rel. to food - cooking is not provided for.

Also - 'home corner elements' (cookery, sleeping etc.) are a 'link-pin' - within unfamiliar surroundings and another time - young children use as starting points.

Name: David  
Age: 7 years

"Is this real wood?" Started asking questions about the canoe and then said he would have to use the baler (this had been talked about earlier.)

Mum told him about the mutiny before he came.

"Sailor threw captain overboard."  
I didn't know anything about Captain Bligh (David)  
What do you know about Captain Bligh now?  
Bligh "bit bossy" (David)

"Sailor got fed up because sailors kept bossing him around"  
(David)

Hammock ) - thing he liked best  
Cannon ) bought gunbelts.

Didn't realise that it was the Bounty ship. - thought it was any ship.

"are they proper breadfruits? - do you still get bread fruits now - how long ago do you think it is on Tihiti (500 years ago (David))

### Drawing

Decided to draw a picture of the Bounty, from looking at the reconstruction of the Bounty.

(sketch attached)

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Name: Sarah                      Australian  
Age: 6 years                      Mother works at N.M.M. - Sydney.  
    Father - sailor.

"I've been here before today."  
Second visit to activity area in one day.  
Wildly enthusiastic about everything.  
V. giggly - enjoyed blowing trumpet and sent me off to various distances to see if I could hear her.  
Told me about trip to Hampton Court.

- Time - 2hours on boat, 3 hours on train, ½ hour wait etc.

c26

Knew what artefacts were for.

Ones she didn't know:-

"Oh, I wasn't told about that."

Stayed in area approx. 1 hour (second time)

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### **Small child approximately 3**

Saw myself and Sarah climb into canoe which he and sister had been playing in.

"That's our canoe!!"

Said very strongly and crossly.

Tried to come and get us out but mother restrained him.

Another comment of his - "we're playing boats!"

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### **Evaluation 30/7/89**

Observation child/Parent interaction.

Child was told that the object was a telescope, was not invited to look through it, pulled away - "it's a telescope" - child guided by the hand to the revolving ???????? - kept hold of straining child for whole period of time spent in the activity area.

### **29/7/89 - Table and Chairs**

We found on Saturday when experimenting with the table and chairs that the children involved in the drawing/construction work activities stayed longer at whatever they were taking part in.

One group of 3 children who had been previously to the exhibition stayed for approximately 1 hour. Their drawing and conversation has been recorded.

I sat with the boy **Matthew**, and we talked about ways in which drawing can be used to tell stories - he was slightly confused and unsure at first but after I suggested the beginning of the story of the mutiny and drew a box and described how the ship was loaded and fitted out at Deptford - he continued the story using boxes and drawing (sketch attached) to help him describe the events of the mutiny. He was obviously very interested which was further supported by

his Grandma's enthusiasm and patience in letting the children stay in the activity area for such a long period of time.

(sketches attached)

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3/8/89

Group of children  
2 brothers + 1 sister + cousin

Wearing green/white stripey  
T-shirts - see photographs  
and Simon's drawing.

Name: Christopher            Imaginative Play  
Age: 3 years

"I want to be the fish"

Trying to include his older brother and sister in his play of catching fish. played with his brother initially - his brother catching Christopher with the net -

Jason

Name: Simon  
Age: 8 years

Came over to the drawing table and decided to draw a picture of the view through the telescope - kept referring back to the view -

3/8/89

Since ships' biscuits have been put on the table for children to taste - the obvious thing to draw has been what is immediately in front of the children - hence we now have a large collection of ships' biscuits - those drawing have been started without any guidance. Children have been using the round objects in front of them to draw the shape of the ships' biscuit.

Nabille 9 years. extremely interested - long conversation with Matthew about coconuts - what they are like:

"So now I know what coconuts are really like"

"Indian sort of films they climb up and they are brown"

C28

Matthew explaining how the ?????? splits:

"when they are in the tree they look completely green"

Conversation whilst drawing palm tree

- previous to this she drew a canoe, and wanted to be sure her drawing was accurate -

"What other trees would they have?"

"They look like our trees now" (talking about the shape of leaves on breadfruit trees and the trees we have now)

"What does it taste like?"

"Why do they grow them then?" (They don't taste very nice)

Very interested in the technical details of drawing - probably knows about perspective without knowing the name for it.

- Example - wanted to make sure that the man's hair was falling in the right direction in relation to his movement.

Able to tell that waves a certain distance apart when close, will look closer together when further away.

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### Evaluation 2/8/89

Name: Roxanne  
Age: 4 years

Isle of Dogs school

#### Drawing process

Roxanne had spent about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. (approx.) - around the activity area - went into the hut and had a close look at the fruit, talked about how Tahitians 200 yrs. ago would have slept - her brother (3 yrs.) suggested that (by motioning a sleeping position) there was nothing to put your head on (pillow). We then suggested that the "stool" was to put your head on - thought it wasn't a very sensible idea.

#### Drawing Table

Roxanne said she was going to draw a picture of a banana - Yvette fetched her a plant in to look at - she then decided after drawing the banana that it was a coconut and started to

colour it in. Then she started drawing dots around the outside of the shape. (sketch attached)

She pointed to the "coconut" she was drawing, when I asked her what the dots were around the outside of the coconut. She was pointing to the top of the ship. I said I couldn't see any coconuts up there. She said "not coconuts", tried pointing again and said, "you know what I mean". At this point I was still confused as to what she was drawing. When she realised that I didn't understand she said that it was a ship's biscuit. She was identifying objects according to their shape - so a round shape was the same as:

a coconut  
part of the rigging  
ship's biscuit

When I realised what she was drawing - the dots were the rope around the dead eyes - she added more detail to her drawing - she was obviously very interested in the technology of the ship. (sketch attached)

Previous to this incident she had asked Vicky where the fire was on the ship to cook the food.

After a discussion we felt that it would have been a great educational advantage if processes such as cooking could have been implicit in the design - to have included on board the ship a cooker, weighing facilities - we felt that children and adults can appreciate differences and changes in history if there are direct links with today, eg. eating and sleeping.

The process of sleeping has been highlighted more successfully; we have comparisons on board ship ie. where ordinary sailors would have slept and where officers would have slept (the differences and advantages can be talked about - but the initial interest is in most cases already there. I feel children and adults are interested in day-to-day life of other people, eg. where did they sleep, where did they go to the toilet, how did they prepare their food? etc.

We are going to try and prepare a prototype worksheet to see if we can try and develop to some extent the parent's role in interpreting for his/her child. (see rough draft)

(sketches attached)



6 August - see 'letter'

Nicholas - 9 - with his mother - he was interested in history - knew the 'story' - after looking round - interacting with the objects - he came to the table - He first drew a picture of the Bounty and then decided to write a letter.

The letter illustrates the stage/level of understanding, and the 'empathy' element - often used as a tool in understanding (although we also need to understand limitations) > an activity could be extended with more time and it's the first 'writing' - as a response.

(sketch attached)

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Name: Adrian  
Age: 8 years

Describing how you would make a canoe 200 years ago, starting with raw materials, wood (tree), animal skin, flint (make your axe), then construct your canoe.

Sister helped with the axe making: "I did a project on this at school" - suggested you knocked the 2 stones together to make a sharp edge and then tied your stone onto a piece of wood using animal skin. (sister about 10 years.)

C31

STUDATA: SA.

Dear Vicki,

Here is the tape recording from my Nursery Teaching Practice - sorry it's so late. Unfortunately the recording was not good enough to transcribe. You can only make out a few words here and there and the background noise overpowers the conversation. The recording took place whilst I was reading a story to a group of three children and includes the discussion we had about the story.

I do think however, that it was a worthwhile experience which makes you very aware of what you are saying to the children. In theory I think the tape recording as a form of child observation is a very good idea as it allows the teacher to reflect upon a conversation or piece of work at a later date when there is more time, rather than having to make hurried and brief notes whilst in the busy classroom. The practicalities of the technique are not quite so easy, as the taping and recording needs to be set up and adjusted with several test runs to make sure everything is working, and the children along with the teacher become very aware of the tape recorder, microphone etc. and lose all interest in the work or book. Also the recordings are not always of a good enough quality to be of any practical help to the teacher.

I think that if the tape recorder was used in a classroom for an ongoing period the children and teacher would become used to it. If then the recording was of a good enough quality, I think this technique would be invaluable as an efficient way of observing young children in the classroom.

Best wishes,

C32

Sa:

## STUDATA:J'

### **Making use of taped interactions as part of my professional development**

I used the tape twice during my fourth teaching practice. On the first occasion I recorded my first story session with the whole class. I found the subsequent recording very interesting. When I played the recording I found that I could listen to the questions that the children had asked and my replies. This enabled me to analyse my responses and to record the children's interests reflected by their comments.

I was also able to assess the story session and whether it was successful and whether, for example, I moved too quickly from each song.

The second time I used the tape was less successful because I was moving from activity to activity, so the recording became disjointed. I also found that whilst outside the children's voices were less clear and much fainter.

So I found that the tape was useful when I was working with a specific group of children. It did help to remember what happened at that point of day in greater detail than when I got home later on.

Although I was initially nervous the first time I used the recorder, once I started the story I forgot that I was using it. The second time I wasn't even nervous. I didn't feel inhibited in any way using the recorder because, at the end of the day, it was me who was assessing it and not someone of far greater experience. If the tape was for a tutor to analyse I might have reacted differently.

I would imagine that a tape recorder might be useful when assessing particular children, for example when hearing them read, when writing notes may be inconvenient or off putting or not comprehensive enough. But on a daily basis I think it may add to the busy work each teacher faces everyday.

## STUDATA: L

Dec 1988, from TP 4 + EdRep (comparison of children in ?? with same age in infant classes)

### Using the personal tape recorder

I only used the tape recorder on one afternoon and found the small amount of time gave me a lot of material. I did not have time to get used to wearing the recorder and was very conscious about what I was saying. The children were also aware that something special was happening and this was distracting and off putting for some. With further use leading to familiarity this would be more natural.

I used the recorder mainly for interactions between myself and individual children. I was particularly interested in a certain group and I concentrated on collecting 'proof' of the quality and importance of their nursery education. eg. being able to spend time encouraging Daniel to read a book - using picture clues and previous knowledge of the book.

During the recordings another purpose became apparent. While talking to one girl I picked up the conversation of two others sitting nearby. Through listening to their interaction I picked up a lot about them which I had been previously unaware of. From this type of information it is possible to build on their interest at their level. In a busy nursery class this is especially important. Even with the increased ratio of staff to children, compared to a reception class, much is missed due, it seems, to the adults time being taken up with organizing and pacifying children! I think the tape recorder used constantly for a period of time can highlight the adults' behaviour and level of interaction which is valuable to assessing the adults contribution.

To return to my original point of picking up childrens' interactions which give us insight, the recorder could be used to do this in areas where an adult might stilt these interactions. eg. home corner. I don't think it should be used to 'spy' but it could be used as an unobtrusive pair of ears which doesn't influence the childrens' behaviour. To be able to plan successfully for the children we need to know their interests and their level of understanding and knowledge. This is often revealed through interaction with objects and other children. eg. we can discover a lot about personalities which may have been held back by adult presence - not just negative aggressive behaviour which needs to be known but those children who appear confident and ??? but in fact find it difficult and vice versa.

I think it is a very useful way of collecting information about the children from which to plan and evaluate their progress and needs. For a class teacher who might not have time to transcribe it all, just listening to them would reveal a lot.

Daniel - reading me a story because my voice was bad. A book he knew fairly well - Not now Bernard. I encouraged him to use the pictures because he said he couldn't read the words.

**Me:** Come on then are you going to read me the story? What do you think his mother is saying (after Daniel had seemed not to know where to start.)

**Daniel:** (v. softly) Don't know.

**Me:** What does his mmother say all the time? (Silence from Daniel) Not Now Bernard.

**Daniel:** (false start) There's a monster outside he's trying to eat me up.  
(Gap)

**Me:** What does his mum say to that?

**Daniel:** Not now Berhard (turns page)  
Hello Bernard said the monster  
Ooh - (interrruption)

**Me:** Where did he get the bad finger, what was he doing earlier?

**Daniel:** Putting the screw in the door

**Me:** That's right, and he banged his finger with the hammer, didn't he?

**Daniel:** Was playing... um, Mummy took his dinner in the front room. That was Dennis's dinner wasn't it?

**Me:** Bernard's dinner that's right. Dennis was in the other story. What did he do then?

**Daniel:** Messing about with the telly (turns page) Ooh, that was... his.. robot.

**Me:** That's right he broke it, didn't he?

**Daniel:** He must eat that kid 'cos he's only little (Turns Page)

**Me:** What does mum say, she sends him up to bed doesn't she?

## Tahani and Samantha

Tahani has taken the role of teacher and is showing Samantha how to draw. She is in fact doing it for her, putting words in her mouth as well as pictures on the paper. She has a very complex storyline and becomes very old. Both girls seemed to thoroughly enjoy the experience.

**Tahani:** Pretend that this was the sky  
Pretend that this was the puddles  
The're tiny legs, the baby can't walk  
This is somebody else  
This is somebody else ok.  
And this is your mum with some legs ok.  
Your Mum's got some legs

This is your mum, with a little tiny head  
This is stupid head

**Samantha:** Ooh.

**Tahani:** ... and this is a table (first part of sentence unclear.).

**Tahani:** Big big one

**Samantha:** She wrote my name (addressing me).

I offered Samantha a clear piece of paper in the hope she might do some herself. At that point she had [NOT??] done any drawing that we were aware of.

Tahani immediately assumed responsibility..

**Tahani:** Can I do that, now I'm going to write your name..

**Me:** Could Samantha do some please, Tahani. (I felt that Samantha was itching to have a go but wasn't fast enough to start before Tahani took over.)

**Tahani:** She done it (-really excited).

(to Samantha) Do it on your own (Very authoritatively). I will do it with you.

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After a discussion on our families and who is the biggest and youngest etc. the children drew me some pictures related to this. In patches several children are talking at once, so I have picked out one child's conversation only - unless the children were talking to each other rather than me. Generally there are two or three different conversations going on at once which are not related.

Nicola

Nicola: This is Paul.

That says Paul does it, are you going to write your name, are you going to put it. You put your name there didn't you?

Thank you Nicola so this is you. Is your brother bigger than you or smaller than you? Is he older than you?

Nicola: Yes 'cos I'm four but I can't remember how old my brother is. I'll tell my mum.

Me: Do you think he is six or seven?

Nicola: Don't know, I'll tell my mum I can't remember.

Mixture of Tahani and Kenechi sitting either side of me.

c38



**Tahani:** (To Samantha, when she is drawing a picture of Samantha's family) This is your baby, have you got a baby?

**Me:** (To Kenechi) So this is your mum, this is Kenechi and this is your...

**Kenechi:** Big brother

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**Tahani:** Your baby is sad

**Samantha:** Why?.

**Tahani:** And you're holding him.

Have you got a little boy?

and there's you - your little arm (unclear what she said - lots of background noise)

That's Samantha's.

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**Kenechi:** Daddy and Mummy and

**Kenechi:** Can you write Kenechi and Mummy and Daddy?

**Me:** You can write your name can't you Kenechi?.

---

**Tahani:** This is your banana isn't it (referring to what she was drawing, talking to Samantha, who agrees). This is um her (banana I think)

**Kenechi:** I couldn't do it when I was a baby.  
(about writing her name)

I agree about writing names and starting writing what she says on a separate sheet.

**Kenechi:** I mean on here.

**Me:** You've written Kenechi haven't you, well nearly finished writing Kenechi. (She had stopped half way through when her attention was diverted.)

### **Kenechi and I**

Me and ??? before the I (normally she writes ??)

**Me:** Who's this, do you know who this is?

**Kenechi:** Mummy, mummy's got curly hair, we've all got black hair.

**Me:** That's right, daddy hasn't got any hair at all in this picture.

**Kenechi:** Where is the black

**Me:** Whose is this, what's their name? Kenechi, whose is this?

**Kenechi:** Nandi (has to repeat it for me. I write it.)

**Me:** Is that right?

**Kenechi:** That's how daddy's hair it is.

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**Tahani:** (to Samantha) This is your little name ??.

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**Me:** (To Kenechi) Who is the youngest in the family?

**Kenechi:** Er, Mummy.

**Me:** Is Mummy the yougest? (Some sign from Kenechi - having a joke) You are - you're the littlest in the family.

How old are you, Kenechi?

**Kenechi:** Four

**Me:** Do you know how old Nandi is?

**Kenechi:** No.

Later describes + belts and Necklaces.

Tahani to Samantha

STUDATA:S.

S - Tapes from C.O.A.N.

1) I found using the tapes useful really in three particular ways.

Firstly, they helped me to look in more depth at time spent with particular children. One child is heavily in evidence on all the tapes, Victoria. She was one of the children that I observed closely on T.P. and being able to tape her really helped in these close observations. I suppose the set up of getting Victoria on to the tape was a little false. She was not always on tape because she hung around me wanting to talk or wanting to know what I was doing. I was really the pursuer. I was keen to record her because of her wonderful sense of fun and spontaneity which I hoped to capture on tape. For the sake of this exercise I thought that it might be easier to get some results of what this kind of taping could achieve if I concentrated on one child. Such 'favouritism' of one child's language over another's in one's own class or long term program may lead one to ignore other important developments happening elsewhere in the class.

Secondly, it was useful as a reminder of how particular sessions had gone. To a student on T.P. it is great to be able to play back a tape to run through once again what happened that morning to put down in one's T.P. file. It is great to have a record of how a particular session developed - how the children came to a particular activity - what part they took in the activity, how their ideas develop and whether they are expressed verbally or not. If not then maybe you will [feel] obliged to make some kind of running commentary! A taped record is useful to analyse a new activity and how it went. You may then like to use it on subsequent occasions to see how an activity develops. Listen back to a tape may also give one ideas about how individuals' interests revealed on tape could be followed up. It gives one a second chance to go through

part of the school day again to give you a second opportunity to pick up on things.

Finally, I have used the tapes as a possible source for my educational report on Aesthetic Education. I used another recorder to tape music sessions which would hopefully hold material on music, language, poetry. They were really quite successful, though I don't know how clear they would sound to someone who wasn't there! But for picking out examples of children keeping regular time whilst beating a drum and playing rhythms in unison, they are useful.

I have transcribed three pieces and the analyses and comments follow each piece.

TAPE - RUNNING ORDER

T.D.K.

Side A

Recorded on 17.10.88

- First recording in garden - pond digging
- Incident in sand - Claudette and children burying each other.
- Victoria and Benjamin building house.

Recorded on 9.11.88

Music session with Janet - I was not present.

- Jack singing - this singing developed over many weeks.  
Beats the drum and sings then Jack gets someone to play the piano for him. Sings "You took the words right out of my mouth. It must have been when you were kissing me".

-Janet and Alex

Baa Baa Black Sheep.

Recorded on 9.11.88

-Sheila with a group

Singing "Five little monkeys sitting on a tree  
Teasing My. Crocodile - can't catch me".

-Jack again - stands on a box to sing.

Benjamin plays piano for him.

Sings "Twinkle Twinkle Little Bat"

then "Angie, I don't love ya Baby" [!]

Side B

**Recorded on Friday 11 November**

**Music Session.**

Singing - me, Charles, Victoria and Nyzinga.

-Transcription piece - Victoria and Annanda speaking.

**Recording in the garden 1.11.88**

-Martin trying to carry water in container with holes.

-Aiden crying - I take him in and Shiela takes over.

-Jonathan - painted stick.

-Me talking, trhing to find an activity.

-Fight between Oliver and Jonathan over bat and ball - Janet joins in (not the fight!)

-Talking with Victoria - 'What are you being?' Ambulance.

-Talking with Melissa (Montessori) about the boat painting.

-Talking with Victoria - Dalmation Dog. Victoria sings and I thoughtlessly jabber over the top!

-Victoria sings "Down in the Jungle". I sing it. Victoria 'pom poms'the tune.

-Chat to Sheila and Eleanot.

-Back to Victoria "What's that?" to the microphone. She and Jasmine listen to recordings.

-I talk to Benjamin and co. about not being cruel to spiders. Victoria says "Can I hear? Can I hear?" Sings "Baa Baa Black Sheep".

**Abbreviations**

S. -me- Goldsmiths Student

V. Victoria)

J. Jasmine ) Children

O. Matthew )

B. Benjamin)

M. - Mantessori Student

V. I know we can build a house.

S. You want to build another one?

Oh Benjamin that looks yummy

J. Which one?

O. Me stuck.

S. You're stuck?

J. Which one?

You're not really

V. ...build a house up there -  
the birds.

Wh. What, you want to build it higher?

V. The birds can get up there but roof and they could get on  
there.

S. Well they might come and perch on this roof.

V. Oh no! I shout my head off. Aah!

S. (laugh)

V. ...some birds off there and then

B. Here's some pie

they \_\_\_\_\_ like the wild geese are  
jump(?)

Do you want some pie?

S. The Wild Geese?

Yeh.

S. Benjamins just thrown your dinner on the ground.

V. If I go up there it might scare me - all the birds.

S. I don't like heights very much, they scare me.

V. And I go 0000000

S. I think even standing on there would be a bit high.



How much taller are you?

V. I'm taller.

S. Where do I come up to on you?

V. You? S. 00 V. 000 You (hee hee)

S. Where do I come up to?  
Just there, just up to your tummy. So you're about a foot taller. (Cough)

V. Hee hee hee

S. So you're about six foot seven up there.

V. What size are you?

S. I should think you're even taller than your Daddy up there aren't you?

V. I go in the bath for a minute.

S. You're going in the bath?

V. In here in the bath  
Here's the bathroom Back. Is supper ready?

V. Baadroom. No you can do it. You can do it in the bonfire.

V. In the bathroom. B. Supper's not ready and we're having mud pie for supper.

S. Oh lucky you.

B. Well I'm gonna go downstairs a bit.

S. Are you going down?

V. No I'm here Ha.

S. Ha

V. Hee S. HaHa

V. Haah S. Hagrh V. Ha ha I done one.

S. Gaa V. It's your breath

S. Ha, Kik you see it? V. Haa

S. Ooh look that's 'cause it's cold.

V. That's smoke and I have it in water. In water so i'll get some water.

J. Here's your lunch Victoria. HERE! S. Ha ha

V. I know I'm coming. S. Look what Jasmine's made.

V. I want a spade. A spade - give me a spade. Gimme a spade! Gimme a spade! Shall I eat it?

J. Here V. Woah - somebody's done a pooh pooh here -  
Somebody's done a pooh pooh here he a pooh pooh here.

Back. Whoa

(V.) here - No that's mine. That's mine \_\_\_\_\_

B. Hello Mr. Pie

V. Hello Mr. Pie

S. Hello V. Oo Smiley (?)

B. It's a long way down there. V. Oo Smiley

S. Ooh what? V. He he.

S. Say it again.

V. Tastes lovely (?)

S. A splablaahmy ? V. Hee hee 000 spla---

S. Do Dooo V. There's a fly!

B. Here's some lunch. V. No, because I got some left.

S. Ooh Benjamin that looks absolutely horrible.

V. I've got some left - Get away.

B. Here's some lunch. Here's some 00

S. Looks nice doesn't it? Mmm Mmm

V. No

S. Look I think - Don't throw it - Benjamin - Benjamin

B. I don't like all this piel

S. Look this looks better V. A leaf's underneath here. A

leaf.

S. A leafey Ha ha V. Ugh! I'll get I'll get insects on me.

S. It tickles Hee hee. Insects

S. Insects?

S. Are there any on there? V. No. Back. Can I have one?

M. Just a minute.

S. What sort of insects?

V. In there to be.

S. Inside? V. Aah! S. Heehee

S. Actually inside?

S. Some for me too? (Being handed cake)

S. Oh thanks.

M. Do you want one Victoria? V. Thank you.

- S. What is it? M. Chocolate. S. That's better  
than mud pie.
- V. Mmmm S. Mmmm B. That's much much  
much better than mud pie.
- S. Are you going to have some hot chocolate? (Repeated)  
If you go and get your cup you can have some hot chocolate.  
Mmmm?

---

**Tape - Monday 17th October 1988**

This was the first tape that I made on the practice.

I was particularly interested in recording what was happening in the pond building activity. The children were at this stage only digging out the pond, it was a relatively new activity so there was much questioning and answering going on.

The part I have transcribed happened later on in the afternoon. It is a conversation between Victoria and myself interspersed with extended conversations with Benjamin and Jasmine and Melissa (montessori student). I found that Victoria to understand when one spoke with her was often quite difficult. Being able to play back a tape meant that I often got to understand a lot more of what she said. This then meant that comments I had made at the time probably threw her into confusion because I had the wrong end of the stick.

Victoria's sense of fun and comedy is really picked up and listening to it really makes me smile. The piece was not really useful for any of my work but it did give me a taste of how difficult it is to transcribe work and showed me how many decisions you must make about how much background is included and what happens when you really can't understand some words. Question marks in brackets following words mean I am very unsure as to what Victoria was really saying.

TAPE

TDK Side B  
(149 on tape)

Recorded Friday 11th November 1988

(Xylophone and background noise)

**Amanda:** Do this one.

No.

**Victoria:** No, you musn't touch that, you might break it. You might break.

**Amanda** Stop... Stop... Stop.  
What is that anyway?.

**Victoria:** It's a radio

**Amanda** Ha -- How do you know it's a radio?  
It's not new ---

You can't put this in can you? (Presumably picking up a tape). (Sheila in the background)..

**Victoria:** Mummy's gonna buy a big one like that an you can't have it.  
It's really dangerous.

**Amanda** Can you buy me a blue one like that?.

**Victoria:** Yeh - I'll buy you a green one.

**Sally:** Can I show you a bit later.

**Amanda** No.

**Sally** 'Cause I want to record -  
I'm trying ro record on it at the moment..

**Victoria:** Mum gonna buy me.

**Sally:** And I'll show you later what I've done - alright?.

**Victoria:** And I'm going to --- do really hard, really hard and bang really hard. And then you'll...

(Hear drum a little)

---

C50

**TAPE Friday 11 November 1988**

This second transcription is very short but illustrated, to me, a very important point. It contains Victoria and Amanda talking about the cassette recorder while I was not around. I find it interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, Victoria's language seems to be very clear when you compare it to the tapes of her speaking to me, when she seems to be slurring a little - speaking quite coyly, she seems shy. But in this she is speaking to Amanda informing Amanda about the nature of the recorder. She speaks clearly and loudly. It was a delightful revelation to me when I uncovered it for the first time.

Amanda is puzzled about the recorder but Victoria knows what it is and takes on the 'knowledgeable' figure role in the conversation, ie. - "it's a radio", "No! You musn't touch it, you might break it", and "It's very dangerous" as a reinforcement of her previous statement.

It also begins to move into a sort of 'play' conversation with

**Amanda:** Can you buy me a blue one?.

**Victoria:** I'll buy you a green one.

The saddest part of the whole thing is when I come barging back and tell them I will show them now it works - later! I cringe at my own insensitivity when I hear it - but it serves as an excellent reminder to one to be aware.

Monday 14th November 1988

**Oliver** No Jonathan - Aah.  
Catch it.  
(squealing)

**Kai:** Oliver's got it!

**Jonathan:** Aah! (squealing)

**Janet:** Errr Oliver!!

**Jonathan:** He hit me.

**Oliver:** (Squeals) He hit me! He hit me!

**Sally:** Yes, but Jonathan, you musn't hit back because it's not very nice to be hit..

**Oliver:** (Crying) **Janet:** That was your own fault. I know I saw him do it. I don't know what happened before that though.

**Jonathan:** And Oliver  
---I think I maybe someone else should get a turn with this raquet and ball. Were you next in line Jonathan? Was it you?

**Janet:** Oliver could you let Jonathan have a turn now?.

**Oliver:** No, he - No he didn't want his.!

**Janet:** Yes, but he asked me a long time ago if he could have a turn and I soon said he could be next.

**Jonathan:** And I want to play with no bat.

**Janet:** You just want the ball? He just wants the ball. I'll hold the bat..

**Oliver:** I, I, I-

**Janet:** You give him the ball. I want you to go in and blow your nose..

**Oliver:** I don't want to gi'im.

**Janet:** Yes, it's Jonathan's turn now Oliver.

**Oliver:** (cries even more)

**Janet:** Come on, I'll hold the bat for you - while you nip in and blow your nose. Hello, Jasmine! What a lovely outfit!

**Sally:** Yes, it's lovely, isn't it?

**Jasmine:** It's an outfit.

**Kai:** Janet! Janet! Oliver was trying to goin--

**Janet:** Oh he hasn't done has he?

## **TAPE - Monday 14th Novembver 1988**

This piece, I decided to transcribe because again I was not in it. I do not mean that I am too embarrassed to be featured, but that I was glad to have managed to record some diplomacy being administered by another member of staff during an argument between two boys. Such 'spying' I think is very useful.

Taping each other obviously would not be possible in every school, but the atmosphere and relationship at Chelsea was exactly right to allow this to happen. And to put it further into context I had not gone out with the intention of recording another member of staff - I was not checking up or testing or prying in any way. I think however that everyone there felt confident enough about their own position in the set up to realise this.

As a student I found it encouraging to be able to listen to the other members of staff dealing with different problems and encounters, to see what kinds of things were said and how far the staff went in disciplining.

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### **Evaluation of what tapes were like to use: How I would use them in the future**

To begin with I felt a little apprehensive about being recorded - what would I sound like? Would I say stupid things? Would I show myself up to be a complete idiot to Vicki! However after hearing the cassette for five minutes and making caged, properly pronounced, intellectual statements I soon forgot I was wearing it and settled back in to some degree of normality. It was definitely the adults who were more scared of this piece



of plastic and metal than the children. The children carried on being their usual uneffected spontaneous vibrant lot while the teachers fled holding their hands over their mouths (or mouthing to me nervously "Is it on?"). With this point in mind I would imagine recording older children would be difficult - unless they were used to it from nursery as it would surely affect their confidence and temperament. They would probably be too aware of what the recorder was doing. I did try recording with a group of 1st year Juniors and found it quite difficult as it proved to be a real 'showcase' for the outgoing confident ones, and yet quite stultifying for the quieter children.

In the nursery the children did not even seem to notice the recorder which was very useful. I had only one incident when Victoria wanted to hear what I had been recording - so we had quite an interesting time recording, playing back, listening. This turned into interesting material a very coherent conversation and several renditions of "Down in the Jungle".

Listening to oneself afterwards can be quite painful - particularly for instance when I interrupted Victoria's and Amanda's conversation about the recorder because I wanted to get 'some recording done'. How I wish now I had just stayed away to see what else could have been captured. So being able to replay certainly makes you more aware of things that you say and can help you be more positively conscious to avoid saying them in the future.

It was certainly very useful to me when I was writing my reports at the end of each day or week - I think that for a class teacher this usefulness could be extended. I found it helpful when listening to Victoria for example as I have already said I sometimes found it difficult to hear what she was saying - listening to a tape of her speak helped me to understand her speech patterns a little more and also to pick up on subjects that she covered. So that when I spoke to her the next day she would often say things that I could pick up on

because I had heard them on the tape.

It was also great to hear her speak so clearly and freely with Amanda her peer. This also led me to analyse the way I spoke to her. Did she feel less confident speaking to adults (clearly) should we leave her a little more - wait till she comes to us to tell us something rather than us bludgeoning her with questions.

I feel that tapes could be used to get another insight into children particularly when it comes to writing reports on children or when you feel a child has a specific language problem or problem relating ideas. Recording a session with a particular child may give some insight into how the child's ideas, or language or problem-solving techniques are developing. Obviously it should be used in conjunction with other things: a child cannot be judged from three minutes recorded tape. Recordings could be made with different staff members to see how the child reacts with different adults and children - this would rely on the staff being close and confident to co-operate. But an insight into how the child exists independantly and in the company of others would be very important to ascertain.

Other important points about the taping procedure are that it is certainly less imposing than making notes with a pen and pad and the child does not feel as if s/he is being tested or that you are more interested in writing than in what is going on between you.

It is also an unbiased record. What you see in something may appear very different to another member of staff. This may prove important if some child is beginning to gain a reputation that is unfairly given because of a staff member's attitude towards him/her. Further to this, it is a good way of shaking you up when you have to listen to yourself. It certainly makes you more aware of how bored or abrupt or uninterested or wet you can sound!

C56

Taped observations week one Post Office Tape 11/11/88

CONCEPTS

089 SEQUENCING

- Sally: Now what happens to the Post once you've taken it to the Post Office and it goes through the machinery of the Post Office?
- Mehmet: an they look at it... it an then they put it back an then they give it to this truck right and they send it.
- Sally: Yes and then what happens when it gets to wherever this truck is going?
- Mehmet: It goes in the Post Box I fink
- Sally: Yes but who collects it from the Post Box?
- All: The Postman.
- Mehmet: Like Postman Pat.

Mehmet has failed to recall the sequence of events correctly and Sally fails to correct him.

145 SORTING

- Sally: Do they put all the same letters that go to the same place together?
- Barry: No they put... they put the places where they belong.. the names of the... umm... doors and where they come from.
- Sally: They go by the name of the town first - London...
- Barry: [interrupts] An then they put the number which to send it to ... an then the name.
- Sally: Yeh... and then they sort it by the postcode to see what area of London you come from.
- Barry: An then they give it to you
- Sally: Yeh... because I live...

In this example I believe Barry understood how the letters were sorted and how the postman found your door to deliver it to you, but had difficulty in finding the language to express his thoughts. This passage was said in a rushed and excited tone of voice.

## 199 SYMBOLISING

(Pointing to the Airmail letter in the "Jolly Postman" book)

**Sally:** This one's got red and blue round it. What do you think that means?

**Mehmet:** They go airplane.

**Sally:** Good boy it means it goes airmail.

**Mehmet:** That's why it's got an airplane on it.

Mehmet here shows he is almost at the stage of being able to recognize that formal symbols represent something abstract. He has recognized that the picture of an aeroplane denotes that it is taken by plane (using picture clues) but hasn't quite yet recognized the more formal symbols of the red and blue striped  
??????ILLEGIBLE

## 310

**Sheila:** We saw a round postbox didn't we? but you can also have square postboxes.

## SHAPE

Thinking about this statement afterwards I realized how confusing it must have been: we don't have square postboxes, they are rectangular.

## 354 SEQUENCING

**Sheila:** Have you ever seen a postman opening the door?

**All:** Yeh, yes.

**Charlene:** He gets the sack and he pulls out all the letters in the sack then he shuts it and locks it an he slings it over his shoulder and he gets into the van and goes on.

Here Charlene repeats a past sequence in the correct order. Her voice was rushed and excited and I therefore feel she wasn't as worried about the sentence arrangement and grammar as to tell me quickly what she knew. I noticed she abbreviated her speech a fair bit because the context was familiar to the whole group and she assumed therefore that we'd all know what "it" meant. (At one point 'it' refers to the post box and at another 'it' refers to the sack).

## 253 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

**Sheila:** Barry would you like to tell us about your idea?

Barry had been telling me previously about "his idea to make somefink for the leaflets in our Post Office". - a leaflet holder.

**Barry:** Well we could make somefink like a wall an we could put leaflets inside one of the um boxes and that you could make it like a box and cut a little square around it and give a little space to put the leaflets in.

## 433 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

**Sheila:** How many sides do I need to cut? (about to cut Post Box door)

C59

**Charlene:** Three... you don't cut this side though because then you won't be able to open and shut it.

Charlene has the idea of a hinged door here.

480 ???

(Discussion on paint not looking very good to see through)

**Sheila:** We can put another layer if you cover it completely then it can dry during playtime can't it?

**Charlene:** An then it can have another layer an it will look much better

**Sheila:** So see if you can do the whole side before playtime

**Charlene:** ??? If you helped me this would be done more quicker.

Charlene realises that two people could do the job much quicker - also has a sense of timing that she may need help in order to get it finished by playtime.

649 SEQUENCE/TIME - DAYS/WEEK

**Sara:** We're going to do PE this afternoon... coz it's Friday.

Sara has an awareness of days of the week and that you know certain events will occur because it's that day and she is aware of the order of events of the week.

807 SHAPE/SPATIAL AWARENESS

(Making stamps)

**Sara:** I know how you do stamps

**Sheila:** How do you do stamps?

**Sara:** Well you do little lines all round and then you put the Queen in the middle.

C60

839 SHAPE/SPATIAL AWARENESS

Charlene: An I seen all sorts of different stamps with the river on it, the blue sky and the sea at the bottom.

830 Charlene: An it had prickly sides like that. (cutting zig-zag edges)

893 Charlene: I've done one of a little girl by herself and it's a round one.

963 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS & SHAPE & NETS

Sheila: Can you see we've got a little flap there? (showing Charlene an envelope as she asked me to so she could "do her own").

Charlene: So we fold it like that an then it goes...

Sheila: How would you make it that shape?

Charlene: I've got a great idea... a bit of Pritt stick would just hold it... What I'll do is get a line and line it down like that and the other bit down like that (talking as she drew lines down each side of the page) (Sketch attached) (an what I'm gonna do I'm gonna Pritt Stick there an then stick it over an that bit will stick... an then when I've finished writing my letter I'm gonna pritt stick an stick it down like that.

???ILLEGIBLE

## CONCEPTS

### Taped Observations - Week Four (Canals) 02/12/88

029

**Sheila:** What do you think? What we want to do is bring that bit up to here, don't we? So how are we going to do that?

**Sam:** Put some more boxes on the corners.

**Sheila:** Do you think we could use these ones? Do we need these ones here?

**Sam:** No... Oh yeh, we could put them half-way.

(One piece of canal was higher than another and Sam suggested cornflake boxes to raise the level of the lower one to meet the higher one i.e. (Sketch attached) and to balance each pipe half way on the boxes i.e. (Sketch attached).

045

**Lisa:** Will they... will the water go under here?

**Sheila:** It shouldn't do because there's a little bit of rubber can you see here look.

**Lisa:** Oh yeh.

**Sheila:** And that little bit of rubber will keep it nice and tight in there.

049 PROBLEM SOLVING (PREVENTION OF LEAKS: WATER-TIGHT)

(Talking about water-tight seals on canal. Rubber seals)

**Sheila:** What do you think this does?

**Dennis:** It stops the water.

**Sheila:** It stops the water you're right it's called a dam... it stops the water running through there.

c62



(The dam was empty at this stage. Dennis could predict what the plastic stop was for).

#### 080 PROBLEM SOLVING

Sheila: Do you think we could join these up?

Chanelle: If you move... if you move them two and then you can join that one there

Sheila: Yes I think you might be right shall we try?

We had (Sketch attached)

Chanelle suggested we move A and B and turn them round to join at C. (The dam was actually at a slightly higher level and therefore we did have some problems later on with a leak on the join - it wasn't quite watertight.

#### 453 FLOATING

Dennis: Look, that one floats

Sam: An that one floated.

SIDE TWO (Re filling dam again after earlier leakage)

#### 000 VOLUME/CAPACITY

Sheila: How do you think we could fill it quicker?

Dennis: Use a hose.

Sheila: But with all the things we've got here what do you think will fill it up the quickest?

Dennis: I don't know.

Sam: The bucket.

Sheila: The bucket, you're right is the biggest thing so it'll hold the most water.

C63

038

**Barry:** This should make a dam

**Vanessa:** That won't work well, why do you think it won't?

**Barry:** Dunno... oh, cos it's got holes in it.

**Vanessa:** Yes, that's right...

(Barry realised a box with holes wouldn't be much good because it'd leak all the water out.)

### 057 PROBLEM SOLVING & VOLUME & CAPACITY

**Sheila:** Why are you using that? (a plastic cup).

**Dennis:** To fill my box up.

**Sheila:** Why... couldn't you fill the box before?

**Dennis:** No... if I go like that an a little bit would come in 'cept I'd do it again an nothink would come in.

**Sheila:** Why do you think that was?

**Dennis:** I dunno coz I kept putting it like that.

**Sheila:** Maybe that was because it was too big for here, if you put it in the bigger one it might've worked. Well done though, that's a good idea.

(Dennis couldn't get a good scoopful of water because his plastic box was too wide for the canal tube and therefore he kept tilting it to get out and so lost all the water he'd just collected. He therefore began filling his box using a plastic cup).

(Jemilla mopping up the water, pressing sheets of newspaper on the floor)

### 161 PROBLEM SOLVING - ABSORBENCY

**Sheila:** What are you doing there?

**Jemilla:** Wiping up the water.

**Sheila:** How is it doing that?

C64

**Jemilla:** It's going into the paper.

**Sheila:** That's a good idea... do you think it's helping... what's it doing?

**Chanelle:** All the water's going on the paper an the floor's gettin dryer.

#### 176 DEDUCIVE THINKING! COMPARISON

(Tom was collecting our telephone numbers and found lots of the students had the same numbers!)

**Vanessa:** Why do you think they're all the same?

**Tom:** Because... coz... you live in the same... same house as somebody else.

**Vanessa:** I do, well done.

#### 255 PROBLEM SOLVING - RECOGNISING PROBLEM

**Sheila:** Why do you think our dam... our plasticine dam didn't work?

**Barry:** Cos it was full of holes.

**Dennis:** Cos when we put the water in it would go out through the holes... an when we put the water full up to here if anyone opened that it would go on the floor coz there's nothing there is it? (Dennis in latter part was talking about the plastic canal dam rather than our plasticine one, and how when they pulled out the stop it flooded over the floor!)

#### 272 PROBLEM SOLVING - WORKING OUT HOW ?? WORKS

**Sheila:** What did you think of the pump?

**Dennis:** It waz good.

**Barry:** Yeh, yeh it was good.

**Dennis:** I liked the bit when you pumped the water an it went sshhhhhsshhhss.

**Sheila:** How do you think it worked, Dennis?  
**Dennis:** Well when you pull it up the water goes down that.. um...  
sort of fireman's thing.(Gesturing at the tube.)  
**Sheila:** You're right - the tube. Well done, Dennis.

215

**Vanessa:** (Talking about the flood we had around it)  
How were we making the leak?  
**Lloyd:** Too much water  
**Vanessa:** You're right Lloyd, we put too much water in and then when  
we lifted this up...  
**Lloyd:** ...the water split out.  
**Vanessa:** ...splashed out; well done.

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## CONCEPTS

Taped observation - Week three (Pancake book and photos) 25/11/88

### 315 MEASUREMENT/COUNTING

(Using the ruler to mark lines for the recipe)

**Vanessa:** Alright, let's do one more six, do you want to measure six  
more centimetres then?  
**Rachel:** I'll do it... what this way down?  
**Vanessa:** Yes we start from right there...  
**Rachel:** An we go up six whih is there.  
**Vanessa:** Brilliant.

(Rachel uses counting on to measure 6cms. starts at 0 and  
counts on 6)

(Rachel stencilling 100g)

C66

#### 094? SYMBOLIZING WEIGHTS

Rachel: An then we wanna 'G'. What shall we have the big G or the little g like that?

Vanessa

and Sheila: I think we need the little g, don't we?

Sheila: Do you know what that little g stands for?

Rachel: Umm grammes.

Sheila: Well done. That was how much we needed.

Rachel recognizes that 'g' is a standard symbol used to stand for grammes - the units we weigh in. NB - Rachel could have done a fair bit of cookery at home.

#### 104 WEIGHING & EQUIVALENTS

Sheila: What did we find out about 100g of plain flour?

Rachel: We took it in turns to do it an it took 4 spoonfuls.

Sheila: So we could say that 100g was the same as 4 spoonfuls couldn't we?

#### 109 TIME - WEEK/MONTH

Jade: Next Monday's first of December.

Vanessa: What do we do on 1st December do you know?

Jade: We start opening our Christmas calendars.

Jade seems to have an awareness of weeks/months however we must be careful because she may have been told repeatedly that Monday is the 1st day and be on a 'countdown' to the day!

#### 196 TIME - WEEK

Rachel: I wish you could come every Monday and Friday.

e67

**Sheila:** Why Monday?

**Rachel:** Well... coz I get bored on Monday.

(Awareness of days of week.)

(We were illustrating our recipe and came across the problem of how to show white items on white paper. Rachel's solution, which Jade picked up on was firstly to colour in a dark colour (grey) and then use white pencil on top. It worked well, the dark background showed off the white.)

#### 415 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

**Sheila:** Oh, aren't you going to do it in white?

**Jade:** Yeh... I'm gonna do it like Rachel's done it... Rachel.

**Rachel:** See if you do it with dark if you cover it all with dark then you can see the white more.

#### 488 SEQUENCING

(Putting the cooking photographs into the correct order)

**Rachel:** That's near the beginning.

**Sheila:** What's happening in that photograph?

**Rachel:** I'm pouring the milk into the jug.

**Sheila:** Into the ...

**Rachel:** Oh, the bowl.

#### 501 SEQUENCING

**Rachel:** That was... this is gonna be... that was more or less at the same time so what do we do after that?

**Sheila:** We can decide which one we think should to first.

## 506 SEQUENCING

**Jade:** Oh that's at the end. (Sharing pancakes back in class)  
**Sheila:** That's right, that one's right at the end.

## 516 SEQUENCING

**Jade:** That's at the end.  
**Sheila:** What's that one?  
**Jade:** Rachel washing-up.

## 624 SEQUENCING

**Rachel:** An that photo does last of all... that photo goes last of all.  
**Sheila:** That's right yeh! (handing out pancakes)

(Making frames for photographs - how do we mark out what shape and size we want to cut out from the card?)

## 691 PROBLEM SOLVING

**Vanessa:** How are we going to measure the right size window do you think?  
**Rachel:** Well we could cut out that first (pointing to photo) and then we could put it on there and then we can mark it on the paper.  
**Sheila:** Yes but we don't want to cut the photo do we?  
**Rachel:** Oh no.  
**Sheila:** What we want to do is we want to cut a hole in the card exactly that size.  
**Rachel:** I know what you could do... you could put it over like that... lift it up and put the photo in the middle and then

you could put that back on. [pencils lying on photo, marking boundaries, i.e. (Sketch attached)] and then you could mark it with a pencil where you cut out and then you can look at it.

(Rachel marked where the pencils overlapped the photo, joined up the marks and cut out the shape)

## 701 PROBLEM SOLVING

**Rachel:** So you wanna cut it there like that... then you wanna cut it there like that.. an then you could cut... an then you could cut it across like that an then you'll have the window big enough.

**Sheila:** That's a very good idea well done.

## 718 SHAPES

**Vanessa:** We don't always have to have a square do we?

**Rachel:** No, you could have a triangle or something like that.

(Problem was how to cut out shape from the centre i.e. not cutting from the edge, so that the frame shape is kept.)

## 720

**Rachel:** What you have to do is get a plasticine... get a hard piece of plasticine an get a pencil... a sharp pencil and stick it through an then you can put in the scissors an cut round.

(I.e. plasticine goes under the card and you stab through with a sharp pencil to make an initial hole which you can then use as your starting point.

## 737

**Rachel:** Because you've got it on tape-recording you can always put it back if you can't find... if you've forgotten how to do



it an then you can put on the tape-recorder and find out how to do it can't you?<sup>1</sup>

Sheila: Yes, you're right, well done, we could.

Rachel: An then we could write it in the book how we did it... we could rewind, rewind that, see what I said an then write it down.

(How we could remember Rachel's method of above - at 720)

### 778 SHAPES AND FRACTIONS

Sheila: What shape do you think we should do for that one?

Jade: A triangle.

Sheila: What bit do we want to show?

Rachel: We could show is, we could cut...

Sheila: What are we going to do again?.. we folded this [sheet of A4 card] in half didn't we?

Rachel: Yes.

Jade: Just show the children this time.

Rachel: Why don't we have a sort of rectangle this time?

### 824 SHAPES

Sheila: What sort of shape do you think would be good for that one?

Rachel: A triangle.

Jade: No, a square again.

Sheila: Or how about a circle?

Rachel: Yes a circle would be a nice idea.

### 912

Rachel: We could do like a rectangle.

Vanessa: It doesn't have to be a regular shape...

Rachel: [interrupts]...we can have sort of a oblong shape, a egg shape... sort of like an egg shape.

C71

943

**Jade:** Why don't we do a diamond shape the next one?

**Rachel:** A diamond... but it depends, it depends on what the next photo's like...mmm...a diamond.

**Sheila:** We could do a diamond couldn't we?

**Rachel:** Mmm... yes.

(Rachel has definitely got the idea of focussing on the photo and realises we can't choose a shape until we've decided on what we want to highlight in the photo.)

951

**Rachel:** That's like a triangle more or less.[Having drawn half of the diamond.]

**Sheila:** Yes because a diamond is made up of two triangles really isn't it?

**Jade:** Why don't we do a star sort of shape next time?

012 (112 ?)

**Jade:** Why don't we have it as a star shape?

**Rachel:** No this one's gonna be a kite shape coz it's a different kind of photo.

177

**Jade:** Wht don't we do a shape of our initials for the photos? Like S for Sheila, R for Rachel, J for Jade, V for Vanessa.

**Rachel:** We could do our initials on that one, our initials like that.

**Jade:** That's what I said.

**Rachel:** ...an then you just colour it in with patterns... so look J for Jade at the top.

**Jade:** No, R for Rachel coz it's a photo of you.

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Good example of seeing the point of any kind of recording whether on tape or paper etc.

C72

385

**Kathryn:** What shapes have you been doing ?

**Jade:** All kinds of shapes.

### CONCEPTS

Taped Observation Week Two (Cooking Pancakes) 18/11/88. S. Horn

034

**Sheila:** What have we got here?

**Barry:** Bowls.

**Sheila:** Are they the same?

**Barry:** No.

**Vanessa:** What's different about them?

**Barry:** One is bigger than the other... these ones are the same...  
that one's the biggest... for growing up!

### 084 UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

**Sheila:** And some milk... How much milk have we got here? [Holding a full pint bottle.]

**Barry:** Two gallons.

**Rachel:** One gallon.

**Vanessa:** One something, you're nearly there.

**Sam:** One litre.

**Sheila:** What do you do if you leave a notice out for your milkman?

C73

What do you ask him for?

**Barry:** Two pints of milk.

**Sheila:** That's it, so what is it?

**Barry:** One pint.

**Sheila:** And that's one of those old fashioned bottles isn't it?

**Barry:** Yeh, you sometimes get... my mum gets the ones like that... them with a red top.

**Sheila:** They're quite a bit smaller but they're quite different in shape too aren't they?

**Barry:** Yeh, because they don't stretch up they go like that an it's about that size.

**Vanessa:** Is it still one pint though?

**Barry:** Yeh.

The initial confusion above was because the jug was in litres and we talk in pints when we see bottles of milk. Secondly Barry was describing the new short, squat milk bottles as opposed to the taller, thinner old ones.

#### COMPARISON (Talking about caster sugar)

**Vanessa:** If I put some on my hand...there.

**Rachel:** It's like salt.

**Vanessa:** How's it different to normal sugar you put in tea?

**Barry:** It don't feel the same.

**Rachel:** It tastes the same.

**Sam:** It's smooth.

**Vanessa:** That's right it's a lot finer.

#### 096 WEIGHTS

**Sheila:** First of al??????1 we need four ounces of plain flour.

**Rachel:** Four ounces?????

**Barry:** Where's a hundred?

C74

**Sheila:** It's not marked on these, but each one of these little marks stands for 25, so we need one, two, three, four... Is that one there?...????

??????????

[Each child put one ??? of flour in the weighing scale] - had explained one ounce was approximately 25g.

## 107 ONE-ONE CORRESPONDENCE

**Jade:** An then all of us can have one go each.

**Rachel:** Four tablespoons of flour, four of us.

**Vanessa:** That's right there's four of us well done.

## 180 MEASURING AND FRACTIONS

**Sheila:** Right now a quarter of a litre of milk... first of all have a look at the jug everyone.

**Rachel:** There.

**Sheila:** That's it, that's where a quarter of a litre is, so we really want to have that much. [How do we convey the idea of quarter. Any link with ???? ?? Could one have referred back to it?]]

## 185 FRACTIONS AND MEASURING

**Sheila:** Now how much milk do you think there's left in the bottle?

**Rachel/Barry:** Half a litre.

**Sheila:** Half a ...

**Rachel:** pint.

**Sheila:** That's what really difficult you know this jug has got litres on it hasn't it which are the new standard measurement and yet we still get our milk in pints don't we?  
[Alternative ways of measuring]

## 191 FRACTIONS AND MEASURING

**Sheila:** It says in here we've got to put half of the milk, so half of the amount we've got in there... how much is half of that?

(Barry points)

**Sheila:** That's about right, yes... pour it in with the egg.

**Jade:** I'll do it.

**Rachel:** Right, keep on stopping every now and again to see how much we've got... just a little bit more... a bit more... that's it... no it isn't (realises when jug is fully upright) just a little more.

**Jade/Rachel:** That's it.

## 217 TEXTURE

**Sheila:** What does it feel like now, Rachel? (batter with only half quantity of milk)

**Rachel:** It's stiffer... it's getting like playdough.

## 66? SHAPES (Talking about what the pancakes look like)

**Vanessa:** I wonder what they look like.

**Rachel:** Wheels.

**Vanessa:** Well it's round isn't it? It's a round pancake and wheels are round.

## TIME VS. HEIGHT. GRAVITY!

**Rachel:** The higher you toss it the more you have a chance you can get under it.

**Barry:** But then you'd get the ceiling.

c76

Sheila: Yes, if you toss it higher you've got more time before it comes down again.

## Side 2

### 026 WEIGHING (UNITS OF MEASUREMENT)

Vanessa: Do you remember what was on the scales?

Barry: Flour.

Jade: No.

Rachel: Numbers.

Vanessa: What did the numbers tell us do you remember?

Rachel: How much to put in... how much stuff to put in.

(Barry actually could have been right - the question was ambiguous enough. We did weigh flour in the scales.)

### 185 SPATIAL AWARENESS

Rachel: No do it up there then we've got more room to write.

(Talking about illustrations in book under sentences)

### 210 SEQUENCE/ORDER OF EVENTS

Jade: I'm going to do the oven.

Rachel: Yeh, you have to do the oven can't cook it otherwise can you?

(Rachel realises unless you have one thing first, can't go on to next.)

### 267 TIME

Rachel: I'm going to my Grandma's tomorrow and I'm excited.

## 356 SEQUENCING - ORDER OF EVENTS

**Rachel:** Well what we did we went upstairs and washed our hands.

(Telling the class at 11.45 events of morning.)

Then we sat down and we talked about all the things we had like bowls and whisk that were on the table and what we used them for. Then we got some flour and a spoon and we took it in turns to put one spoonful of flour onto the scale and it

### ONE - ONE CORRESPONDENCE

took four spoonfuls coz there's four of us. (inaudible)

**Jade:** Then you put the eggs in, cracked the eggs... and put it in a bowl and mixed it together.

[Good. Can you use data to describe ???'s individual stages of understanding?]



## STUDATA:GWYN

### Using cassette recorders in the classroom 7.12.88

This was the first time I'd used a cassette recorder, and I must admit I was initially reluctant. I was very aware that I was wearing it, although I didn't feel too worried about what I might say, I felt it was very unnatural, and prevented me behaving as spontaneously with the children, as I might have done. However, after a while, it didn't feel quite so awkward. It was interesting that although two of the children wanted to know what it was, the other three took no interest in it whatsoever. The first two also soon lost interest. It obviously doesn't prevent the children behaving normally!

When listening to the tape I became aware of certain things I might not have noticed had I just looked back on the morning, with no recording.

1) I did a great deal of the talking. I think perhas the batteries weren't working perfectly, as some of the children's voices were very faint. I think using the tape might help you to be aware of whether your talk is supportive, or restrictive towards the children's talk.

2) Although we were making a model village, and concentrating our maths work, when I listened to the tape, we were actually doing a lot of talking about other things whilst we were working. Whilst this was useful and good for the children in other ways, I realised that I could have used the situation better to bring in "mathematical language". I don't think I would have been aware of the missed opportunities had I not listened to the tape, and 'rethought' the morning.

3) It took me some time to realize Sarjeet was not achieving anything. After listening to the tape I also realized that she said about ten words during the whole morning. Thomas was the most vocal child. You are so busy when working with a group of children, that it isn't possible to always be aware of the interaction. Listening to the tape helps you work this out, and perhaps highlights those children who do dominate, or who are too quiet and not participating.

4) I could do with improving my language: I use the word nice far too much!

I really couldn't find anything to transcribe that seemed like maths - partly because I didn't pick up the children's voices too much, and also because I don't think I was talking about what we were doing as much as I could have done.

I thought this part was quite nice, showing that the children want to know about your life (as a visitor to the classroom, or a teacher) and that being willing to share this must help to build up a good relationship.

**Perin:** (To Sarjeet) Your Mum wears those funny things that hang down, near to your legs.

**Me:** What, S???? Why do you call them funny. I think they're lovely.

An opportunity to talk about Sarjeet's culture - missed unfortunately as the conversation ceased, but having caught it on tape, it wouldn't be forgotten, and could be followed up later, perhaps in the afternoon or the next day. Sarjeet finds it difficult to talk in a group. This subject might be something she could be encouraged to talk about.

Talking about Mums led to Thomas's next question.

**Thomas:** Where's your Mum? (To me)

**Me:** My mum lives in Sittingbourne, that's quite a long way away.

**Thomas:** Can you ... can... have you seen her yet?

**Me:** Have I seen her yet? Not today, no. I don't live with my Mum anymore.

**Thomas:** Where do you... who do you live with?

**Me:** I live with my little boys.

**Thomas:** Have you got some children?

(Several other questions from the others. "How many children" etc. Obviously interested that I had children.)

**Me:** Yes

**Thomas:** Are they yours?

**Me:** Yes.

**Thomas:** Do they stay with you all the time?

**Me:** Yes, well, sometimes they go and stay with their Daddy, because he lives somewhere else.

**Dean:** How comes you don't live with your Dad?

**Me:** Some Mmms and Daddys don't live with their children do they?

**Thomas:** My Dad doesn't live with my Mum.

This was a nice discussion about families and relationships. Perhaps it helped Thomas to know that my children don't live with their Father either.

At the time I didn't want to use the cassette recorder. I still feel slightly uneasy about it, feeling that it might prevent me being totally natural with the children. However, listening to it heightened my awareness of what I say to the children, and how much they are participating. I also picked up several ideas of continuation of subjects that they might be

interested in.

eg. Thomas talking about his neighbours planting and making a garden.

Saris??? - discussion of different clothes people wear etc.

I hadn't remembered these conversations, but was reminded of them when listening to the tapes.

## MATHS TAPE

### Evaluation of Maths in tape of silhouette work with children in School

#### Maths

- 20- 1)Initial work of dividing the paper up for silhouette work
- 2)Fitting houses into paper.
- 20-22 Found some spare ones. Seeing whether we had too many or too few buildings on the paper. Counting skills, seeing how many we had. Thinking what to do with the left over buildings. Arrangement and ordering of buildings.
- 22- 3)Counting how many clock towers we had on one sheet of paper. Assessing whether one of them would look better on a sheet without a clock tower.
- 23- 4)Fitting on houses. Over crowded. Spacing and rearranging.
- 24 5)Perspective. Having some houses in front and some behind. Not too far back or houses would be in the sky.
- 25 6)Buildings with no windows on, looking like the people were out.
- 27 7)Sticking on houses. Not too much glue and one building being stuck on at a time.
- 30 8)Buildings being glued on. Not too far from group or in the sky. Arrangement of buildings same up and same down.

## Teaching Points

I felt that I over dominated the discussion with the children and should have taken more of a "back seat". I was anxious to get certain maths points in, like the idea of perspective and should have let the children talk a bit more, without interrupting them. I didn't give the children enough time to answer questions or to take in what was being said or done, as I was afraid of pausing too often, or of losing the childrens' interest. I did discuss where things should go on the picture but I didn't give the children enough time to suggest their own ideas, which meant that often they took my ideas for building arrangement and didn't offer their own suggestions in case they didn't seem as good as mine.

I organised things for the children too much and didn't give them enough room to decide on, for example sharing the glue with each other. Allowing more peer interaction would have been better.

**SCHDATA:CUTON 1988**

Age range of children: 7+ (1st year Juniors)

**January - March 1988**

**Classroom approach**

Before considering my approach to the curriculum for the Spring term I feel I must consider my approach during the Autumn Term.

**Evaluation and reflection on the Autumn Term**

**Class 10: Personal and Social Skills**

The children responded to work having clear guidelines but had difficulty working independently. Weaknesses were also apparent in terms of interest and motivation. Initial interest is there but it is difficult to sustain this. Generally, I am disappointed with the quality of relationships within Class 10. This relates to both pupil/pupil and teacher/pupil. I am concerned about the level of aggressive and anti-social behaviour shown by a minority of children. I am also concerned about the difficulty I have had establishing a happy and relaxed atmosphere.

NB: I had two severe behaviour problems in the class. One has a non-teaching assistant for an hour a day and the other has now been suspended and has a home tutor.

C85

## Intellectual Skills

Specific difficulties have now become apparent through my own knowledge of individuals as well as the 7+ results. These will form the focus of my content planning.

## **Classroom**

### Organization

For much of the term the class were fairly formally based as I tried to establish my work and behaviour standards. I had to abandon my reading area as I found children were abusing the freedom it offered. The outside area was introduced as an area for Art work and this was successful.

### Environment

I feel that this aspect showed areas of weakness as I failed to place sufficient emphasis on the classroom environment. My available preparation time was unevenly spent and I feel I probably spent too much time planning content when mu time could have been more profitably used to create a stimulating and exciting classroom.

### Self

A very difficult term for me in many respects. I had underestimated the physical and emotional demands of working with younger children.<sup>1</sup> I found planning difficult as I had no

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<sup>1</sup> I have just returned from teacher exchange in Canada and had been teaching Grade 6 (12+). Prior to this I had taught second year Juniors.



prior knowledge or experience of what the children had done or 'where they were at'. Trying to establish relationships and to cope with the varied social problems has also been difficult. Their lack of initiative, responsibility and independence has created frustrations as I have struggled to match the school's philosophy with the practicalities of the situation. Too many problems seemed to exist to allow me to work with class 10 in the way I feel happiest.

### Implications

I feel the greatest need within class 10 is to try and develop personal and social skills. My focus through all work will be on working co-operatively and showing consideration and respect for others. I shall endeavour to provide a greater range of practical activities and try to limit the amount of recording. The emphasis being on quantity.

Personally, I aim to try to be positive and to praise on as many occasions as possible, particularly praising reasonable behaviour as well as good quality work. Through more detailed knowledge of the children's strengths and weaknesses I hope that I will be able to match the activities more accurately with the needs of class 10.

My priority, in terms of time, will be the classroom environment and I shall endeavour to create a stimulating room to encourage interest and also a feeling of worth for having been responsible for the room. The outside area will form a shared Art area with class 9, to encourage co-operation and responsibility whilst I have re-introduced the reading area which I hope will be used more appropriately.

Some children within the class are able to work more independently and these will work from a weekly work programme enabling me to spend more time with other groups.

Through the change of emphasis in my approach I hope self-

esteem and confidence will grow and thus help prevent some of the anti-social behaviour shown by some children.

### Reflection: Spring 1988

I have found that writing down my reflections on the Autumn term actually had a positive influence on my classroom. I intend to repeat the same process.

### Class 10: Personal and social skills

A much more successful term for many children. They now seem more settled and I am pleased with the degree of initiative and responsibility being shown by most children. Some are still coming to terms with working independently and using the reading and outside area without supervision.

### Intellectual skills

The water topic created many opportunities for practical work and it was interesting to observe and listen to comment. Using the environment as a starting point interested many children and they became more aware of the weather and its effects.

## Classroom

### Organization

My emphasis on group and co-operative work has been very useful. I am pleased with the increase in co-operation between children. I was particularly pleased with the collective responsibility shown by groups in organizing themselves to bring in objects for the floating and sinking work.

### Environment

I feel happier with my classroom although I still feel this is an area of weakness and shows room for improvement. This term I aim to try and create an area of interest which changes more frequently as well as using book displays to encourage and promote interest. I also hope to use the Blue Library as a place of shared interest and responsibility.

### Self

I feel much happier with the classroom atmosphere and feel that my relationship is now more positive with many children. Planning has become easier as I have increased by knowledge of individual needs as well as the different demands made by younger children. I feel that I am now coming some way to matching school philosophy with my classroom practice. Mrs Boyle has even commented on what a different group of children Class 10 seems to be!

[[N.T.A. for behavioural problem.]

## Implications

My focus will continue to be the development of personal and social skills. The emphasis being on group and partner work and working responsibly and independently.

Personally, I shall continue to praise and draw attention to work of quality and originality. I shall try and place more emphasis on practical activities as I know I am still guilty of providing too many passive activities.

The classroom and year group environment will continue to be priority in terms of time.

## Thematic Work - Pattern and Shape

NB. As this is such a wide topic it has been decided that areas of content will be left to individual teachers within the year group. The identification of specific skills and concepts will provide the guidelines for content. Hopefully, Show and Tell time will be used to 'pull' the theme together and to share the work going on in other classes.

The focus throughout this term's theme is Mathematics (an area of weakness identified in 7+ screening) and the approach investigative.

Aims: To further develop intellectual skills of observation, classification, application of learning and problem solving.

To further develop personal skills of curiosity, originality, self criticism and responsibility.

To further develop social skills, particularly co-operation.

To develop the concept of similarity and difference.

To increase the children's confidence and interest in Mathematics.

# **APPENDIX D**

## **EVALUATION OF WORKPLACE NURSERIES**

**June 1990 - November 1991**

## COMING UP OR GOING DOWN?

### HOW DO WE CONCEPTUALISE THE EARLY YEARS OF EDUCATION?

Practitioners evaluating their own practice in provision for under fives

Victoria Hurst

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The conceptual setting of the research

Early years practitioners may justifiably be concerned about how the early years are seen. Are they perceived as the foundations of education, from which educational principles and practice arise to affect later stages, or are they seen as requiring the most watered-down curriculum and least well-prepared practitioners? Are they rising or falling in public and professional esteem? The early years of education, from three to five in nursery education, and from four or five to seven in infant school, have recently been seen as an easy option, for which a 'Mums' Army' training would be sufficient. This puts existing practitioners in a painful predicament. This chapter invites the reader to consider whether the findings of a recent project justify the description of nursery practitioners' task of educational evaluation as a rigorous professional process. If this is the case, perhaps a higher valuation should be placed on the work of early years teachers and nursery nurses.

## Summary of the project

The project was concerned with educational evaluation in two nurseries providing for children of parents in full-time employment. It investigates a model of self-evaluation by practitioners through 'outsider' support. The project initially collected both quantitative and qualitative data about the nurseries, their aims and the principles on which the staff based their work. Next, researchers supported individual practitioners as they evaluated their work.

The methodology of the project is described as an action-research framework in two ways. Firstly, the model of educational evaluation is one in which the practitioner is committed to an ongoing process of investigating self-chosen aspects of the classroom, making judgements on the effectiveness of provision, and re-forming educational strategies. Secondly, the 'outsider' is engaged in learning about the process of practitioner evaluation through supporting the practitioner with observations and shared reflections on the meaning and value of what is learned from the evidence (Elliott 1985, 1991). There are thus two action-research processes - one at the practitioner's level and one in which the researchers sought to establish tentative hypotheses about what is involved in supporting the process of practitioner self-evaluation.

## EXPLORING PRACTITIONER SELF-EVALUATION IN THE EARLY YEARS

### Rationale for the research

The research described was undertaken to explore some of the factors that might be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of provision for under fives in workplace nurseries. The two researchers were experienced in educational evaluation with early years teachers and student teachers in maintained education settings, such as nursery schools and classes and infant schools. The project sought to allow the researchers to work collaboratively with staff in settings where care and education were offered from 8.00am to 6.00pm. The aim was to establish what some of the necessary conditions were for effective evaluation, so that in the event of an expansion of private and voluntary provision for employees' children we could put forward an outline of a procedure for monitoring the quality provided.

Because we intended to explore this process with staff, and try to inform ourselves what might be the professional principles and practices that were involved in the full-day provision for under-fives, we wanted to share the thinking of staff rather than to decide in advance what we thought were the criteria that should be used in evaluation. Insiders and outsiders collaborated in the evaluations, and together gradually established some of the necessary ingredients, ~~as we saw it,~~ for effective monitoring of education and care in workplace nurseries.



## The model of educational evaluation used

The collaborative evaluations were based on a cycle of the following processes:

1. *Staff-directed observation - analysis - reflection - evaluation -*
2. *adjustment of strategies and perspective on educational provision*
3. *- observation etc.*

We have called this process *self-evaluation* because the practitioners make the choice about the value attributed to particular criteria. They do not evaluate on the basis of criteria supplied by other agencies. In order to study self-evaluation we had to ask the staff to select the focus of the evaluation, and tell us their thoughts about the observations that we collected.

*ead (the observations)*

Educational self-evaluation differs from the cycle of

*observation - assessment - curriculum planning*

in that the evaluation asks questions such as to what extent the provision met the children's perceived needs, and to what extent it could have been better. The curriculum planning process links children's perceived needs with the curricular provision. Decisions are made about what should be the next steps, and these are related both to what is noted about children and to assumptions about the appropriate curriculum. Self-evaluation widens the perspective to include asking why certain curricular assumptions are accepted, and encourages the

practitioner to take into account the fundamental principles on which professional values are organised. An example of this can be seen from nursery 2.

*'July 1990. Activities for children under 18 months.*

*3. Mirrors hand-held plus wall-mounted*

*Three months onwards. The babies are intrigued to see their reflection....'*

*'20th May 1991.*

*B, age 3 months, 3 days*

*B is sitting in the bouncy chair in front of the mirror. B turns her head from side to side. She looks in the mirror, her eyes fix on K's dress. She watches K walk across the room.....*

*Comments by practitioner*

*I wanted to see B's reaction to the mirror without the added distraction of mobiles..... B is watching everything that is going on, the slightest new movement or action, B will fix on.'*

The practitioner concluded from this observation that it was the other people in the room, children and adults, that B found interesting rather than the mirror's reflections. The impact of the information may be seen by contrasting her expressed views across the period of time concerned. In July 1990 she and her partner <sup>had listed</sup> defined suitable activities from which a stimulating learning environment could be constructed. In May 1991 she evaluated one aspect of this provision and adapted her

DS

understanding of an appropriate curriculum in the light of what she learned. In the <sup>using</sup> ~~outline~~ of July 1990 the role of other people in a baby's learning environment is described in terms of talking to the baby and physical contact, and both of these come quite low down on the list (nos 10 and 11). The result of self-evaluation is that watching other people <sup>becomes</sup> ~~is now~~ part of the list, and other human beings are understood to be of greater significance to babies than the mobiles, rattles, mirrors, soft cubes and other equipment which in 1990 preceded 'people' on the list.

We hoped that, for the researchers, the process of participating in the evaluations by making observations for staff to use and recording their responses would lead to new understandings about what would be involved in monitoring and evaluation in workplace nurseries. For us, each new experience of evaluation would give us the opportunity to explore how staff could be supported, in that we could formulate and test out our ideas and reshape them as we went along. Several of the conclusions relate to the need staff felt for ongoing support if they were to be able to continue the process of self-evaluation. Some other conclusions concern ourselves as outsiders, and may throw some light on the role of those who might, in future, engage in giving staff this support.

## Methodology of the project

### 1. The two nurseries

Approaches were made to several commercial nurseries, but at the time of the project's initiation (1989) none of those that we consulted felt able to allow us to work with them. We were fortunate at last in persuading two inner-London nurseries, one maintained and one private, to collaborate ~~with us~~. The essential common characteristic of the two as far as the project was concerned was that each was providing full-day care for the children of working parents. We had hoped to gain experience by working with staff in actual workplace nurseries. In the event, we worked instead in groups with some similarities but some ~~some~~ differences that should be noted, in that some of the practitioners were trained nursery teachers (less likely to be the case in workplace nurseries because of the pay differential), and neither group was organised to make a profit, as is the case when a company supplies nurseries to industry.

### 2. Data-gathering

a) The questionnaire - quantitative data, and some qualitative aspects.

A questionnaire was sent to the head of each nursery to establish details of the establishment (see below). There was also a questionnaire for staff which asked about their qualifications and experience, and asked them to say what they most enjoyed about their work, and what of their training and experience had best prepared them for the job as they saw it.

From these questionnaires we were able to establish what we felt were some essentials if we were to understand the work of each group and the practitioners within them:

- administration - how much professional control and support
- finance - any source of support other than fees
- children - how many, how old, how grouped
- special needs - as defined by head of group
- parents - what work they are released to do
- parents - what contact, policies
- accommodation - how used, particular assets and disadvantages
- staff - roles, child ratios
- staff - levels of training and experience of each member
- aims - how the nursery defines them, how decisions taken
- records - of individual children, what sort, how kept
- records - of activities provided
- other information the head would like to provide
- any comments on the questionnaire

The questionnaire was in the form of questions to which the heads were invited to give a narrative response. This of course gave us quantitative information, but qualitative information also emerged from the way that the answers were constructed by the heads to express their views and values as well as the factual aspects of their situation. For example, on policies on relations with parents, the head of nursery 1 wrote:

*Not written down as yet, but our philosophy is one of working with parents - the partnership model.....also trying to encourage families to spend as much time together as possible - not to 'take over' the children but to share their responsibility.*

The questionnaire for staff gave similar opportunities for practitioners to define what they felt were the most important aims of their work. A practitioner at nursery 2 defined hers as being

*'providing a safe and stimulating environment for the children, encouraging their development and dealing with any problems as they may occur.'*

Through the qualitative aspects of the questionnaire we were able to begin to get an idea of the principles and values held by heads and by staff, and the personal qualities that they brought to their work. These were to inform our understanding of their intentions in the classroom, and were an essential part of the process of evaluating their work. The principles and values held by practitioners are integrally involved in the process of evaluation, as explained above.

**b) The data from staff self-evaluations.**

The data fell, broadly, into two groups. The first set of data referred to the process of evaluating with staff and discussing with them what they found helpful and where they felt they needed more support. A major shift in staff thinking in general concerned

expectations about observations. At first staff expected that they would be observed by the researchers, and found it surprising to be asked to take the lead in deciding the focus of their evaluations and collecting the observations on which to evaluate their work. Once staff began to work independently in this way the process became a part of the interaction between them and the researchers. In each cycle of evaluation the focus was determined by the practitioner concerned. In nursery 2, as related above, for instance, one focus was the behaviour and responses to different provision of a three-month old baby for whom the practitioner had responsibility.

The second set of data concerned the learning that went on in the researchers' minds. Again, the collection of observations from which to make evaluations was the cause of a shift in thinking, this time <sup>for</sup> in the researchers. We had assumed, on the basis of our earlier work in infant and nursery classrooms, that staff would do their own observations and then discuss them with us. This did indeed happen, but we learned that our help was often needed because staff were under great pressure. It became clear from both nurseries that it required so great and organised an effort for staff to observe and record their observations that it could not be taken for granted that this could happen. While staff in nursery 1 got together to organise observations in their playground, and incorporated them very effectively into their forward planning, it was more in the nature of an occasional audit than an ongoing process. At nursery 2, the head undertook observations - again of outdoor play - but she also saw this as a part of her responsibility for the provision, and

as connected with her input into staff development, rather than something that could be done by staff as a matter of course.

The result of this was that we concluded that in future support for practitioner self-evaluation might have to include observations made by the researchers on behalf of staff and under staff direction. This demonstrates the way in which the outsiders themselves were involved in learning in the course of researching. The gradual emergence of form is identified by Elliott (1991, pp.74-5). It is this factor, along with the investigations undertaken by both staff and researchers, that has led us to identify the project as a research as well as a development project, and to acknowledge the role of action-research precedents in influencing the development of our procedures.

The insider/outsider discussions frequently related to both sets of data. Insiders would contribute their experience of supported self-evaluation, outsiders would draw conclusions about their role and test these out with the insiders.

### Research and development findings of the project

In each area of data (learning about insider self-evaluation, learning about outsider support of self-evaluation), summaries which were agreed by practitioners gathered together what the researchers felt had been learned. What was learned about the process of self-evaluation by practitioners, and about what it was like to support this process as



an outsider, is defined as research data (see below p.....). What the practitioners learned about their practice, i.e. how the baby responded to being placed in front of a full-length mirror, was seen by them as a form of professional development.

The range of data findings analysed from each nursery centre was as follows:

1. Data findings based on what staff are actually doing with children, i.e. *'Since our discussion on the use of the garden, I have observed a lot of children playing very imaginatively, in groups and individually and alongside of others.'*
2. Data findings based on what the researchers feel is emerging about how the process of self-evaluation works, i.e. *'Staff evaluating their work: outline of the process'* (a 5-page document itemising the stages of observation and analysis through which evaluation takes place).
3. Data findings based on what seems to be emerging about outside support for the process of evaluation and monitoring, i.e. different staff responses to an enquiry in February 1991:

*'What role do you feel an outside view has played in our work together?'*

*Staff from Nursery 1.*

1. *'Gives a more objective outlook'*
2. *'It has provided a focus for us to take a more formal and objective*

*view of the centre and the children.'*

3. *'It has made us do just that - describe and justify what we do and in some cases, realize that we are not always doing things as well as we might. Conversely, it has helped underline that most of what we do is right and successful for our children.'*

4. *'Yes, an outsider is helpful, if only to have someone to discuss observations with, but also to provide "expertise" suggesting further ideas for observation and possible conclusions.'*

## HOW THE RESEARCH PROJECT DEVELOPED

This section outlines the evolution of the project and the development of insights about evaluation and how to support it that emerged during the project's lifetime. It would be true to say that the understandings of both staff and researchers were much changed in the process. The staff came to the project with the idea that their practice would be researched in a formal, appraising way, and that the researchers would observe them and make judgements about their work.

*'I was of the understanding that it was you who were doing the observations on us and the children, when in fact it turned out to be the other way around, which seemed to confuse everybody.'*

We were made aware through this sentiment, which was quite widely shared, that our project must have seemed even more challenging than we had thought, and we felt that the staff had been professionally generous in agreeing to participate. Our own understandings about our role as collaborators in this evaluative process formed a kind of second layer, in addition to the findings about self-evaluation. The need to support staff with help in observing their chosen focus has been mentioned above (p.....). We also found that the 'outsider' role required us to provide some structure for the analysis of the observations (below, p.....). Although staff had had experience of observing children during their training they were not at first confident about linking the observations with evaluation of their practice.

## Sequence of events in the project

1990: Questionnaire establishes staff training and experience, and what each participant feels to be the important links between their training and experience and their work with young children.

1990-1; Action-research cycle undertaken with individual or paired members of staff as follows;

### Cycle A

1. Interview - explain research purpose  
agree what staff member will observe
2. Staff member observes children
3. Staff member and researcher discuss observation
4. Discussions of developments in practice by staff member
5. Discussions of more general implications, eg research, or staff training and development

Dissemination of preliminary findings; evaluation defined as an ongoing pedagogic process based on observation and assessment of children; document circulated to participants for comment and discussion.

For the individual staff member this could be the end of the involvement. However, if s/he decided to continue to participate there could be another cycle in which the learning from the first cycle was built on. An example of this process from Centre 1 follows.

Cycle A as applied in Centre 1

1. Interview - explain research purpose:  
staff decide they will observe use of  
playground equipment
2. Staff members observe children
3. Staff members and researcher discuss monopoly of  
bikes by certain children
4. Discussions of developments in practice,  
strategies for more equal access
5. Discussions of more general implications, eg  
need for further observations, possible  
planning for outdoor play as focus for whole  
staff to link with overall planning

At the end of this stage, staff in both nurseries took over the process of evaluation and incorporated it into their own processes of development.

1991-2; Continuation of the action-research cycle. Dissemination of findings and interim conclusions continues; discussions with different members of staff about this.

#### Cycle B

1. Staff take initiative to monitor impact of new planning strategies on playground, agree to share observation of use of playground equipment
2. Staff members observe children on agreed rota
3. Staff members discuss among themselves use of the equipment on different days
4. Discussions of new strategies, decision to maintain these developments and monitor again,
5. Discussions with researcher of more general implications, eg appropriateness of whole-team focus on evaluating outdoor play but value of having the researcher as an outsider to provoke, support and reflect on staff initiatives

For the research project there was another strand of interest - the research methodology - and this involved a parallel development of understanding. Another example follows, which shows how the collaborative action-research approach developed.

Cycle AA

1. First concept - research purpose to focus on staff evaluating. Researcher will compare data from observations with staff aims  
Method - agree what staff member will observe, researcher act as 'fly on wall'/adjudicator
2. Staff member observes children
3. Staff member and researcher discuss observation, researcher shares elucidation and analysis
4. Discussions of developments in practice by staff member and researcher
5. Discussions of more general implications, eg role of researcher

This led to the formation of a new concept of the research and hence a change in the methodology, as shown next.

Cycle BB

1. Integration of conclusions from Cycle AA  
Forming of second concept - method of research collaborative still, but researcher a participant in the process
2. New focus agreed with staff
3. Researcher's own responses shared as part of data
4. Researcher informally observed by staff with children
5. Joint conclusions about children's needs, staff suggest ways to meet them.
6. Discussion of extent to which the research is a formative experience for the researcher.

This final point (6) became a new part of the methodological reflection. The opportunity to explore the 'outsider' role of researcher in a project where the 'insider' knowledge of the practitioner is the focus is an exciting one. There has been much work of interest in relation to the foundation of research in the 'grounded realism' approach which roots research firmly in the reality of the classroom and in the classroom expertise of the practitioner.

1992-3; Final stages of the action-research cycles as far as the research was concerned; continued discussions and dissemination of findings.



## Dissemination - the first year's work, 1990-1

During 1990-1 the programme of observation-based evaluation progressed slowly for two reasons. The first was the essential process of acclimatisation which the researchers needed in order to acquire a degree of 'insider/understanding' of the children, the staff and the structures of the two Centres. This was accomplished by a programme of observation by the researchers of the children and the curriculum provided. The second reason for a slow start was that, as described above, there were some important understandings about the research approach which needed to be established, in particular that staff were not going to be appraised or examined on their work, and that the researchers intended to focus on staff evaluating their own effectiveness in achieving their own aims. Dissemination of our intentions was as important as dissemination of ongoing findings.

This made the role of the summaries very important, as even in the smaller of the two centres it was not possible to spend much time with each member of staff if the budget was to be adhered to. The staff who worked with the researchers contributed by communicating the aims of the project as they saw them, and these were expressed in the summaries. The more active staff helped as well as by feeding in information from their colleagues. In May 1991 an interim statement was circulated, summarising the views of the chief participants, both researchers and practitioners, as gathered from interviews; the following quotations are from this document. A strong element in the research is the development of a collegial process of review and interpretation. In the summary quoted

below this process of review focuses on the idea that practitioner evaluation is not something that can, in its actual focus, originate from outside the classroom.

*'We [VH writing on behalf of the research team] have been taking stock during the first months of 1991 of where we have got to. I have had meetings with staff at both centres [team leaders, individuals, and one group meeting].*

*I have been fortunate in having some illuminative conversations with staff in both centres, which has led to a new way of articulating the research process [see below]. L [head of Centre 2] sees our joint investigation of the monitoring and evaluation process in terms of ongoing staff development, and feels that she, as team leader, should take a leading role in it, and also incorporate it into the regular sessions she has with individual members of staff to review their professional development. H and A [Centre 1] have said that they feel a responsibility for structuring the centre's continuous review of its work to include the research into monitoring and evaluation. They feel that while I was absent the impetus towards observation died down, and that if anything is to happen they must take the initiative. They therefore used one of the staff meetings for me to come and discuss this with staff, according to an outline I had prepared after talking with them. They are incorporating the investigations into the centre's theme of outdoor play; they have been working to develop their provision for this during the year 1990-1, and see the research as an opportunity to continue the focus..... The meeting agreed on a programme of staff*

*observation over the next month, with a meeting to review what had been learned...'*

The next section of the document explained how the input of particular participants had helped researchers to understand the project better from the point of view of staff.

*'The contribution from centre 2 [J] set out some of the difficulties, particularly that it had not been understood by her that staff were to do the observing rather than the college researchers. I have done an outline of the process [see below] for use in this centre. It corresponds closely to the one I have developed for use with the staff in the other centre [see last paragraph].*

#### ***Summary***

*Stage 1: Find out what's going on by observing the children - play, talk, emotional signs etc*

*Stage 2: Think and talk about what the observations tell you*

*Stage 3: Point out what you think are the educational issues involved*

*Stage 4: Make changes and develop new approaches*

## Insights into the process of evaluation

The points noted above led to certain conclusions about evaluation, which were circulated to the participants;

'1. Staff have to feel that they have ownership of monitoring and evaluation if the practitioner is to avoid being measured by others' yardsticks; incorporation of process into structure of centre, in one case staff development, in the other development of provision.

2. No blueprint can exist but processes can be identified; staff in both centres seem to be able to 'find themselves' in the process outlined

observation - this without preconception about what is being looked for in any specific sense; we are still at the stage in both centres of people identifying general areas for investigation [Stage 1], and have not yet examined different kinds of observation'

This summary brought to an end the informal dissemination, but it did not end the development in the two Centres. As has already been explained, both the Centres went on to explore the process of evaluation in their own way, and this change in initiative brought in a new stage of the project where the role of dissemination in stimulating and supporting staff development was no longer so necessary.

How staff took the process of evaluation and used it in their own curriculum processes is described next.

## The process of evaluation at work

Centres 1 and 2 each developed a kind of evaluation which enabled them to re-structure their planning processes. In addition, Centre 1 evolved a structure for monitoring a very large playground and evaluating the experience of children from the age of one onwards, including several with very acute special needs. Centre 2 developed criteria for observations which differentiated between a broad sweep and a particular focus on one area or a particular child or children.

Staff in both nurseries decided that one focus should be outdoor play, with its rich possibilities of social and physical development, and its stimulus for imaginative play, language, and mathematical and scientific thinking. Both nurseries had interesting outdoor potential, with assets in terms of space offset in each case by some difficult features. For Centre 1 this was the sheer number and range of development of the children from barely walking to five years old who needed to use the space. For Centre 2 the problem was that the playspace was reached by a long steep ramp, down which children could not be allowed to go unaccompanied.

Centre 1 approached the evaluation by monitoring the use of equipment, which seems to have served well as a way of achieving a higher level of staff observation and reflection. The action-research cycles (above, p. . . .) went through several developments; in the first the nursery teacher-trained team leader devised an observation schedule which his colleagues on the staff used to record who had access to the

bicycles. Children were then observed at the outdoor sand-pit and their behaviour and language noted.

'2.40.

*same children*

*A - still filling bottles up*

*R - has found a stone - playing hide and seek with stone*

*E and L - co-operative play with barrel and plank; E to L "No, L, don't do it like that, let's make a horse."*

*D - still lying on plastic plank.'*

The volume of information thrown up was reflected on and analysed, and this was followed by a different system of planning which gave each team within the nursery the opportunity to plan and set up the playground within an agreed framework of aims.

Centre 2, quite independently, made use of a series of observations by its Head to reconsider the equipment and use they made of their outdoor play-space. She compared the usefulness of a broad observation of the whole outdoor area with approximately 20 children in it, with a more focused observation of one activity. Her observation was analysed as follows:

*'This observation has shown me that a lot of play equipment is being used in the garden but I was unable to determine how engrossed individual children were, I feel I was trying to look at too much in one go.*

*For my next observation I decided to stay with one activity and observe what happens immediately around it....'. [There follows a study based mostly on one child's use of the dough]*

A short while later, she recorded:

*'Since our staff discussion on the use of the garden, I have observed a lot of children playing very imaginatively, in groups and individually and along side of others. Generally the children appear to be calmer and happier, less arguments breaking out, children absorbed in creative and physical activities and working co-operatively.....J. found a selection of plastic crates which have been extremely successful, they are light enough for children to drag on their own or carry in 2s and 3s co-operatively. They have been used as dolls' beds, seats, cars, trains, bounced on, made into space craft, airplanes.....'*

These selections from a wider range of work go well together because they have the same focus and show similar levels of development in thinking through the process of evaluation. The underlying principles to which staff refer in their reflections are not articulated directly but can be seen in their selection of particular aspects of children's behaviour on which to concentrate. Centre 1 focussed on social behaviour and language, Centre 2 on social behaviour and imaginative play.



## CONCLUSION

During 1991-2 when the project activity focussed more on the participants' general conclusions and interpretations (the stages shown as no. 5 in Cycles A and B in Section 2), broader conclusions began to emerge.

Some conclusions about practitioner evaluation

**Evaluation is a professional process related to educational principles**

Evaluation by the staff of the nurseries studied was directed towards meeting the individual learning needs of children. Practitioners' evaluations were founded on observation and assessment of children, and were linked with principles of child development and curriculum knowledge in order to match learning needs.

Criteria for evaluation should be related to the principles which define participants' conceptions of education and of childhood itself; one of the participants (Centre 2) added to her response to the questionnaire a statement reasserting the value of the principles of her original training. It has been the experience of the project that participants believe that evaluation is to be discussed in the light of these principles and the values by which these principles are justified.

Ideas about what is appropriate care and education provision for babies and children under five depend on practitioners' values and principles. Through sharing and discussing the process of evaluation, practitioners

relate their principles and the values which support them to the provision that they make for the very young children in their care. In order to discuss what might be developmentally appropriate provision, staff have to be prepared to examine their own practice in the light of their principles.

**Practitioner self-evaluation is a demanding process; staff felt it was helpful to have an initiative from outside their institution and someone who can guide and support their efforts**

Participants in the project have emphasised that they do not feel it would be possible for nursery workers, whether qualified or not, to undertake and maintain a critical approach to their work without an outsider to bring an alternative perspective to bear, and to give the moral support necessary for self-evaluation of their practice. Staff also made it clear how much they wished to have opportunities to continue their professional development and how much they valued a non-judgmental but professionally critical outsider's collaboration.

Practitioners felt that levels of professional support and inservice training should be adequate to allow staff to monitor and evaluate their work to the standards they saw as appropriate.

**Training of staff to work with young children must be targeted at developing participants' understanding of young children and their learning needs**

The project work has shown that quality in the nurseries was related to staff capacity to discuss practice in terms of principles. This makes it

clear that training for staff at all levels should focus on the underlying understanding that is needed rather than on the completion of particular tasks. The leaders of the nursery teams in both Centres have told the researchers that they feel that the main problem for staff in developing their practice lies in a lack of confidence about their ability to fulfil the professional role in terms of the making of observations and the discussion of findings. This being so, both initial and in-service training should emphasise the practitioner as independent and autonomous thinker. Skills of observation for assessment and curriculum purposes will have to be given priority as well as for the process of evaluation.

#### **Further implications; NVQs, performance criteria, competencies**

Performance criteria and assessment through 'competencies' both place heavy emphasis on the completion of tasks to a defined standard. It is suggested here that the prime emphasis should instead be on the capacity to reflect on and discuss the inter-relationship between insights from observation and assessment of individual children and the knowledge and understanding gained from studying child development and the early years curriculum. Thus, the training of staff to work with children under seven within the NVQ framework should be examined closely; if it means that the orientation of the assessment of students will consist of tasks to be completed to a formula for different levels it will be a cause for concern. The tacking-on of sections to do with 'underpinning understandings' will not satisfy this criticism, since the

project shows understanding of principle to be the dynamic, not a concomitant, agent of quality in educational provision.

### **Finally....**

The work of the project shows that there are essential principles involved in both practitioner evaluation and in the training of practitioners for work with children under five. This perspective offers a way through the diversity of education and care provision for the under-fives towards generating a more certain standard of educational provision for this vulnerable age-group. The findings of the project also cast light on the main issue raised at the beginning of this article, and emphasise the complexity of the task of the practitioner in early years education.

The project identified the value of the professional process of self-evaluation based on reflection on the results of observation and assessment. Elliott (1991) associates curriculum quality with reflectiveness.

*'The curriculum is not a body of predetermined static content to be reproduced via the pedagogical process. Rather it is the selection and organisation of content within a dynamic and reflective pedagogical process and is therefore constantly evolved and developed through it. Pedagogy takes the form of an experimental process of curriculum enquiry.'* (1991, p. 16)

We return here to the question outlined at the beginning. Is education in the early years, and in the years before five in particular, a simple process which requires a low level of preparation for practitioners? Or might it be an equally complex part of the whole education system, with something to contribute about our understanding of the task of the practitioner?

The process of self-evaluation undertaken by the practitioners studied in this project seems closer to that identified by Elliott - a process of the creation of an appropriate curriculum by the practitioner. In general, raising and maintaining standards in workplace nurseries, as in all educational provision, depends on the assumptions that we bring to bear on the task. Hard tasks, like educating very young children, cannot be achieved unless all concerned, the parents, governors, administrators and others as well as the practitioners, see the task for what it is. Although very young children are sometimes seen as having to be taught very simple things, the project shows what must be important aspects of practitioner evaluation for education in the five-eight age-group as well as with the under-fives.

A young mother has expressed the problems with a simple model of education as a justification for taking her children out of the education system entirely. 'The system of education is based on the idea that you can transmit knowledge from one person to another. I don't think that's how children learn. Children learn by being interested in something and wanting to find out about it. That's the motivation to learn.' (Tayler 1993)

**Acknowledgement:**

This is, in a very real sense, a collaborative work. The staff of Centres 1 and 2 have given generously of their time and their interest. Much of what appears here is the result of having talked through with one or more participants the processes we have shared. Throughout the years of this research it has been a great pleasure to be a part of the life of each nursery.

TAPE A - CENTRE ONE.

Andrew's planning - Drina (New Zealand) Philippa (Janet on holiday)

Admissions of special needs child, Liam. Implications for other special needs children, Ravi, Winifred, Franco, e.t.c.

? Correct sp. Liam, O.K. speaking, Parents re 50 pence

Planning - growing theme.

Behaviour related movement, artwork, strong.

Concern for a child's level of understanding.

How C.R environment affects what children do.

Easel vs. table painting.

How to support Susan (? student)

How to monitor children's progress - this could be an evaluation point to follow.

Centre One.

Visit 18. 4. 90.

Started in the Green Room. Lorraine had grazed a knee - made eye contact with V. straight off and looked sad - at first I thought she was distressed by seeing me again, but we chatted about hurting herself. She said, 'I wanted to go with Heidi'. H. (present) said, 'Did you? Where was I?' Lorraine said, 'I was in Centre Two'.

Nursery Centre is still very quiet. Sarah and Simon are playing with the car with Heidi. Lorraine is looking on cautiously. Sarah keeps hitting Simon. L. wants a ride. Heidi is talking about it. S. and S. invite her to sit on the raised back end. H. and S. and S. are playing filling up, Simon is arguing that the petrol doesn't go in the tank but can't think of a sensible alternative. Simon is fed up with Sarah. 'I'm not your friend!' Lorraine takes his place. Adele and Jermaine in the home corner with Chris. Simon goes to join them (no-one wants to go outside). Sarah goes to the home corner ( 'Let's go home') and Lorraine stays as driver, changing traffic lights. Lorraine has very cold hands, talking about the dolly who is left at home, going home with mummy later, Mummy's got my egg. Lorraine gets up to 'go to my work' then 'I'm coming back'. She told Heidi that she did painting at her work. Natasha enters with drawing for Heidi, then joins Lorraine who says to get up on the back as she had done. Natasha waits first but Lorraine doesn't. Natasha goes to her 'own' car (chain) carrying mobile phone and using separate steering



wheel. Natasha - 'Mine is broked'. Lorraine - 'Mine is!'. Natasha gets Duplo lego to mend car. Then she gets petrol. Lorraine gets up to do the same. Natasha holds her car and 'I'm going to (catches Lorraine's eye) hold it for you'. Lorraine - 'Just hold it', then they sit together. Natasha says, 'I'm not sitting here any more - going to my own car'. Lorraine - 'Sit here tomorrow, going home'. (see T.R.) Interrupted by eggs.

Lorraine - Play. Ducks and bread - Water play.

Sarah - typewriter - still writing with pen but interested in the machine.

Wendy - Chris - choices very important - bookmaking.

Jenny - Queries re. Head Start.

P.M.B. (15p stamp) P.O. Box 299, Risely, Bedford, MK44 1TG.

8.10

Performance criticism - Wendy - see what children did with their opportunities to choose, reasons why it's a good idea.

Goes on to making books and aims for future development.

8.80

Jenny on Head Start.

Carol =

Notion of differential performance criticism access to jobs as well as team shared (within one philosophy).

Role of professional judgement in all cases including examining own feelings \ errors as in work on prevention of child sex abuse.

Centre One 8. 5. 90.

Heather planning meeting - sorting out who is on which shift, Heather (Benin) Patricia (Nigerian) Maureen (Irish) Helena (Finnish) Maggie (nursery nurse - absent)

Re agenda - points from anyone.

Visiting baby (to Pat), student, plans, plan for painting themselves with different skin shades - how to get right paint, wool for hair (----> next week size comparison) Now TAPE for plans for self image work to respond to some racist behaviour last term (beginning of tape)

? How does next week's plan get modified in light of day to day experience?

? What planning happens when teachers are off?

( Holiday policy - out and about)

? How will they monitor the success of the piano?

? How was the racist behaviour reported and discussed?

Blue and green rooms have something they need to discuss - ? Any evaluation issues?

? Can we get further light on the informal process by which they monitor?

TAPE Side 2 - Heather mentions need to plan stories to avoid duplication, parents committee decisions.

Heather - racist behaviour before Easter - children at dinner table, heard by several staff. Then in the playground - snowball effect, though dealt with.

? Ask Carole about school wide evaluation and monitoring.

Next term - Wed - 2 hour training session on art where some differences of view are held. Hilary V. is coming but also gathering information - how is to be decided - Carole and Tony and Heather. Will see if G. or V. can be included.

Centre One. 22. 5. 90.

Andrew's team Centre 2.

Ravi, 2 Madhvi's. Liam settling in well, Dizzy , very early upset. Ravi put peel in bin. M..... 1Good boy Ravi, very clear and show.

Playground - Heather -----> Andrew on in / out.

Indoors - Lorraine - knees , picnics.

Chris, Charmayne bringing all children in to tidy up (10. 30)

Green room - Siva reading story from big book. Hairy bear, then the Hungry giant (child's name Feliz) Natasha Tanya e.t.c.

N.B. For next time ask whether staff have other issues they'd like to include in the evaluation process e.g. Wendy's workshop idea, Andrew in groups, Heather and Andrew on outdoor play.

No tape - battery failure? CC defective?

Centre One. 5. 6. 90.

Secretary Shanthy

- 1) Questionnaire, including Carole's
- 2) Ask Carole re. identification idea and big staff meeting (done - 18.7. at 4. 30)
- 3) Ask Andrew and Heather re. ideas for monitoring and evaluation.

Pressure on planning meetings - plans, staff communication.

Observation e.t.c. used for child studies and write up for children's records and C.R. evaluated informally - discuss big meeting - also report on our meeting.

Heather's planning - Rula (B Tec student) Patricia, Maureen, Helena and Maggie.

Centre two. Plans for outing to Clacton July 11

Assessing Bayram - language, levels of operations.

Queries of communication between staff (confidential)

Plans - colours in paint-mixing.

? from Heather - children not using the sand - Maggie consider moving it, making it a central attraction. Helena add printing to sand provision.

Heather - have person with sand to a greater extent.

buying new equipment, keeping track of own equipment.

No occasion to discuss the self-image work - will ask H. if we can

discuss this on my next visit - Tues. 19 or Thurs. 21. Feel this is where a lot of staff learning could be developed by evaluating how children have responded to what has been provided.

Andrew's planning meeting.

Centre One. Grace Philippa, Janet.

Arrived as suggested for last 15 minutes to give them a chance to do the rest of their work

Summarised aim to document process of m and e; possible focus could be a particular child who may need extra attention, Have asked for photocopies of red book entries which Olive could type up. They will consult parents, emphasising confidentiality.

28. 6. 90

00 - 50

Playing with Arabella in the garden - dolls 'Sweet Rosie' and Robin.

70 -

Matthew - bacon and poo

82 -

Matthew being covered up

92 -

Porridge - feeding Matthew

100 -

Emma and Isla - the cot

105 -

Rupert, wanting / not wanting porridge, bringing a bowl for me

130 -

Emma's bottle, bottle for Matthew

Centre One 3. 7. 90.

No tape.

Lorraine painting from M, wanting V to be companion. Wanting M-type 1:1 relationship, not to be one amongst a group.

Lunch with babies.

Gave observation sheets (both kinds) to Andrew's team. Will do pilot on Ahlem new to incorporation from September.

? I could spend time with babies one visit - discuss G and Carole.

October 4th.

Which room? - quiet, carpet, best lighting, - best quiet room.

Which children? - 1 year - 20 months  
Ellen, Henry, Jack or Harry, Victoria, Piers, Jonathon.

Which adult?

What time ? - fit into routine (3\4 hour)

Preparation of room - 3 adult chairs + one for Linda, take out movable furniture.

Provision for other children in age group.



Follow up session - V and G to do. Formulate view of what is learned from it - development of language, abstract thinking, difference between a nursery for under 3's and a nursery school.

Treasure basket - What is it? What can I do with it? What can it become? (language)

Special needs children may be unable to put something into something else, and not separating language from object.

Need of staff to mature through developing intimacy with individual children through awareness and evaluation of own work.

Issues of organisation - size of groups, key workers, lunchtimes, group times, helping staff to have time for children - not for organisation e.g. lunch trolley.

EG at NCB Dec. 3rd      Under 2's in Italy Oct 12 - Nov. 17.

4.10.90.

Treasure basket stage - hand, eye, mouth.

Continuous link with making own choices - mobile, preverbal.

Heuristic play stage - hand, body, brain.

Importance of close focus on delicate, manipulative movement.

Child can move, take initiatives re. putting things with things.

Difficulty with finding puzzle for 5 - 6 children, 12 x 20.

21 tins of various sizes

20 - 30 chains of various lengths and thicknesses

40 tin lids

15 pom-poms

15 plastic cones

20 - 30 cardboard tubes - max. 10" long

4 medium wicker baskets

Explain to Lisa about sitting and allowing children free exploration or standing by her to watch. Minimal conversation - gestures are very helpful. Intervention - if swinging or throwing chains. Procedure for putting things away.

10.25a.m.

Ellen and Victoria enjoy. Piers too and refused to come in at first. Jonathon is the most enthusiastic and Henry is O.K.

10.30.a.m.

All but Ellen have settled by the lids. Silence is very supportive, though some queries of adults presence. Ellen (and Victoria ) closer to Lisa - Ellen clinging tight. Much mouthing of lids by Jonathon, Piers and Henry

D4S

at first. After three minutes lid fitting Jonathon is handling and turning down. Four are sitting very close and move as a bunch. Victoria is vocalising a lot. Elinor modelling adult making slight adjustments. Victoria and Jonathon are making contact. Victoria brings Lisa cones.

10.37.a.m.

Bunch has separated, into three groups.

Henry - shells - In and out of tins. Victoria brings pom-poms. Piers joins. Ellen is on the floor, but clingy. Jonathon joins Lisa - vocal. Piers is bringing pom-poms to put in the basket by Ellen.

10.40.a.m.

Lisa fetches a basket for Ellen. She puts the pom-pom straight in. Four children are around Lisa - but O.K. (even Ellen). When Lisa puts the objects straight, Ellen joins her on the floor. Victoria gives me two shells. I give them back.

10.45.a.m.

Piers is clearing up the cones. Victoria - also pom-poms and other things. Piers needs reminding constantly.

10.50.a.m.

Piers is very cross with Felicity for not giving him a bag for himself - avoiding her suggestion that he puts the tin in the bag. Henry is very good on pom-poms. Ellen is very clingy. Felicity says 'thank you', but not 'good girl or boy'. One should have a tin in hand to collect tins.

Early identification of names and objects - discrimination.

Perseverance needed for learning to clear up. Over time this gets easier.

11.00.a.m.

Ellen is clearing shells. Henry is fitting tubes over each other. The other three are playing climbing by the window.

Not all the lids are needed.

JJ - Strategy for camera - like heavy suitcase at floor level.

Gracelyn re. tins.

sequencing

discarding

combining

pairing

making own puzzle

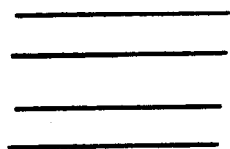
choosing

discriminating

enclosing

inserting

Child of 19 months fitting 4 tubes into box



and a chain in the remaining space - concentration on shape, size, space, behaviour of materials i.e. waiting for chain to stop swinging. Testing and observing i.e. how far to push before tower falls - scientific method. Organising thought processes.

Future programme for development.

-Copy film at college

-Get copies of Heuristic play document

Meet to discuss Jan 14.

Meantime, note what children of this age do in their normal play - what they use, how it is used, what holds interest.

14.1.91.

The Heuristic Second Year Of Life.

Ellen, Jonathon, Piers, Victoria, Henry.

Henry looking pleased with fitting cones (see also diary for Feb 1st.)

Tidying up!

Importance of chair

Henry turning and pointing to guide himself.

Rachel - liked variety and unlikeness of objects

- appeal to senses

-stimulus of tidying up

-choosing i.e. making sets

Lynn, Linda and Ann are surprised at the length of concentration.

Piers noticing chain on cylinder when putting in pom-poms.

Ann - not correcting child but allowing the child to be self-correcting, leading to confidence.

Lisa - child takes self onto next stage (and defines next stage for itself instead of having a 'right' answer)

Role of adult is to support, model.

(Sue - contrast with policeman but similar importance of signs) especially by actions.

Lynn - sense of achievement for self. ? 'We set them off on doing it for us.....Good boy'

Lynn - problems with video

V - view to see how it is, let Lynn know.

1991 - 2 - Research Programme.

1) Staff self appraisal form via evaluation of work already established in supervisions.

2) Has given staff a notebook for outdoor play observations ---> planning for resources "Not building things because we haven't got things to build with....."

V - Importance of informed outsider as collaborator.

LB - Outsider to help see positive aims - not the negative judgments she feels they often make. How much should come from her and how much from us?

V - Outsider helps with evaluation beyond staff relationships with coordinator.

LB - Staff organising selves as far as possible.

V - Come to outdoor play discussion meeting - 6pm 12.8.91.

LB - Staff problems with understanding my role and observations. however, Jenny found observations helpful in another area where she was working with Rachel.

LB - Issue of getting staff to understand observation / evaluation as a natural part of the professional process - problem of time. Still thinking of observation as a special process. Observation of 0 - 3s and mixed groups in day nursery setting requires exceptional organisation so you can sit back and watch e.g. potty training.

V - Concept of participant observation but put into common sense terms like 'observation as you go'

LB - Translate subliminal observations into conscious fact finding.

V - Outsider very useful for this.

Jenny; Bonnie

Observation 2. 10.6.91.

Aim - prefer people to mirror + new mobile to mirror - 8 minutes.

Observation 3. 8.7.91.

WNN, laughing at self in mirror. Preferred other baby when left by NN, WN to baby, baby to mirror.

Observation 4. 1.8.91.

Bouncy chair and cuddly toy. No interest in mirror - played with cuddly toy briefly. Cried. J doesn't want to change anything.

"See what would happen normally" and just watch.

General discussion -----> Staff notes leading straight into evaluation without writing up "snippets of things"

J - Still difficult for each person all at once with management and organisation. Perhaps 1 person each session but even so "it's a burden" - "books and pencils get left inside e.t.c.'

LB - Observations of individual children in outdoor play for checklists as 'part and parcel of our daily work'.

V - How long could staff remember?

LB - Whenever noted, task is a problem.

V - via assessment of individual children by named staff?

LB - Take books and pencils out last thing in the morning

J - College vision of observation "got to write loads + loads + haven't got the time" may be dominating staff.

LB - Look at outdoor play - what are popular toys? Also focus on areas like sand, what children are playing on their own e.g. throwing things or playing behind trees -----> should provide appropriate resources.

J - Make clear to staff short format targetted.

LB ? J experiment with book outside and speak from book at staff



meeting.

V - Ask J also to note very briefly the best stage from her observations of Bonnie.

25. 2. 91.

1) Discussion p and questionnaire. LB worried that they hadn't been able to do much - see Woodlands.

2) A brainstorm.

Jenny - Henry - tubes - end of session, others lost interest - concentration, staying power, inventiveness.

Lynn - Henry - Chain on neck, short but shows varied ways of appreciating it.

Victoria after Henry collecting pom-poms - watching, learning - just from baby room in September.

Lisa - Importance of the fact that Ellen is on the floor after ten minutes. Starts from just inside the door - still anxious. Jonathon broke ice by exploring and swirling with both arms at once.

Lynn - Keep stills of equipment, re-ordering to show adult's role and as on chain.

Lisa - Piers fitting cones together - tried two thick ends first.

Close ups of materials

As soon as door is open - ? Edit out Piers outside.

Piers and small can in big can - beams, shakes, ----->trunk.

Henry and cones.

Comparison - precision movements vs. swishing.

Piers following Henry, Jonathon cone-----> basket.

Victoria cooperating with Jonathon, sharing with an adult. Getting idea of Pom-pom from provision for Ellen.

Piers trying to thread chain on basket as he found it on cylinder.

Piers' look of triumph.

Piers and Henry - enjoyment of having stuff on floor, knocking things down.

Staff discussion on tidying up.

Take close up of head and shoulders not showing what he's doing

+others.

Henry with shells - clinking.

Piers - Tussle + EG

? Long reversing cut from male voice as children begin to go to the window? But it shows the continuity of the children's experiences - giving a true picture of the children's behaviour. (Jenny)

Henry stacking cylinders - end in still of it.

15. 5. 91.

Jenny - pick up from earlier focus on mirrors with Bonnie. Three minutes. Can observe twice a week, perhaps 3 / 4 times . Then reflect, then decide on activity either in baby room or in big room.

Observation recording - borrowing camera from pts - could use that.

Lynn - Part of staff development? For the new staff. Perhaps their awareness of how the nursery is organised could help with understanding how it does work and how to communicate it. (Process of articulation, being conscious of what is done and what you want to do.) Woodlands also coming to staff development idea but it is different as it is very big and mixed staff.

Problem with staff getting new ideas e.g. from grapevine, or as in P.G., or through educational reflection.

7. 6. 91.

Video, voice-over, involve E.G. Videos and pts going very well.

V - Contact Lynn early July, let E.G know what's planned and she can contact Lynn.

L - Integrating observation

Barriers to observation

Important everywhere but especially in outside play. (Her observations of a bonfire earlier this year, including a short video)

V - C Barrets point on t's personal development. Threateningness of observation with children invalidates the easy answers. Incorporating learning into daily life - very difficult when staff work long hours (Lynn), also staff shouldn't feel they've got to 'do observations'

V - Suggest putting 1 mature and 1 new staff together, do 'journal' of time outside to include observations.

Both staff and provision development. Observations need a context.

Jenny - Timing problems with observations of Bonnie.

Observations. 20. 5. 91.

'How do you play with a baby of three months?'

Naturalistic observations e.g. of what occurred when parent came.

Need to have admin. flexibility to incorporate process of observation and time to discuss what is learned.

Ann - Thinking re. bonfire observation (Lynn has also noticed in garden that children build bonfires)

Development to forms - space for conversation / vocalisation on observation forms, space for evidence on outline process.

D56

Further news to:

Ann Lew,  
45 Cameron road,  
Bromley,  
Kent,  
BR2 9AY.

081 - 464 1536  
fax. 081 - 460 2288

Further development - focus on bonfires (real, imaginative - stories, provision for imaginative play in room)

Ann - Questions make you examine yourself, 'not stagnate', not infallible. Perhaps need to change - see her quote from Montessori - own shortcomings, admit mistakes to children. Right for research to focus on staff as people, their thinking and awareness. 'We need to change with the children'

Straight from college, one copies the staff one is with. The environment is so influential. Link this with children and role models - children and adults must be treated together (in research too).

Education as personal interaction, therefore research time and support.

Ask G. would exchanges of news between nurseries be a good idea.

|  
|  
|  
V

7. 6. 91.

19. 7. 91.

Lynn.

Evaluation as part of staff development.

Joint discussions with Lynn ----> developing guidelines integral to the situation.

Staff realise value of own views and initiatives.

L - Regular contact structures - a framework essential

Initial personal relationships with children were important but could have intertwined observations and ideas of staff initiatives at the same time .

Claiming something for individual staff. (Claim time, space, )Restricting way look at work - seeing evaluation as what you do with children, not putting management / staff needs into children time.

7. 8. 91.

Lynn - discuss:

1) How to focus research next year - co-ordinate via staff development or via provision?

2) Follow up role of outsider in evaluation - Responses to questionnaires. Jenny's comment on observation. Anne's reply -- dialogue about quality in professional's approach.



7.8.91.

Focus on outsider's role in self evaluation. Discuss in chapter.

? Change of terminology from observer to outsider during research development.

Teacher A --> B. from being a mirror to fact finding for own focus.

Therefore awareness of self as element in research. (also Fox and Stronach)

-construction of another view of the outsider's role.

several areas presented.

|  
ITE tutor role

|  
Colleague collaborator  
with other professionals  
e.g. museum.

|  
WPN research  
in evolution.

Colleague collaboration  
with other education  
professionals.

What is learned from each?

What are the common themes?

What are the contrasts \ conflicts?

What is to be deduced about monitoring quality in WPNs?

ITE?

Educational research?

The operation of what you would, or would be, or what you realise is around you or how you are operating at present.....the dynamic process of change.

The outsider's outsideness challenges you to articulate and reflect on your aims - the outsider's different perspective produces a which has new elements of reality in it.



Is it the outsider's place to initiate?

Not directly, but the presence of an outsider provokes questions about the use of outsiders i.e. focus of attention, structure of dialogue, eventual outcome for outsider + participants.

Ann - Professional dialogue.

Jenny - Outsider's structure for PTs focus.

Lynn - Peer dialogue.

For outsiders, implications for;

-Integration into ecology - size and structure, ideologies to cope with.

-Forming professional relationships

-Gathering information relevant to good practice

-Sharing articulation of professional / practice aims and reflection on these.

-Assisting in exploration / monitoring of interface between aims and reality.

Lynn - problems with video

V - view to see how it is, let Lynn know.

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Maxine - fair, dark eyes

Judith - fair hair

Maika - dark, long hair.

Quiet room when staff numbers are low, but LB observed empty quiet room being used profitably for music.

JY - If not out early, unlikely to be able to get things out properly later.

LB - Write up this discussion and keep for next summer. Then plan for winter.

Waterproof sheets for wooden equipment.

Check sandpit for drainage.

Keep.....down in shed. - ?tent?

Routine for going out in winter.

- Walk to the park
- Stagger rooms going out
- Set out garden in certain areas e.g. One big apparatus, not messy things out. Ask parents to bring boots to keep.

LB - Build up two observations / snapshot impressions to give an idea of how the nursery is developing ----->letter to parents, parents evening before Christmas.

October 15 - next staff meeting.

12. 8. 91

Staff development - LB has spoken to Judith and Maika re. research project, given observation sheets and first questionnaire . She and I think Questionnaire One is useful to practitioners to use to take stock of themselves and their work.

\*Think re. development of this.

Review of outside play: Jenny, Linda, Rachel, Jane, Maika, Shirley, Lisa and Lynn .

Bike and haycart, buggies. What works well - crates, tent.

Why - Imaginative play, especially hiding, privacy, security.

Construction.

Co-operative play.

Quiet room - HC staff works well - cooker e.t.c.

Messy things - water, paint, cleaning equipment.

Bikes lead to squabbles - Work better when the sandpit is closed for space reasons especially with the haycart on the back. Could the sandpit be moved without removing sand? Cause problems when only babies are out, but good at the end of the day.

Observations referred to;

Victoria and Sophie chatting and babies.

Lewis and Jamie - space rocket (tunnels)

Things don't work - hoops - hooked on peoples necks.

Swings, individual play. Heavy on staff, children love them. Need at least 4 staff out; 1 floating, 1 for nappies and accidents, 1 for babies, 1 for swings.

Going under ramp - dangerous though popular.

Lobbing things through fence, twigs, sticks, stones, e.t.c.

Digging under ramp - LB - Sandpit small ? Make it less dangerous to

D65

have children's private spaces there.

Getting stuff out is a problem.

Children go manic with big climbing frame - Lisa - it's not that often, LB also put out a lot of other things especially easy to carry.

LB seek out resources that can be left out - breadcrates, tyres.

Problems - e.g. why the children play with sticks and stones?

When too little else is out.....

Why do they get manic?

Too many children outside - More indoor activities e.g. list for green room time.

Different equipment for sand tray going to second cupboard, not to the one with the bikes, which tend to be put out regularly.

LB will put ideas in tidy form, then staff will discuss at further staff meeting. (This would be a good time to consider how to monitor / evaluate how this is working and how to develop the provision)

? Would parents and guardians make a wild area for them? It can be left out! A digging area?

4. 10. 91.

Rachel and Shirley - Child study, start doing observations (two minutes, one minute before and one minute after)

Rachel - Jamie - In transition to big room - social play - Peep-bo, Messy room activities.

Comparative length of attention span in different situations.

Shirley - Catherine - the 'getting to know you' process and working with a student.

Parent forms as start, then compare with the observations.

Both key children - back-ups will help, e.g. Judith for Catherine, Lynn for Jamie.



1. 11. 91.

- 1) Research talk with LB
- 2) Open discussion with Maika and Jane

Some questions for LB

- 1) What kind of research do you call this? i.e. is it proper research. Is it incomplete in structure? Are there some areas undefined to be explored?
- 2) How is it supposed to work? i.e. what are its characteristics? What are essentials? What are ..... unessentials?
- 3) What does it actually do? Might there be more than one answer to this - i.e. could it have the character of an interactive process like teaching or ITE where each party is learning? What does each gain?
- 4) Is it any use to more than the participants? i.e. are there any general benefits or is it just like improving the practice of these particular individuals?

Write up by agreeing with staff - Centre, Practitioner, Development.

A. 1) What's been achieved i.e. what we've done over the months - observations, developments, insights.

- 2) Knowledge / understanding over a range.
- 3) Structure / process in the centre.

B. Monitoring / evaluation / Planning in work place nurseries.

- 1) Time off during the day.
- 2) Extra person for support - Head of Centre can't.
- 3) Longer holidays
- 4) 5 training days.

"It is an expensive business" LB - see tape.

C. Discussion on outsider and LB.

J + M

Chart development of Green room from the start as educational activities in Staff room with Sandy.

Pre school educational activities distinct from teaching reading and writing.

Theme - Space project just finishing to co-ordinate activities

Art and craft activities

Shape and number work

Science

History i.e. Neil Armstrong - first man on the moon.

Literacy - Reference, fantasy.

Colouring in

Miniature world rockets

large imaginary place in garden or big run.

Focus on preschool curriculum - from November 19th.

Theme and activities and how to be aware of the curriculum - J---> area of provision and two children at different levels of development. M----> books and stories in theme. How to plan observations within these.

Next visit - V work with Jane and Rachel in the green room.  
Baby room and Shirley.

Talk to LB re. how to keep an eye on progress after discussion.

23. 9. 91.

Re. outside play discussion last visit - general discussion. LB thinks big change - use of imagination in setting out garden has made a difference to children eg. home corner play, making up own games.

Jenny - More running when less to do e.g. today children were outside less due to the weather and therefore behaved more like previously.

Jane - Big climbing frames seem to prevent guns and fighting games.

Jenny - More children returning from holiday therefore more children will be in the garden in future.

Good effects of cornflour mix and of dough. Creative activities cooking well.

Particular children e.g. , Sam, George, lead in rushing and e.g. Piers follows.

Crates help with cooperative play - Lisa's observations of slide and crates -----> airport, runway e.t.c.

Having the equipment out early is very rewarding, also changing at certain stages - less fighting over bikes. However there is a danger of neglecting.....

Centre Two. 27. 4. 90.

Patricia and Maureen (short staffed all week, 1st week educational staff are back)

Dough - P.

Home corner - Simon, Daniel Hadley, Daniel Daly.

Patrick (sister Florence - 2) and Sam (sister Naomi - 7) were drawing. P segments, both robots. Patricia trying to persuade D.H. to keep the dough on the table - 3 boys - handbags and Batman play.

Angalee, Ebon, Sanjay playing Mr. Joker - hiding and creeping. Joined by the Daniels and Simon.

P. and S. - hopping.

Marian.

9.45.

Children arrive late, quiet distress.

9.50.

Register, milk and banana, book corner.

9.55.

Late child, Dominic.

Daniel - sad - can't put shoes on. Teases baby.

10.00.

Out - all have to go. Bayvar gets coat after reminding. Daniel is still sad, rescued Sylvia - 'I lost'.

10.05.

Wonderful exploits of S. and P. and Bayram on classroom floor  
Donna says Luigi and group of 3 or 4 boys who are beginning to express, 'He won't be my friend'. They play very well across languages - Italian and Greek.

10.30.

Daniel Hadley still missing one shoe, in playground, taken by Patricia.  
Efran contacted me.

11.00.

D. snatches spade from Winifred and runs off challenging me to chase. 2 children miserable. (Dominic and Sam - 1 unwell and one bitten by Simon)

Andrew is interested in the way S. and P. are writing and in whether W. was speaking - not sure whether English is her second language (Tai at home)

Bayram discreetly indoors, closing door to the playground. No-one noticed.

Getting some introductory ideas of staff criteria. Need to formalise i.e. ask what they are concerned about professionally and what kind of evidence would be helpful.

Planning meetings - C 2 1-2

Tuesdays C1 2.30 3.30.

Next week less good, following week O.K.

Contracts received - Chris Kemp

Maureen .....

Tony .....

Centre Two. 17. 5. 90.

at table and Ann.

10. 10

Snack. Arabella, Lewis, Jelani, Matthew, Antony and Robbie.

Felicity, Zoe.

Sitting down for sorting boats mg e.t.c. at end of snack.

Out to garden.

Lily and her drink

Staff absences - Linda - holiday, Shirley sick, Jenny hospital.

Sandy - frogs, Jigsaws - Stephanie and Arabella, Sandy and 4 children  
- Zoe, Isabella, Andrew, George drawing geometric shapes, colour  
matching dots. Arab counting box. Waterproof watches. Frogs, toads  
escape. George finish colouring, triangle when enclosing drawings.

Sandy's plans - more ranges of children's choice to suit their interests  
and different levels and pace of learning and to separate them from  
younger ones and encourage co-operation not like private education  
with children at desks, but as part of developmental move to structure  
experience of 3's in terms of 'preschool work'

Lunch - Jenny and Zoe, Antony, Matthew, Alexander, Rachael.

Alexander's head (Antony)

Playing games, reading stories after lunch while children go to bed as  
decided.

Kitchen (Mary)

Lynn - Coordinator, Linda - Deputy. Linda replaced as nursery officer  
by Carolyn.

Lisa - room plans and theme work planned during week.

Lisa presently in baby room.

Ends 142.

the evidence from the participants.

Centre Two.

31. 5. 90.

New child - Marianne. "She's big but she's new". I said I was new too and didn't know anyone's names. To arrive at snack time is quite alarming - 14 children and 2 staff and 2 parents all at once. Lewis remained and showed me his special toy that sticks to the table.

Arabella - very companionable and seeking attention from me. Comparing own clothes and showing minute details of hers, talking of grommets, sharpeners and buckles, prongs, singing music from a film, Mary Poppins.

Staff - Jane, Shirley, Carolyn, Jenny, Linda, Sue, Sandy, Lisa.

Lewis' toy - What would it fix on? flat and shiny surfaces - only indoors.

Small group chatting - Lewis, Arabella, Isabel, Emma, Isla - what were Jenny and Linda doing with board and black tape? Leaf from Sophie, small piece of greenery from Marianne.

N.B. Lynn away on a course next 3 - 4 Thursdays.

Interactive vs. supervisory role; More intense kinds of play - like sand - need interaction.

Hugo burying 'hand in sand' "Look - no hand!"

"Where is it, Hugo?"

"Under the sand"

"Can you find it? / I don't believe it!" - waves hand in triumph. Arabella takes over, Isabel hides hand in cooking pot, Zoe loses 2 hand at once, Marianne 1 hand Antony 1 hand. Hiding and finding. Hiding for a long time Arabella (V - likes sleeping bag)

Antony filling watering can "I got too much"

Carolyn - interest in developing work and gaining in confidence.

Centre Two. 14. 6. 90.

Arabella and Zoe necklaces, interest in CC and listening to voices.  
Talked with Lynn about Elinor's visit and booked it - their parents have just agreed to a T.U. so this is convenient for videoing.

Discussed Carolyn observing children's play and booked to talk at staff meeting on July 2.

Talked with Carolyn about observations. She felt unsure about this in her training. Hope she and I or she and G can explore this without too much stress.

Questionnaires - only two to come. Suggest descriptive analysis which staff could see - probably not using names but number each questionnaire if discussing individual ones.

No ~~visit~~ visit 21. 6. 90.

Shut down of all possible underground.



Centre Two. 28. 6. 90.

Garden.

Arabella interested in tummy bugs. (Isla has sore tummy, A had diarrhoea this morning) A 2 babies in pram room with Robin. 'Sweet Rosie with pink lips'

6 - 7 children putting Lynn to bed on a 'doctor's bed' with a doll in her arms.

I took part in similar play and later Matthew repeatedly wanted 'something to eat'

Lots of possibilities of play and relaxed child / adult collaboration out there.

Carolyn (Hudspeth) produced observation - anxious that it was 'rough' but lots of effort and perfectionism noticeable.

jenny explained she and ? Jane had not had time. Would meet to discuss what to do. I suggested the just-moved babies needs.

Centre Two. staff meeting 8. 7. 90.

V and G

See tape

V explained stages of monitoring and evaluation. Staff discussion of principles. G asked what structures would be helpful e.g. focus on 4 areas where staff support children's learning - but would like ideas to come from staff. Jenny and Lisa found 11 areas and could keep counting.

Centre 2.

Heather's room - lunchtime.

Beverly (back from maternity leave)

Hazel (probation)

Maureen

Heather

Centre.

Andrew's plans 8am - 9am Tuesday.

Most staff meetings are now early a.m.

Heather 8am - 9am Monday.

Purple room 1 - 2 Monday.

28.9.90.

1) Future programme of visits

2) Next research stage - Heather. We're not going to impose the focus - this must be negotiated.

Ask staff to indicate four areas of interest and choose one to examine more closely

OR

Staff choose one or two questions they want answers to

OR

Staff choose one or two children they'd like to know more about.

3) During observations - making time and preparing.

Two focuses - provision and adult role and behaviour.

Heather and perhaps Andrew will start idea with interested staff choosing an opportunity for observation which seems to have

educational potential outside with observations, children - actions, gestures, conversations, activities.

Reflect.

Possible future action by adult.

Term duration.

V talk from observations.

Daniel's interest in concrete in playground.

?Development as R. Owen.

Music session? Sarah's idea of what is going on in having a turn then waiting while others do. Can copy W when raises hands in the air - Dexter, however, stops without raising hands - says 'I stopping! Look, I stopping!'. Kevin - 'Dop, dop'.

Heather - Outside play an interest.

1) Environment - resources.

2) Quality of play - adults talking to each other - seen in terms of safety and supervision. Need to extend play.

Rota for setting up garden instituted - sandpit opened, climbing apparatus put up. Fewer wheeled toys now used.

Had visit to RMc. following up Men at Work digging patch and resources.

Health and safety aspects as barrier to development.

27. 3. 91

Babyroom - Sylvia and Mandy with Carrie (2), Olewea (1 10\12), Ben (2 5/12).

Carrie - friendly showing how the play car works.

Drink and Apple - Mandy showing Carrie how not to fill mouth too full.

G - very keen collaborator (tissue in bin) and C - very keen collaborator (sweeping up).

G - Showing where to put wooden shapes on spikes.

S + 3 - 'take it off, off!'

G - 'Put it on.....don't snatch! Ask her nicely.

G - 'Get it!'

Andrew's room - Easter egg hunt. Ravi did well. Language.

Heather and Andrew.

Momentum is hard to sustain when VH is not there. Staff self-doubt - 'I need to write it up'. Keen to learn from Andrew on his work with bikes outside which sparked staff off to take other children out to have access. Think re. patterns of use, e.g. Mavis in pram - children sticking to bikes whole time. Also observations feeding into key worker monitoring. Staff need a model. Andrew has 3. (outside play, bike use, time sampling every five minutes) key children, HC, 3 Feb.

V - Stage two is discussion of where next. Outside play in wide theme 'What is it telling us (H) Hierarchy of favoured toys - Hierarchy of children in access. Children who choose solitary play on bikes, red room. Children play as big group? The value of the smaller size or longer time together than purple room.

Effects on staff of small sectioning of outside play area - more involvement.

Nat. could develop too from this.

Moving from J sch. playground model of control\supervision.

Implications of role Heather has had to play.

D - H Senior admin. at once, therefore team leadership is difficult.

Demands of the office conflict when engendering interest.

-----> Personal relations - aspect of research.

Nursery officers autonomy is not well developed.

Heather, Andrew and Vicky could work with nursery officers but not until after whole nursery info. communication and whole nursery valuation is achieved.

V - Moving from patchy contact to whole group contact.

Heather - Local nursery support group set up under Liz Murphy (Rowland Hill) Context for broader discussion - also involve Terri Borhan and Najuna Shah - towards the end of summer.

\*My information gathering has been towards trying to understand the institution and see a way in.

Heather and Andrew - information to other staff. 'What's going on here?' Data helps with staff communication. Negative e.g. team's manipulation.

V - Do a few charts

A - Provide data proof

Collect questionnaires next visit.

Input next term - a Wednesday, perhaps. (May 8)

Do outline for this and for City Child

V's role as catalyst for what the centre wanted to do but needed input \

change for - negative helplessness of farting around has been part of finding out how it's done.

8. 5. 91.

Heather - Values centre 1's observations as fitting with the general consensus re outside play.

Andrew - Focus on who likes wheeled toys now the fixed apparatus is there.

(? Much easier than to say what activity child is involved in? )

Heather - need wider focus for quality as bikes predominate.

Andrew - When Chris was by the fixed apparatus, more children came and played - ? so over sandpit - could observe and see.

Carole - Observations of children's social skills e.g. getting into spaces e.g. Ch J - intervention could be planned.

Tony - This is something that would usually be discussed in room meetings and planned for as we're observing all the time.

Carole - If so we should be developing whole school strategies.

Sylvia - Informal networks between teams.

Heather - Value of sharing insights.

Timetable - observations - summer  
interpretations - autumn

Carole - Interested in adults involvement in use of equipment. Duration of play - indicators of social interactions and communication.

Tony - Monitor for a balance of opportunities.

Anne - Some children stick on the bikes.

Maggie - Perhaps not if there is a greater range of provision.

Anne \ Sylvia - Value of cooperative play and solo activity.

?A group focus on a variety of provision and on how to respond. Name special day for change of provision and observe differences. (Take up Maggie's suggestion and put bikes away on one day per week)



Carole - Agrees with the same observation areas so can observe with \ without bikes. Staff decide key areas to observe. (Sand, bikes, wooden equipment, metal climbing frame (bus))

This would be the structure. Need to coordinate observations within it.

- Questionnaires back May 22
- Observations finished by June 5. V come to collect June 7.

7. 6. 91.

- 1) Questionnaires - collect.
- 2) Observations - discuss.
- 3) Forward planning - structure for observations.

Despina - Red Cables - Head Carol, strong - excellent leadership, relations, values everyone.

New see Jennifer.

Heather - New approach to plans for outdoor play - each room not each team per week. Observations in structure established, focus on particular area in training sessions in context of curriculum review now. HJ and A are in post with respect for this. (HJ two years, A one year) Carole only three years.

Effect of research observations to generalise information and communicate it e.g. Daniel HA behaviour with another child, red room operate as group - 10 children. Importance of group size?

This could help with placing new children - some might need this support 'Knock-on effect everywhere'

As a staff involved, sharing knowledge, developing group view.

Conclusions re. outdoor play from meeting;

Should share ideas and development

Rainy day / sunny day - park e.t.c.

Group decision on new equipment - Use of hill - cut grass all over?

(Keep most long) Planting - extension for each room - form observations - set up room by room

White plans on planning sheet

Unwritten observations are contributing to RK and to individual staff responses in Cur. Nursery staff individually monitoring outdoor play now on. Already play improved e.g. no bikes, but will review in autumn.

Jenny; Bonnie

Observation 2. 10.6.91.

Aim - prefer people to mirror + new mobile to mirror - 8 minutes.

Observation 3. 8.7.91.

WNN, laughing at self in mirror. Preferred other baby when left by NN, WN to baby, baby to mirror.

Observation 4. 1.8.91.

Bouncy chair and cuddly toy. No interest in mirror - played with cuddly toy briefly. Cried. J doesn't want to change anything.

"See what would happen normally" and just watch.

General discussion -----> Staff notes leading straight into evaluation without writing up "snippets of things"

J - Still difficult for each person all at once with management and organisation. Perhaps 1 person each session but even so "it's a burden" - "books and pencils get left inside e.t.c.'

LB - Observations of individual children in outdoor play for checklists as 'part and parcel of our daily work'.

V - How long could staff remember?

LB - Whenever noted, task is a problem.

V - .....of individual children by named staff?

LB - Take books and pencils out last thing in the morning

J - College vision of observation "got to write loads + loads + haven't got the time" may be dominating staff.

LB - Look at outdoor play - what are popular toys? Also focus on areas like sand, what children are playing on their own e.g. throwing things or playing behind trees -----> should provide appropriate resources.

J - Make clear to staff.....

LB ? J experiment with book outside and speak from book at staff meeting.

V - Ask J also to note very briefly the best stage from her observations of Bonnie.

Maxine - fair, dark eyes

Judith - fair hair

Maika - dark, long hair.

Quiet room when staff numbers are low, but LB observed empty quiet room being used profitably for music.

JY - If not out early, unlikely to be able to get things out properly later.

LB - Write up this discussion and keep for next summer. Then plan for winter.

Waterproof sheets for wooden equipment.

Check sandpit for drainage.

Keep tunnels down in shed. - ?tent?

Routine for going out in winter.

- Walk to the park

- Stagger rooms going out

- Set out garden in certain areas e.g. One big apparatus, not messy things out. Ask parents to bring boots to keep.

LB - Build up two observations / snapshot impressions to give an idea of how the nursery is developing ----->letter to parents, parents evening before Christmas.

October 15 - next staff meeting.

15. 11. 91.

## Achievements and Problems.

HJ - We looked and talked more. Staff bring up regularly in meetings the criteria e.g. not enough to stand around in playground. Peer appraisal and monitoring easy to accept professionally now.

JC - Children discovering more - using buckets on sand more imaginatively - likes drums - effect of more varied provision from observations of children.

HJ - More structure for rooms linked to guidelines. Tying in research with centre's preexisting concerns, now hope to extend it via institutional development plan for centre i.e. Maths, child protection - could add a place for staff input of concerns to be monitored on models of research.

(Staff personal awareness and developing structure within IDP built on previous staff awareness. )

JC - Problem was of staff lack of interest.

AC - Role of observation critical in motivating staff to action e.g. children on bikes or study of girls for equal opportunities. Looking at the garden has highlighted importance of looking at boy / girl issues.

All worried about notes of observations - 'not enough papers to give VH'

Outsider's importance

AC deadlines

Articulation

Evidence.

HJ - Role - sounding board, evolution of ideas and suggestions, not involved, therefore different perspectives

HJ The best meeting was the one where we evolved the plans of observation process and development. Commitment to paper - achievement, seeing where we could go.

AC Role of outsider based on expertise on observation.

JC Needs to be an expert in.....not to be afraid, know how to do with other people who are also afraid.

HJ - Anxieties of staff ----->not involvement, NNEB trained staff have particular anxieties rightly or wrongly - judgment system as in City Child.

JC - 'I've got to evaluate it without a book' fear.

HJ - More mature staff less anxious. From her NNEB experience the role of observation in training is a bugbear.

JC - At work paperwork disappeared and therefore research was a shock.

AC - Seeing importance of observation is often different at schools and TS.

HJ/AC - Accept that you won't win some people.

JC - All reactions different, therefore 'special' person.

AC - Show the reasons for doing it more clearly. Maybe an example of case study from another nursery.

HJ - Explain that there is not an urgent need for paper.

VH - Two kinds of expertise - outsider and 'on the ground'.

AC - Not a blueprint but some examples to show process of focusing down on observation until format and area are defined.

HJ - Finding the focus.

JC - Not to worry if it takes a long time.

HJ - Much quicker with another area with same staff.

Subtext of personal development through project which fits in with CW's plans for Centre - staff initiatives.

JC - Reduced anxiety about change - experiencing it, making it, accommodating change of head, sure changes forced.

JC - Impatience of staff controlling pace and direction of change.

AC/JC - From static to dynamic view of professional work.

HJ - CW's role in supporting project and staff change and being willing to give space.

Written comments at the end of Nov.

VH - see Wendy, Sylvia, Beverly, Philippa, Margaret, Jenny.

When writing do abstract with recognition to all staff.

AC - Process has been more useful than the product (the observations)  
Now know what to do - 'the intentional mechanism' - about it.

HJ - Understanding.

Joint publication from two different perspectives - perhaps role of head in not keeping hold of reins but allowing time with VH - sees criticism as constructional, developmental process, not as damaging.



HJ - 'The innovators again!' re publication.  
Outsider recognises importance of what staff say.

#### Costs

Full time babies (under two) - £80 per week.

2 - 3 s extended £10 per hour per week

Over threes £8

Holidays - flat rate - £40

We could make after school and holiday provision for young children in school especially in the light of the Children Act.

Wall Hall Campus, Hatfield Poly. Similar involvement with the faculty.

Invite.....count after school children in their numbers. Staff could fetch children to nursery.

**BEST COPY**

**AVAILABLE**

Poor text in the original thesis.

Some text bound close to the spine.

Some images distorted

As we have mentioned many times at our meetings, I feel that for us the most beneficial outcome of your visits was the opportunities to discuss and analyse the observations (both written and remembered) with an "outsider" (yourself) which underlines your statement on page 14. We found a number of occasions that this in fact enabled us to see points we may have otherwise missed. All this necessitates time being found for these type of discussions to take place - something that is not usually easy in the busy day to day life of a nursery. However I think that if we are to be able to move forward in the self evaluation process and in our knowledge of early learning it will be one of the important factors. Good planning will need to include this type of evaluation among other methods. Although we can sit together as co-workers our views are often similar and clouded by other factors whereas an "outsider" can have a more detached view.

H.

Dear Vicky -

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to read and consider your general statement about your research project a quite horrified at myself for not being precisely familiar with your brief - I understood originally it to be work considering "qualitative" child-care & education - (I'm not quite comfortable with the 'Educare' label as yet!!) but not that it was to be particularly considering self-evaluation and monitoring - and the role of these processes in achieving qualitative gains for children. I do regret not taking a more active role - the reason (possibly but not an excuse) is that these past 3 years have been a time of uncertainty and great change for the centre - and we are not quite on an even keel yet... there are possible

restructuring plans and yet more financial constraints to accommodate. However, I know that Andrew and Heather and the N/Os involved have found it most stimulating and shared with staff most enthusiastically - the excitement of insights gained from particular assessment projects.

I think that your work will have much relevance to me as a manager. I do find my position most challenging - to be honest uncomfortably so at times. I so want the nursery to continue to develop, to offer the highest possible standards of care and education, accommodating the needs of all its "stake-holders" - children first of course, families, staff agencies, governors, community..... etc..... but am often assailed with real fears that I can facilitate this - We have worked on many 'policies' together as a whole staff group where values are examined - so far so good... but the disparate nature of the huge staff group means that this is of necessity a long process - sometimes involving domestic/other support staff as relevant - for example in developing a 'behaviour policy'. Because the staff is very unbalanced in numbers of people similarly trained - I am stressed by the thought that the 'right' educational decisions ~~are~~ <sup>must be</sup> made... Thus I shall be pleased to master any strategies to empower staff to progress the educational process.

My thoughts are with you as you care for your mother -

Looking forward to the final oeuvre -  
My very best wishes



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