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AN EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF DRAMA IN THE SPECIAL
SCHOOL CURRICULUM: BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF A RESEARCH PROJECT
CARRIED OUT IN A SAMPLE OF SCOTTISH SCHOOLS FOR SEVERELY AND
PROFOUNDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN.

BY

ANN B. McCLINTOCK
D.S.D.; A.C.P.; Dip. Ed.

VOLUME 2 OF THREE VOLUMES

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The materials developed in the course of the
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PART 3

AN ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICAL
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PUPILS AND STAFF TO THE PROCESS OF DRAMA, AND THE CRITERIA
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CHAPTER 9

Drama and the Profoundly Mentally Handicapped Child.

CHAPTER 10

Observations and Practical Work Carried Out Within Three Schools for Severely Handicapped Pupils.

CHAPTER 11

The Design Criteria, the Format and the Intentions of the Curricular Materials Developed.

PREFACE TO PART THREE

In Part 2 there was an attempt to provide a series of hypotheses concerning the principles and practice of drama in special education. The analysis carried out was summed up in a model showing the various goals, methods, activities and teacher behaviours which might be appropriate to children of different developmental levels, and with differing educational needs.

In Part 3 we examine how these hypotheses appeared to stand up in practice within a small sample of schools. First, we examine how the observation and practical work carried out within one school for profoundly handicapped pupils raised doubts both about the efficacy of the hypotheses for this segment of the special school population, and about the extent to which drama is a relevant curricular element within schools which cater mainly for profoundly handicapped and behaviourally disturbed pupils. It is concluded that this is an area which would repay further systematic research of a type not possible within the present project.

This is followed by an examination of the reactions of severely handicapped pupils to the process of drama. It is argued that the conditions observed within three schools for severely handicapped pupils, together with the favourable reactions of pupils and staff to the process of drama, all upheld the possibility of carrying out a collaborative project along the lines envisaged, and culminating in the production of curricular materials which might be disseminated to a wider cross section of schools for testing.

In the final part of this section of the thesis there is an attempt to show how far the theoretical formulations presented in Part 2 were upheld in practice and reflected in the design, the format and the intentions of the curricular materials developed. It will be argued that, while the materials embodied a number of the theoretical principles advanced in Part 2, there were also a number of variations. Some elements were missed out as a result of staff's contribution to the project. Additional elements not considered in theory were added as a result of practice, and, again, at the request of collaborating staff. The developed materials, therefore, represent an amalgam of theory and practice, and are not so much representative of a curriculum in 'drama' as of a curriculum in which drama is the central ingredient in a number of lessons, each of which represents a centre of interest which may be explored through a variety of different curricular experiences.

It is doubtful whether such a format could have been arrived at on the basis of a study of theory alone. It is certain that such a format would not have been arrived at without the input of general staff who urged that the materials be aimed primarily at the development of communication skills, and linked to other areas of the curriculum.

CHAPTER 9

Drama and the Profoundly Mentally Handicapped Child

Introduction

In discussing the research methodology in an earlier chapter, it was noted that, at the start of this project, a period of observation and exploratory work would be required in order (a) to establish, at first hand, the practical constraints operating within the schools involved in the project; (b) to assess the feasibility of attempting to collaborate with teachers in the investigation of drama; (c) to establish the extent to which pupils with varying degrees of mental handicap appeared to be capable of understanding and engaging in the process of drama.

In this chapter it will be argued that in School A, whose population comprised pupils with the more profound forms of handicap, the proposed method of curriculum research and development did not appear to be a viable or productive method of investigating drama. Since many of the environmental and other constraints operating within this school appear to be reasonably typical of schools which cater mainly for pupils with the more profound forms of handicap, it will be argued that some of the findings arising out of the work carried out within this school, may have a degree of general applicability to other schools of this type.

For example, it will be argued that within such schools the wide variety in pupils' capabilities may point to a need for individual programmes of work, tailored to individual needs, and presented on a one-to-one adult child basis. But the environmental conditions created by the presence of a high proportion of disturbed and aggressive children within any one classroom may make it difficult for staff to carry out individual programmes of work within the classroom and such programmes may have to be carried out elsewhere. For some pupils, who are operating at very low levels of development, drama may not be an appropriate curricular activity. For other children with severe behavioural or emotional problems, specialist skills may be necessary in order to make drama accessible to them. Because of the idiosyncratic nature of pupils' responses, benefits to pupils may be difficult to achieve and assess over a limited time span, and staff may find it correspondingly difficult to see a justification for the amount of time

and effort they might have to devote to making drama accessible to pupils.

It will also be argued that there is a need for further research into the applicability of drama for profoundly handicapped pupils. Contrary to what had been envisaged, it will be suggested that research which aims at the investigation of drama through the development, production and testing of curricular materials in drama may be considerably less necessary than research which seeks to establish a data bank on how individual pupils have reacted to specific methods, materials and subject content. Only when sufficient ideographic data of this kind has been collated will it be possible to make more informed judgments about the role of drama within the context of actual practices within schools of this type. Alternatively, there may be a case for attempting to establish a 'laboratory-researched' data-base, before carrying out ideographic studies within actual schools. Neither of these aspects of further research were attempted within the present project for reasons which will be argued within the text of this chapter.

The support for this and the other arguments to be presented within this chapter are drawn specifically from the findings of the observation and exploratory work carried out over a period of one year with in School A. This has been supplemented by information from other informed personnel about conditions obtaining within other schools of a similar type, and by information obtained during brief visits to other similar schools in the course of the project.

Before going on to present this argument, and in order to set the argument more clearly within the context of practice, information will be presented on the actual conditions and practices observed within the school. Where such conditions appear to be fairly representative of schools of this type generally, this will be noted, together with the implications of these for the practice of drama.

This information will be followed by three case studies, typical of the range of practical work carried out with individual pupils. Discussion of these should serve to illustrate some of the earlier comments and highlight the arguments which will be presented in the later part of the chapter. The findings from each case study will be presented and discussed individually. These will then be related in more general terms to the practice of drama within schools of this type.

In the concluding section of the chapter, other arguments which led to the termination of the research within this school will be given briefly and in the more general context of collaborative curriculum research and development.

The School Observed

Here, individual aspects of school organisation and practice, which appear to be relevant to the practice of drama within such schools, will be described and discussed briefly. The aspects identified as being relevant to drama were -

1. Staff/pupil ratios;
2. Staff/pupils interactions;
3. Staff priorities and the curriculum presented;
4. Parental involvement;
5. Pupils capabilities.

1. Staff/Pupil Ratios

In each class the ratio of adults to pupils was around one to three. There was at least one trained instructress within each room. Additional staff were care assistants, who were employed on a permanent basis, or teenagers on temporary placement through a government sponsored job creation scheme. A qualified teacher visited the school on a peripatetic basis and helped devise programmes of work for pupils. There were nurses on hand for medical care, but staff carried out bathing and toileting duties and were responsible for carrying out educational programmes. Children who were capable of doing so had a weekly swimming lesson within the local pool. Staff accompanied them and, where necessary, carried out programmes of exercises authorised by the physiotherapist who visited the school on a peripatetic basis.

The head teacher was a trained instructress with some considerable experience of working with both profoundly and severely mentally handicapped children. Individual children's programmes of education were devised by the head teacher in consultation with the educational psychologist and the trained teacher. General staff were responsible for their implementation.

Since environmental conditions within the classrooms were such that staff found it difficult to carry out programmes without interruption or distraction, these programmes were generally carried out in one-to-one teaching sessions outwith the classroom. This meant that for

some time each day the staff/pupil ratio within the classroom was decreased to one adult for every four or five children. As it was the trained staff who carried out these programmes, the staff left in charge of classes during these periods tended to be either the untrained or temporary staff. Such staff did not, in general, initiate activities with pupils within the classroom, but acted as 'minders', ensuring that children were adequately supervised, toileted, etc.

2. Staff/Pupil Interactions

The level of physical care for children by staff was high. Staff attitudes to children, implied from their behaviour and their informal staffroom conversation, indicated that staff had an affection for most of the pupils and a commitment to helping them overcome physical and behavioural problems. In many cases staff were operating on ad hoc principles of trial and error in the handling of the behaviour of individual problem children, and there was considerable staffroom interchange on possible ways of dealing with these.

Although the standard of physical care was high, the impression was gained that there was relatively little physical contact between pupils and staff. Most of the physical contact which did occur was either instigated by pupils - who would, on occasion, spontaneously hug, stroke or move close to an adult - or in connection with general care duties such as dressing, feeding or toileting. Some staff members were seen to flinch away from, or try to discourage, spontaneous contacts initiated by pupils. When asked about this, they indicated that they regarded such contact as inappropriate behaviour in pupils who were chronologically aged ten or upwards. They suggested that it was necessary to attempt to reduce such behaviour in that it would be regarded outwith the school as socially unacceptable and could lead to pupils being rebuffed or rejected. They suggested that the majority of pupils could not distinguish between behaviours which were or were not appropriate to different social situations, and required to be taught to react in less socially unacceptable ways. They did, however, express concern over those pupils who were so withdrawn or aggressive that they were unable to tolerate any form of physical contact, other than aggression, with adults or other children, and sought to bring their behaviour also into line with the social norms. They also suggested that a major cause for concern with these very withdrawn or aggressive children was the fact that their behaviour made it difficult to teach

them anything - hence the emphasis on establishing more normal social behaviours.

In the course of the drama work carried out it appeared that a strong element of physical contact between adult and child did appear to create favourable conditions for the child to respond. And this was somewhat at variance with the general behavioural ethos within the school, in which the contacts between staff and pupils tended to be calculated on the basis of behaviour modification programmes rather than occurring spontaneously. A similar comment could be made about the expressions of approval or praise given by staff to pupils. Again, these were governed by the need to reinforce or extinguish certain behavioural patterns, rather than occurring spontaneously. The range of words used in these exchanges tended to be limited to a sharp 'no', or 'good boy/girl'. Again, this appeared to conflict somewhat with the need to establish high affect within the drama lesson, and to do so spontaneously in the course of the lesson.

There was also limited interaction between adults and pupils in play. Staff rarely became actively involved in pupils' play. This was not entirely a matter of choice. Staff did try to interact with pupils, but environmental conditions arising out of the range of handicaps within the room made this difficult. For example, when a member of staff tried to interact with a child who was playing with sand, water or toys, she could be distracted from it after a few minutes by other children who were creating a disturbance elsewhere in the room. As some of the children were highly disturbed and aggressive or self-abusive, it could often take more than one staff member to deal with a single incident. By the time the disruption had been dealt with the child had often lost interest in the play and wandered to another part of the room. In general, when this happened, staff did not renew attempts to engage the child in play.

Some children also rebuffed staff's attempts to engage them in play, either by moving away from the play objects, by attempting to destroy them, or by aggressive behaviour to adults or children nearby.

As indicated in an earlier chapter, some of the most self-abusive or aggressive children tended only to receive staff attention when they were causing trouble. When they were behaving well, staff tended to leave them well alone for fear of provoking a violent reaction. While this was clearly at odds with the behaviourist principles which they were attempting to implement, it was an understandable reaction in a

situation where aggression or destructive behaviours on the part of such children could be physically harmful to staff or other pupils, and could destroy the play materials provided for pupils within the classroom. Moreover, for these pupils, neither social or concrete reinforcement appeared to be having any great effect, other than, on occasion, to stop pupils behaving well and to induce less productive behaviour. It may be noted in passing, however, that these difficult pupils tended also to be those who had a higher than average level of self-help, communication or motor skill. With these children it was difficult to assess the extent to which they were mentally handicapped or the extent to which emotional or behavioural maladjustment amounting to mental illness, was causing their general appearance of retardation.

The presence of a number of such very difficult children within any one class made life less than peaceful for staff and other children, and produced an environment which was productive neither to group work, nor to close, interactive learning situations within the classroom.

Conversation with staff from other schools suggest that, in all the former day-care centres, there is a fairly high proportion of such very difficult children. Apparently, where there is a chance that even a profoundly handicapped child can cope in a higher category of establishment without unduly disrupting staff or other pupils, the child is placed in that category of school and maintained there even though he may be making little progress. The result is that the former day-care centres receive not only the profoundly handicapped pupils, but, in the main, those pupils who are also the most difficult to deal with because of problems of bad behaviour.

In discussion, staff were explicit about the difficulties posed by such children, and about the reasons why they were in the school. Parents find difficulty in coping with such children, and the school provides them with a respite from the demands made by them. Parents are also reluctant for their children to be placed in institutional care in homes or hospitals if there is any chance that they can be cared for and helped without resorting to such extreme measures. As a result, such schools appear to be a last resort measure for a number of children who might, otherwise, be institutionalised. A number of parents confirmed staff's comments, and indicated that they felt that staff were coping well in a difficult situation.

It is outwith the scope of this project to make comment on the

rights of pupils, parents or staff in such a situation, but the fact that such a situation exists has relevance for the present study in that it creates environmental conditions which will, almost certainly, mitigate against the practice of drama within the classroom, and may necessitate that any drama work attempted is done outwith the classroom and with individual children.

3. Staff Priorities and the Curriculum Presented

As indicated earlier, the ethos within this school was strongly behaviourist. Staff were encouraged to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis and to carry out individual programmes of work based on an assessment of each child's need.. The programmes were geared towards continence, self/help, and the control of anti-social behaviour. There was a good deal of evidence to suggest that in certain areas, such as the development of self-help skills and in the control of continence, these programmes were both time-saving and effective in achieving their aims. In some cases, programmes were also having an effect in reducing anti-social behaviours.

For some children, there were also programmes designed to teach specific items of language, specific manipulative skills such as those requiring hand-eye co-ordination, and the physical manipulation of materials. There was less evidence to show that these programmes were effective. In general, progress was slow or uneven, and there was little indication in pupils' spontaneous behaviours to show that they had assimilated the programmes' teaching into their spontaneous repertoires. The staff time taken up in administering these programmes was considerable. Much of the in-school time of trained staff was taken up in assessment, and in the charting and monitoring of pupils' progress prior to and following lessons. This, coupled with the writing up of daily diaries for each child, left little time for the introduction of more creative or aesthetic aspects into the curriculum.

For example, although the school was well equipped with art and craft materials, with apparatus for physical play, with percussion instruments, and with properties for imaginative and dramatic play, there was little evidence of any of these being used in any regular or purposeful way by staff. This may partly be explained by the time taken up in other programmes of work. But it is rather surprising that some of these materials were not being used when it is considered

that staff had, in fact, made many of these themselves and had devoted some considerable time to ensuring that these were both appropriate to the needs of pupils and attractively displayed within the classroom. In practice, it appeared that the time devoted to their use was rather less than the time devoted to making them and to maintaining them in reasonable condition.

An additional factor in the lack of aesthetic and creative activities within the classroom, and in the lack of use of play materials, was the fact that care assistants or temporary staff appeared to put a high priority on ensuring that the classroom was tidy. They spent a considerable proportion of each day in tidying toys, in clearing them away neatly, and in ensuring that all parts of a set of toys was together. If children attempted to play with bits and pieces from different sets of toys, staff tended to encourage them to play with one set only, and seemed to place a high emphasis on toys being played with 'properly' - ie. toys being used only for the purpose for which they were designed. Clearly a degree of order and propriety in play with toys was necessary to ensure that toys were not destroyed. And too much untidiness within the room could constitute a physical hazard for those pupils who had poor motor control, poor sight or a degree of paralysis. It did appear, however, that pupils were being actively discouraged from play by these restrictions, and that more emphasis was placed on the toys than on encouraging pupils to use and experiment with these. The fact that untrained staff were in charge within the rooms for some time each day meant that pupils were not given a great deal of encouragement to play freely with toys, and in even sand and water play tended to follow certain prescribed rules such as 'no splashing', 'only one toy in the water at a time', etc. Again, there were sensible safety reasons behind these rules, but it was suspected that some pupils might display less aimless and more purposeful play behaviours if more encouragement were given them to do so by a less rigid regime.

Trained staff did take a less rigid attitude to play behaviours but had relatively little time available for interaction with pupils in play. Conversations with advisers and lecturers suggest that, while this situation is not typical of all schools of this type, it is representative of the practices in a number of schools where a strictly behaviourist ethos prevails. Since one of the principle aims in the

use of drama is to encourage more productive and interactive dramatic play behaviours, this situation is one which may mitigate against these aims being realised, or realisable, in practice.

There were also plenty of story and picture books within the school, but, again, staff were seldom seen using these. The possibility that pupils would destroy them, and lack of time for this form of work, were the reasons most commonly given by staff for their neglect of books, art and craft materials, and related activities. But it was observed that children were often dressed and ready to leave the school a full ten to fifteen minutes before the arrival of buses, and were often gathered round the table for as long as fifteen to twenty minutes before the mid-day meal was delivered to the classroom. Since pupils were relatively settled and already gathered as a group at these times, it appeared that they would present an opportunity for singing games or a story. But staff were reluctant to consider using this time for this purpose, giving as their reason the fact that pupils would become over-excited and unsettled and it would take too long to settle them down again before the meal. Or, if the buses arrived early, the drivers would 'create' if pupils were not ready and waiting for them. Again, these reasons were practical and sensible, but it was noted that staff tended to use this time in chatting among themselves, and it was suspected that these quiet periods - when pupils made relatively few demands on staff's energy or resources - represented for them a welcome respite, which they would be reluctant to give up. And again, given the high stress levels involved in this work, this represents an understandable and natural reaction.

As indicated earlier, very little time was devoted to any form of group activity. The one exception to this was a period of around ten minutes after lunch when the whole school came together in the central hall for a session of music and movement under the direction of the head teacher. These sessions operated on carefully structured principles. Little deviation in pupils response was possible, and the same range of 'rocking', 'hopping', 'clapping' and 'walking' movements was repeated on each occasion. All the movements were accompanied by music, and by appropriate words repeated in time to the music. The least able children, and those with extreme behavioural problems did not take part in this activity. The other children tended to work on a one-to-one adult/child ratio with the staff within the group. With a very few of the more able pupils, the ratio was two children to one staff member.

The head teacher indicated that these sessions had helped some children to develop their language abilities, as they could now repeat some of the words which, previously, they had been unable to say. Some of the staff were more sceptical of the value of these sessions. They agreed that a number of pupils had learned to say a number of words and that some pupils appeared to enjoy the sessions. But staff themselves found them boring, and it was observed that they carried out the movements in a mechanical and lifeless manner. Staff felt that the amount of disruption and effort involved in bringing pupils together in the central hall without major incidents of aggression cancelled out the benefits of the sessions. When the head teacher was absent from the school for any reasons staff generally 'forgot' to carry out the session, or, if reminded, 'could not find the tape-recorder with the music in it'!

Further questioning elicited the information that staff were not simply bored by the sessions, but found them embarrassing also, as the older staff members were reluctant to enter into the exercises with gusto in case they looked foolish in front of the younger staff. The young girls on the job creation scheme were also self-conscious about, as they put it, 'leaping around in public', and unwilling themselves to take a lead in a situation where they were not being given a lead by the older and more experienced members of staff. One member of staff noted that, as the head teacher generally played the piano for the sessions when she was present, she, herself, did not have to carry out the movements which staff were being asked to perform..

As the mixture of older and younger staff members within this school is typical of the staff-mix within such schools, it is possible that this situation may be repeated within other schools. From conversation with staff from other schools, it appears that the consciousness of the censure which may come from colleagues if one is apparently uninhibited and unselfconscious in movement work is a fairly typical reaction from staff who have to work in an 'open', and consequently more exposed, environment. As movement and drama work with the more severely or profoundly handicapped child does tend to require a more exaggerated and 'larger than life' presentation and demonstration in order to achieve a response, reluctance to engage in this form of movement may be a real constraint to the use of movement and drama within such schools.

A group of research workers who have been attempting to establish

physical education programmes of creative movement within schools in the Ayrshire area, suggested that their greatest problem has been, not in persuading pupils to engage in movement work, but in convincing staff of the necessity for them to be prepared to demonstrate the work to pupils with conviction and vigour. A music specialist working within the same area confirmed that staff did find these movement programmes embarrassing to carry out, and tended to denigrate the value of the programmes to pupils as a reason for not using them.

No drama as such was presented within the school, although staff very occasionally used a finger-game, a rhyme or a singing game in the course of the day. Most staff were lacking in knowledge of drama and, consequently, were unsure of its value or relevance to pupils. Other staff were sceptical that it had any relevance or value for their pupils. At the start of the project all staff were somewhat wary of what might be involved in doing drama. It transpired that a visit from a Theatre-in-Education company in the previous year had contributed to their wariness. This company had spent a morning in the school, working with a number of pupils as a group, but with one-to-one adult/pupil ratios. They had apparently worked on dramatherapy exercises in which the adults wore masks and took on a role. They had also included a strongly exaggerated movement component in the work. Pupil reactions to the work had been mixed. Some had appeared to enjoy it, others responded little, while one or two had to be removed from the group because of aggression. Staff had been encouraged to take part in the work, but had done so with reluctance. The general feeling expressed by staff was that little benefit could be seen from the work and a great deal of disruption to normal school routine had been occasioned by it. They felt that it had taken pupils some time to settle after the visit, and that their pupils required a predictable and ordered existence in order to give them security in their environment.

It was clear from the comments of staff that, although they were prepared to assist the researcher by observation and comment, they were reluctant to become involved in the presentation of work in which they had to take on a role and act. They also indicated that they were anxious that the work done in drama would not disrupt normal routine or conflict with the existing programmes of work being carried out. While this particular situation was peculiar to this school, it does have implications for the practice of drama in that many of the groups which have pioneered drama for use with mentally handicapped people, and who

tour the country giving demonstration lessons within schools, do tend to be strongly biased towards the use of the more difficult drama techniques, which demand a high degree of personal skill and commitment from the adults involved. From conversation with staff in other schools for either severely or profoundly handicapped pupils it appears that staff reactions to this work tend to be polarised either towards or against. For some staff the work is too out of keeping with their general practice for them to see any value in it, others appear to 'wish' they had 'the ability to copy the professionals'. Either of these polarities may well create 'entry effects' for a research project in drama, making the project either more or less difficult to implement. In this case, the effect was a negative one.

4. Pupil Capabilities

One classroom in the school was set aside as an 'intensive care unit' for those pupils who were multiply handicapped and so developmentally retarded that they were operating at around the one to three month level. Some time was spent within this unit in observation but no practical work was attempted with pupils as it appeared to be as inappropriate to attempt drama with such pupils as it would be to do so with a normal baby of the same developmental age.

With the exception of these children, and of the very disturbed children already referred to, the majority of pupils in the school appeared to be operating at fairly low levels of sensori-motor development. Some had barely reached the stage at which they were capable of imitation. Skills in comprehension and communication appeared also to be very limited, and the incidence of children with autistic features was relatively high. Some of the children were doubly incontinent, but a fair number had become continent as a result of behaviour modification programmes. Some had limited self-help skills, but others had developed some skills, again as a result of behaviourist programmes already referred to. Some had also benefited from the inventiveness of staff who had devised special eating implements and other self-help tools to overcome physical disabilities. Even so, changing and feeding the incontinent and dependent children took up a considerable amount of staff time.

It was difficult to assess from observation the extent to which pupils' play behaviours were representative of their levels of general development because, as indicated earlier, they were not exactly being

given strong encouragement to play either symbolically or manipulatively - except, to a limited extent, in behaviourist programmes. Few pupils gave the impression of being able to engage in either symbolic, imaginative or dramatic play. Some showed no play of any kind. Their behaviour consisted mainly in aimless wandering around the room, picking up or discarding toys but taking little interest in them, and making no attempt to use them as playthings in the conventional sense. The fact that pupils did not engage in symbolic play was not, for the reasons given above, taken as evidence that pupils could not engage in such play if given training in it and encouragement to engage in it. However, the fact that this school had good communications with the children's parents meant that it was possible to supplement the information on pupils' play behaviours in school with parents' information on their out-of-school activities. This enabled a more accurate assessment of the child's general play level to be arrived at before starting drama work.

5. Parental Involvement

The reason for the good communication between parents and school was the fact that the head teacher had adopted a positive policy of parental involvement in the work of the school. A daily diary was filled in by parents and staff. These documents formed an on-going commentary on children's progress, interests and pre-occupations. They also provided the researcher with a source of information which enabled her to assess the type of subject matter which might attract an individual child's attention or interest in the drama work.

Parents were also encouraged to visit the school, and there were regular parents' nights in which parents could meet and talk informally with staff. Not all parents did attend these functions, but the fact that there was a high level of parental involvement within the school enabled the researcher to meet with some of the parents and, in conversation with them, to gain more information about their child. For example, it transpired in conversation that one child who appeared to be withdrawn and unable to mix socially with other children within the classroom, mixed well with other handicapped children when she attended riding lessons at a local stable. The fact that this child appeared to be the least aggressive member within a class which had a high proportion of disturbed and aggressive children, suggested that her isolation and withdrawal from the other children was less indicative

of an inability to relate to others, as of a degree of prudence in avoiding confrontation with more aggressive children.

Subsequent work with this child indicated that she was one of the very few children within the school who, potentially, could work within a group situation. But for long periods in each day this child played by herself in a corner of the room with a doll. As she appeared to be happy to do this, staff tended to leave her to it.

It appeared that, in a situation in which individual needs were being stressed, the needs of this more passive child were subservient to the needs of the more insistent and demanding pupils. Again, however, it is understandable that staff felt they had to give priority to modifying and controlling the behaviour of the more insistent pupils who could disrupt the whole classroom environment, rather than attempting to provide socially interactive situations for this, apparently contented, withdrawn and passive child. Without the information from her parents, it could easily have been assumed that the type of drama lesson which was appropriate to this child was one which sought to encourage her to interact with other children, and, if she did not do so, it could have been assumed that the programme was not effective. Whereas it may be that the child had 'chosen' not to interact, rather than being incapable of doing so.

It was information of this kind which proved useful not only in making an initial assessment of children's interests and capabilities but also, at a later stage, in determining whether there had been any significant changes in out-of-school behaviour which might be attributed to the work done in drama. Again, this enabled a rather more detailed analysis of the child's response than could have been arrived at on the basis of in-school activity alone.

Summary of Observed Findings

To sum up so far, while some of the conditions, practices and staff attitudes observed within this school may be peculiar only to this school, it has been possible to identify a number of general similarities across schools of this type. These similarities occur in areas which may be critical for the implementation of drama at this level. This suggests that certain of the findings relating to the introduction of drama into the curriculum within this particular school may be of more general applicability. These findings may be summarised thus -

1. Pupils within all schools of this type are either operating at very low developmental levels, or have emotional or behavioural problems of considerable severity.

2. The severity of these handicaps suggest that the majority of pupils may require personalised, individual instruction even when work is presented within a group context.

3. The idiosyncratic nature of pupils' needs, response patterns and individual interests suggests that drama programmes may require to be specifically tailored towards individual needs, making a group context for the work a potentially less appropriate form of drama provision.

4. A high level of parental involvement within the school may facilitate accurate assessment of individual needs and capabilities, and make it easier to devise and plan appropriate programmes of work for individual children.

5. The classroom problems posed by the high numbers of behaviourally disturbed children within such schools may create environmental conditions within the classroom which are conducive neither to group drama nor to close, interactive individual teaching sessions, and teaching sessions may require to be conducted outwith the classroom.

6. The extent to which general staff will be able to conduct such sessions outwith the classroom may depend on these factors -

a. The ratio of trained to untrained staff, and the extent to which trained staff are already committed to carrying out individual programmes of work by other methods. (Temporary staff will not remain in the school long enough to ensure continuity in the work, while staff with no formal educational training may lack the background of teaching skills on which to base the work. Where there are few experienced and trained staff the provision of individual teaching sessions by staff who are already committed to carrying out other programmes of work may be difficult to organise. The ethos of the school may also determine the time staff have available to them for the implementation of work in drama. A behaviourist ethos is likely to result in staff being heavily committed.)

b. The extent to which staff are prepared to find time in order to include drama within their curricular provision. (This may depend on the extent to which drama is congruent with their educational aims and existing practices. Where priorities are already geared towards the development of self-help, motor and linguistic skills; aspects such as imaginative development may be accorded relatively low priority. Staff

may, therefore, require to have it demonstrated to them that drama may provide an additional, an effective, or an appropriate means of achieving their priority aims.)

c. In order to demonstrate the potential of drama in achieving such aims, it may be necessary for a specialist to work within the school over a period of time. The extent to which such specialist provision is, or can be, made available on a regular basis may also be a factor in determining the extent to which general staff will develop a capability for the work.

7.7.If, by the in-situ presence of a specialist, teachers were convinced that drama was of value to them in their teaching, a number of practical problems remain -

aa. The literature suggests that the presentation of drama and movement to pupils with the more profound forms of disability may require that staff are prepared to initiate close, interactive physical contact with pupils. The extent to which staff would be prepared to initiate this contact requires further clarification.

b. The literature also suggests that the presentation of movement and drama may require uninhibited and exaggerated movement, vocal, gestural and facial expression. Such patterns of behaviour are not commonly seen among staff within such schools, and the extent to which staff may be prepared to acquire these skills may depend not only on their commitment to drama, but also on:

- (i) the staff-mix within schools of older and younger members,
- (ii) the provision of a specialist to demonstrate and help staff acquire the skills, or
- (iii) in-service training provision.

As neither of the latter is likely to occur in any great numbers within the near future, the provision of staff training is likely to remain a problem area.

The Need for Practical Demonstration and Experimentation

All of the foregoing findings - arrived at on the basis of observation and of discussion with parents and staff - presuppose that drama is of sufficient educational value to pupils as to warrant the provision of either specialist teachers, or a higher element of staff training in drama at the in-service level. Clearly, observation of pupils and staff in a school where no drama was currently being attempted

could provide little evidence of how pupils would, in fact, react to the process of drama if it were presented to them regularly, and in accordance with individual needs. It had been envisaged, however, that the practical exploratory work in drama which would be carried out within the school as part of the project would provide some information on these aspects.

It had been envisaged that the work would be carried out on either an individual or group basis within the classroom, thereby enabling staff to observe and comment on the work and, if they wished to do so, to take an active part in it. The findings reported above, however, indicated first, that it would be necessary to work on an individual basis with pupils; secondly, that it would be difficult to carry out this work under normal classroom conditions; thirdly, that there would be organisational problems involved in ensuring that staff could be present during lessons which were taken outwith the classroom. As a result, a compromise had to be arrived at. It was clearly not going to be possible to work with all the pupils on the individual and intensive basis that appeared to be necessary. It was decided to limit the intensive work to a small sample of pupils, representative of the range of disability within the school, and to attempt to work with other pupils on a less regular basis as and when it was possible to do so.

While some of this latter work might be done within the classroom, for example, in the periods identified as being unused for any other productive activity - the regular and intensive work with individual children would be carried out outwith the classroom, and it was agreed that staff and/or head teacher would observe the work as often as possible. In addition, staff agreed to observe pupils' behaviours following lessons and to report any changes in behaviour noted when the researcher was not present.

In order to provide something of the flavour of this work, and to show the evidence on which the conclusions reported in the latter half of this chapter are based, there will be an attempt to present three case studies, typical of the range of work carried out with individual pupils. These give some indication of the benefits perceived to have been achieved over the time-scale of the project. They highlight some of the difficulties involved in making drama accessible to pupils. And they give some indication of the level of staff involvement achieved in practice.

The first study deals with a child who did appear to be as developmentally retarded as his general observed behaviours had indicated. With this child, and with similar children within the school, the provision of drama appeared to be a less relevant form of provision than the provision of stimuli based on movement, sound, perceptual and play training with no imaginative element.

It will be argued that the second child made considerable gains. She represents the more intelligent, but autistic or emotionally disturbed type of child to be found within the school. And it will be argued that such a child may be capable of responding to the process of drama, but that working with such a child is a demanding task.

The final case study takes as its subject one of the most emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children in the school. His case provides little information on the relevance of the process of drama to meeting his needs, and it is argued that, in his case, there was a need for more long-term work. His case does, however, provide an illustration of the dangers involved in extrapolating from short-term, single-study cases and highlights the need for caution in assessing the claims made for drama on the basis of these.

Having presented these three studies, there will be an attempt to compare and contrast them, not only with each other and with other children within the school, but also with the findings reported by other workers in the field. On the basis of this analysis, a number of recommendations and conclusions are presented regarding the applicability of drama to the needs of profoundly and mentally handicapped pupils, and to the needs of staff working within schools which cater primarily for pupils with these more profound forms of disability. It will be noted, however, that these conclusions and recommendations are tentative and require to be validated or negated by further research. It will be argued that it was inappropriate to pursue this research within the present project. The reasons will be presented, and it will be suggested that research methods different from those employed in the present project may be more applicable to the study of drama at this level. These methods will be presented briefly in the context of the arguments presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis, where the research methods for the project are examined.

Finally, it will be argued that the methodological intentions for this stage of the work were not fully realised, partly as a result of practical constraints which suggested that some of the

methods were inappropriate to researching drama at this level, and partly as a result of the need to accommodate the practical constraints which will occur when drama is attempted within schools where the population is mainly profoundly handicapped, behaviourally and emotionally disturbed children and where there are untrained or unskilled staff employed. And it will be argued that the real problem at this level appears to be not so much the provision of resources or the development of curricular schemes in drama (or any other subject) but rather a rethinking of the purpose of the schools and of the extent to which scarce monetary resources can be best utilised. Again, this raises questions which lie beyond the scope of this thesis and points to the need for further co-ordinated research which is funded at the policy level and directed towards identifying where policy changes are necessary to ensure better practices at grass-roots level.

Description

Age at start of the programme - 6 years, 3 months.

Has one older sister of normal intelligence. Comes from a home in which both parents are in professional occupations.

Aetiology - brain damaged, profoundly mentally handicapped, epileptic, some autistic tendencies.

"Collin is mobile but at the very basic sensori-motor stage. Expressive language consists of no more than one or two words. Understands simple, limited vocabulary. Continent. Can feed and dress himself with some assistance."

(From the psychologist's report)

"He is a friendly child who enjoys physical contact with adults. He likes games involving pushing or rocking. He likes music and can sing in tune, recognising some tunes and joining in sometimes. He responds well in music and movement. He has only three words - 'mummy, daddy, car'. He does not always use these appropriately. He babbles a lot but most of it is nonsense. We are trying to discourage him from making autistic hand movements and get him to use gesture and words."

(From the head teacher's comments)

Personal Observations

Collin appeared to be using babble as a form of protowords, employing a variety of intonations and facial expressions. The babble itself was not easily interpretable, but it did, at times, appear to be reasonably purposeful. He was chosen by the head teacher as being a child who, having the mechanics of speech already present, might respond to individual tuition in drama. He was not on any other language development programme. His behaviour at home was reported to be intractable and aggressive, especially towards his sister. He had more reported fits at home than he did in school. The doctor suggested that this could be due to the effects of television on him. He was on a high drug schedule. His behaviour could range from active to very lethargic, depending on the time of day and the extent of his medication. His mother found him a difficult child, but staff found him easy to deal with and pleasant. He could play for long periods on his own with sand, water or toy cars. This play was mainly manipulative rather than actively exploratory or symbolic.

General Aims

Collin appeared to be at the transition stage between sensori-motor and more symbolic development. The fact that he had a few words, was babbling, and could understand some language suggested that he might be ready to learn how to engage in more symbolic or imaginative play, although he had not spontaneously exhibited abilities in this area. As he was not on any other form of language development programme, it might be possible to assess whether the work in drama had had an effect on his communication abilities.. The general aims for work with him were.-

- (i) to encourage the development of symbolic/imaginative play;
- (ii) to encourage him to respond appropriately to verbal cues;
- (iii) to encourage the use of simple language in appropriate situations.

Methods and Procedures

Because Collin did not have much appreciation of language it was envisaged that there would be a need to adopt fairly structured lessons with him in order to feed in the information which we would require to enable him to make a more spontaneous response. As the school was already behaviourist in ethos, it appeared that lessons which were structured on the behaviourist learning principles outlined in Chapter 7 would be appropriate to working within this school. These principles also appeared to be well suited to working with this particular child. An attempt was made, therefore, to choose subject matter which would be in keeping with his existing interests and capabilities, to build into lessons reinforcement in the form of music and some other play object which he obviously enjoyed, to demonstrate the responses possible, to encourage him to imitate these, and to encourage his active participation in the work. As the main aims of the work were centred on the development of imaginative ability and communication, an attempt was made to choose subject matter which could be presented in both real and imagined situations, to make deliberate use of the pairing of sounds, words and movements, and to provide the same vocabulary range in a number of different contexts.

Subject Matter

As Collin already played with toy cars, and as he could say the word 'car', the first few lessons were based on the use of a toy car. This

was introduced initially as a plaything and an attempt was made, by introducing a variety of car noises, to encourage Collin to engage in interactive play using the toy car. A number of car rhymes and a simple story based on a car which stuck and couldn't move were envisaged as follow-ups to the play. This work was continued for five sessions. During this time Collin was pleasant and docile, made no attempt to resist going for lessons, smiled a lot during lessons, but gave no indication that he was understanding anything of the lesson. He made absolutely no attempt to participate in the lesson in any way. As this work appeared to be having none of the desired effects, it was decided to change the subject matter and content of the lessons.

For the next series of lessons it was decided to introduce simple movement games based on the movements he could already do - clapping, rocking, jumping, etc. These were paired with tape recorded music, and with rhymes such as -

"I have hands and I can clap them, one, two, three.
Collin has hands and he can clap them just like me."

This was varied to include feet stamping/head nodding/arms waving, etc. These were considerably more successful in that Collin would imitate the movements demonstrated, and, after prompting, could vary the movements in response to the changes in words within the rhymes, etc. As lessons progressed he became able to carry out the appropriate movements when asked to do so at other points in the lesson - for example, in response to 'jumping' music. When it had been established that he could carry out the movements on request, and could, apparently, differentiate between the words signifying the different movements, an attempt was made to introduce a more imaginative element into the work - eg. not simply stamping but stamping and splashing in puddles. This more imaginative element was introduced by the use of my large wellington boots. It was hoped that he would be able, eventually, to pretend to wear these and to splash in puddles etc. He clearly enjoyed wearing the real boots and stamping about in them. In the absence of real boots he made no attempt to copy my mimed demonstration and only joined in with the stamping movements. He did not appear to be understanding the imaginative element in the work.

Attempts to introduce any dramatic work through the use of simple stories based on the themes being used in the lessons were met by a smile and a blank look. In the course of the work he was shown pictures of animals which he could have been expected to be familiar

with. These were used in conjunction with songs which he already liked - a favourite being, 'How much is that doggie in the window'. Occasionally, he would pat or attempt to kiss the picture of the animal, but made no response when it was suggested that he might pat an imagined dog, nor would he attempt to 'be' an animal or anything other than himself. His lack of response to any of the imaginative elements in the work meant that few of these could be pursued in any detail and more time was spent in the singing and movement activities to which he could respond with some animation and apparent enjoyment. Even though he had been given several opportunities to put on and take off real boots, had been taken out to splash in a puddle and jump on dried leaves, etc, these real experiences appeared only to hold meaning for him in reality. When presented as imaginary situations, he appeared to be unable to comprehend them.

One unexpected development in the work, was that, after only a few sessions, he attempted to operate the tape recorder himself. An attempt was made to capitalise on this by encouraging him to put the music on and off to the accompaniment of the phrases 'it's on/it's off'; 'put it on/put it off'. He learned to do this fairly quickly. The buttons were colour coded and he appeared to be able to recognise the appropriate button to put the music on or off. Once, he volunteered the phrase 'it's on', but never subsequently repeated it. The only other words heard within lessons, but never used outwith lessons, were 'hands', 'down', 'up' and 'off'. He did use the word 'on' in asking teachers to put on the radio or musical box within the classroom. This was accompanied by appropriate gesture which made his meaning clear. Attempts to generalise this 'on' and 'off' to other objects such as light switches or water taps failed completely, even when these were colour coded in the same way as the buttons on the tape recorder. Attempts to get him to put these other objects on or off were met with a smile and flicking, autistic movements with his hands.

Staff Involvement

Staff members were only present in about half of the lessons carried out. They made comment and observation on his responses and noted any differences in behaviour which occurred between lessons. One teacher followed up the work by using some of the action rhymes in class time, and by deliberately using the vocabulary used in lessons when

there was an opportunity to do so in the classroom. At the end of the school year the project supervisor interviewed the teachers who had been involved, and they filled in a questionnaire on the work. One teacher, who had been on a training course throughout the year, and who had had no opportunity to observe or participate in the work, was of the opinion that there was little change in Collins's general pattern of responses or behaviour since she had seen him before the start of the programme. Some of the comments made by the head teacher and other staff members are given below. These have been transcribed from the project supervisor's interview notes.

"The head teacher felt that Collin's vocabulary had not increased throughout the year. She felt it was very much a situation of 'can but won't'. She felt that his comprehension had improved as had his general behaviour. He went more willingly with staff, there were fewer misbehaviours at school, there was reduced aggression, he was generally more agreeable, and all this was attributed to behaviour modification. She felt that he had improved in responding to instructions such as 'come here', etc, and that he very much now responded to social praise. Some of this improvement was attributed to the work done in drama.....

One instructress felt that his vocabulary had extended and there was better enunciation of single words. She felt that there was more comprehension and that he made some attempt to understand and repeat the words that you were concentrating on. She felt that there was improved comprehension of instructions and when he didn't obey the instructions they would rather it was a case of 'he opted out of responding'

The other instructress did notice that when he returned from drama sessions there was a distinct improvement in his singing and he seemed to be more aware of his hands. She felt that Collin was happy in his sessions but quickly forgot what he had learned. She felt that he was lazy. She thought there had been some improvement in responding to instructions but again she suggested that he chooses not to respond."

Personal Comments

Collin was easy and pleasant to work with in that he was never aggressive, appeared to enjoy the work and was always eager to go for lessons. Whenever I entered the classroom for any reason he immediately took my hand and tried to take me to the room where we worked. He also sought to make contact with me during music and movement sessions and he appeared to enjoy these greatly also. But it was somewhat frustrating to work with him in that when he did not respond, he continued to smile and be pleasant, but appeared not to comprehend. Whether he did comprehend or not is a moot point. His response patterns were erratic in

that it was noticeable how quickly he learned to operate the tape recorder, learning to put it off almost as quickly as he learned to put in on. Moreover, he soon learned that the cassette had to be loaded before the recorder would produce music and would hand me the box after trying to open it himself. After watching me load the machine he would examine the empty box. If, during this time, he was asked to put on the recorder, he would ignore the instruction until he had finished his examination of the box. This suggests that either he could not easily switch attention when attending to one thing, or that, as teachers had suggested, there were occasions when he could comprehend instructions but chose not to comply with them. The fact that he did learn to operate the tape recorder so easily (and he had never had previous opportunity to learn to do this either in home or school), suggests that his comprehension level may have been somewhat higher than his general behaviour suggested. This was also suggested by the ease with which he learned to respond to movement rhymes and action games. Why he should have been unable or unwilling to put on or off other objects which, since they also produced an effect, could have been self-reinforcing, was unclear. Since he consistently failed to respond to any imaginative or symbolic element in the work, it must be assumed either that he failed to comprehend these or found no reinforcement in them.

As noted in the comments made by staff, there did appear to be a slight general improvement in his ability to comprehend and respond to instructions. This was perhaps more marked within the drama and music and movement sessions than at other times. But, as teachers were rewarding with praise and a smile those times when he did respond to requests within the classroom, the slight general improvement noted outwith lessons cannot be attributed only to the work done within drama lessons.

The deliberate pairing of words and actions within the lessons appeared to have had some effect. The number of words he learned to say during drama sessions represents a gain of over 100% over his word count at the start of the programme. Since all the words he learned to say were ones to which he had been deliberately exposed within lessons, it can reasonably be assumed that his learning to say these can be attributed to this work. As noted earlier, however, there was little generalisation to situations outwith lessons, and little generalisation of the words themselves to less familiar contexts.

There was no evidence to suggest that the work had had any effect on his spontaneous play behaviour, nor is it possible to argue that the stimulation of the work done with him accelerated his developmental readiness for more symbolic work. The hypothesis that a juxtaposition of real and imagined experience would lead to some development of symbolic, imaginative ability did not appear to be supported in this case.

The head teacher reported that after the researcher withdrew from the situation the teachers in Collin's class showed no marked change in attitude to the provision of drama activities within the classroom, though they did, occasionally, use one or two of the rhymes and singing games which had been introduced in the work. Four years later Collin still has very little speech and virtually no symbolic or imaginative play. His interest in play with sand and water has waned, and he now spends much of his time in play with formboards and pegboards. The increased manipulative ability he shows with these has been attributed to the behaviour modification programmes being carried out with him. As his epilepsy has worsened he is now on a high drug schedule. This makes him very lethargic and passive. He creates no disturbance within the classroom, but neither does he participate in any form of interactive work with staff or other pupils.

Discussion

The learning principles around which lessons had been structured appeared to be reasonably effective in attracting and maintaining attention in encouraging imitation of the physical actions presented, and in maintaining positive affect within the lessons. As long as the material presented was well within his comprehension range, he was prepared to respond and obviously enjoyed doing so. It had taken some time to find an appropriate stimulus and reinforcement within the work, but when these had been established they achieved their purpose. Just as importantly, perhaps, this lesson structure was understandable and familiar to the staff in this classroom, who regarded lessons as 'less way out' than they had feared they might be.

One of the stated purposes in encouraging teachers to be present and to comment upon lessons was to gain their views on the skills, methods and material being demonstrated. It had been hypothesised that in those Scottish schools where there was a strong behavioural bias, and where staff were unsure of their abilities to take drama,

this type of approach might be one which it was easier for staff to relate to and attempt than, for example, the more complex or demanding techniques implicit in some of the other approaches explored earlier. This did appear to be the case in that staff in this room suggested that these methods were ones which could be encompassed without undue disruption in general school routine. These teachers expressed a desire to see the work continued and said that they might be prepared to become more actively involved at a later stage in the project. But as there was little change in their behaviour to support their stated attitudes, it was unclear whether they envisaged that they would remain in a supporting role, or whether they would, in fact, be prepared to take over and work with pupils on their own.

As a result of the discussions and demonstrations, they were more informed about drama. For example, one teacher disputed the fact that the work being done with Collin was 'drama' in that it had centred on movement and music work and he had never actively participated in any of the imaginative elements. Her comment raises some doubts as to whether the definition of drama as an enactive process could be applied to the work done. The skills being brought to bear were teaching skills which would have been applicable to the teaching of other subjects, and, although an imagined element was presented and acted out for the child, the child himself did not engage in this. If we discount the possible benefits in communication, which, in any case, appeared to stem from the pairing of words and actions rather than from the use of drama itself, it must be concluded that the dramatic element in the work appeared to be of little relevance or value to this particular child at this stage in his development. It has been argued that the theoretical justification for drama lies in the form of knowledge or experience it represents, coupled with the benefits which engaging in this form of experience may effect in the areas of communication, imagination or the development of other skills. The practical reality for this child was that he either could not, or did not choose to, engage in this form of experience. This negates one justification for the provision of drama - namely that it provides a form of experience and expression which is unique. Whether he had benefited from exposure to the process is speculative. Certainly, his overt behaviour outwith lessons gave no indication that he had done so. And within the lessons themselves, his responses were considerably more indicative of enjoyment when he was exposed to work which contained no imaginative element.

Collin's response to the process of drama was idiosyncratic, but it was not unique. Other children with different disabilities and needs, but with a similar level of development, responded to different patterns of stimulation and reinforcement. But, with the exception of one group of children who will be discussed in the context of the two case studies which follow, none of the children within this school responded to the imaginative or enactive elements in the work done with them. What they appeared to respond to was the stimulation of the work, rather than the dramatic element in it.

The work within this school was not continued for long enough to establish whether this would hold true in the longer term, or whether what we were seeing was simply the effect of increased individual attention. Certainly, with the group of children of whom Collin is representative, the benefits achieved over the timescale of the project appeared to be very small in relation to the time spent in providing them with individual and personalised attention and stimulation. But the stimulation itself appeared to hold a high potential for enjoyment, and the work may therefore have added something to their quality of life, rather than producing educational benefits which could, in the short-term at least, be observed and assessed.

There was a difference in the responses made by one other group of children within the school - those with severe behavioural problems, or a degree of autism considerably more pronounced than that seen in Collin. As will be seen in the case study which follows, these children may be capable of engaging in the process of drama if ways can be found of making this accessible to them. But, because of the difficulties inherent in making drama accessible to such children, it may, as will be argued later, be a task for the specialist teacher or drama-therapist rather than the general class teacher.

Description

Age at start of the programme - 8 years, 9 months.

Has two elder sisters of normal intelligence. Parents divorced - lives with mother.

Aetiology - severe brain damage, possibly progressive, hyperactive, with marked autistic features.

"Mary was unable to complete any of the sub-tests on the IQ scale. Concentration span is very limited and it is extremely difficult to hold her attention. She responds to her name and can carry out simple instructions. She is withdrawn and aggressive. Continent. Can feed and dress herself with assistance. Slight phobic tendencies. Marked autistic features."

(From the psychologist's report)

"Mary is an isolated child with many aggressive tendencies. She is easily frightened by mechanical or electrical equipment. She does not respond well to physical contact and dislikes being touched. She rarely initiates contact and displays many autistic symptoms. She likes music and will occasionally listen to it. In music and movement sessions she reacts very badly, disliking to be in contact with people for such a long time. She spends most of her time trying to run back to the classroom. She has some spontaneous speech which she uses appropriately. Her word count at the start of the sessions was -

- 54 single words;
- 4 two-word utterances;
- 9 three-word utterances;
- 2 four-word utterances."

(From the head teacher's comments)

Part:

Personal Observations

As Mary already had some speech the head teacher was planning to start a language development programme with her as soon as her general behaviour made this possible. Meanwhile, staff were listing her speech as a word-count in preparation for starting. They were also using behaviour modification programmes to attempt to modify her aggressive and withdrawn behaviour. She had only been in the school just over six months at the start of this project, but in that time her behaviour had changed little.

During the observation period Mary was never seen to engage in play either by herself, with other children, or with adults. She spent most of her time wandering aimlessly around the classroom, occasionally stopping to gaze intently at something which had caught

her interest - eg. a knot in the wood of the skirting board; some spilled water, etc. She would fixate her attention on such things for as much as fifteen minutes at a time, and would then revert to wandering, occasionally attempting to hit or kick another child or to throw down the toys and play objects displayed in the room. Teachers tried to interest her in sand or water play but she became so aggressive that they gave up their attempts to get her to participate. When one of the adults played with another child she would attempt to disrupt this play by aggression or destruction. Gadgets within the room - eg. a fan heater - made her retreat in terror when they were switched on, and even when they were not in use she gave them a wide berth.

It was reported that her behaviour was equally difficult at home, and her withdrawn manner and dislike of any form of physical contact (other than aggressive) was reported to be as marked at home as it was in school. During the previous term a physical education lecturer from a local college of education had visited the school from time to time, and had tried to institute a programme of movement work with her, but she was so aggressive and unco-operative that this was discontinued.

A music programme started by the visiting music teacher had more success. She allowed the teacher to put bells on her hands and would move her hands in time to the music played in order to hear the bells ring. The music teacher left shortly after this project started and her music programme was discontinued. When staff attempted to put bells on her hands as the music teacher had done, she would not allow this, and became very abusive of staff.

General Aims

As Mary already had some speech, including two four-word phrases, it seemed possible that she would have sufficient developmental maturity to understand and engage in dramatic play, even though she gave no indication that she could do so in her general classroom behaviour. Two of the general aims in working with her in the early stages of the project were -

- a. to attempt to establish whether she was - as her linguistic development suggested - already capable of the kind of symbolic understanding which would enable her to engage in dramatic play;
- b. if so, to attempt to engage her in such play in the hope that she would begin to find it enjoyable and would begin, spontaneously, to replace some of her aimless classroom activity with play of a more

purposeful nature.

It was assumed that, in view of her dislike of contact with other children, any spontaneous play which could be achieved might be expected to be solitary rather than interactive. But it was also assumed that, in order to establish whether she could engage in play, it would be necessary first to overcome her general dislike of being in contact with an adult. The initial stage in the work with her, therefore, represented an attempt to reduce aggressive reactions to contact and to enable her to tolerate physical contact for long enough to introduce her to some aspects of play.

The head teacher chose Mary to participate in the programme of drama for a number of reasons. First, she felt that Mary's continence, her self-help skills and her speech all pointed to a degree of intelligence which suggested that she ought to be able at least to understand what was being said to her, and she should be able to recognise the names of play objects used. Secondly, Mary was fairly typical of the aggressive, hyperactive child, whom staff found difficult to teach, and who did not, therefore, receive as much attention as some of the other children. Thirdly, although she had reacted badly to physical education, she had reacted rather better to music work, and some of the methods used by the music teacher were not dissimilar to those applicable to drama. Finally, other methods of approach were having little effect, and if drama could help her, the head teacher felt she should be given the opportunity for this help. If drama did effect any improvement in her ability to tolerate contact without aggression, this would enable the language development programme to be started more quickly.

Methods and Procedures

As one of the initial aims in the work was to establish some degree of physical contact and mutual trust, the movement exercises devised by Sherbourne for this purpose (described on p.199) appeared to be an appropriate method of starting. Clearly, it could not be assumed that such exercises would be rewarding to the child, since the physical contact involved in this work was the very aspect which she disliked. Moreover, she had already reacted badly to movement work. It appeared, therefore, that it might be necessary to approach any kind of movement work obliquely by attracting her interest and attention by some other means, and while her interest was so engaged, to attempt gradually to make contact. If such contact were

established, it might then be appropriate to introduce the movement work, and to lead on from this to the introduction of simple dramatic play. As music appeared to be re-inforcing, this was chosen as a possible lead in to the work.

At first, I attempted to work with her in the classroom but, as this provoked temper reactions which were disrupting to the other children, I decided to try to get her to work somewhere other than the classroom. The hall was not possible because of her adverse reactions to music and movement and her consequent dislike of the hall. Moreover, it was too large to establish any degree of intimacy in the work. The only other free space was the 'time-out' room. This had the advantage of being relatively small and free from any other distractions, but, again, it had unpleasant connotations for her. In any case, I did not particularly want to work in it. A compromise was reached by choosing a store-cupboard beside the head teacher's room. This was piled with boxes at one end, but did have some free floor space. I introduced a few posters, and a couple of 'sag-bags' as seating.

For the first few lessons, it was necessary to propel her very forcibly to this room, but thereafter she went, if not willingly, at least with no more than a token resistance. In the later stages of the work, she went with no resistance, and would take my hand as we went along the corridor.

For the first seven lessons she responded to none of the songs, the rhymes or visual aids I introduced to catch her attention. She would not tolerate contact of any kind, and her behaviour was as aimless and distractable as it was in the classroom. On one occasion I introduced a very brightly wrapped parcel which I hoped might arouse her curiosity, but it was studiously ignored by her. I was also ignored when I unwrapped it, speculating aloud on what it might contain. It did, in fact, contain a musical Jack-in-the-Box which I thought might arouse some interest. It had the opposite effect of making her retreat in fear. This, at least, was a strong reaction, but it was in keeping with her reactions to other mechanical or electrical objects, and, perhaps, should have been anticipated. None of this work could have been regarded as 'drama'. There was no interaction between the child and myself, and any imaginative or enactive content was on my part rather than hers.

During the eighth session when, as usual, she was unresponsive

and unco-operative, it occurred to me that the aggressive reactions were a means of communication, albeit a negative one. During this lesson I took her with me as usual into the room and then began to ignore her, carrying out a singing game by myself, to myself, and with apparent enjoyment. After a time she came over and hit me. I said something to the effect of - 'O.K. You don't want me to sing. So I won't. I'll just sit here quietly.' I then sat quietly and calmly for a few minutes, again ignoring her. After a time she hit me again. Again I used similar tactics - 'Oh, so you don't want me just to sit quietly. O.K. Then I'll tell my friend a story.' I took the cat puppet which I had brought as a possible visual aid and began to tell it a simple story about a bad-tempered cat that nobody liked! After a few minutes, she grabbed the puppet and threw it across the room. I went across to where the puppet lay, but, instead of picking it up, I began to comfort the puppet because he had been hurt, and to 'miao' like a cat as though he were replying. She ignored this, so I put the puppet back on and began to have a 'miaowed conversation' with him, pretending to be very sorry for him, etc. I kept this up for some time. Meanwhile, Mary was ignoring me and picking at some loose plaster on the wall. Eventually, I decided that this approach was going to be no more productive than any of the others tried. I decided to terminate the session and, still ignoring Mary, said to the cat puppet, 'Come on Timothy, back to the classroom. Mary doesn't want to play with us today.' As I walked to the door, I heard her say, very quietly, 'miao'. I stood still, and, still with my back to her, replied 'miao'. She didn't answer but came up and took the hand which held the puppet and allowed me to lead her back to the classroom.

The teacher and I were unsure how to interpret her behaviour, or even what aspect of the lesson had given rise to it. We decided to hang the puppet on her coat peg in the hope that she might try to play with it. Throughout the week the teacher reported that her behaviour was the same as usual and she made no attempt to touch the puppet. When it was time for her next drama session, I took the puppet and put it on. This time she took my hand again and allowed me to take her up to the drama room. I decided to capitalise on the cat theme, and introduced the rhyme 'Pussy-cat, pussy-cat, where have you been, etc'. Mary did not respond, but she was not aggressive, and, when I decided I had gone on long enough I said it was time to stop. Again, she allowed me to take her hand.

Although there was little change in her behaviour outwith lessons, a point of contact had been established with her. Over the next few lessons the cat theme was continued, with the puppet. I tried to introduce this theme without the puppet, and, by getting down on all fours, I 'became' a cat. As long as I was a cat, she would allow me to nuzzle her and move close to her. Eventually she began to pat me, and, as she became bolder, I became a bigger cat. Eventually, I became a fiercetiger, which would only calm down with 'a Mary' on my back. By this stage, she was able to join me on the floor, to be a cat with me, or to interact with me in my cat role. It was through the theme of cat that I was able to introduce the 'trust' exercises in which she had to allow herself to touch and be touched, to be rocked, enclosed in my arms, or lifted on my back.

The pattern of progress was uneven. Sometimes she reverted back to her earlier, aggressive behaviour and, on these occasions, I simply terminated the lesson at once. On other occasions she was 'biddable' but only just, while there were some occasions when she actually appeared to enjoy the work, but at no time did she smile or laugh. The 'cat' work lasted throughout the year, and only towards the end of the year was I able to introduce any diversity into the work. Stories had no effect in producing a response. Dramatic play based on physical objects was more effective - for example, my 'treasure box' - a musical box with nothing in it but imagined treasures such as big, big boots which could make us jump in the air, balloons which began to fly over the room and had to be caught, and shoes which danced by themselves, etc. On the occasion when Mary attempted to remove the imaginary boots before going back to the classroom, it was clear that she was understanding something of the imagined elements in the work without relying totally on my prompting. This stage of the work only lasted a few sessions, however, before the year ended. For reasons which will be discussed later, no further intensive work was carried out with her by myself.

Personal Comments

Mary's case has been given in some detail because it illustrates fairly clearly a number of the difficulties which may be encountered in attempting to make drama accessible to children whose behaviour constitutes a handicap in itself. First, in the early stages of working with her, the work was difficult, unrewarding and, on many occasions,

actively unpleasant. Had this not been a research project in which the researcher had some vested self-interest, it is dubious how long the work would have been continued before it was concluded - as the physical education lecturer had concluded - that it was unproductive. Secondly, the 'breakthrough' came not as a result of a carefully thought out programme of work, but as a result of a 'hunch' which worked. Why it worked as and when it did, we cannot be certain. A number of possibilities may be suggested. It may be that she felt that she had been able to communicate through her aggression without being either reprimanded or ignored. It may be that she was enjoying the extra attention given to her in the lessons, even though she gave no indication of such enjoyment. It may be that she had simply reached the stage at which she was ready to respond and would have done so regardless of the specific stimulus used. She may have been interested in the puppet itself, although, again, she gave no indication of this and never subsequently tried to play with it or attend to it when it was on display in the classroom. Or the cat sound may have triggered an association with her own cat at home and caused the reactions. But her mother reported that she never tried to play with the cat at home or stroke it. Whatever the reason for her relatively sudden progress, Mary was one of the children within the school for whom drama did appear to be an appropriate teaching tool.

Nevertheless, by the end of the year it was still extremely difficult to judge what her reaction would be to any of the activities presented, and much of the work with her represented a process of trial and error, rather than carefully structured and planned work. The need to react flexibly appeared to be of paramount importance in working with her in order to capitalise on any advances made by her. This meant that I had to rely to a very large extent on my own prior experience and expertise in drama. All the stimuli presented to her were larger than life and exaggerated in a way which necessitated an uninhibited use of face, voice and movement. The continued non-response to this, in the early stages, made it difficult to sustain with any degree of personal credibility. The non-specialist teacher, with no prior commitment to drama, might have found this degree of disinhibition in the presentation of stimuli difficult to achieve, and even more difficult to maintain in the face of non-response from the child. Moreover, the non-specialist teacher is likely to have a smaller 'vocabulary' of drama techniques on which to draw for stimulus materials or methods of

presentation.

Thirdly, Mary's case would appear to support the Piagetian assumption that symbolic play and the ability to use two-word phrases are correlated. As the work progressed, it became clear that she was understanding much of what was said to her and could appreciate the imagined element in the work, even though her general behaviour prior to lessons suggested that she was incapable of either symbolic or dramatic play. Her autism was clearly masking her abilities in this area, but, because her condition was one in which there was a compound of severe brain damage and autism, it was impossible to predict in advance the extent to which her imaginative abilities had developed, or were capable of being developed.

Finally, the sheer difficulty in finding an appropriate space in which to carry out the work, the high 'therapy' element in the work, and the knowledge of drama required to carry out the work, all point to difficulties for the class teacher who might wish to implement a programme of drama work for, and with, such a child. There is the additional difficulty that the class teacher is a 'known' person to the child, and a person who will continue to be in contact with her both before, during and after lessons. This continuity of contact has been suggested as a plus factor in the primary school, in that the teacher and pupils can get to know each other well. It is for this reason that the Young Report on drama in Scottish Schools suggests that the class teacher may be the more appropriate person to carry out drama work within the primary school, than a peripatetic teacher who knows the pupils less well, and who would have more difficulty in integrating the drama work with the general work in the class and with the interests of the pupils (HMSO 1978). In the case of Mary, however, the fact that she was working with a stranger, and working outwith the classroom, may have helped her respond. She was out of the environment which she associated with non-response. There were no other children around her to trigger aggression. Any contact established in lessons did not have to be maintained throughout the rest of the day or week. And, as most of the drama work carried out within this school was presented outside the classroom with individual children, she had less opportunity to learn about my patterns of behavioural responses to other children and in other situations, and could, therefore, have relatively fewer expectations of how I might react. In the classroom, her aggression was an effective instrument in ensuring that others did

not interact with her. And, consciously or unconsciously, she used this to manipulate others. She appeared to know how to dissuade teachers from interacting with her. She could be less certain of how a comparative stranger within the school might react. From the teacher's point of view, it might also be less easy to introduce drama to a child who has consistently rejected any efforts to engage her in simpler forms of play with toys, sand or water.

Staff Involvement

At the start of the work with Mary, the school was temporarily short-staffed due to illness. There were only two staff members within the classroom, one of whom was untrained and inexperienced. It was, therefore, impractical to suggest that members of staff should observe the work outwith the classroom. The head teacher observed a number of sessions, as and when she could. When the staff quotas were restored to normal, staff members from this classroom were able to observe the work more frequently. All of the staff members in this class were interested in the project, and gave considerable help to the researcher by keeping notes on pupil behaviours outwith lessons, by making home diaries available and by making time for some considerable discussion of the work, and of the pupils, both in and out of school time. Two staff members in particular became very interested in the use of drama, and, towards the end of the year, attempted to use simple drama techniques as part of their classroom practice. Both of these staff members left the school the following year - one to have a baby, and she is no longer in teaching. The other transferred to a school for severely mentally handicapped pupils and was involved in testing the curriculum materials developed in this project. It is known that drama now forms a regular part of her general curriculum with severely mentally handicapped pupils, and she has continued to use the materials as stimulus, adapting and changing these to suit new groups of pupils.

Staff Comments

Again, these comments are taken from the notes made by the project supervisor who interviewed staff at the end of the year.

"The head teacher felt that Mary had leapt forward in the last year. Her behavioural age apparently had moved forward from 26 months to 32.8 months. She could now speak in sentences of three or more words. She had apparently enjoyed the drama sessions and had benefited from them. She got very interested

in animal noises. The head teacher thought that her language had broadened in the sense that instead of using isolated words she used phrases such as 'me go to play'.

She felt that Mary had significant autistic features which had considerably reduced during the year. And this she attributed directly to the drama work. She had a far greater tolerance to physical contact and this was a generalised contact - with adults with whom she was familiar and with adults who were unfamiliar. Her mother says that she is now at the stage where she will go off with anyone. It was noticeable that Mary still did not have any contact with other children. Mary now initiates contact with adults and her mother finds her far more affectionate.

Now, she apparently likes dressing up and from time to time examines herself in the mirror. This is not apparently stereotypic play in the sense that she alters her dress or hat based on what she sees in the mirror. The head teacher felt that Mary's speech had extended considerably and was much more comprehensible. Her general progress she attributed to perhaps Mary's greater intelligence and the fact that she apparently likes to work.

The class teachers again emphasised that Mary's autistic features had been reduced and that she now apparently wanted physical contact with adults. One reckoned that Mary was only now becoming aware of other children. She felt that drama was very much a part of this awareness and she certainly noticed that Mary was very anxious to go out of the room with them whenever familiar adults appeared in the classroom. However, she was of the opinion that Mary still did not seek contact with unfamiliar adults. She observed little or no flinching when Mary initiated contact but there was still some flinching when contact was initiated by the adult.

Her play had become much more extended. She used a greater range of areas within the room. One teacher felt that her play was now imaginative. For example, Mary was now at the stage where she liked to play at shopping, although her actual shopping consisted merely of putting a number of items into a bag. However, she had grasped the fact that once these items were in the bag they were hers for the rest of the day. She felt that Mary played some sort of role in collecting her favourite things for the day. In this past year Mary had progressed to the extent that she now went into the house corner and participated in tea parties. Her language had extended considerably more to objects and her speech was clearer, and this was part of her general improvement. Her phobia against fan heaters, etc, had not diminished in any way."

(From the project supervisor's report)

Throughout the following year a project development programme was started with her, and class teachers followed up the drama work by interacting with her in dramatic play within the house and shop corner, and by introducing rhymes and singing games into their work with her. This aspect of the work diminished considerably once these teachers left, but she continued to take an interest in the music and movement sessions and to participate in these with apparent enjoyment, whereas

formerly she had disliked them. The general trend of improvement in her behaviour continued, in spite of the prognosis of further deterioration due to progressive brain damage. This progression of brain damage does not appear to have occurred, though, of course, this may simply be a remission. She was able to tolerate the presence of other children without aggression, but never interacted with any except one passive, echolalic, very seriously retarded, aimable and attractive child of fifteen, who, herself tended not to mix with the other children. Over a period of four years she progressed so well that she has now been transferred to a school for severely handicapped pupils, where she is reported to be settling well and continuing to improve in general ability.

Discussion

It would be foolish, in the absence of hard evidence to support it, to claim that the drama work carried out had played a major part in Mary's general all-round improvement. It may have been a contributory factor. The comments of teachers appear to suggest that they believed it to have had an effect. The weighting which could be given to this effect could only be determined if the project had been considerably more controlled in terms of other variables.

Hoetker, the Director of Research and Evaluation for the Educational Laboratory Theatre Project, carried out in America between 1966 and 1970, was faced with a similar problem in determining the project's effects on a number of those involved. In discussing the effects of drama, he has this to say -

"For most people the effects of an artistic experience, or a series of them, remain, as it were, a form of potential energy only, and have their effects far in the future as traces of them are impinged upon and interact with other life experiences. The residue of an artistic experience may have no observable effect on a person's life until there have been enough other experiences for a sort of critical mass to be reached. Alternatively, the artistic experience may itself be a catalytic agent, making sense out of other sorts of experiences. In any case, it will be the extremely rare occasion when it is possible to attribute a change in a person to a particular set of aesthetic experiences."

(Hoetker, 1975)

Throughout the course of the year there was a marked change in Mary's behaviour. It may be that the drama work did, in this case, act as a catalytic agent, consolidating upon the earlier work done with her

by the music and physical education specialists, and the work done by her teachers in class. It may also be that her development had reached a transition stage where she was ready to develop, and, again, the drama work acted as a catalyst in this development process. These comments must, however, be speculative, and, until similar work is replicated by other teachers in other situations, it would be difficult to predict the possible effect which drama might have on the behaviour and development of children with similar symptoms.

What can be stated with a fair degree of confidence is that a child like Mary is capable of engaging in drama, but that making drama accessible to her may be no easy task; that any programme of drama work, carried out with such a child may require to be carried out on a regular basis over a fairly prolonged period, and that the programme itself will not only require to be presented in individual teaching sessions but will also require to be tailored and adapted to suit the response patterns and very specific needs of the individual child concerned.

Although much of the work carried out with Mary had little or no imaginative or enactive component, the later stages of the work did contain such a component. Moreover, in her case, it appeared to be the imaginative component which facilitated the movement work, rather than the reverse being the case. This was in marked contrast to Collin, who responded only to work which had no enactive or imaginative elements. It may be, therefore, that a child whose imaginative ability is being masked by other symptoms such as autism or maladjustment will respond better to imaginative stimulus, whereas a child who has little established imaginative capacity may require perceptual or motor stimuli in order to develop this capacity. The problem would appear to lie in determining which child is, in fact, equipped with this degree of imagination.

The speech development of the child may provide some clues, as may the degree of behavioural impairment, and the general skills of the child in other areas. Discovering the precise nature of the stimuli which will effect a response, however, may well have to involve a process of the methods of presentation and techniques available. And it will be argued in the later parts of this chapter that there may require to be an input of specialist skill and knowledge in, at the very least, introducing the implementation of such a programme and developing it in an appropriate direction thereafter.

Mary's progress was the most striking of any child's in the school and certainly not typical of the effects of the work carried out. Only three other children made consistent gains throughout the period of work. Of these, two were considered to be autistic, while the third was very seriously behaviourally disturbed, but with a level of speech and motor development which suggested an intelligence level considerably in excess of the majority of children in the school. The fact that all the children who made observable gains, and who were clearly capable of engaging in and comprehending drama, were either autistic or behaviourally disturbed suggests that it was only those children who were intelligent relative to the norm in the school who were capable of understanding the imaginative and enactive process of drama, while the less developmentally mature children did not appear to be capable of this degree of understanding.

Mary's case illustrates something of the difficulty inherent in attempting to make drama accessible to those pupils who can comprehend it. The final case study to be presented in this section also illustrates this difficulty, but, in this case the effects of the work are considerably more difficult to assess. This case study has been included less as evidence of the difficulty in presenting drama and more as an example of a misplaced assumption that the work was having a considerable positive effect. In this case, had the work been continued for a shorter time, the reported findings would have been very different from those occurring over a somewhat longer time-span.. As most of the reported accounts of drama with mentally handicapped pupils are based on short-term or one-off teaching sessions, this case may provide a cautionary warning against accepting all of the claims which have been put forward for the benefits of drama based on short-term projects.

Description

Age at start of the programme - 12 years, 7 months.

Has two younger sisters of normal intelligence. Father a manual worker who often has to work on nightshift, leaving much of the management of Peter to his mother. His mother is asthmatic. She works in a factory on a part-time basis.

Aetiology - mentally handicapped, cerebral palsied - spasticity of the right side; has perforated eardrum due to self-abuse, giving a slight degree of deafness; epileptic.

"Peter is a very aggressive child. His aggression is non-specific - i.e. it is directed towards any other person, child or adult, without visible stimulus. If thwarted he will resort to self-abuse of a quite serious kind. Doubly incontinent. No speech. Slight psychotic tendencies."

(From the psychologist's report)

"Peter may be mentally ill as well as mentally handicapped. There is evidence of weird behaviour patterns from the age of nine months. He did have speech at one time but following an unfortunate incident involving hospitalisation he no longer uses words - other than 'ball', 'no' and something that sounds like 'mummy'. But he appears to understand much of what is said around him. He is very aggressive and this can take place at quite unpredictable times and in a variety of ways - kicking, punching, biting, head-butting, and self-abuse. Two members of staff have had to attend the out-patients clinic at the hospital to have injuries attended to which he inflicted on them during bathing and changing."

(From the head teacher's comments)

Personal Observations

Peter appears content to remain curled around a chair, isolated from the other children and taking no part in the activity around him. His eyes give some indication that he is taking notice, and he will occasionally smile or chuckle at some incident which has taken place - usually the bad behaviour of another child. He is very reluctant to move out of his chair for feeding, changing, etc, and can become very aggressive if anyone goes near him or tries to move him. He takes no part in any activities involving movement, with the exception of kicking a ball - if the ball is placed at his feet. This reluctance to move cannot be attributed to his ataxia. He can move quite competently if he is sufficiently motivated to do so - eg. in getting back

to his chair after a feeding or changing session.

Over the past year staff have apparently succeeded in reducing the aggression at changing time by negative reinforcement - icy cold water sprayed on his face when he becomes unduly aggressive during changing. One member of staff refused to co-operate in this programme. The others co-operate with reluctance. He is a child for whom positive reinforcement in the form of sweets or other foods are inappropriate as his diet is severely restricted due to allergic reactions. And he does not appear to respond well to praise or smiles. Thus much of his treatment is based on negative, rather than positive, reinforcement.

The head teacher suggested that he was a child for whom it had been impossible to do much. All other approaches tried so far had failed. Drama was regarded as being 'something else to try' but it was not expected to succeed in helping him. But it was felt that drama might supply the 'play' element lacking in his general behaviour, although the head teacher was dubious as to how he would respond to this in view of his history of aggression and violent non-co-operation. Nevertheless she and the staff were concerned for the child, sufficiently so to try anything which might offer even a slim chance of success in reducing his aggression and giving him an outlet for normal activity. Music and movement work, attempted by the music teacher and physical education lecturer referred to earlier, had been terminated almost immediately due to his aggressive reactions. A visiting psychology student had had a very slight success while in the school in that she had succeeded in sitting close by him and inducing him to stroke a soft toy. She was only in the school for a short period, and staff did not follow up her work.

General Aims

With this particular child the aims of the work were broad and very simple - namely trying to find anything that would interest him sufficiently to enable him to interact without aggression, even for a short time. It was impossible to judge from his general behaviour whether he would be capable of understanding the imaginative or enactive element in drama, and it was equally impossible to pre-judge whether he would ever be capable of participation in it. The one hopeful sign was that he did appear to be capable of much more understanding than his general level of self-help, motor or linguistic skills would suggest.

Methods and Procedures

At first I was content to sit fairly close to Peter in the classroom and to attempt to indicate by this closeness that I was unafraid of his aggression. Taking a lead from the work of the student who had been in the school, I spoke softly to him about a furry puppet I held, or simply read a story from a book. Gradually I extended the closeness to include physical contact, stroking his hand or cheek while speaking softly to him. He tolerated this well.

I tried various devices in order to get a response from him, among them drawing a story with pictures of a boy called 'Peter' as the central character. These were stapled together to make 'Peter's Book'. When this was offered to him, he took and held it, but dropped it when it was time to go home, and made no attempt to retrieve it. During this period he evinced no aggression towards me, but neither did he make much overt response, other than showing recognition when I appeared in the room. When I approached him, however, he became totally expressionless..

He liked kicking the football which I placed at his feet. But when it rolled out of reach he would not attempt to retrieve it. I used his liking for football as the basis of most of the subsequent sessions with him, having discovered that the only play activity which he would engage in at home was a game of football with his father.

After a few weeks I tried to get him to move out of his chair and to accompany me to the hall for a game of football. This proved surprisingly easy, and in time he would also get up in the classroom, go to the football to kick it, and would retrieve it if I placed it in the toybox out of his reach. I introduced silly stories about a 'happy ball' and occasionally he would smile or chuckle at these, but would very quickly suppress this if I showed that I had noticed. Similarly, I had to be careful not to reinforce with praise too early in his chain of ball activity as, if I did, he would stop what he was about to do and revert into surliness. By Easter he was capable of playing hide and seek with the ball, and would look behind the door or under furniture for it. I tried to initiate as much physical contact as possible and eventually he would sit on my lap or relax against me while I crooned to him or told a story. He particularly liked stories about animals and would respond to pictures of these, or furry toys. I also encouraged him to take part in the school's music and movement programme, taking him as a partner, holding him very firmly and moving

his limbs when he failed to do so on his own. When he became agitated I stroked his cheek and spoke softly to him but encouraged him to continue with the exercise.

Throughout this entire period he showed no aggression towards me, though his general level of aggression did not appear to be very noticeably lessened. In the drama sessions he appeared to be progressing with every session and was beginning to give 'normal' responses - eg. refusing to go back to the classroom after a game in the hall, but going quite willingly when he was told firmly that 'after one more kick (or whatever) we must stop'. He also laughed a lot and shouted 'no' if he didn't want to do something. The only other words he ever used were 'ball' and my name.

His non-aggressive reactions surprised everyone, including myself, and we were at a loss to account for it - other than the possible suggestion of 'personality factors'. As he became more responsive in the drama sessions, his general level of aggression in changing also lessened and the 'cold water' programme could be discontinued, much to the relief of staff. His level of classroom aggression to other children had not diminished, and, even during music and movement sessions, it was important to keep him out of reach of other children.

Towards the end of April, when I returned to the school after a four week break, I was unprepared for his reactions when I attempted to work with him again. He refused to co-operate, became violently aggressive towards me and, in fact, inflicted some quite severe scratches and kicks before I knew what was happening. On subsequent sessions with him I reverted to the 'protective' clothing I had worn at the beginning of the work with him in order that I might be able to tolerate his aggression, to continue to hold him firmly and to prevent his manipulating me by aggressive reactions. This worked tolerably well, but it was as if the programme were starting again from scratch. It never became possible to introduce many of the 'happier' activities again, and it was the end of the year before he would once more go out into the hall for a game involving the ball. His aggression towards me lessened gradually as he began to realise that it had no (apparent) effect on me, or my general manner or behaviour towards him. But his general behaviour in class continued to deteriorate, as did his changing behaviour and, by the end of the year, the psychologist had suggested instituting a 'blow-by-blow' programme of negative reinforcement - meeting aggression by aggression. In the event it was never

instituted because staff refused to co-operate in it.

Staff Involvement

Peter was in the same class as Mary and, as indicated earlier, staff within this room became very interested in the project. As many of the teaching sessions took place within the classroom they were able to observe these, and, whenever possible, they also tried to observe the work carried out in the hall. His behaviour in the music and movement sessions was visible to all staff members, and some members of staff from other classrooms also came out occasionally to watch the work done with him in the hall. The head teacher, too, was present on a number of occasions. Probably his unusually non-violent reaction to the work was what had occasioned so much interest in it, and his subsequent reversal to aggression also occasioned much staff speculation.

Staff Comments

As in the two previous studies, these comments are taken from the notes made by the project supervisor.

"The head teacher felt that Peter had learned little over the year. He had shown some marked improvement but there had been two regressive periods, the first in April and the second in late May. The head teacher felt that the behaviour modification programme had worked in that it had reduced the amount of self-abuse and displays of aggression when Peter was bathed and changed.

Up until recently Peter had never been aggressive with his father although he had always been aggressive with the instructresses. He has a very ghastly sleep pattern and now has been drugged for more than a month in an endeavour to control his sleep pattern.

The head teacher felt that there was a place for the researcher's work in his treatment, although she suggested that it lay in improving the quality of his life, rather than in effecting improvements in his behaviour.

His class teacher felt that he had made good progress for a while but now all this progress had gone. She felt that the changeover took place at the end of April when there was a very rapid deterioration in his feeding, toilet training and other activities, co-operation and physical contact. She felt that he certainly gave the impression that he enjoyed the researcher's work with him and that he liked her to come."

Staff did not follow up the drama work in subsequent years.

A number of different behaviour modification programmes have been instituted with him over the years. None of these has had any lasting

effect. His general behaviour has continued to deteriorate, and staff have finally agreed that he should be transferred from the school to a hospital for the mentally ill. His parents held out against this for as long as they could, but, eventually, agreed that hospitalisation was perhaps the only answer. It is not known how he has reacted to this as he has only just been transferred and there has been insufficient time to determine how he will react.

Discussion

Very little of the work carried out with this child could be described as drama. Occasionally he did respond to an imaginative element in the work by smiling or laughing, but he never participated in these by taking an active role or by responding as though he were part of the imagined situation being presented to him. The only activities in which he took an active part were those involved in kicking, hiding, throwing, the ball, etc. On the other hand, he did appear to take some pleasure in hearing stories and in the stimulus materials presented in an imaginative context. This suggests that he may have been understanding something of the imaginative element in the work. But the extent of this understanding would be impossible to assess on the basis of his overt responses to it. As described earlier, the marked improvement in his behaviour during the first term was reversed during the second term, with the result that, although some progress was made in the second term in containing his aggression during lessons, the work never again progressed to the point at which it would be possible to determine whether 'drama' - if it is defined as an imaginative enactive activity - was appropriate to any of his educational or emotional needs.

It is also difficult to separate out the possible effects of 'personality factors' from the effects of the methods and subject content of the work being presented, the more so considering that his early responses were so unexpectedly positive, while his later, negative responses were equally unexpected. One teacher suggested that personality factors were very important and that his regression after the holiday period was his means of 'punishing' me for my non-appearance over these weeks. But it could just as easily be argued that, in my absence, he had forgotten all about the earlier work, and that the methods adopted in the new term were inappropriate. Because I had assumed that we would resume more or less where we had left off

before the holidays. I approached him in a very different way from the approach adopted at the start of the work, and with very different expectations about how he would react. But it would be just as plausible to suggest that his earlier non-aggression marked a period of remission in his psychosis and that his later behaviour was part of a general increase in psychotic behaviour. If this were the case, then neither the methods adopted nor the personality factors would have been responsible for either set of behaviours.

The fact is that neither the staff nor myself were able to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of his behaviour, and his reactions to the work tell us little about how a similarly disturbed child might react to the process of drama, or to the regular provision of drama within the curriculum.

The ironic thing about this case is that, whereas it could be suggested that with children like Collin a longer time-scale might be necessary in order to determine whether the work could have educational as well as enjoyment value, had the work with this child been terminated after one term the reported findings would have been to the effect that the child had responded well to the work done with him and that this appeared to be generalising to his behaviour outwith lessons. The reported findings by the end of the year, however, show that he had reverted to less acceptable behaviour and never again attained the response levels reached in the earlier work.

This raises two points. First, most of the reports in the literature on drama with mentally handicapped children tend to be based on work which has been carried out over a very short time-scale. Almost all of these reports indicate that pupils respond well and that they appear to benefit from the work.. In most cases the assumption of 'benefit' is based on the fact that pupils became more animated in the course of the work, that they showed a desire to participate in it, and that they talked about the work after the event. The first term's work with Peter - with the exception of speech development - fits this pattern exactly. He became more animated, less aggressive and more involved. None of the reported accounts in the literature carry a follow-up study of the extent to which benefits were maintained, nor can they provide an assessment of whether the reported benefits slowed down, accelerated or changed over time as the work became less of a 'special' event and more commonplace. On the basis of the work with Peter it would be wrong to suggest that, over a longer time scale, the work

would achieve less positive responses. It would be equally wrong to extrapolate from Mary's case to suggest that all autistic children would benefit in the same way if drama could be made accessible to them. And it may be just as misguided to accept the claims put forward in the literature for the benefits of drama on the basis of short-term projects which have not been followed up. What can be argued is that there is a need for long-scale systematic research to determine whether, and in what areas, the reports on short-scale work are a predictor of the benefits which may be achieved over a longer period.

Secondly, it cannot be assumed that what have been described as 'personality' factors did or did not have some influence on Peter's response patterns in the early, and possibly even in the later stages of the work. In discussions with educationalists and teachers about the reasons for the neglect of drama within Scottish schools, one factor which cropped up frequently was the belief that a particular personality type was required in order to present drama effectively. The impressive degree of pupils involvement seen in video-recordings of leading drama specialists was often attributed by teachers to the 'sheer personality' of the individual involved, and many teachers felt that they lacked the kind of personality which would make such work a possibility for them to present.

Undoubtedly, many of the leading specialists do possess powerful personalities. They also possess a considerable degree of skill in the techniques which may be applicable not just to the presentation of drama but to the presentation of other teaching situations as well. For example, drama specialists have been trained to use their voices, their bodies and their facial expressions in a way that will enable them to catch and hold the attention of an audience, and to communicate with an audience without boring them. If we concede that many teaching situations are ones in which a teacher attempts to attract the attention of pupils and to communicate with them, then the skills developed in drama training may be applicable to any such teaching situation. Moreover, the intensive training in improvisation, which many drama colleges provide, is aimed at enabling the students to react with sensitivity to the moods and feelings expressed by others in the improvised situation in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Students are also encouraged to develop their powers of observation by noting and reporting on how people they have observed in everyday life react

to situations and events, both verbally and non-verbally. It could be argued, therefore, that drama specialists who have received this form of training should be equipped to notice and respond to small nuances of pupil behaviour. Again this ability is one which may be appropriate to any teaching situation, but may be particularly apt to working with non-verbal and non-responsive mentally handicapped children. All of these skills are ones which have been developed over a course of training and are not necessarily dependent on personality. But it may be, that in watching a specialist at work, teachers do not separate out the personality factors of the teacher's presentation from the learned skills and experience of teaching which the specialist is bringing to bear in the situation, leaving the work open to the charge of being personality dependent.

A similar comment could be made in the present project. In the earlier stages of the work, considerable attention was paid to conveying an impression to the child that the researcher was -

- a. unafraid of him;
- b. unthreatening to him;
- c. unworried by his lack of response.

While the decision to adopt this approach may have been influenced by the personality-type of the researcher, it was also influenced by a knowledge of psychology, by observation of the fact that negative reinforcement principles were having relatively little effect, and by the precedent set by the psychology student who had been able to get close to him by similar methods. The fact that these methods continued to work - albeit less effectively - in the later stages of the work suggested that he may well have been responding as much to the approach adopted as to the person using that approach. The only way to determine which was the case with any degree of objectivity would have been to change the methods or the presenter, while still providing similar lesson content. As this was not attempted, it would be fruitless to speculate on the outcome. It does suggest, however, that if we are to advance our knowledge of whether, or in what ways, drama is appropriate to children such as Peter it may be necessary either to dispel the notion that the teaching of drama is so personality dependent. Or, alternatively, to concede that every teaching situation is one in which there is an element of personality dependence, and to go on from there to examine learned skills and techniques which can be brought to bear, regardless of personality type.

In the case of the drama specialist, however, these techniques and skills are ones which have been learned over a full three or four years' intensive course in drama training. In addition, most of those who gravitate towards working with mentally handicapped children tend to have additional qualifications in psychology, in education or in sociology. If such qualifications and training count for anything, then it has to be assumed that staff who lack such training may be less well equipped to present drama to pupils, than staff who have undergone such a course of training. And, while staff who already have experience of working with mentally handicapped pupils may not require to spend as long a period in acquiring the skills to present drama, it is unrealistic to expect that they will be able to develop these skills without at least some training. To ask staff to undergo such training, however, it may be necessary to show that either drama per se, or the skills required to present drama, are appropriate to the educational needs of the type of child they are teaching. And, as argued earlier, the research data-base is, at present, too limited to make any such claims except in the broadest sense of determining what may or may not constitute good, general teaching practice, regardless of subject.

The implications of the need for further research, the applicability of drama to the needs and the abilities of profoundly mentally handicapped pupils, and the levels of teaching skills presently employed, will all be returned to and discussed more fully in the concluding section of this chapter. In the context of the case studies which have just been presented, it may be sufficient to note that it would be unwise to extrapolate from the specific responses of a few pupils, without considerably more evidence that their responses are representative rather than idiosyncratic.

Summary of the Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions Arising out of Practical Work

Of the three children described, Collin was by far the easiest and most pleasant to work with. His pattern of response, though idiosyncratic was rather more representative of the level of response found among the majority of the pupils in the school, in that he did respond with apparent enjoyment to the speech and movement elements in the work, but gave little or no response when presented with activities containing an enactive or imaginative element.

Earlier in the thesis it was postulated that such sound and movement activities cannot be described as drama, but that they may constitute the pre-drama training which will enable the development of more symbolic and enactive skills. The time scale of the work done in this project was too short to determine what the longer term effects of stimulation by these activities might be, and whether such activities would help to accelerate development, or whether they would merely provide an input of enjoyable activity within the pupil's school day. Thus, the findings from this stage of the project neither refute nor support the assumption made earlier, but they do indicate that any such training may require to be continued for a longer period than that within the present project before concluding that such effects would or would not occur. On the basis of the findings from this school, therefore, it would be premature to suggest that specialist drama teachers should be employed to demonstrate the appropriate techniques to teachers, or that courses should be made available within drama departments of colleges for teachers to acquire the necessary skills in in-service training.

On the other hand, the fact that pupils did appear to find the work enjoyable, and were able to participate in it, suggests that this type of work may provide an enjoyable input into the pupils' day, irrespective of its effects on subsequent cognitive development, and may be worthy of inclusion in the curriculum purely for the stimulation it provides. But, as it has been argued that these forms of activity are not drama, then it is not essential that the drama trained specialist be the person to introduce or carry out the work in schools. Physical education and music specialists are both equipped with the kind of training which would enable them to present and develop this form of work. Such specialists are not in such short supply as drama specialists, and there is some evidence to suggest that more music and movement specialists are taking an interest in, and seeking employment in, the special education sector. If, as they appear to be, such specialists are equipped with the skills to introduce early movement, sound, perceptual and play training, and if such specialists are already being employed within schools, this would provide an additional argument for suggesting that it may be either unnecessary or premature to recommend specialist provision of drama teachers in schools of the type described here.

What does appear to be clear is that this form of work is unlikely to be given any great priority within the curricular provision

of schools of this type unless, and until, some form of specialist provision is made to demonstrate the work to teachers, to provide teachers with practical evidence on which to judge its value to pupils, and to help teachers overcome the self-consciousness and lack of skill which they presently display in these areas of work, thus enabling them to introduce the work into their curriculum if it appears to be a worthwhile addition to it.

Mary, and the two other autistic children worked with, all showed evidence of an ability to understand and respond to drama. In each case, it was suspected that autistic features were masking a degree of cognitive development consistent with some degree of symbolic understanding.

Earlier in the thesis it was argued that children under the developmental age of twenty months did not appear to be capable of the kind of symbolic understanding which would enable them to engage in symbolic play with toys, and the children of under the developmental age of around twenty-four months showed no evidence of the ability to engage in interactive imaginative play with other children. But it was also noted that certain children do not exhibit either of these forms of play even when their development in other areas suggests that they ought to be cognitively equipped to do so. It was argued that, while the absence of such play behaviours may be indicative of low levels of cognitive development, lack of training, lack of opportunity for and practice in such play, emotional blocks stemming from environmental or social factors, specific language difficulties which are not related to general developmental levels, or even physical and perceptual handicaps may all contribute to a child's apparently low developmental level and may result in a wrong diagnosis of that child's potential.

Earlier in this chapter it was argued that many of the pupils within this particular school were being given relatively little encouragement to play, and virtually no play training. The pupils' observed play behaviours could not, therefore, be regarded as an indicator that drama would be inappropriate to their needs or capabilities. Subsequent work showed that with Mary and a few of the other pupils drama was a possibility. But the work carried out with these pupils was difficult to present, their reactions to it were inconsistent and unpredictable, and, on some occasions, the lessons were actively unpleasant. The presentation of the work, and the techniques used in doing so, were more akin to dramatherapy than to ordinary class-room drama. And it was argued

earlier in the thesis that the introduction of dramatherapy requires the skills of a trained specialist. The practical experience of the work attempted with these pupils appears to support the argument for specialist skills. And in this case the specialist skills required would appear to be those of the drama teacher with training in drama-therapy, or the psychologist with a knowledge of drama techniques. Because of the short time-scale of the work, these recommendations must be tentative. But it does appear that there is a need for further research into the applicability of drama with this minority population within such schools not only in order to discover the longer term effects of the work, but also to determine which aspects of the work are those which achieve benefits.

It was suggested earlier that, in the case of Mary, drama may have acted as a catalyst in her developmental process. If this were shown to be the case, it would be necessary to determine not only the earlier experiential elements which are necessary before this catalytic effect may be observed, but also the elements which require to be present in the work itself before a catalytic effect can take place. It may be that this will vary from case to case and that no general predictions can be made. But a longitudinal study of a number of such children might indicate there were some common elements which could be identified and which could enable the formulation of a tentative theory regarding the possible use of drama in the education and treatment of such children.

Whether such research should be carried out within the school environment is a moot point. Most of the psychoanalytic accounts of the use of play therapy point to a need to place the work within a laboratory context where it may be observed and analysed with rather more rigour than may be possible when working within a school setting. In the present case, it was necessary to take the work in a setting which was far from ideal and which did not contain the kind of artefacts which might have enabled an assessment to be made of the direction of the child's interests and the nature of her emotional trauma. It is, moreover, difficult to assess what is happening in the lesson while it is actually taking place. Within a purpose-built laboratory setting facilities exist for recording the work, for observers to watch without themselves being seen, and for the kind of preparation of the environment not possible without disruptions within a school setting. For these reasons a laboratory setting for the work may, in fact, be more appropriate.

Additional support for setting the work in a laboratory context

comes from the fact that such children do appear to be relatively small in number. The expense involved in making recording facilities and space for such work available within a school, or even for employing a specialist to work with such pupils within a school, may be unjustified not only in terms of the ultimate benefits proved, but also because these facilities already exist elsewhere. It would probably be more cost effective to take the child to the research than to attempt to bring the research into the child's school environment. And, if the research did prove that drama was beneficial to the child's development, and if the child then became more able to engage in play, it would be relatively easier for the teacher to take over at that point in the process and to provide additional forms of similar play experiences within the classroom setting, than to spend classroom time away from other children in the early stages of the work observing the research in action within the school.

One final point is that Mary continued to make progress even when drama no longer figures prominently within her timetable and in spite of the staff changes within her classroom. The other two children have progressed relatively little in comparison over the same period and under the same circumstances. By setting research into drama with such pupils within a laboratory based research project, it might be possible to ensure some continuity in the drama provision made over a longer period of time and in spite of staff changes throughout the life of the project. Such work could then proceed as planned independent of the vagaries occurring within the school environment.

From the work with Peter it was impossible to judge the extent of his symbolic understanding and capacity for engaging in drama. The fact that he had an obviously well developed concept of object permanence - as shown in his reaction to the hiding and finding the ball activities - and the apparent level of his ability to understand the spoken word and to react to situations within his environment, all suggest that the problem in making drama accessible to him lies less in his inherent capacity for understanding it as in his inability to regulate his behaviour sufficiently as to take part in it. The fact that he was prepared to engage in ball games also suggests that the 'activity' aspects of these were considerably more reinforcing and motivating to him than the 'symbolic' aspects of some of the other work presented. One other disturbed and aggressive child did appear to

find some reinforcement in the symbolic elements of drama work. This child was considerably less extreme in his behaviour than Peter, and spent much of the time in sand or water play. By attempting to interact with him in this play, and by introducing an element of imaginative dramatic play into his play with sand and water, it became clear that he could understand and respond to something of the symbolic elements in the work. Like Mary, however, he was inconsistent and erratic in his responses and it was impossible to predict in advance how he would react to any activity presented on any one occasion. Again, the only conclusion which may be drawn from this work is that there is a need for further systematic research, and again the difficulty in making the work accessible to such pupils argues for specialist skills in presenting the work.

The Need for Further Research

At the start of this section of the thesis the research methods envisaged for the present study were presented. It was argued that, for a number of years at least, the responsibility for providing drama within schools is likely to lie with the general staff in schools, as the sheer lack of numbers makes the provision of specialist teachers impractical at the present time. One of the major aims in carrying out the work, therefore, was to discover whether and how drama might be brought within the capabilities of the general staff, and whether it was of sufficient value to pupils as to warrant an attempt to persuade staff to attempt to investigate these aspects within their own classrooms. This suggested that a research method which addressed itself to teachers and was set within the context of actual classroom practice would be a more productive approach to investigation of drama at this level than a method which sought to establish specific information on a narrow aspect of drama within controlled, experimental conditions.

From the work carried out within School A, and from the information obtained on other schools of a similar type, it did not appear that this assumption held good. First, because drama did not appear to be of sufficiently obvious relevance to enough of the pupils within the school as to attempt to persuade teachers that they ought to present and judge its value for themselves. Secondly, the activities which do appear to effect a response with ^amajority of the pupils are not in fact, drama

activities but the movement and speech play, which it could be argued, may be introduced to staff by specialist teachers who are not necessarily drama trained. Thirdly, the level of skill required to present even these non-drama activities appears to be one which is more in line with those of the specialist than the generalist, although it is possible that the generalist who becomes committed to their use could acquire these skills over a period of time. For all of these reasons it did not appear to be productive to carry out further research with the pupils who did not yet respond to drama, nor with the staff who cared for them.

Moreover, although there was a clear need for further research with the minority of pupils for whom drama was a real curricular possibility, again, the early work had indicated that the presentation and development of such work was not something which class teachers would be able to achieve without some on-going specialist support and guidance. In addition, it appeared that what was needed was not so much a research which sought to involve the general staff in the work, as research which was aimed at establishing the kind of specific information about the process of drama and pupils' reactions to it, which would enable more informed decisions to be made about the nature of drama provision applicable to this type of pupil. It was concluded that this might be more productively set within the more controlled, experimental research paradigm than within the context of classroom practice. And, again, this suggested that continuation of the work on the proposed lines was not, perhaps, the most appropriate course of action.

Finally, it had been assumed that the development of curricular materials, in collaboration with staff and tested by staff, would be a useful approach to investigating the kind of methods, subject matter and activities which would be within the capabilities of pupils and applicable to the skills of staff. From the observation and practical work carried out within this school it appeared that the feasibility of producing such curricular materials was low. First, because the idiosyncratic nature of pupils' needs and responses pointed to the need for individually tailored programmes of work rather than for a package of resources which could be modified and adapted. Even if it proved to be possible to develop such a pack, the time needed to adapt and modify it to suit these very individual needs would negate much of the value of having such a pack. Secondly, there appears to be only a few pupils who would benefit from drama activities, and, since they

appear to require specialist help, this too minimises the value of producing packs of materials, as specialists ought to be able to develop their own programmes from first principles. Thirdly, materials for the non-drama movement and speech activities already exist in the publications arising out of the Hester Adrian Research Unit and current educational research projects in Scotland (Jeffree and McConkey 1976; 1977; McKay, 1978; Murdoch et al, 1978). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, teachers were not asking for such materials and did not appear to regard the provision of materials as of primary importance, and it was clear from their observed practice that the majority of teachers were not using even those materials which are already on the market and relatively easy to come by.

Short of a complete rethinking of the research paradigm, therefore, it appeared that continuation of the research within this school did not appear to be a viable means of achieving any of the aims of the research project.

Collaborative research which is terminated at the end of a short, restricted feasibility study is, almost inevitably, unsatisfying for all of those who have been involved in the study. The termination of the research may give staff the impression that the researcher is more interested in furthering her own career or research interests than in providing information which will enable teachers to take a critical stance towards practical problems within the classroom. And, to an extent, this may be true. This may create a resistance among staff to becoming involved in future research and create unfavourable entry effects for other projects. It may also further the divide which exists between perceptions of the value of 'theory' and 'practice' and the aims of the 'academic' and the 'grass-roots' practitioner.

If the research produces, as it did in this case, findings which do not support the continuation of the research on the proposed basis, staff may feel that they have been 'used' - as, to an extent, they have - and may become further resentful of academic intrusion. On the other hand, the research may lead to increased expectation on the part of pupils or staff, and, because staff have made some investment in the project, they may feel that it is their right to have some of these expectations met.

In order to minimise some of these effects within the present project, contact was maintained with the school on a sporadic basis, staff were informed of the on-going progress of the research within

the other schools, and, when the curricular materials had been developed, were given a copy of these and invited, if they wished to do so, to comment upon them. This they subsequently did. And, in fact, two of the staff who went to work with less profoundly handicapped pupils are presently using drama, based on these materials, with their pupils.

All of these measures, however, are palliative. They did help to minimise the termination effects of the project and to ensure that barriers to entry were not created for other researchers who might wish to go into the school and work with pupils or staff. But, with the value of hindsight, it does appear that if collaborative research is to be undertaken within a school in a subject about which, like drama, so little is foreknown, then staff ought to be made fully aware at the start of the project that it may not produce 'pay-offs' for either them or their pupils; that it may involve them in an investment of time and effort which may not, in the end, lead to any practical benefits; and that there is the possibility that the research may have to be terminated without its having led to real or practically useful benefits. If, having been given these facts, staff are then prepared to become involved in the research - either out of interest, for personal self-development, or for some other reason - no unrealistic aspirations will have been generated. Within the present project, the researcher had warned staff that the work might not succeed, but was herself unprepared for the extent to which it was impossible to predict in advance how pupils would react, and also of the extent of the effort required in order to get any positive reaction from pupils. With the value of hindsight, therefore, it is clear that the extent of researcher bias was higher than that appreciated by the researcher herself.

Moreover, it is somewhat ironic that a project which took as its central methodological influence the work of Stenhouse, who suggests -

"that long-term improvement of education through the utilisation of research and development hinges on the creation of different expectations in the system and design of new styles of project in harmony with those expectations.

The different expectations will be generated only as schools come to see themselves as research and development institutions rather than clients of research and development agencies. Against that background assumption a project will see itself as helping schools to undertake research and development in a problem area and to report the work in a way that supports similar work in other schools".

(Stenhouse, 1975; p.223-3)

should have embarked upon a feasibility study which was controlled by the researcher and in which staff did come to see themselves as the clients of the project rather than the research personnel within it.

Because the presentation of drama required a degree of specialist skill, staff were unable to attempt it. Because staff were inhibited they were unwilling to try to acquire these skills. The first of these conditions was created by the capabilities of pupils; the second by the abilities of staff, their previous attitudes and conditions obtaining within the school. The extent to which these factors would be important could not have been predicted in advance, or from observation of the more passive kind. It is, therefore, difficult to see how it would have been possible to create conditions whereby staff could take on the role of researcher, given that most of the factors which mitigated against this were either not obvious at the start or not within the power of the researcher to change. Therefore, it may be that the conclusion to be drawn from this is that 'fruitful' collaborative research may require to take place within a curricular area in which it is already foreknown that the subject being researched is one which is relevant and applicable to the needs of the pupils, and where the research is, consequently, geared towards identifying possible changes in practice, attitudes, activities or training which would enable staff to better their teaching and help their pupils. Where the subject being researched is one which is not applicable to the educational needs of pupils - as the work in this school suggests drama may not, in the majority of cases, be - the 'betterment' of teaching in that subject may be equally inappropriate. Indeed, in this situation, 'better' teaching practice may equate to no teaching practice. If the subject is irrelevant to the needs of pupils, it would be better teaching practice to omit it from their curriculum. Consequently, it must be argued, on the basis of the work done in this school, that perhaps those staff who were sceptical of the value of drama at this level, were, in fact, taking a more realistically critical stance towards its value than was the researcher whose previous training and whose reading of the pertinent literature had led her to believe that drama might be appropriate. Moreover, the work done in this school raises questions as to the adequacy of the definition of drama adopted within the project, and sheds some light on the reason why specialist views of drama at this level appear to be at such variance with both the findings from

the present study and the views of general staff.

The work of those specialists - Sherbourne, Jennings, Byron, and a few others - suggest that no child, however disabled, should be debarred from participation in drama. And, as was argued in the earlier part of the thesis, such specialists claim that drama is beneficial to pupils in a great many ways - social, physical, intellectual, emotional or linguistic. The work carried out over this year showed that the researcher was unable to elicit a response from some of the pupils to the process of drama. The fact that she was able to effect a response when using the simpler techniques of movement and sound play activities suggests that the lack of response to drama was not simply indicative of the researcher's lack of competence. When the work of these other specialists is analysed in more detail, however, it becomes clear (as was noted earlier in the thesis) that they are not using the imaginative enactive activities which, it has been argued, characterise drama. Rather, they are using the same range of movement and sound activities which effected a response from the majority of the pupils in the present project. It may be necessary, therefore, either to examine the concept of 'drama' once more in order to assess whether the definition adopted is an appropriately representative one, or to concede that movement and sound activities may take precedence over drama for this segment of the school population. If the latter is the case, it may be more important to ensure that pupils have opportunities to engage in these forms of activities, than to attempt to isolate whether the work is better served by the skills of the music, the movement or the drama specialist. If, on the other hand, we seek to redefine drama in order to encompass such movement and sound activities within it, we find ourselves once more faced with controversy of whether drama is a discipline or a method. In order for it to be regarded as a discipline with a distinct body of knowledge relating to that discipline, it is necessary to identify the unique characteristic of the form of knowledge it embodies. And, since the time of Aristotle, the only characteristic of drama about which there has been no argument, is the fact that it is based on the symbolic, imaginative activity of acting as if the present reality were something other than itself. If, on the other hand, we suggest that it is the 'methods' of drama which are valuable, we may be hard pressed to identify those methods which are singular to the drama process, and those which may apply to any form of teaching.

The present writer would contend that the singularity of the drama method also lies only in the fact that either teacher, pupils or both are involved in imaginative enactment; and that there is no justification for seeking to extend the definition of drama to encompass those activities or methods which do not involve this property. Indeed, the case for drama as a core curricular element might be better served by seeking to place boundaries on its value and usefulness. By doing so it might be more possible to determine for which pupils drama is relevant and valuable, and to concentrate the scarce resources which exist on maximising its use with these pupils, rather than seeking to make it available to all pupils regardless of its value and applicability to them. Thus, the present author concluded that in schools which cater for pupils with the more profound forms of mental handicap drama may not be a necessary or desirable element in the curriculum for the majority of pupils. Even if subsequent research proves this conclusion wrong and demonstrates that even profoundly mentally handicapped pupils can and do benefit, in the longer term, from regular exposure to 'drama', the present writer would further contend that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for general staff to realise these benefits unless conditions within the school are changed to make them more conducive to the presentation of group work, or to individual work on the more creative or aesthetic subjects.

When there is a high concentration of 'difficult' pupils within any one school or class, and where there are staff members with no formal training or experience in working with such pupils, it is doubtful how far conditions will allow staff to carry out such work with pupils. It is equally doubtful how far staff will have the time, the inclination, the energy or the ability to develop the skills they may need to teach subjects such as drama, art, music or movement, all of which may be as much dependent on the personal ability and presentation skills of the teacher as on the methods and activities used.

It may be, therefore, that if society does want to maximise the potential of the least able members of the handicapped community, more thought may need to be given to how schools are populated, how staff are trained and recruited, what purpose the schools are seeking to serve, and where the money is to come from to implement changes if, as the present author would contend, such changes do appear to be necessary. All of these are policy issues which lie outwith the scope of this thesis to consider. Until they are considered, however, it may be

fairly pointless to seek to innovate with new curricular elements, methods or activities before what Stenhouse has described as the 'real' issues have been identified and faced up to by all of those concerned. Whether or not to introduce drama into the schools would appear to be a relatively minor issue in comparison with the other issues which the present project identified within one particular school. And it has been argued within this chapter that this school is not unrepresentative of schools of this type in general, and that, consequently, the findings from this school may have a degree of general applicability.

In this chapter, therefore, there has been an attempt to examine the role of drama within schools which cater for the more profoundly mentally handicapped. In the next chapter, its role within schools for severely mentally handicapped pupils will be considered, and it will be argued that, whereas conditions within schools for the profoundly handicapped mitigated against the practice of drama by general staff, conditions within schools for the severely handicapped were conducive to its use as a regularly timetabled core activity within the curriculum.

CHAPTER 10

A Description of the Observation and Practical Work Carried Out Within Three Schools for Severely Mentally Handicapped Pupils

Introduction

In the previous chapter a number of arguments were presented concerning the applicability of drama to profoundly mentally handicapped or severely behaviourally and emotionally disturbed pupils. These arguments were based on the observation and practical work carried out over a period of one year in one school which appeared to be fairly representative of schools which cater for pupils with the most profound forms of mental and emotional handicaps. It was concluded that, although there may be a number of pupils within such a school who are capable of comprehending and participating in drama, the problems involved in presenting drama to pupils are such that it is unlikely that such work could be sustained on a regular basis without an input of specialist provision. It was argued that the development of curricular materials for use by general staff did not appear to be an appropriate measure, given the need for in-situ specialist provision and the personalised nature of the programmes of instruction which would be necessary to cater for the highly individual needs of each child.

A similar period of observation and practical experimentation was also carried out within other three schools. These catered for the needs of severely, rather than profoundly, mentally handicapped children. Again, the intention was to obtain preliminary information on how pupils and staff within these schools reacted to the process of drama in general terms, and to determine whether a collaborative, school-based project, leading to the research, development and testing of curriculum materials for use in drama by the general staff, would be an appropriate means of investigating the role of drama in the curriculum within such schools.

In this chapter the findings arising out of this period of observation and practical work in all three schools have been combined to provide a comparative picture of how conditions within these schools differed from those in School A, described in the previous chapter. The environmental conditions within the schools, the capabilities of pupils, the attitudes of teachers and the curriculum followed will be described briefly and compared with those obtaining within School A. It will be argued that within these schools conditions did not

mitigate against the practice of classroom drama by general staff and there was a strong case for suggesting that pupils could comprehend and engage in several forms of dramatic activity. Many of these activities were ones which did not appear to demand a higher level of teaching skill than general staff believed themselves to be capable of acquiring through the practice of drama within their own classrooms. And, in addition, there was a clearly felt need among teachers within these schools for instructional materials in drama for use with their pupils.

Thus, the environmental conditions, the attitudes of staff, the capabilities of pupils, the apparent applicability of drama to the needs of pupils, and the expressed need for teaching materials, all indicated that the investigation of drama by the envisaged methods would be both feasible and informative within these schools.

In discussing the above aspects, a number of issues relating to the research and development of materials will be touched upon briefly. It will be argued that, as the same range of material did not appear to lend itself to presentation with both the older and the younger pupils within the schools, there would be a need to examine the needs of the two groups separately in the research and development of materials. And it will be noted that the outcome of this period of observation and exploratory work was a firm decision to continue with the research in collaboration with the general staff within these schools, and to do so in two stages -

- a. the research, development and testing of materials for use with younger pupils, and the dissemination of these to a wider sample of schools for use, adaptation and critical testing;
- b. the subsequent research, development, and testing of materials for use with older pupils. In the final part

In the final part of the chapter three brief case studies will be presented. These highlight the different reactions of the pupils within the schools for the severely mentally handicapped and that for the profoundly handicapped children. These serve as a comparison with the case studies presented in the previous chapter. From an analysis of these case studies it will be argued that, while not all severely mentally handicapped children seem to need to engage in drama or to derive benefit from doing so, the majority of the children within the schools did seem to enjoy and benefit from the process of drama - one of the most obvious benefits being in the area of increased

language flow. It will also be argued that it may be difficult to assess the effects of drama simply by observing a child's behaviour during the drama lesson or subsequently in school. Contact with parents, however, can help in this assessment by showing how pupils have talked about or benefited from the work in their out of school behaviours.

The third case study demonstrates the lack of interest shown by a child for whom the drama process did not appear to be a beneficial element - except perhaps as a stimulus to other forms of creative activity. The second case study highlights the case of a child who did not appear greatly interested in drama, but who, according to his mother's accounts was benefiting from it by recounting the process and attempting to experience in reality some of the events which had occurred in the drama lesson. The first case study shows the other extreme of a child who is clearly capable of engaging in drama, who thoroughly enjoys doing so, who seems to have some natural dramatic talent and who benefits from drama both in terms of exercising his leadership and imagination and in his increased ability for dramatic play and spectator speech.

A Description of the School

Staff/Pupil Ratios

Within all three schools the ratio of staff to pupils was around one staff member to every four or five pupils. Very occasionally a single staff member would be in control of a group this size. Generally, however, the number of pupils within one class was around seven to ten, with two members of staff working full-time within the classroom. In all three schools pupils had a weekly swimming lesson. School C also had regular visits from peripatetic music and home economics specialists.

In all three schools the general level of staff training was higher than that in School A. The only untrained member of staff was in School D and she was awaiting placement on an in-service training course when a place became available. All other staff were either qualified primary teachers, instructresses, or, in one case, a nursery nurse with training in special education. The degree of previous experience of working with handicapped pupils varied from around one year to twenty or so years of continuous service.

Staff/Pupil Interactions

Although the ratio of pupils to staff was higher than in School A,

staff did not experience the same problems in classroom management due to the relatively better behaviour and greater comprehension levels of the pupils. All three schools were using language, self-help or motor development programmes based on behaviour modification principles, but these were used less rigidly than in School A, and their use was restricted either to individual work with single pupils who required specific help in certain areas, or to small-group work within the classroom. While one staff member was engaged in this work, the other was on hand to cope with emergencies or to interact with other children. In none of the schools was the ethos so overtly behaviourist as in School A, and the behaviourist programmes were supplemented by other teaching methods and materials.

As many of the pupils were capable of becoming absorbed in play with toys or teaching materials, and could sustain this play for some time without adult intervention, staff were free to provide more individualised teaching and attention for the less able pupils. But it was observed that other pupils, working on their own, were not neglected and were given help or encouragement either in passing or as they required it.

In each school there were a few pupils whose comprehensions levels and levels of general ability appeared to be comparable to that seen in pupils within School A. In the main, however, these pupils did not appear to create undue problems in class management as, although less able, they were well-behaved and amenable to instruction. Such pupils appeared to receive considerable staff attention - ie. staff spoke to them, sang to them, attempted to engage in simply finger-play with them, and carried out individualised programmes of structured work.

Staff did not appear to show any reluctance to make physical contact with pupils. For example, a member of staff might place an arm around a pupil while talking to him or working with him, might take a younger child on her knee while telling a group story, or might hug an older child as he was leaving school at the end of the day. A number of the Down's children within the schools were overtly very affectionate to staff, and there was no evidence to suggest that staff attempted to modify this behaviour. Only once was a child seen to be restrained from making affectionate physical contact with an adult. In this instance the adult was a visitor to

the school and the staff member was clearly unsure of how she would react to the child's friendly overtures. The child was despatched to another part of the room to fetch a piece of work for the visitor to admire. This example is fairly typical of the way in which staff attempted to avoid confrontation whenever possible by distracting the child's attention and directing it elsewhere. It was only when a child continued to misbehave or to behave inappropriately that staff took direct action and rebuked or restrained a child. In only one of the classrooms observed was confrontation between staff and pupil a regular feature, and in this case there were two very disruptive children within the room. The behaviour of these children could be controlled by maintaining their interest but they did require a high degree of personal attention if this was to be achieved.

There were relatively few occasions when staff within the school's interacted with children in their spontaneous play within the house or shop corners. Children were encouraged to engage in this form of play, but were generally left to get on with it on their own. It was observed that much of this play tended to be stereotyped, with children repeating very similar sequences of play in the same way on each occasion.

In all schools play material were abundant and well displayed and pupils had access to these at virtually any time in the day. There was less emphasis on keeping materials in a tidy and ordered condition, but there was less need for such emphasis as pupils were less inclined to be destructive. With older pupils, the play materials tended to take the form of educational toys and craft materials, and there was more evidence of staff interacting with pupils in these forms of activity - giving help, making suggestions, or praising the efforts of pupils.

In the main, the environmental conditions within these schools were very different from those within School A. This may be attributed almost entirely to the nature of the learning groups within the school, coupled with, perhaps, the rather higher levels of staff training. Pupils posed fewer behavioural problems, and staff appeared to have devised strategies for coping with those which did occur without undue confrontation. Moreover, as pupils were clearly responsive to social reinforcement, there appeared to be more emphasis on this as a means of controlling behaviour, and less use of concrete rewards and negative reinforcement. The atmosphere within the classroom

seemed to be both more relaxed and more purposeful. There was less evidence of aimless activity on the part of the pupils, and there were few occasions when staff were not actively working with pupils in one way or another. In all schools, however, staff had their lunch and tea breaks away from pupils and were able to relax at these times. Pupils were supervised by nurses or ancillary workers. This was in marked contrast to School A where there was less opportunity for staff to take communal tea-breaks, and where the lunch period was frequently interrupted by the need to return to a classroom and help with a crisis situation. As lunch hours in School A were staggered, there was little opportunity for all staff members to meet together in the staffroom at the same time, and it was not uncommon to find that a member of staff had spent much of her lunch break alone in the staffroom.. In the other three schools staff were able to meet together during breaks. Although much of the staffroom conversation was concerned with the work of the school, there were many occasions when staff simply relaxed and chatted. This meant that staff within these schools had more social life within the school than was the case in School A, and this may have contributed to the rather more relaxed attitudes observed.

Parental Involvement

In School C there was a high level of parental contact with the school - regular parents' nights, easy access to staff or head teacher, regular home diaries giving parents details of work in school and providing staff with parental comment on these. In School D there was less parental involvement. This was not due to staff policy, which was aimed towards involving parents in the corporate life of the school, but resulted from an apparent apathy on the part of many of the parents to become involved. Home diaries had been introduced, but only a proportion of parents commented in these. Attendance at parents' nights were similarly limited. In contrast, in School B the head teacher adopted a definite policy of not involving parents in the work of the school, of interviewing parents herself, rather than allowing them to talk to staff, and of restricting the number of parents' meetings organised. Why this policy had been adopted was unclear, but both staff and those parents whom it was possible to contact, appeared to resent this situation. In this school the head teacher was not prepared to make children's case notes, etc, available

to the researcher for scrutiny as she felt that this would be a breach of professional confidence, and she was similarly unwilling to provide the home addresses of children. This feeling was respected and she was not pressed to make these details available. A number of the parents were subsequently introduced to the researcher by their children at a social function outwith the school. These parents were not only willing to be interviewed by the researcher in their homes, but agreed to provide her with feedback on pupils' home reactions to the practical work undertaken over the subsequent period of the research. Within the other schools the head teachers agreed to interview parents informally and to obtain their reactions, if any, to the work. If parents were able to speak knowledgeably about the work and about pupils' reactions to it outwith the school, this would give some indication of the extent to which the work done in school had had any generalised effects.

Pupil Capabilities

As indicated earlier, there were a few behaviourally disturbed or profoundly mentally handicapped pupils within each school, but the problems posed by the disabilities of these children were compensated for by the fact that the majority of the pupils were operating at higher levels of ability and had some control over their own behaviour. School D had the highest proportion of less able pupils. In all schools there was a high proportion of Down's children, School C having the largest complement.

Throughout the whole age-range within the schools, language difficulties were prevalent. Most of the pupils had some comprehension of language, could respond to verbal instructions and carry out simple requests. Some pupils also used gesture effectively to supplement or replace speech. The majority of pupils were restricted in their verbal output, appeared reluctant to initiate conversation with an adult or another child, and tended not to engage in speech unless it were necessary to do so. Articulation difficulties were also common, especially among the Down's children. A small number of pupils were, however, capable of speaking in complex sentences and could carry on a conversation with an adult. Some of these pupils would initiate such conversations. An equally small number appeared to have language difficulties of a degree of severity comparable to that seen among the pupils in School A.

The majority of the pupils also showed either a readiness for symbolic, imaginative play or an ability to engage in such play. Most of the children appeared to be capable of playing alongside, if not actually with other children. Among the younger pupils the play observed appeared to be restricted in both its degree of complexity and in the degree of interaction between pupils in play, and much of the play was repetitive, stereotyped or occurred in very short, unconnected episodes. There was less evidence of spontaneous dramatic play among the older pupils as their day was more structured and directed into other forms of play activity. Throughout the age-range, most pupils appeared to be capable of taking part in group activities such as those presented in physical education sessions, in music lessons, in listening to stories and in the teacher-directed language development sessions.

No pupils displayed the very severely disturbed, aggressive, self-abusive or destructive behaviours seen in pupils within School A and there was less evidence of severe emotional disturbances among the pupils. The most common areas of behavioural concern were lethargy and hyperactivity. Some of the older girls in particular were content to remain passive and unoccupied for considerable periods in the day and staff spent time in trying to elicit an animated response from them by presenting them with a variety of different tasks and playthings throughout the day. A small number of pupils had a tendency towards stubbornness or aggression, while others displayed a lack of concentration and the kind of hyperactive behaviour which made it difficult for them to settle to any one task for any length of time. In the main, staff coped well with these behavioural problems and they did not create any sustained environmental disturbances within the classroom. Again, this was in marked contrast to the classroom environment created by the very severe emotional and behavioural problems presented by the pupils in School A.

Staff Priorities and the Curriculum Presented

Staff priorities varied according to the age of the pupils in their charge. With all pupils there was a premium placed on language development, and staff at every level were using some form of structured language teaching programmes. With the younger pupils, these programmes were linked to the development of self-help skills, to the provision of educational play with peg-boards, jig-saws,

matching cards and sorting games, and to eliciting an interest in the immediate environment. With older pupils there was an emphasis on the use of art and craft materials, and on the development of basic social skills. In School C, in particular, the home economics teacher had introduced a programme of social skills training related to home management. Where appropriate, with the older and more able pupils, the rudiments of literacy and numeracy were being introduced.

All three schools regarded music as an important element in the curriculum, and all had some form of regular provision for physical education. Art-work was in prominent display in all schools. There was, however, a difference in the type of work being attempted with pupils by different categories of staff. Trained teachers appeared to favour an exploratory approach in which pupils simply experimented with the paint or other materials and produced their own work. Instructresses tended to favour a group activity in which all the pupils worked on the same task - often with templates or other guides provided by the instructress. Pupils appeared to find enjoyment in both forms of activity.

Similarly, although all schools engaged pupils in music activities, in School C, where there was a specialist music teacher, the programme of music was considerably more varied, more exploratory and more use was made of free movement in interpreting songs or other musical stimuli.

Staff Attitudes to Drama

Drama, as a separate timetabled activity, did not appear on the curriculum of any school. Staff did not, however, appear to hold actively unfavourable attitudes to drama. Most indicated that they believed drama to be an important means of developing imagination and language. With the exception of the head teacher in School C, however, most of the teachers were rather unsure of what was meant by drama, reluctant to admit to using drama in their teaching, and clearly dubious of their ability to use it successfully. In at least three cases, previous experience of drama in their college of education course had led staff to question whether their drama training had been of any value to them, other than the negative value of leaving them feeling inadequately equipped to teach it. Embarrassment, inhibition and a general feeling that the activities they had been presented with were pointless had led to this attitude.

Nevertheless staff in all schools did tell stories, used finger-play or other acting rhymes with the younger or less able pupils, and did encourage pupils to engage in dramatic play with toys, although they rarely interacted with pupils in this play.

All three head teachers were keen to see drama introduced into the curriculum on a regular basis, providing pupils could respond to it without becoming over-excited or uncontrolled in their behaviour. They also felt that the drama lesson should not be presented as an isolated curricular element, but should be linked to the on-going class work in other areas and to the themes which were being introduced to pupils in their language or social skills training programmes. The head teachers in Schools C and D both complained about the inadequacy of the drama training they had received in post-graduate, special education courses. They regarded the activities suggested as inappropriate to the abilities of their pupils and suggested that the methods lectures were insufficiently explicit in giving them an idea of how to tackle or develop drama work at this level of education. The head teacher in School B had trained as an instructress many years previously and had received no formal instruction in introducing drama.

The staff in School B were initially somewhat resistant to the introduction of drama by collaboration with a specialist researcher, assuming that the project would be 'academic' rather than 'practical'. When it was made clear that the intention was to carry out a collaborative, practical project, leading, if possible, to the development of resource materials for use in drama teaching, they became enthusiastic participants in the project. Although all staff had few reservations about the possible value that drama might have for their pupils, they indicated that they would be prepared to forego any possible benefits if the presentation of drama resulted in an uncontrolled and disruptive situation which could create problems in classroom management. Fear of losing control appeared to be a major factor in their thinking. This fear seemed to stem from a belief that drama was a free, spontaneous activity in which it was inappropriate for teachers to intervene and direct children's flow of creativity. This impression had been gained from textbooks on classroom drama and from college of education lectures. When they had been given the opportunity to see, in the practical demonstrations carried out with pupils, that control mechanisms could be structured into lessons, and that, in any case, freedom and spontaneity were not the only appropriate or desirable

elements in lessons, they began to see where their existing skills and knowledge could be utilised in the teaching of drama.

The Reactions of Pupils and Staff to the Drama Lessons Attempted

The lessons tried out during this period appeared to confirm that drama was a viable activity for the children in these schools. Their responses were such that it became apparent that the level of technical skill required to present lessons and achieve a response from pupils was much less than that demanded by the need of the more profoundly handicapped pupils in School A. Some of the Down's children, in particular, needed little prompting to become involved in lessons, some showing a natural aptitude for both imitation and for introducing new initiatives into a dramatic situation. As indicated earlier in this thesis, some of these children appeared to have a high degree of imaginative ability and simply required structured opportunity for and guidance in how to express this imagination in word, gesture or movement. The presence of such children within a group facilitated the presentation of drama as other children often looked to them, and took their cue for response from the responses made by these more able pupils.

The younger children in the schools responded most enthusiastically to imitative mime, to singing and speech rhymes or games which could be acted out, to dramatisation of stories by the narrative and role methods, to movement with a music or percussion stimulus, and to simple role-play in which the adult took a leading or directing role within the activity. Rhythmic, repetitive or onomatopoeic sound sequences within any of these activities encouraged vocal imitation and participation among the less able pupils, some of whom showed less ability to engage in acting out, but who could maintain an interest in the work. Only the most imaginative Down's children responded to situations involving obvious fantasy or 'magic'.

It is less easy to generalise on the responses of the older pupils. Some were able to enjoy and respond to similar kinds of activity as the younger pupils, and appeared to be interested in some of the same range of topic. There were, however, a substantial number of pupils in the older age-groups who had interests more in keeping with their chronological rather than their mental ages. For example, a number of the older girls showed an interest in pop music and pop stars, while some of the older boys were particularly interested in football,

cars or motor cycles. These interests were not expressed in conversation and pupils had some difficulty in responding to questions about their interest. Interest was mainly expressed through looking at pictures and through the ability of pupils to label or categorise the items of interest. A boy would be able to name a series of different cars, but would be unable to say anything else about them, while a girl could recognise a particular pop group, but, when asked, for example, how many there were in the group, would have to stop and point in order to count them even if there were only two or three in the group. Thus, even in areas where the interests were not in keeping with the chronological age of the pupil, the ability to use language and conceptualise about these interests was nearer to the overall developmental level of the pupil.

With some of the older pupils their poverty of linguistic comprehension and expression in relation to their age presented some difficulties for the use of drama with them. In School D, for example, there were a number of fourteen and fifteen year olds who were operating at linguistic levels which were lower than those of some of the much younger children, both in terms of comprehension and expression. Even with the non-verbal younger children, however, it was relatively easy to gain some kind of vocal response by the use of repetitive rhymes, or by translating animal or environmental sounds into onomatopoeic sound sequences, and by using these to enhance pupils' enjoyment of sound within an imaginative context. But while it seemed natural to suggest that a young child would act out the part of, for example, a duck, with the appropriate verbalisations, it seemed inappropriate to ask a physically developed fourteen year old to do so. Thus it appeared that if opportunities to extend the range of vocalisations were to be included in lessons for older pupils, there would need to be consideration given to how this might be accomplished within subject matter which was simple enough for them to comprehend but not 'babyish'.

The obvious alternative was to concentrate on the use of mime and movement work which did not require a sustained verbal input from pupils but which nevertheless enabled them to participate. Again, however, with the least verbal and the most withdrawn pupils, the use of mime and movement presented a degree of difficulty. Several of these children did not particularly enjoy engaging in movement work either within the drama lesson or within physical education sessions. Some of the girls in particular were overweight and had a natural

disinclination for movement work, while some of the others appeared to be aware of their lack of co-ordination and clumsiness in such work and, consequently, did not appear to find it either easy or rewarding.

Non-handicapped teenagers can experience similar difficulties in relation to mime and movement work - especially if they have had little prior experience of creative movement. For this reason, many drama teachers who are working with pupils at this stage in the secondary school often approach the movement aspects of drama work through the use of texts, through discussion, and in conjunction with work based on verbal exchanges in improvisation and role-play. Other teachers find that an end product, in the form of some type of performance, can encourage the development of skills in speech and movement more readily than work which is based on a process approach. Both of these strategies are, however, more difficult to adopt when working with pupils who either have little linguistic ability, or whose conceptual ability to develop and sustain a train of thought in verbal exchanges is limited. There was, therefore, a dual problem. On the one hand, the poverty of verbal expression suggested that mime and movement work would be more appropriate in gaining a response than work which demanded a good command of language. On the other hand, the inhibitions natural to pupils at this age, coupled by limitations imposed by physical characteristics, made it more difficult to introduce such work and to encourage pupils to participate in mime and movement with enthusiasm.

At the other end of the spectrum were those children for whom drama seemed to fulfil a need to be both active and vocal and who had a strong desire to demonstrate their ability to use both voice and movement in an imaginative context. These pupils responded to virtually all the aspects of the work tried out with them with a similar degree of enthusiasm and ability as that shown by the livelier Down's children. Some of these children were not only keen to participate in group drama but enjoyed 'performing' for the benefit of teachers and other pupils. These pupils could enjoy role-play and would often attempt to carry on the role-play by themselves after the actual lesson had terminated.

Almost all of the older pupils responded well to hearing stories told and it was in the dramatisation of stories that all pupils appeared to be able to participate most freely. The other activities which effected a fairly general response were 'guessing games' in

which pupils tried to guess what an adult or another child were trying to portray in words or mime. And, in fact, games of this nature appeared to be one way of encouraging the participation of the less able pupils who would take their turn at miming within a sequence of this nature, and appeared to find it rewarding both when other pupils were able to guess and when they couldn't do so.

Finally, there were three or four older boys within Schools B and C who, while they enjoyed participation in drama, had a tendency to become over-stimulated within a dramatic situation. With these children care had to be exercised to ensure that they did not become uncontrolled and disruptive. Simple devices such as incorporating a 'freeze' sequence between lively activities, a suggestion that a particular sequence of movement be done as an action replay in slow motion, a challenge to them to see how slowly or quietly they could accomplish something, coupled with praise when they did so, or the guessing games already referred to, were usually sufficient to ensure that the situation did not get out of hand.

This aspect of the work was particularly important from the teachers' point of view. As indicated earlier, one of their fears about using drama was that they would end up with a disruptive classroom situation to deal with. They seemed to be surprised to find that with the younger pupils this did not present a problem. In general, their enjoyment of the work made them responsive to suggestion and control of an authoritarian nature did not arise. Any necessary controls occurred as a direct part of the dramatic activity. As indicated above, however, there was a need to employ the devices described in order to maintain a disciplined framework for the activities with some of the older boys. Discussions with staff indicated that while they believed that they could employ these devices without too much difficulty, they would be unwilling to introduce themes which had the potential for generating too high a level of excitement. They suggested, therefore, that in the development of materials they would be happier to use a range of subject matter which did not involve too much boisterous movement or situations which could lead to the portrayal of aggression or violence.

It could be argued that a restriction of this kind is contrary to one of the principles of drama, which is that engaging pupils in simulated and controlled acts of aggression, violence or exuberance will provide a safe outlet for destructive feelings and have a cathartic effect, making the expression of these feelings less necessary in other,

real-life situations. This view has been advanced in the specialist literature on drama by a number of leading exponents, and there are accounts of drama work having a beneficial effect in reducing undesirable behaviours among non-handicapped aggressive or destructive pupils (Slade, 1975; Way, 1967; Bowskill, 1974). On the other hand, a number of writers, influenced by Bandura's and others' studies on imitation and aggression, have suggested that the presentation of mock anger, violence or other destructive emotions within a drama lesson may encourage experimentation with these in real-life situations, with negative consequences (Courtney, 1974; Prior, 1976; Bandura et al, 1973). Heavey, whose work has been with mentally handicapped pupils, also cautions against the introduction of work which contains elements of mock aggression or excitement. He notes that, while such elements may be possible with non-handicapped pupils who can discuss them in their dramatic context and make a clear distinction between reality and fantasy, handicapped pupils tend to be imitative in their behaviour, may be unable to distinguish between acts which are appropriate within and without the drama situation, and have little means open to them of conceptualising and discussing the implications of the acts engaged in without drama. He suggests, therefore, that if drama is to be used constructively with mentally handicapped pupils, it must embody the kinds of acts and subject matter which, if pupils imitate them outwith the drama situation, will be beneficial and appropriate (Heavey, 1979). As there appeared to be no clear theoretical consensus in this area, teachers' preferences were what influenced the selection of themes for older pupils in the developed materials, and their desire for non-exciting themes was reflected in the subject matter of the lessons. This point has been dealt with at some length because, as will be argued in a later chapter, the decision to restrict the themes in this way had both positive and negative consequences in terms of the willingness of teachers in field trials to use the materials developed with their classes.

Summary

To sum up, therefore, it appeared from the reactions of pupils that it would be relatively easy to introduce regular drama activities with the younger pupils, that the skills required to do so were not out of keeping with those already possessed by general staff, that 'control' would be less of a problem, than staff had anticipated, and

that the activities to which pupils had responded most readily were mainly those which were relatively easy to describe and which had been identified as being among the more teacher-directed and simpler forms of dramatic activity. With some of the older pupils similar comments applied. With others, however, their passivity, exuberance or linguistic impairment, coupled with the fact that they were physically mature and had, in some cases, interests congruent with their physical maturity, suggested that the development and presentation of suitable materials would be a more demanding task both in terms of the skills required by teachers and the constraints imposed by the type of activity to which pupils would be able to respond. Even so, the problems in developing drama for the older pupils appeared to be minimal in comparison to the difficulties involved in making drama accessible to those pupils in School A who were able to comprehend the symbolic elements in the work.

The Need for Separate Materials for Older and Younger Pupils

What emerged very clearly from this period of exploratory work was the fact that the same material, presented in the same way, was unlikely to be appropriate with all age-groups. A single resource pack, encompassing material graded to suit a variety of ages, would require some considerable time to develop and test in the collaborating schools before it could be made available to a wide sample for testing. Within the time-scale of the project, this could create difficulties in obtaining the feedback from the wider sample and restrict the generality of the findings obtained. To obviate this problem, it was decided that the materials would be developed in two stages. The first, for the younger pupils, would form the subject of the initial period of research and development, and it was envisaged that while this material was undergoing trials in other schools, the research and development of materials for use with the older pupils would be undertaken within these three schools. Given the time-scale of the project, however it was not clear whether the field testing of these materials would be able to be accomplished within the life of the project. Nevertheless, it was felt to be worthwhile to continue with the research and development of materials for use with older pupils, as the information obtained from doing so would add to the data available on the responses of these pupils to the process of drama and would, at the least, enable the teachers within the schools to judge the effects of the work, not only in terms of their own development of skills and changes in teaching

practice, and in terms of the observable effects on pupils over a period of time, but also in respect of the kinds of dramatic activity, subject matter and methods of presentation which appeared possible with older pupils.

Teachers' Willingness to Become Involved in the Project

As indicated earlier, teachers were willing to be involved actively in collaborating in the project. The practical demonstration of lessons carried out during this early, exploratory period had provided them with opportunities to discuss the different activities seen, the methods used and the responses of pupils to these in relation to their teaching aims and general existing practices, and enabled discussion of where their existing aims and practices might be congruent with the practice of drama. At least two of the areas of learning which had been postulated as possible outcomes of engaging in drama - namely, the development of communication and social skills - were congruent with the aims and curricular priorities of staff. This appeared to contribute to the willingness of staff to include drama in their teaching and to investigate how far drama did contribute to their teaching programmes in these areas.

Another major factor in teachers' willingness to become involved in the project appeared to be the fact that the intention was to research, develop and test curricular materials as an integral part of the investigation. This was particularly evident within School B, but the head teachers and staff in all schools felt that such resources were in very short supply. They also indicated that, although they presently lacked the technical expertise to develop and plan lessons from first principles, they could contribute to the planning, even in the early stages, by indicating what they did and did not want to see included in lessons, and, because they knew their own pupils well, could judge the effect of these on general behaviour and development.

Teachers indicated that what they saw themselves being able to gain from the work were additional teaching resources and a means of developing their skills in planning, teaching and assessing drama. They also indicated that they were prepared to accept the risk that the results of the work might be other than those envisaged. For example, it was possible that, as the work progressed, the earlier assumptions that drama was appropriate and beneficial to pupils might not be supported in the longer term. Similarly, although teachers felt,

on the basis of the lessons they had seen demonstrated, that they ought to be able to acquire the skills to implement the work, and could probably contribute to the planning and assessment once they had gained some knowledge of drama and confidence in their ability to present it, it was obviously not possible to guarantee that such would be the case. Nevertheless, teachers felt that even if the work did result in their failing to acquire skills, or deciding not to introduce drama on a regular basis to pupils, the time and effort they were prepared to invest in the project would be worthwhile in that they would have acquired some knowledge of an area of education of which they presently had little knowledge.

Conclusions

From the observation and practical work carried out in the early stages of the project within the four schools described, it appeared that there was no single distinction which could be drawn between profoundly and severely mentally handicapped pupils. Some of the pupils in School A appeared to have higher levels of intelligence than some of those in the other three schools. But their general behaviour made them exceedingly difficult to teach. It appeared, therefore, that while some pupils within School A were clearly much more retarded than any of the pupils within the other three schools, the extent to which a child was behaviourally disturbed was a major factor affecting whether he was placed in a school like School A or was placed in a school like one of the others. The high concentration of difficult pupils within School A created a situation in which School A differed markedly from the other three schools. While there were individual differences between these schools, there was also many similarities. For example, the general behaviour of pupils was less heterogeneous than in School A; classroom conditions were more relaxed and purposeful; because pupils were better behaved staff priorities could be less geared towards control of behaviour and more towards effecting learning and creating a stimulating environment for pupils. Thus, the overall impression gained from observation and practical work in Schools B, C, and D was that there was a high correspondence between them in many areas. The main findings which appeared to be relevant to the viability of the proposed research at this level may be summarised as follows:

- a. Although there was a high level of delayed or disordered speech, most pupils showed evidence of some verbal comprehension.
- b. Many of the pupils showed disinclination to engage in spontaneous conversation with adults or peers, but, when necessary, could use gesture or speech to indicate needs or wants.
- c. The majority of pupils showed evidence of readiness for symbolic, imaginative or dramatic play.
- d. It appeared to be possible to carry out individual work with single children within the classroom without undue difficulty, and small group activities appeared to be possible with all but a few of the most hyperactive or damaged children..
- e. Social reinforcers appeared to be appropriate and effective as a means of motivation and control..
- f. Staff regarded aesthetic activities such as music, art or movement as of equal importance to the development of self help or social skills, and saw these activities as an adjunct to the teaching of communication skills, which was the area of highest curricular priority among teachers..
- g. Staff appeared to be convinced of the possible value of drama to their pupils but were unsure of how to introduce it and of their ability to teach and develop it successfully with pupils.
- h. Resources in drama and guidelines for drama were regarded as being in short supply, and teachers saw a need for the development of resources which would enable them to try out drama with their pupils.
- i. Staff were prepared to collaborate in the research and testing of drama within their own classrooms, providing certain conditions could be met - primarily those conditions were concerned with ensuring that classroom discipline could be maintained and that staff did not require to attempt activities which placed too heavy demands on their existing levels of skill.
- j. In at least two schools it appeared to be possible to maintain some contact with parents and to obtain from them some indication of pupils' out of school reactions to the work and some information on pupils' interests.

All of these observations suggested that continuation with the research along the proposed lines would be viable within these schools.

Introduction to Case Studies

Throughout this chapter there has been an attempt to show that the different conditions operating within schools for profoundly and severely mentally handicapped pupils make drama a more viable curricular element within the latter. The single major factor contributing to this viability was the fact that within all three schools for the severely mentally handicapped there was no concentration of highly disruptive, disturbed or difficult pupils within any one teaching group. This made classroom conditions easier for staff to cope with and pleasanter for the pupils themselves. Another factor which contributed to the viability of drama was the fact that there were more trained staff within these schools. This meant that there were few occasions when pupils were left to be supervised by untrained personnel and, consequently, few periods in the day when pupils were not actively engaged in some productive activity under the direct supervision of a staff member who could encourage the child and interact with him as he carried out his task. Within the conditions obtaining within School A, such interactions were difficult, if not impossible, to maintain over any prolonged period. Interactive group work was similarly difficult to achieve.

In order to highlight these contrasts in more specific terms, there will be an attempt now to present three brief case studies.

The first of these deals with a child who was clearly capable of engaging in drama and, indeed, may have a degree of specific talent for drama. The second deals with a child who showed little benefit from the work in school, but who had clearly benefited in terms of his spontaneous behaviours outwith school, and in the degree of communication the work engendered in him. This case provides a caution against assessing the work purely on the basis of observed 'in-school' behaviour and highlights the value of communication with parents. The final case deals with a child who, while capable of engaging in drama, clearly did not enjoy doing so. For this child, however, the drama work introduced in class provided a stimulus for the form of expression which he could relate to - the use of art as a medium for representing the activities and ideas which the other children were exploring through the use of drama.

These three case studies serve as a basis for comparison with the case studies presented in the previous chapter. While they are less detailed than the case studies given in the previous chapter, they

do show something of the range of response shown by children within Schools B, C and D and show why it was decided that a continuation of the work within these schools would be both possible and productive as a means of illuminating the possible role of drama in the curriculum at this level of education.

General Description

Age at start of programme - 8 years, 4 months.

He has two elder sisters of normal/high intelligence. Father in middle management position. Mother ex-business career.

Aetiology - Down's Syndrome. Specific speech and articulation difficulties. Mental age of approximately 4½ years.

"John is a very social child who enjoys contact with other children in class. His behaviour is generally good. He can be very stubborn when he doesn't get his own way but is otherwise easy to work with. Although he has speech problems his comprehension is good and his general knowledge is higher than most of the other children in the class."

(Class teacher)

"His speech is much better in the holidays when he is away from his friend Alan. (A child with very severe language problems and with some behavioural difficulties.) In term time he copies Alan but in the holidays when he plays with his sisters and their friends we see a big improvement in his speech. He is a born mimic and will copy the pop stars on Top of the Pops and other TV programmes. We treat him as we treat the others and though there are problems we find that most of the time he can behave in public and he likes going places. He joined the junior Sports' Club at the Sports' Centre and goes with his sisters. He really enjoys this."

(Parents)

Personal Observations

John was clearly capable of symbolic play and on many occasions was seen spontaneously to engage in this. For example, toy scales were seen used on a single occasion to represent scales, a shovel, and, to the accompaniment of motor noises, a toy transporter. He did not appear to develop a theme in his play, and engaged in short episodes of unconnected play. He occasionally interacted in play with his friend Alan, but, again, there was little development in the play and the episodes were short and unconnected. He liked to dress up and appeared to take a role in solitary imaginative play. This role did not always appear to be in keeping with the dressing-up clothes adopted. He would, for example, put on a policeman's hat and then go and iron the dolls' clothes in the house corner.

At home, in play with his sisters, his play was more purposeful and interactive. He was seen playing at hospitals with them and

he sustained a role in his play throughout a fairly complex sequence in which a doll received an injection and a subsequent 'operation'.

The class teacher indicated that she knew virtually nothing about drama and, though she said she would like to do some drama work with her class, felt that she didn't know where to begin. She generally spent the few minutes before the buses arrived at the end of the day in some form of action rhyme, finger play or singing. She felt that John, in common with most of the children in the class, would benefit from interaction by her with them in their free play but indicated that it had simply not occurred to her to interact with the children in this way. She believed that 'free play time' was a period when children could experiment by themselves in play, and felt that this belief stemmed from her previous work in primary school when the free play period was, quite literally, one of the few times in the day when pupils were not involved in adult-directed activity. Her previous limited experience of drama had led her to expect that drama was somehow 'different' from the play engaged in spontaneously, and she appeared relieved to find that the interactions involved were more prosaic than she had imagined they would be. Moreover, she could see where drama would supplement, rather than replace, the free play time which she regarded as important for her pupils' general development.

General Aims

There were no specific aims for John as an individual at this early, exploratory stage in the work. He was always worked with as part of the general class group, and was clearly capable of group activity of this kind. The general aims in working with the group were to discover the types of activity to which the children appeared to respond with interest and enthusiasm and to note any effects this might have on their general behaviour.

Brief Description of the Work and its Effects

Lessons lasted between twenty and forty minutes, depending on the degree of absorption, concentration and participation shown by the group. On most occasions there were between six and eight children present. John, himself was seldom absent but, when he was, his absence was noticeable as the group was considerably less cohesive and purposeful in their acting-out and role-taking.

From the start of the work John was markedly enthusiastic and appeared to have, as his parents indicated, a natural talent for precise mimicry of the gestures and movements of others. But he was also able to introduce novel elements into the work. These were generally in mime and the other children tended to copy him and follow his lead when he introduced a new idea.

Another Down's child was almost as able as John in this way, but it was interesting to note that the other children were less inclined to copy him, even on occasions when John was absent from the group. It appeared that John was the recognised leader in the group, and in his absence, children did not look to anyone else within the group as leader. John was not the most intelligent child in the group, but his good general knowledge and general liveliness appeared to make him popular with the other children. Outwith an adult-directed group activity, however, he was able to exert less leadership. For example, children who would copy his movements or accept his suggestions in a drama activity or during a period of language development activities, were less inclined to join with him in free play or to accept his directions within such play.

John's responses to the drama work indicated that he was capable of sustained dramatic play around a given topic, if that topic were clearly defined for him and he was given guidance in developing it. Following lessons, his free play was more linear, more structured and less episodic. After only a few lessons, his spontaneous play had increased in quantity and he and the other Down's child would, together with Alan, re-enact some of the sequences from lessons. In these re-enactments, they would spontaneously seek out props or items of costume appropriate to the activity.

The fact that John could engage in sustained dramatic play with his sisters, and could remember and re-enact sustained sequences of play from lessons, suggests that although he lacked the ability to take the initiative in developing a structure in his play, when given such a structure, he had the imaginative ability to expand it in novel directions. For example, in acting out a story previously done in class, he might introduce a sequence of activity which had not been present in the original story but which was in keeping with the plot and character development in it. Most of this play was conducted in highly effective gestural form with a minimum of speech but, following lessons, a high degree of onomatopoeic sound as a supplement to gesture.

His long-term memory was good. When a lesson had been done he would interrupt to add incidents which had occurred in the earlier lesson. A marked example of this occurred the following Easter when in developing a lesson based on Easter eggs he was able to suggest that the eggs should be 'rainbow' eggs - the eggs suggested in the story used for dramatisation the previous Easter.

He could remember individual items of vocabulary introduced in lessons, but, in general, both within and outwith lessons, he was more vocal than verbal and, throughout this period of work, there was little sign that the practice in onomatopœic sounds within lessons, and his subsequent repetition of them outwith lessons, had any generalised effect on his ability to articulate clearly. There was, however, a marked increase in his 'language flow', and this could be attributed directly to drama. His parents indicated that there was a marked increase in his conversation after school on 'drama days'. He attempted with great enthusiasm, but not always successfully, to communicate to his parents some of the activities carried out in school, and tried to organise his sisters into participating with him in these.

For John, the drama work carried out during this period clearly represented what Heathcote describes as 'a peak experience to be recounted after the event'. (Heathcote, 1982). From the first lesson it was clear that drama was, for him, a relevant curricular activity and one which added to his enjoyment of the school day. In terms of direct benefits, it appeared to provide him with a topic for communication and a desire to communicate, but had not, at this stage, had any marked effect on his ability to articulate clearly, and had only marginally affected his ability to use language by slightly increasing his effective vocabulary. There was an increase in both the quantity and quality of his spontaneous and interactive dramatic play. Here, the drama work appeared to have facilitated the emergence of inherent ability and extended his existing skills. He had not learned to create and act out a role as a result of being taught to do so in the drama lessons. He was already capable of this form of expression. But the drama lessons provided him with a framework which helped him sustain and develop his role-taking skills, and gave him an opportunity to express both his imaginative ability and his ability to lead others.

Although John was among the most responsive of the children worked with, he appeared to be most at ease within lessons in which there was a fairly high level of teacher direction, adult participation and demonstration. He found dramatisation simpler to cope with than

improvisation, and role-play within a dramatised situation based on a story appeared to be easier for him than either dramatic play or role-play which were introduced without a narrative framework. He could, for example, act out a shopping situation as part of a dramatisation of a story in which the characters had shopped for various items. When asked simply to pretend that he was going shopping he appeared to find it difficult to organise his thoughts sufficiently to achieve coherence in acting this out, and would revert to the rather more fragmented and episodic play sequences which he had previously shown in his spontaneous play.

This need for some kind of narrative structure to support their make-believe play within the drama situation was a feature of much of the work carried out during this period and applied as much to the less able children as to those who, like John, had fairly well established imaginative abilities. The one exception to this general finding was in the area of movement work, where it was relatively easy to effect a response by providing children with a music or percussion stimulus and suggesting what they were and the nature of the movement which would be appropriate. Children like John did not necessarily have to have such movements demonstrated. The less able children did, however, look either to a more able child or to the teacher for a demonstration of what would be appropriate.

To sum up, although the work done over this period was not aimed towards achieving specific educational benefits in individual children, John did appear to benefit in terms of his spontaneous play and in his desire for communication. It was possible that this increased desire to communicate about the work to his parents could be attributed mainly to the novelty of the work over this period and to the fact that the forms of expressions involved in this form of work appeared to be particularly well suited to his temperament and general imaginative abilities. As the project progressed and drama became a more regular part of the general curricular activity within the school, there was no sign of this effect lessening and he still passes on information about the drama work more frequently than about other regular curricular activities. And it does appear that, for a child like John, the specific factors which seem to give rise to this increased flow of communication - whether verbal or gestural - are -

a. the fact that drama represents an experience which has been lived through in real time and which has, therefore, some quality of reality within it, although the actual events and situations enacted are imaginary;

b. the sequential nature of dramatisation does seem to facilitate the ability to recall and re-enact incidents in a sequential and ordered way;

c. the narrative framework of dramatisation also seems to provide a structure for subsequent spontaneous dramatic play, enabling the play to be sustained for longer periods, to involve more complex interactions, and to progress beyond simple dressing up and toy play, to play which has a clearly defined progression of incidents.

Conclusions

It could be argued that the type of spontaneous play observed occurring after exposure to drama is not an advance on that seen prior to it, for two reasons. First, it could be argued that children are merely repeating a series of activities with no real understanding of why they are doing so, or what these activities mean in real terms. For example, a group of children who elect to play at being plumbers, after a lesson based on a story about a plumber coming to mend a burst pipe, may have very little improved appreciation of the concept of 'plumber' and may simply be imitating the actions carried out in the story with little understanding of why these actions are appropriate. Within the context of the actual drama lesson this argument could be supported. Some of the less able children did appear to be imitating rather than understanding the reasons for carrying out a sequence of actions. But it is significant that the children who appeared to lack understanding in the actions they imitated within lessons, were also the children who did not assimilate these actions into their repertoire of spontaneous play behaviours. This suggests, albeit inconclusively, that those children who did elect to re-enact the actions done within the drama lesson in their spontaneous play, had at least some notion of purpose behind their activity. This is further supported by the fact that they did occasionally introduce novel elements into their free play, and these were, in general, in keeping with the concepts presented within the lesson. As the work progressed

over a longer period, it became clear that such children could differentiate between the activities appropriate to, for example, a plumber, and the very different activities appropriate to being stallholders at a fair.

Secondly, it could be argued that, as children will act out whatever attracts their interest at the time, their improved ability to act out sequences from the lessons and to incorporate these in their play is merely a transitory expression of their interest. As new elements are introduced into the lessons, these interests will change and their new interests will be reflected in play. Thus, it could be argued that, although the play appears to be more varied, this variety is misleading in that it is a response to a more varied stimulus, rather than a genuine expression of a wider and more complex understanding of events, situations or characters outwith their immediate environment. Again, in the case of the less able children, this could be supported to some extent. For example, one or two children assimilated the ideas suggested in two of the early lessons into their play but were unable to develop this play further on the basis of new work introduced and continued to repeat the earlier sequences with little variation long after these themes were no longer being presented within the lessons. This suggests that the novelty of the early work had attracted their interest, but that they were either unable to assimilate new ideas at the pace at which they ^{were} introduced in subsequent lessons, or that interest diminished as the work became less of a novelty. Similarly, a few children appeared to sustain an interest in the work and would repeat in play whatever the theme of that week or day's work had been. But, as themes changed, so did ~~their~~ play. their play. And they did not incorporate earlier work into these new themes.

On the other hand, the more able group of children whom John typifies, did appear to be capable of incorporating earlier sequences of play into later situations, and of doing so appropriately. And such children did not necessarily stick to play which was connected to the specific theme introduced in that week, but appeared to be capable of remembering a number of the themes introduced and of selecting from these the ones which they wished to play. At time went on, a pattern emerged which suggested that these children had certain favourite themes to which they would return from time to time, while other themes reflected a more transitory interest. Thus, it can be argued that the

stimulus of the drama work had led, in these children, to a real increase not only in the amount of play but also in its variety and complexity. It must be stressed, however, that these effects were only marked among the children who were most able in terms of their existing capacity for imaginative play. Children with less apparent capacity for this form of play exhibited less obvious improvements in their spontaneous play following lessons, at least during this period of early, exploratory work. The longer term effects were somewhat different and will be discussed separately in the next chapter.

The conclusion drawn from this early period of work, therefore, was that the work presented within the drama lesson, could, as predicted in the theoretical analysis of the effects of drama, have some generalised effect on the spontaneous play engaged in by pupils outwith lessons. John exemplifies a child for whom this effect was marked from virtually the first lesson. Other children, especially those who appeared less developmentally ready to engage in this form of play, showed less obvious and rapid benefits. And since children like John tended to be in the minority rather than the majority, it appeared that a series of unconnected lessons like those presented in this period could achieve a response from the majority of pupils within the drama session, but had relatively little effect on their subsequent behaviour outwith lessons.

In discussing this aspect of the work with staff, it was decided that, in the development of lessons in the subsequent work, there might be a need to have some unifying element running through the work, and a need to introduce new ideas more gradually in order that the less able children might be able to assimilate these more fully. Again, this aspect will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. But it appears to bear out the theoretical analysis which suggested a need to move gradually and progressively from the familiar to the rather less familiar imaginative elements in the work.

The capacity of the work to generate an increased flow of communication, however, did not appear to be restricted to children like John who were temperamentally suited to the work. Some of the more lethargic children, especially in the older age-ranges, did show some interest in attempting to communicate something of the work to the head teacher when asked to do so by the class teacher. And a number of the words introduced and repeated within lessons were heard repeated in subsequent talk to the teacher about lessons. More obvious

than the increase in actual speech, however, was the increase in purposeful gesture used by these rather more passive children in attempting to communicate. In children like John, this effect was not noticeable as they already had a wide and effective range of gesture.

In general, therefore, it appeared that the effects which were occurring during this period served to confirm the trends predicted by the earlier analysis. It was too soon to say how marked these effects would be over a longer period of time, whether they would diminish as the work became less novel, or whether an increase in the progressive structure and regularity of the work would enhance the effects. Similarly, it was too soon to predict whether drama would be applicable as a regularly enjoyed curricular activity or whether it was only applicable to children with the kind of imaginative capacity displayed by John. Equally, it was impossible at this stage to suggest whether the work would have the same effects when presented by general staff.

As a result of this period of work, however, staff had been introduced to a number of different drama activities, had seen for themselves how pupils had reacted to these, and had been able to discuss methods and procedures in the context of their own abilities, their curricular priorities and their classroom organisation and practice. Staff in all three schools were keen to continue with the work and appeared to be willing to make a fairly high investment in time and effort in trying out ideas within the classroom, in assessing their on-going work and in collaborating on the actual design of resource materials.

Given the response of a child like John, it is clearly important that he has opportunity to practise his dramatic skills for two reasons. First, because it does represent a way of improving the quality and quantity of his spontaneous play and, in the longer term, may help his cognitive development as a result of this. Secondly, a child like John is unlikely to have open to him in adulthood the full range of recreative activities which normal adults can engage in. If he is capable of acting out a part, of enjoying doing so, and of interacting with others in doing so, he may find, in drama, an activity which he can engage in as recreation at a later stage in his life. For a child like John, therefore, the provision of drama in the curriculum represents not only a relevant experience but also a means of making

adult life more 'normal' and of enabling him to integrate into the normal life of his community. At the very least, drama appears to represent for such a child an outlet for a natural mode of expression which he can use both for the outlet of creative imagination and as a topic for communication with others.

Drama may serve a somewhat different function for the child in the next case study, but, it will be argued that it is just as important that drama is included in his curricular scheme.

General Description

Age at start of programme - 7 years, 2 months.

Has one older sister of normal intelligence. Mother ex-clerical position. Father Managing Director and founder member of small engineering firm.

Aetiology - brain damaged, severely mentally handicapped (birth trauma).

Epileptic, with frequent, repeated attacks of Petit Mal, particularly at night. Hyperactive.

"Adam is a strange child. Often he seems not to hear or understand what you say to him but then he does something and that shows that he has understood. His speech is good. He has a good vocabulary but there are days when he hardly speaks at all. Sometimes he can be very aggressive to other children and does not mix well. When he is hyperactive he is quite difficult to control and he needs a lot of attention. I think he might be a bit spoilt. His mum and dad give him a lot of attention and so does his sister. He tends to play alone and he needs a lot of direction to get him to stick at anything for any length of time. But he's quite bright compared to some of the others."

(Class teacher)

"He can be very difficult sometimes but he has come on a lot since going to school. He never really plays with toys or books or things. He can be very destructive. He's fascinated by electric plugs and we have to be very careful he doesn't get to any live wires. His father rigged up a toy plug and socket for him in the hope that he would play with this. But he seems more interested in the real thing! He sometimes talks quite a lot about what he's been doing in school. We were trying to buy him P Moonie books because he wanted them. He liked the stories in them. I hunted everywhere. Then we found out from the school that P Moonie was a character in his language development programme (The Peabody Language Development Kit: Dunn, 1973). P Moonie is a puppet. That was why none of the bookshops had heard of them"

(Mother)

Personal Observations

The psychologist had assessed Adam as being at the sensori-motor stage. His play behaviours in school were somewhat aimless and lacking in purpose, but he did show evidence, in water play and in play with toy cars on the floor roadmat, of the ability to engage in symbolic and imaginative play. He was not seen to engage in dramatic play of an interactive kind and he did not appear to be particularly interested in any of the action rhymes, or singing games presented

by the class teacher. He participated little in music and even less in art work. His speech was the best in the class - totally intelligible and with a fairly extensive range of vocabulary and grammatical structure. Of all the children in the group he was the only one who could be described as willfully naughty in that, having done something which he knew to be against the school rules he would announce that he was a 'bad boy' and obviously had some knowledge of what this meant.

When in the group for the Peabody Language Development Programme which was taken by a qualified teacher from another class, he did not appear to take much interest in the proceedings, nor did he volunteer to answer questions or attempt to copy the puppet. But his mother's comments show that he had taken in a great deal of what had been presented in these lessons and was sufficiently interested in the stories as to want to hear them again at home.

It was not clear from his general behaviour whether he was ready to engage in group drama, or whether his needs would be better served by providing him with tuition on a one-to-one basis. It was decided to include him, initially, in the group activities, and to observe him closely to see whether he could cope with the group work without becoming unduly aggressive or disruptive. He could be a problem in this way in PE sessions and often needed to be in a one-to-one relationship to the teacher in general class work.

General Aims

Again, these were not child specific but geared to the group in general. And again the emphasis was more on discovering and judging the reactions of the group to the various types of activity tried, than on the need to achieve specific objectives at this stage.

Initially, lessons lasted around fifteen to twenty minutes. As the concentration span of the group improved, the time was increased to nearer thirty minutes.

Adam's Responses

Throughout the first four lessons Adam was not unduly disruptive or aggressive, but neither was he responsive. During the telling of stories or the presentation of the setting for improvised scenes he looked as if he were bored, and seemed inattentive - looking vaguely round the room, swinging his legs and playing with his chair, etc. In question and answer sessions he only responded when addressed

directly and when pressed to give a reply. When he did reply, however, his answer was generally accurate and appropriate indicating that he had heard and understood. When any form of acting out activity was proposed he opted out of participation and wandered off to another part of the room, where he did not appear to be listening or watching the activity of the rest of the group.

The work with this group of children had been started just after Christmas. There had been no snow until then. But on the day of the next lesson there was a brief but heavy fall of snow. As the children were interested in and excited by this, the prepared lesson plan was abandoned in favour of another lesson involving snow/snowfights/snowmen etc. Adam's behaviour was unremarkable until the point in the lesson at which, as a group, we began to build an ENORMOUS snowman - with much exaggeration of the enormity of the snowman. Adam suddenly announced that he was going to build his own snowman, and, taking a tin of polystyrene chips, he began to build a snowman. He collected bricks and other objects and lay them on the floor on the chips to represent the features of the snowman. And he included every feature which had been talked about in the scene setting at the start of the lesson.

I was unsure how to react to his activity - whether to ignore it and let him get on with it on his own, while the rest of us worked on our snowman, or whether to indicate to him that his work was being noted and approved. I decided on the latter approach and suggested to the other children that we should all stop to watch him build his snowman. For a few moments we watched, then the other children decided that they wanted to build individual snowmen also. I agreed, and each child took a different article - a box of bricks, the sand tray, etc - and began to build. As they did so I walked round and asked each child to tell me about his snowman. This took some time, and, by the end of the lesson, we had a very strange collection of 'snowmen'. At my suggestions, Adam and I became the judges who had to admire the snowmen and award imaginary medals for the happiest/the funniest/the biggest/ etc, until all the children had been given a medal by Adam. He also got a medal and the lesson ended with us moving among the snowmen saying the snowman rhyme which had introduced the activity.

This lesson proved so popular with the pupils that the class teacher had little option but to repeat a similar lesson during the following week when it snowed again. Again, Adam participated fully

in the lesson, and from then on began to participate rather more frequently than before. From time to time he still wandered off, and there were many occasions when he appeared bored or uninterested, but these occasions lessened slightly as the term progressed. Even so, by the end of the year he still showed little evidence of enjoying the lessons, there was little change in his dramatic play behaviours, and there was little change in either the amount or spontaneity of his communication patterns.

With Adam, occasions like the 'snowman' episode were the exception rather than the rule. He did not seem to be particularly responsive to drama, nor to find it particularly interesting or enjoyable. Although his level of participation increased throughout the term, it remained the lowest of any of the children in the group including those who were considerably less able than he was in either linguistic or cognitive development.

Comment

Were one to assess Adam purely on the basis of his observed classroom behaviours, one might conclude that the drama done in class was, with a few exceptional occasions, not particularly productive or appropriate to his educational needs. Conversation with his mother, however, revealed a very different picture. Clearly he had taken in a great deal of information in the course of lessons and he must have been attending quite closely to the work in progress. His mother was able to relay very accurate accounts of the lessons on the basis of what he had told her at home. In addition, his mother reported that he was so enthusiastic about the lessons that he had "dragged her out to the park" on cold days, and well wrapped up in (specifically) "scarves and gloves and wellingtons" in order to experience in reality some of the acting out activities done in class. He was, for example, quite adamant that he and his mother should 'splash in puddles, throw stones in the water to make a splash, fish with an imaginary net in the real boating pond, and roll balls of snow to make an enormous snowman in the park'!

It is not clear why there should have been such a discrepancy between his behaviour in school and his reported behaviour at home, but it did appear to be a feature of his general behaviour, like his reaction to the Peabody Language Development work. The fact that there was this discrepancy, however, indicates the difficulty there may be

in achieving an accurate evaluation of pupils' responses. It also highlights the value of close parental contact and communication in providing additional information which might not otherwise be available to the class teacher. With Adam, as with John, drama did appear to be providing a 'peak' experience to be recounted after the event, even though he gave little indication of this during the event. Moreover in the case of Adam, his fluency in speech enabled his mother to respond without hesitation to his communication and to allow him to re-experience the activities which had interested him. By doing so in the context of reality, she may also have been enabling him to make the juxtaposition between the real and the imagined which does seem to facilitate conceptual development.

It is also interesting that in the case of both John and Adam the biggest 'effect' in terms of increased communicative ability was seen in the home rather than in the school. It was possible that the reason for this increased language flow within the home environment could be attributed mainly to the Hawthorne effect, and to the novelty of the drama work over this period. Neither child had previously had much opportunity to engage in this form of work. As the project progressed, however, as drama became a more commonplace aspect of their general curricular activity, as the work was taken by their regular class teacher instead of by the researcher, and as the novelty wore off, there was no sign of this language flow decreasing. Both pupils still relayed considerable obvious enthusiasm. And they recounted tales about drama more frequently than tales of other curricular activities, with the possible exception of other novelty events and music lessons. It was concluded that the specific factors which gave rise to this increased language flow were -

- a. the fact that drama represents an experience which children 'lived through' rather than simply being told about, seems to make it more vivid and memorable;

- b. the sequential nature of acting out a series of events seems to facilitate the ability to retell it in an ordered and sequential way.

These findings seemed to bear out the findings of Byron (1979) and others who suggest that one of the major benefits of drama is its power to engender increased spectator speech after the event.

Adam's case also illustrates another aspect of the drama process. It was argued that one of the skills the teacher must have in the

presentation of drama is the ability to capitalise on chance effects, and the flexibility to incorporate novel contributions by pupils into the general framework or structure of the lesson, with a possible increase in incidental learning, and without sacrificing the general aims of the lesson. In the case of the snowman lesson, rather than attempt to work against the environmental conditions created by the snow, the interest generated by it was harnessed in order to provide the subject matter for the lesson. The lesson itself, however, developed in a different direction from that envisaged. Adam's contribution provided a novel element which other children spontaneously adopted, and the last part of the lesson was a direct response to their spontaneous reactions.

Because, in this instance, Adam's response was so unexpectedly positive, it appeared to be worthwhile to try to capitalise on this, rather than to attempt simply to accept his contribution and to channel it into the previously prepared lesson plan - especially since this lesson plan had itself been developed at relatively short notice to accommodate the changed environmental conditions. As Adam so seldom responded, it seemed worthwhile to make him the focus of the lesson and to encourage his response, even if it meant a reduction in the extent to which other children were benefiting. Because his contribution had been accepted and acted on by the other children, he was, for once, a socially acceptable leader-figure within the group, rather than a disinterested observer, his more usual pose. Because his contribution appealed to the other children they were prepared to copy it, and it was relatively easy to introduce the idea of the 'contest' as a means of containing the various suggestions within the imaginative framework of the lesson. Moreover, as the specific aim within this lesson had been to increase pupils' awareness of a particular feature of their environment - the snow and its general effects on behaviour - Adam's contribution could be accepted and utilised quite readily in pursuit of this aim.

Neither John nor Adam could be regarded as completely typical of the majority of the severely mentally handicapped pupils within the schools. John was rather more adept at drama than most, while Adam was among the most apparently unresponsive of the pupils. A description of their reactions to the work does, however, show something of the range of response to be found among the pupils. Both were capable of responding to a dramatic stimulus and of engaging in

the process of acting out. Both could understand the symbolic, enactive elements in the work, and even Adam, who was among the least responsive, showed an appreciation of the drama process which was considerably in advance of anything evidenced by the pupils within School A. Moreover, while it took some time before Adam responded overtly to the work, he was not disruptive and the general atmosphere in both groups allowed the work to be carried out without incidents of aggression or general disruption. Again, this was in marked contrast to the situation in School A. It also meant that the presentation of the work was a relatively more enjoyable, immediately rewarding and easy process. The child who did not respond was the exception rather than the rule. Even with such children - and there were only four of them within all three schools - their non-response was less depressing than was the case in School A since it did not represent the norm.

There was, however, one child in School C who did not ever respond to the drama work tried out and who proved so disruptive in general that he had to be excluded from the group work. He also refused to co-operate in work which was carried out on a one-to-one basis, responding either with aggression or with a total passivity. This child forms the subject for the final case study to be presented in this chapter.

General Description

Age at start of programme - 9 years, 10 months.

An only child; parents divorced; lives with mother and grandmother; rarely sees his father who has remarried and lives in England.

Aetiology - severely mentally handicapped; brain damaged; epileptic (but condition well controlled); tendency towards aggression and hyperactivity; some autistic features.

Personal Observations

Eric's class teacher regarded him as a difficult child who needed a lot of 'containment' in order to ensure that he did not get out of control. His aggression was not general, as was the case with some of the children in School A. Rather he was quick to be frustrated or to take offence if anything thwarted him. He would then lash out without restraint. As a result, the other children tended to be somewhat wary of him. But he was not a total isolate. He had a good sense of humour which could be triggered by relatively trivial events. And he had such an infectious laugh that it was difficult not to laugh with him when he was amused.

He had been assessed as at the sensori-motor stage. He rarely engaged in any form of imaginative play, but would spend long periods of time playing contentedly with jigsaws, matching cards or picture books. He also enjoyed writing and would take a great deal of trouble to copy out accurately his name and the words or phrases provided for him by the teacher.

Like Adam, Eric was inclined to be disruptive in PE sessions. He loved music, however, and would join in group music activities with no difficulty. It was decided to try him out in group drama to see how he would cope. If he proved disruptive, he would be given individual training.

Eric's Responses to the Work

The decision to include Eric in group drama proved unwise. Either he simply opted out of the work and wandered back to his desk and his jigsaw, or else he became agitated or threatening to the other children. If, for example, another child brushed against him in the course of the work, this could cause him to respond by hitting out

at the child or breaking down in tears. As this was making the work less pleasant for the other children, all of whom responded well, it was decided to try him with individual work.

However, every time I tried to work with him in the classroom, or take him out of the classroom to work, he became very distressed, crying and pulling away. We wondered if it were a personality clash - if, for some reason, he did not want to work with me. But he reacted in the same way when his own class teacher tried to engage him in some interactive dramatic play in the house corner and dressing up area. After a few weeks, when he was still as unresponsive, we decided that it was doing him no good to try to persuade him to engage in drama when it was obviously against his will.

This response may seem very like that of Mary's in School A. And in her case perseverance paid off and finally achieved a breakthrough in communication with her. Eric's case was, however, quite different. First, because he had some speech he could say, quite clearly, what he did and did not want to do. And he did not want to do drama. Secondly, unresponsiveness was not his only behaviour pattern. There were many times when he could be very outgoing and responsive. In the case of Mary, it was judged to be important to get her to make some response other than aggression to the people and events in her environment. In the case of Eric, the drama work appeared to be introducing an event which, gratuitously, increased his tendency towards aggression or distress. It was decided, therefore, not to try to coax him to join in with drama work, but simply to let him get on with whatever he was doing so long as he was not disrupting others. We hoped he might eventually join in of his own accord. But he did not do so in the time that I was involved with the school. The teacher and I counted him as one of these children who had failed to respond to and benefit from the drama process. Had he been a 'normal' child, we would no doubt have concluded something like 'he was bored', 'he was shy', or, simply, 'he didn't like drama (and PE)'. Simply because he was handicapped seemed no reason to assume that he could not register these normal emotions and reactions, and it may very well have been that he was either shy, bored or simply not interested in the process of drama. The only reason that his case is remarkable is the fact that there were so few children within the three schools who did not like drama. In fact, the most obvious statement made by staff within these schools, and in the field study was the extent to which pupils seemed to enjoy drama and to

find it easy to become absorbed in the drama process.

There is, however, an interesting spin-off from his case. Recently, I had occasion to visit the school in order to take some photographs of the drama work in progress. The children were much further up the school by now, but they still had the same teacher. She indicated that the drama work tended now to be based less on predetermined story lines and much more on improvisation and role play. On this occasion, she was using an open-ended story in conjunction with an illustration as an impetus for the acting out. I noticed that when the children gathered round her to hear the story and look at the picture, Eric was among them. When she had set the scene and the other children got up to proceed with the acting, Eric got up too. But instead of joining in with the other children's improvised drama activity, he set up an easel, donned an apron and began to paint his version of the scene the others were acting out. As they introduced new ideas into their play, he added some of them into his painting.

The class teacher explained afterwards that, almost by accident, she had discovered that Eric loved to paint. On one occasion, when the others had been acting something out he had come up to her and asked if he could paint it. From that time onwards, whenever the others engaged in drama, he expressed the ideas in the form which was clearly much more natural and congenial to him than the vocal and active form of expression of drama. The teacher remarked also that he was 'a changed boy' in terms of his general behaviour which had improved so dramatically that he was now one of the least troublesome children in the group. The class teacher and the head teacher clearly regarded him as one of the school's 'success stories'.

From my point of view it was interesting to see a child take the same stimulus as the others and, simultaneously, to express it in a different form from that engaged in by the others. The reaction of such a child neither constitutes an argument for or against the provision of drama in the curriculum, but it does point to the need for staff to be prepared to accept idiosyncratic responses from those children who do not - either in the long or short term - appear to find any satisfaction in the mode of expression and experience which drama typifies. His reaction also suggests that it would be unwise to attempt to coerce an unwilling child to participate in any of the expressive arts. On the other hand, by waiting until the child is ready, willing and able to demonstrate his expressive preferences, it may be possible to provide

that child with the curricular experiences most suited to his individual needs or preferences. One could argue that the child's preference may lead to an imbalance in the curriculum he follows, and that few non-handicapped children get the opportunity to choose their curricular scheme. On the other hand, 'normal' children, simply, as a result of their normality, have many more opportunities in general to exercise personal autonomy than does the handicapped child. It seems sensible, therefore, that if there are areas in which the child can express a preference, and, assuming that preference does not lead to damaging experiences, there ought to be room in the curriculum for the child to express himself creatively in the way best suited to his individual personality.

In the case of the children in School A, the general pattern of response was either so erratic or so passive that it was difficult to detect any personal preferences and, for them, it was necessary to adopt a process of trial and error in order to discover what, if anything, effected a response from them. The children in the other three schools, however, were generally well able to indicate some degree of personal preference in their responses. In the case of John, there was clear evidence of a need, or, at the very least, a desire to express himself through the imaginative enactive process of drama. Adam's responses were less obvious, but it was possible to discover the modes of expression to which he could respond. While for Eric the drama process was clearly a much less attractive form of expression than art. The responses of these three pupils represent a fair scatter of the range of expressive abilities found within the schools for severely mentally handicapped studied.

On the basis of responses such as those described in this chapter it cannot be assumed that drama will be relevant to the educational needs of all severely mentally handicapped pupils who are capable of engaging in and understanding the drama process. But, from the work carried out in these three schools, it seems that the child who does not enjoy the form of expression embodied in drama is the exception rather than the norm, and, both from the benefits derived and from the children's behaviour while participating, it does seem that drama can be justified in the curriculum both as a means of expression and experience, and as a means of engendering increased language flow after the event for the majority of pupils.

Summary

Throughout this chapter there has been an attempt to show that pupil capabilities, staff practices, the conditions within the schools and staff priorities all pointed to the possibility that continuation of the collaborative research project on the proposed methodological lines would be viable within the three schools for severely mentally handicapped. It has been argued that staff were willing to co-operate in the project - even if it proved to be a failure. They believed that they could take an active part in the presentation of lessons, in the assessment of the work and in the design and development of resources if they had time to develop their skills in drama and to learn more about the drama process. The fact that the development of materials was a central feature in the research design seemed to be a plus factor in teachers' desire to co-operate, their reasoning being that, at the very least, the project should provide them with some additional classroom resources. The other factor which seemed to make them keen to participate was the reaction of pupils who, in the main, found the work an enjoyable and absorbing experience.

The case studies highlight the reactions of a cross section of the pupils, giving examples of the most and least able in terms of ability and willingness to engage in drama.

In this chapter also a number of design constraints for the curricular materials have been identified. In the next chapter, there will be an attempt to look more closely at these constraints and also at the factors involved in the design and development of resources. And it will be argued that the active collaboration of general staff resulted in the development of curricular resources which in aims, in design and in content differed quite markedly from those which might have been produced by a specialist or on the basis of a reading of specialist literature.

CHAPTER 11

A Consideration of the Design Criteria, The Format and The Intentions of The Curricular Materials Developed

Introduction

In the previous chapter, in describing the reactions of pupils and staff to the early exploratory work carried out within three schools for severely handicapped pupils, a number of possible design constraints for the curricular materials were discussed. It was, for example, argued that there would be a need to devise separate materials for use with older and younger pupils. It was argued that staff saw a need to restrict the themes of the subject matter to those which seem least likely to lead to uncontrolled or uncontrollable responses from pupils, in order to reduce staff's fears concerning the possibility of chaos developing within lessons. Also, in this context, it was argued that there would be a need to investigate and devise material which would be simple enough to be understood by the linguistically impaired older child, but which incorporated methods and subject matter which were in keeping with the interests of these older pupils. There would be a need also to examine devices which would be expected to evoke a response from the more passive, withdrawn or perceptually unaware children.

A number of other constraints have been mentioned in passing. For example, it was noted that staff were keen to see the work linking into existing programmes of work in other areas, rather than being presented as an isolated curricular activity. It was also noted that two of the areas of highest curricular priority among staff were the development of communication and social skills. It was argued that these priorities were congruent with aims which had been postulated as being relevant to the presentation of lessons in drama, and that to aim lessons specifically at these areas of development would not be out of keeping with the broad aims of educational drama.

In this chapter these constraints, and other aspects of the design and development of materials, will be discussed in more detail and the design arrived at on the basis of practical research will be compared with that postulated in the theoretical analysis of drama, and advanced in the earlier chapters of this thesis.

For each aspect of the materials considered a brief resume of the central points of the earlier argument will be given. Thereafter, an attempt will be made to show the extent to which the actual criteria adopted in the design of materials agreed with or differed from the criteria advanced in the earlier theoretical analysis. This argument will be presented in the context of the classroom constraints, the pupil capabilities and the staff attitudes and abilities identified in the course of the collaborative, school-based, practical research carried out.

It will be argued that the practical findings, coupled with the collaborative input to the work from general staff, resulted in the development of curricular materials which were different in a number of respects from those which might have been devised on the basis of theoretical analysis only, or as a result of a review of specialist accounts of drama work with mentally handicapped pupils. One consequence of this was that the materials developed in this project are not so much representative of a curricular scheme purely based on drama, but rather that the materials represent a scheme of work in which drama is the core activity. From this core activity is built up a progressive series of lessons which form an interactive link with other, more general, curricular experiences. The materials therefore represent a means of introducing drama into schools on a regular basis, rather than a comprehensive curricular scheme based only on drama.

In this chapter no attempt will be made to provide any detailed evaluation of either the materials or the findings from the research investigation. The evaluation of these will form the subject of subsequent chapters. In the present chapter the intention is simply to illuminate the more general and practical factors which influenced the nature and scope of the curricular materials developed and to highlight the contribution which general staff within the three schools described in the previous chapter made to the research. The particular aspects considered in this chapter are -

1. the aims towards which lessons were directed and how these compare with the aims of educational drama in more general terms;
2. the criteria postulated as being appropriate to achieving these aims and the extent to which these criteria were met in the developed materials in -
 - a. the subject matter of lessons;
 - b. the dramatic activities represented in lessons;

c. the methods and procedures incorporated in lessons in order to encourage 'total communication', practice in babble and articulation, to facilitate attention, learning and recall, to provide motivation and reinforcement, to encourage pupils participation, and to enable staff to utilise and extend their existing teaching skills in the presentation of drama.

d. the assessment procedures adopted in the research and development period and the procedures incorporated in the developed materials disseminated to other schools for field testing.

The Aims Postulated for Educational Drama

In Chapter Two of this thesis it was argued that the aims of educational drama could be subsumed under two broad headings -

a. those which sought to provide pupils with the experience of drama and with the opportunity to develop their skills in the forms of imaginative, enactive expression embodied in the drama process;

b. those aims which sought to effect other areas of related or unrelated learning through the use of the drama process.

It was argued that, as drama and spontaneous make-believe play share a common process, the provision of opportunities to experience and develop skills in the drama process is synonymous in the case of younger, mentally handicapped children, with the provision of opportunity for, and instruction in, structured and guided make-believe play. For the older child, skill in drama process means the development of role-taking skills and the ability to interact with others in a sequence of dramatic activity around a given theme.

It was postulated that the outcome of such training would be to enhance the younger child's spontaneous make-believe play and his ability to enjoy and learn from such play. While for all children it was postulated that engaging in drama could have potentially beneficial outcomes in the specific areas of imaginative, social and emotional development, and in the development of skills in communication.

It was further postulated that lessons could be specifically directed to effecting improvements in any one of these areas by employing specific strategies in individual lessons. Such lessons would have dual aims; on the one hand, the provision of experience in drama, and, on the other, attempts to effect related learning through this experience. It was also argued, however, that the subject matter of lessons - particularly in the areas of social skills training - could effect additional learning which arose out of the subject matter of lessons, as, for example, in learning about the environment or in learning concepts related to choice or value decisions.

The Aims of Lessons within the Curricular Materials

It has already been noted that staff placed a premium on the development of communication skills, on encouraging younger pupils to engage in play, on helping pupils to become aware of and take an interest in their environment, and, in the case of older pupils, on helping pupils to develop the skills which would enable them to function more effectively

in normal social situations. This suggested that lessons which were aimed directly at these areas of development would be readily accepted and tested by staff. Equally importantly, these areas were ones in which staff had existing skills and knowledge. There appeared to be a strong possibility that staff would be able to use this knowledge in contributing to the planning of lessons which were aimed at these areas of development by suggesting the subject content which might be appropriate and by suggesting how lessons might be structured to create links with existing programmes of work. By aiming lessons at these areas of development, therefore, staff could become, even in the initial stages and before they had fully developed their skills in the presentation of drama, 'collaborators' rather than simply 'participants in' or 'recipients of' the research programme.

Conversely, conversations with staff indicated that, although they were willing to accept that drama might be a possible means of encouraging more stable emotional development by reducing passivity and by enabling pupils to act out in a controlled situation their more negative emotions or fears, staff were unwilling to aim lessons specifically towards these aspects, regarding them as possible outcomes rather than as planned objectives of the work. As indicated earlier, they were unwilling to introduce cathartic themes and the therapeutic use of drama to reduce emotional trauma or induce specific emotional reactions, they believed to lie outwith their areas of competence as general class teachers. One member of staff who had attended a one-day conference on dramatherapy was firmly convinced that the kinds of ideas, aims and exercises presented at this conference were ones which demanded specialist skills in both psychology and in the presentation of drama. She indicated that some of the exercises suggested appeared to be more suited to individual work with profoundly handicapped children in a hospital setting than to group drama within the framework of education.

This view was very much in accord with the conclusions which had been arrived at on the basis of a review of the literature pertaining to dramatherapy. It was also supported by the work carried out in School A, where it appeared that the more disturbed pupils did require a more therapeutic form of drama provision and a correspondingly higher level of skill for the presentation of such drama. As staff had no commitment to the provision of drama as a therapeutic aid in encouraging stable emotional development, it was decided that none of the materials

- a. enabling the child to understand the communication of others;
- b. enabling the child to realise that he can communicate by work and gesture;
- c. enabling the child to make pleasurable associations with the making of vocal sounds and providing practice in babble;
- d. extending the range of the child's existing speech by the provision of a topic for communication.

Within School A, where pupils had extreme difficulties in both understanding and using the spoken word, the first two of these aims had appeared to be appropriate. Within the other schools, however, there were very few children who did not have some basic understanding of speech, and most used some form of gesture. There did, however, appear to be a need to encourage pupils to make more pleasurable associations with the language process, and, as indicated earlier, there was an obvious need among both some of the older and the younger pupils to extend their range of babble. Almost all pupils needed to extend their existing language skills and to increase their range of effective vocabulary. Consequently, the more specific aims which were drawn up for the lessons in the curriculum materials were - that as a result of participation in the lessons, pupils will improve their communication skills in at least one of the following ways -

- i. by increased attention and appropriate response to verbally presented material within lessons;
- ii. by increased use of purposeful gesture in lieu of, or to supplement spontaneous speech outwith lessons;
- iii. by increased interest in the production of sound as shown by their using speech sound to accompany play activities outwith lessons;
- iv. by spontaneous or elicited use of words used frequently within lessons;
- v. by an apparent understanding of new vocabulary or concepts used in lessons;
- vi. by generalising this new vocabulary or conceptual information to situations outwith lessons;
- vii. by a general increase in 'language flow', shown by a willingness to engage in spontaneous conversation, either with or without accompanying gesture, or to initiate this conversation -

would take this as an expressed aim. But it was agreed that staff would observe pupils' behaviours in the course of the project and note whether an individual pupil's passivity had notably lessened in the course of the work, and whether more peaceful and co-operative play behaviours occurred as a result of co-operation within the lesson. This would give an indication of whether the work appeared to have any beneficial effects in these areas, even when lessons were not aimed at the more general development of emotional stability.

Similarly, although staff expressed the view that drama might improve the imaginative abilities of pupils, they indicated that they felt less competent to suggest the kind of material or subject matter which would enable this development. They were unwilling to 'interfere' in pupils' spontaneous play, indicating that they viewed spontaneous play as an opportunity for pupils to 'experiment' and to 'express themselves' without adult intervention. They could see where the subject matter and the activities of the drama lesson might be incorporated by pupils into their spontaneous play, and they could see how this might affect pupils' imaginative abilities. But in the development of dramatic play and role-taking skills within the drama lesson, they felt that, in the early stages at least, they would have to rely on suggestions made by the researcher and they felt that it could be later in the life of the project before they would feel confident about making suggestions for extending and developing the 'drama' aspects of the project in terms of activities designed to develop pupils' skills in dramatic play, role-taking and imaginative development.

On the basis of these discussions with staff, it was decided that lessons should be aimed primarily at the development of communication skills, with an additional emphasis on encouraging an awareness of the environment, and, for the older pupils, the development of social skills. And, while it was agreed that we would note the effects of the work on pupils' general behaviours, on their capacity for corporate, interactive play, and on their imaginative expression in such play, these aspects were regarded as desirable outcomes from the work rather than specific aims towards which lessons would be directed.

Aims for the Development of Communication Skills

From the theoretical analysis carried out it had been postulated that in aiming lessons at the development of skills in communication, an appropriate hierarchy of aims might be -

- a. in play with other children;
- b. in classroom interactions with other children;
- c. in relaying information to parents;
- d. in interactions with staff and other adults.

Discussion on Aims and Assessment

These aims represent a continuum from the simpler to the more difficult responses possible, depending on the starting point in linguistic development of the individual child. It was not expected that any one child would make gains in all of the possible areas, but rather that these areas should be represented in the scatter of gains made within the groups as a whole. And, although these aims are stated in behavioural terms, they do not represent precise behavioural objectives. For example, there is no criterion to indicate the extent of the change expected over time, and, while some indication is given of the general behaviours expected no attempt was made to indicate, for example, the precise nature of the gestures and words which pupils might adopt.

There were two reasons for this. First, when dealing with a learner group as heterogeneous in linguistic ability as are mentally handicapped children, it would be unrealistic to set general targets which all children would be expected to reach over a similar period of time. It has already been argued that patchy overall development is a feature of mental handicap, and, earlier in this chapter, it was noted that there were a number of pupils who, nearing the end of their school life, had linguistic abilities comparable to or less than those of some of the younger pupils within the school but who had interests in keeping with their chronological ages and self-help skills well in advance of their linguistic ability. Since such children had consistently failed to make any considerable linguistic advances using other approaches, it seemed unrealistic to expect that, when exposed to drama, they would make sudden or rapid progress. Thus it was assumed that change for one child might represent simply an increase in attending to the spoken word with no corresponding changes in the ability to use language, while for another child, starting at a higher point in the communication hierarchy, one might expect to see the emergence of novel communication skills.

Secondly, there was no single objective ascribed to individual lessons, because it was expected that benefits, if any, would occur as a result of the accumulative effect of the work done over a series

of lessons rather than as a result of the work presented in any single lesson. It was assumed that the work done in the earlier lessons would be reinforced and repeated to some extent in later lessons, and that, in addition, much of the vocabulary used in lessons would, itself, serve as reinforcement or generalisation of material introduced in structured language development programmes already used in all schools. Moreover, it has been argued that precise targets are inappropriate to a drama lesson, and that the objectives of the drama lesson are much more likely to be 'expressive' -

"intended to serve as a theme around which skills and understandings learned earlier can be brought to bear but through which those skills and understandings can be expanded, elaborated and made idiosyncratic. With an expressive objective what is desired is not homogeneity of response but diversity."

(Eisner, 1974; p.15)

Thus, although it had been postulated that certain general behaviours should occur as a result of lessons, it was assumed not only that an individual child's starting point would influence the extent and direction of his progress, but also that, as children had a variety of previous personal experience of any given theme or topic introduced within a lesson, individual children would vary in what they could contribute to and take from lessons. For example, a child who had had a previous, enjoyable experience of visiting the seaside, and who also had a fair degree of linguistic ability, might well be moved to remember and recall his previous experience and to initiate a flow of conversation about it as a result of a single lesson based on a seaside theme. Such a child might well also be able to add to the informational flow within the lesson by recalling events or vocabulary from his previous experience. For another child, less linguistically competent, and without a basis of prior experience, it might take several lessons involving a similar situation and range of vocabulary to lay down a foundation of familiarity for words which would only really become meaningful when elements of the enacted situation were encountered in reality. Even then, however, the outcome might not be to engender language flow but might simply result in an increased attention to and awareness of either the imaginary or the real situation encountered.

Assessment Procedures

It has already been argued that general staff may have less need for systematically recorded assessment of the drama lesson in that

they do not have to justify the subject to others in the way that the specialist may have to do. It was also argued in an earlier chapter that it may not be possible accurately to assess the longer-term, the catalytic, the experiential or the 'internal' benefits which drama may effect. It was suggested, however, that the observed behaviours of pupils both during and after lessons can provide evidence of changed behaviours in the areas of play, communication and social interaction which can provide some indication that the work is having any of the effects intended. And staff may observe more closely if they have to do so for the purpose of recording their observations.

For the purposes of the research, therefore, and in order that comparisons could be made of pupils' abilities and progress across schools, simple charts were devised which would give a broad, general picture of the children's profile of abilities in the areas of interest at the start of the programme. These could also be used to indicate any major changes in behaviour which occurred over the life of the programme. Staff had indicated that, as they already spent some considerable time in the charting and recording of pupils' progress for other on-going programmes of work, they were unwilling to undertake additional lengthy or detailed test batteries for the drama programme, and they suggested that staff in other schools were likely to feel much the same. Because of this, there was an attempt to keep the charts as simple as possible. They were, therefore, neither sufficiently detailed, comprehensive or rigorous as to provide data which would lend itself to statistical analysis. The information provided on the charts would, however, give some indication of any pattern of change occurring in individual pupils, and in those with similar profiles at the start of the programme. For any change to be recorded on the charts the improvement shown would have to be one which had occurred on more than a few isolated occasions.

Since the charts were being filled up by the same staff who would provide anecdotal evidence on pupils progress, they were neither less subjective nor more reliable as indicators of 'real' change. They did, however, have the advantage of providing a more systematic method of recording information than if we had relied on anecdotal evidence alone. Staff were somewhat sceptical of the value of charted information, believing that they were quite capable of evaluation pupils' progress from their behaviour because they knew the pupils so well. The researcher was keen, however, that staff should

have some standardised format for recording their pupils' abilities before, during and after the programme, in order that comparisons could be made. It was envisaged that, subject to possible individual variations in interpreting scoring procedures, the charts would give an indication of whether the effects and trends noted in the development schools were occurring in the field trial schools, and would provide a simple measure of the extent.

For the present, it may be enough simply to note that these charts formed an input into the developed materials. A copy of the charts are in Appendix A. In a later chapter, however, it will be argued that the charts failed completely to achieve their objective and the reasons for this failure will be discussed in the light of similar findings from other research and development projects.

Possible Strategies for achieving these Aims

In Chapter 4, when analysing the possible strategies which might be adopted in seeking to enhance communication skills through the use of drama, it was postulated that it might be necessary to -

- a. choose subject matter which is sufficiently within the child's range of experience to enable him to make a verbal, gestural or movement comment on the topic;
- b. to accept and use these comments as a means of initiating dramatic action which exemplifies them;
- c. to pair such action with verbal language and with deliberately expressive, naturalistic gesture as a means of providing a 'total communication' experience;
- d. to incorporate within lessons the deliberate pairing of movement and gesture with single sounds or onomatopoeic words as a means of providing children with practice in the elements of sound production and articulation.

It was also argued that it ought to be possible to build into lessons a number of the elements which appeared to be desirable constituents in enabling mentally handicapped children to attend, to remember and to learn, regardless of the specific aims which were ascribed to lessons. And it was postulated that -

- a. building in an attention-getting device would facilitate the introduction of lessons;
- b. that maintaining high affect and enjoyment within lessons would provide motivation for continued attention and participation;

c. that the breaking down of material into small successive stages would facilitate retention and provide opportunities for recall and elaboration at each stage in a lesson or series of lessons.

The Strategies Incorporated within the Curricular Materials

a. Subject Matter

It has already been argued that, within a group situation any given subject matter may be more familiar to some children than to others and that this will affect both the extent to which a child can contribute to a lesson and the extent of the learning which may be achieved by it among individual children. Where the work is being carried out in an adult/child dyad, as was the case in School A, it is clearly possible to choose subject matter to fit the individual child concerned. But drama is essentially an interactive group process, and it has been argued that the child/child interactions which occur within a group drama lesson are a valuable part of the learning experience. For example, it has been argued that the less able child may learn from imitating his more able peers. It has also been argued that group interactions within a lesson may help children develop more co-operative and interactive social behaviours outwith lessons. And it was noted that, even in the early exploratory stages of the work, there was some increase in social interactions in play among the more able child following lessons. Thus, while the child who is developmentally or behaviourally unable to profit from group work may, nevertheless, benefit from individualised instruction, such instruction necessarily reduces the peer group interactions which, it has been argued, are a feature of educational drama.

As the majority of the pupils within the schools could operate within a group, and as staff felt that they would benefit from doing so, the lessons within the curricular materials were envisaged as group lessons. Consequently, it did not appear to be possible to ensure that all of the subject matter chosen would be familiar to all of the pupils within any one group. Even when all the pupils had been exposed to the same prior experience, their differing levels of perceptual awareness and comprehension would make it unlikely that all would have achieved the same level of familiarity with all the elements of that experience. And, although the same sort of comment could be made of a group of mixed ability non-handicapped pupils, with such pupils it is possible to assume a baseline of knowledge and to elicit from them, by questioning, the upper limits of their knowledge. With linguistically

impaired mentally handicapped children such a strategy is less easy to implement as children may understand but lack either the means or the desire to indicate that they do understand. Lack of response may indicate lack of understanding but it may also indicate simply that the child, for whatever reason, is not responding. And it may be necessary to observe their behaviours over a period of time in order to determine both the level of prior knowledge on any given topic and the extent to which new information based on any given topic is being assimilated and understood.

The choice of subject matter for the developed materials, therefore, was based on trial and error, with various topics being introduced and the responses of pupils to these being noted and discussed in relation to their general behaviour outwith lessons. Throughout the development period, the subject matter of lessons was gradually modified until it appeared to fit with the prior experience of all but the least able pupils within any one group. And, in practice, even the least able children were capable of participating by imitating the actions of the more able. These more able children were capable of indicating their understanding by the clear and purposeful movement, gestural or verbal comments they made in the course of the work. For example, in a scene involving a policeman, a child might spontaneously look for a policeman's helmet in the dressing up area and would do this before proceeding with the acting out. Similarly, in a situation involving a picnic a child might suggest the kinds of foods appropriate to take with us on the picnic, or indicate whether he preferred to carry his food in a basket or a plastic carrier. Such suggestions were relatively easy to incorporate within the dramatic action, and the group as a whole could be invited to choose the particular elements appropriate to the situation.

But, although the less able children were capable of participating in the work by imitation either of the teacher or their peers, it was not at all clear, in the early stages, whether their behaviour was purely imitative or whether it represented a degree of understanding. As the work progressed, however, it became clear that such children did have a degree of understanding in that they began to incorporate imitative actions used in the course of lessons in appropriate novel ways in subsequent lessons, and, latterly, in their spontaneous play. For example, following the 'policeman' lesson referred to earlier, a child who had copied the actions of other pupils throughout the lesson, was

subsequently observed in free play, wearing the police hat and moving a toy police car to the accompaniment of the noise of the siren which had been practised vocally in the lesson. This sequence of behaviour, while clearly related to the activities in the lesson, was not a repeat of the sequence of activity in the lesson as at no point in the lesson had a toy car been used. Children had simply sat in their chairs and pretended to drive a car. This sequence of play activity was a new one for this child and seemed to indicate that he had imitated with understanding and was capable of making a connection between the sounds and movements imitated in the lesson, and the related object, the toy car.

This illustrates how, even with a group of mixed ability, it was possible to find subject matter to which all pupils within a group could respond either by imitation or by the contribution of a relevant movement, gestural or verbal comment.

The fact that most pupils, even in the early stages of the work, had responded better to situations which were based on real life characters and events, rather than on those involving more 'fantastic' or imaginative subject matter suggested that it would be more productive to choose material which had some basis in reality so that there would be more likelihood of children being able to relate it, at some point, to real or familiar experience. And it transpired that lessons which were based on naturally occurring features in the environment, and on groups of people whom pupils were likely to come into contact with in their daily lives, could be presented in such a way that the interest of even the least aware pupils could be attracted and their participation ensured.

Two aspects of the environment which even the least aware pupils could respond to were the weather and the seasonally occurring festivals such as Christmas and Easter. These topics provided a starting point on which to base the development of lessons. Staff felt that such a choice of subject matter could stimulate the less able pupils to become more aware of and take more interest in their natural environment. And, because of the rehearsal and repetition of events which could be built into lessons, an opportunity was provided for the less able pupils both to re-enact past events, and perhaps equally importantly, to learn behaviour which would be appropriate to future events. For example, staff had observed that a number of pupils were afraid of the sound of balloons bursting and could be distressed by the sound at parties. By practising blowing and bursting imaginary balloons pupils gradually came

to anticipate with pleasure, rather than fear, the noise of a real balloon bursting. This, in turn, helped the children to find the party a more enjoyable social experience and to participate in the games involving balloons. Similarly, practice in imaginary play based on snow, helped them take more interest in the real tactile and visual experience of seeing snow falling and playing in real snow.

There was an additional practical reason why staff welcomed such a choice of subject matter. They indicated that one of the practical difficulties they faced in carrying out any long-term projects on a regular basis was the disruption to normal school routine occasioned by visits, by school holidays and by seasonal festivals. Primary trained staff indicated that this created more of a problem in special education than in ordinary primary schools because there were fewer activities which the special school children were capable of engaging in during the period immediately preceeding such events. The result was that it was often difficult to allay the general excitement generated by the approaching event and to keep pupils occupied on productive tasks. Moreover, breaks in normal routine could result in pupils' forgetting what they had been taught in, for example, language development programmes, with the result that learning which had been established before the break and to be re-established after it, with a consequent loss in time. On the other hand, staff felt that festivals and other special events do provide a source of interest and excitement which, particularly for the more withdrawn or less aware pupils, can be a useful means of stimulating them to take a temporary interest in their surroundings.

Rather than try to work around these constraints, therefore, it seemed logical to attempt to include the activities associated with festivals and other special events as part of the work. At the least, it was envisaged that drama lessons based on such themes would provide staff with additional activities to use with pupils in the lead up to festivals. At best, the rehearsal and recapitulation of events within lessons might enable staff to capitalise on the activities which pupils had engaged in during holidays or other events and it was envisaged that this, in turn, would obviate some of the difficulties of carrying through the project on a regular basis throughout the year.

A copy of the developed materials is included with the thesis, and it can be seen that, in both the materials for older and younger pupils, seasonal lessons comprised roughly one half of the material, while other lessons were used to supplement and link these. In these linking lessons

the subject matter was based on concepts such as contrast, colour or shape, all of which linked with the work on language development staff were already introducing. For the older pupils, the linking lessons incorporated and elaborated on situations and concepts being introduced in programmes of social skills training. As far as possible, there was an attempt to make the seasonal lessons of roughly the same level of difficulty, in order that other staff, using the materials, might start the programme at any given point in the school year without having to work through a series of earlier lessons first. The linking lessons, however, take a more linear progression with the lessons becoming more difficult for pupils or more demanding of staff as they progress.

Each lesson theme was designed in such a way that there was enough material in it, or suggested by it, to last for roughly three weeks, assuming that lessons were conducted over a fifteen to thirty minute period on a twice weekly basis. Each theme was diversified in the materials to provide a number of different ways of pursuing the initial idea introduced. For example, the winter theme not only introduces the obvious aspects of snow, ice, snowmen and appropriate clothing, but also suggests how the winter theme may serve to reinforce the contrasts of hot/cold, black/white, and to lead on from these to the idea of shape and pattern. For the older pupils the same theme was translated into the idea of winter illnesses, with the intention of increasing pupils' awareness of the work of doctors and chemists, of reducing their fear of hospitals, of introducing drug safety and safety in the home, emergencies, using the telephone to leave a specific message, and the idea of 'appropriateness' in the choice of get-well gifts.

It was envisaged that, by introducing a variety of such themes within any one lesson, staff in field trials would be able to develop the work according to their specific needs, rather than attempting to follow slavishly the outlines given in the lesson plans. It was hoped that, by providing a variety of such suggestions, it would be possible for other staff to overcome to some extent the initial difficulty of identifying material which would be familiar to pupils, as it was assumed that the staff testing the materials would choose from the suggestions given those which appeared to be most apposite to their own pupils' needs and would adapt these to fit the environmental conditions obtaining within their own area. In this way it was hoped

to produce lessons which would not be seen as teacher-proof, but rather as being flexible enough for staff to adapt to their own teaching purposes. And, again, it was hoped that the lack of precision and rigidity in the formulation of aims would enable staff to use the subject matter for a variety of purposes within the general framework of language development.

Summary

To sum up, therefore, while it did not appear to be possible to ensure that material in the lessons would, for every single child in any given group, embody the principle of using the known and the familiar as a baseline for the introduction of new learning, there did appear to be considerable scope in the real events and conditions created by seasonal variations and in the concepts embodied in many language development and social skills training programmes, for developing lessons which could cater for a range of ability and which, in the development stage, had evoked a response from the majority of the pupils within the schools. The possible variations suggested on these themes represented an attempt to make lessons flexibly capable of adaptation to suit a range of differing capabilities, and environmental conditions. This choice of subject matter also appeared to satisfy staff's desire to see the drama lessons not as isolated curricular activities but as a link with and an elaboration of information which had been, or could be, introduced into the general curricular scheme by other means also.

b. Dramatic Activity

It was noted above that it proved to be relatively easy to make use of children's contributions to the lesson and to incorporate these in the dramatic action of it. It was, for example, noted that a child could suggest a particular item of food to be included in a picnic. Thus, when a child suggested that a sandwich was appropriate, it was relatively easy to elaborate on this comment and translate it into dramatic action by suggesting that pupils could mime cutting and spreading the bread, going to the cupboard for paper and containers, wrapping the sandwiches and packing them in containers in preparation for the picnic. Similarly, a suggestion that sweets or drinks be included could become the basis of a role-play situation involving the purchase of lemonade or sweets. Having seen demonstrations of how to take and adapt children's contributions in this way, staff felt

reasonably confident of their ability to handle this type of situation. And, in practice, they proved to be capable of doing so with a degree of skill.

Where difficulty was experienced, however, was in the initial introduction of situations. For example, in demonstrating the picnic lesson described above, the researcher had simply started by saying something along the lines of -

"Let's pretend it's a lovely sunny day. And we're all going to the park for a picnic. What do you think we should take on the picnic to eat?"

Thereafter, the dramatic action had proceeded along the lines described above, with the final dramatic activity being a complete re-enactment of the whole picnic episode from the initial food buying and preparation to the eating of food and the disposal of litter. When staff attempted to introduce work in this way, however, they experienced difficulty in catching the children's attention and in keeping them together as a group in the first transition from talk to action. Once the lesson was well underway staff found that group management was not difficult - especially with the younger pupils.

Staff's difficulties in introducing and starting off activities of this kind may be partially explained by their lack of confidence in their own ability, and, in the early stages in particular, by their lack of skill and practice in this form of work. There did, however, appear to be an additional reason why staff experienced more difficulty than did the researcher in introducing and starting the work. And this reason may point to a fundamental difference in the conditions of working which surround the specialist teacher and the general class teacher. The specialist teacher, going in to a class to work with a group of pupils on a specific subject, is quickly recognised by pupils as being associated with that subject. Expectation is created that a particular series of activities will be provided by the specialist and pupils are, therefore, set to respond in the particular way appropriate to that specialism. If pupils have enjoyed the lessons in the past, there is little difficulty in gathering them together as a group and in catching their attention in the introductory remarks. Moreover, general staff have often eased the way for the specialist by telling pupils that the specialist is coming and reminding them of the work done in a previous lesson. The entry of the specialist acts as an alerting signal to pupils to gather as a group and to be prepared to respond in a particular way.

Pupils do not, however, associate their general class teacher with any single activity. When the teacher has to alert the group to work in a particular way, she has to create the necessary expectations herself and has to devise a set of signals which will be sufficiently stimulating to cause pupils to cease the task they are already engaged in and to gather as a group for another task. In the case of physical education, music and art, this is relatively easy in that each of these has its own in-built signal. The production of percussion instruments or a few bars of music played on a piano can provide the necessary expectation that a music lesson is to be presented. The change into kit, or the move to the hall creates the expectation of movement work. While the production and preparation of art materials creates a similar preparatory period before the introduction of a lesson in art. As the raw materials of the drama lesson are the human voice and body, the teacher may have to rely less on such concrete signals and more on verbal instruction and explanation. And it has already been argued that it is in the area of language that pupils may be less responsive. Thus staff may have to repeat several times that children have to leave existing work and gather as a group for drama. And, as not all pupils will understand the word 'drama', time can be spent in communicating to pupils that they are now going to carry out a series of activities involving pretence and action.

This may appear to be a somewhat abstract and trivial distinction. It does, however, have important consequences. If, for example, staff have to spend some time in preparing pupils to respond to drama, the time spent on the whole lesson is increased, as is the disruption to other routine tasks. Thus staff have to decide whether the subject merits this allocation of time at the expense of other activities or, alternatively, have to be prepared to devise ways of signalling the start of a lesson which are less time-consuming and disruptive. And to this we may add the fact that, once pupils are actively engaged in doing drama, the excitement generated by it, and the general level of activity and noise created, may lead to a situation in which even more time is spent at the end of the lesson in settling pupils down to other more sedentary tasks. Given that this is the practical reality of the situation facing the general class teacher who wishes to teach a drama lesson, it is not perhaps surprising that staff tend to neglect drama, regarding it as either too much trouble or too disruptive of general routine. Equally, it is not surprising that specialist staff who only

visit the class for the duration of a lesson, may fail to appreciate that conditions are different for the general class teacher. And it is this different perception of conditions between the generalist and the specialist which appears to create some communication difficulties in training programmes in which the lecturers do not give any practical advice on such aspects as how to start and round off a lesson, being more concerned with the activities which may take place within the lesson itself, or with the value of the work in general terms.

The other consequence is that staff find a way round the problem by using drama only as and when the opportunity to do so occurs naturally as a follow on from some other activity. For example, if pupils are gathered together for a story, staff may take the opportunity to encourage pupils to dramatise that story. Or they may use odd minutes in the day to introduce finger play or action rhymes - as was the case in the three schools described here. The fact that such work occurs 'accidentally' rather than as a planned and purposeful learning experience, means that there may be little progressive structure to lessons, the learning introduced may be unrelated and fragmentary, and the lessons themselves represent occasional experience in drama rather than a regular opportunity to develop skills in this form of experience and expression. And the lack of regularity in the work may not only affect the extent of pupil learning possible, but may also affect the extent to which staff can develop their own teaching skills. Lack of regular practice in the planning and presentation of drama may perpetuate their existing lack of confidence in their own ability to tackle and develop the subject on a regular basis, and to introduce regular work without time-wasting and disruption.

Thus staff felt that if they were to be able to use drama on a regular basis it would be necessary to devise some means of signalling to the class that they were about to do drama, and to be able to use this signal as easily and effectively as the signals used to signify the introduction of music, art or other activities. Moreover, staff felt that this would be even more important in the curricular materials developed and disseminated for field testing as staff within other schools would not have had the opportunity to experiment with different ways of introducing the work prior to starting the series of lessons. Equally importantly, the pupils in other schools would not have had practice in doing drama with a specialist and staff could, therefore, experience more difficulty in communicating to pupils what was about to

occur. Staff in the collaborating schools at least had the opportunity to introduce the work by a phrase like - 'Do you remember what you were doing with Mrs X last time she was here?' - and to use their memories of the previous drama experience as a lead into the new lesson. Without the symbol of the specialist to remind pupils of the activity, staff in other schools would have to use many more words to jog pupils to recall one out of a series of different curricular experiences engaged in with their familiar class teacher.

In order to describe the alerting or signalling device which was incorporated into the materials to facilitate the introduction of drama, it is necessary to digress somewhat and to examine the types of dramatic activity which were incorporated in the materials, to indicate the reasons behind the choice and to show how the collaboration of staff directly affected the choice made. It will then be argued that the alerting device used was a direct consequence of this choice and one which proved to be surprisingly effective in spite of its apparent simplicity.

It has already been noted that one dramatic activity which staff had used, albeit occasionally and with the younger pupils only, was dramatisation. The stories used tended to be traditional tales such as 'The Gingerbread Boy', 'The Three Little Pigs', 'Goldilocks' or 'The Tale of a Turnip'. And this was general not only in the collaborating schools but in many of the schools involved in field trials also. The method of dramatisation used tended to be that of the guided dramatisation in which pupils were allocated separate parts and the story itself was simply re-told in action with no elaboration of incidents or characters other than those directly related to the development of the plot. Indeed, staff were surprised to find, when the work was demonstrated in the early stages, that other methods of dramatisation existed and that, in particular, it was possible to elaborate on incidents and to have a group act out individual characters in unison and with staff demonstration. It has already been noted that this form of dramatisation evoked a response from almost all pupils, young and older, and staff were enthusiastic about it as a means of ensuring that the more passive or less able pupils could join in even if it was only by imitating others. In the form of dramatisation they had used previously they were conscious of the difficulty of ensuring that the less able and more passive could be given a part in the work, and they indicated that such children were sometimes left out. This was

another reason why they used such work only occasionally as they felt that it was unfair to the less able children if they could not take part. The advantage of dramatisation as they perceived it, however, was that it was relatively easy, having gained pupils' attention by telling a story, to make the transition to acting it out. Another advantage was the fact that, as the story had an ending, the dramatisation of it also worked towards that ending and there was less difficulty in persuading pupils to return to other forms of work as, when they had acted out the ending of the story, the work could be drawn to a natural conclusion.

The fact that pupils liked hearing stories, the fact that they would readily gather into a group to listen to a story, and the fact that staff found stories a relatively easy way of focussing pupils' attention and introducing drama suggested that dramatisation would be a useful introductory activity for lessons in the curricular materials. Pupils' enthusiastic response to dramatisation reinforced this, and the fact that subject matter based on the environment could be readily translated into the form of stories which would be suitable for differing age groups, depending on which aspects of the subject was highlighted, was an additional plus factor. It was decided, therefore, that the introductory lesson on any theme would take the form of dramatisation by the narrative method in which pupils and staff worked in unison. Other dramatic activities such as role-play, situational dramatic play or the use of rhymes would be introduced as part of the subsequent lessons which followed up and diversified the theme. In many cases also the guessing games which had proved effective in encouraging participation among the older and more passive pupils could be incorporated as a direct follow on from incidents introduced in a story. Staff felt that this format would make it easier for them to introduce other activities as the story would provide a theme and focus for the work which followed.

Having decided to use dramatisation as the introductory lesson in each theme, it was proposed by staff in discussion that it would be a good idea if the stories in each theme could be linked in some way by, for example, having the same central character in each. They felt that this would provide continuity in the work from one theme to the next. This also seemed like a good way of ensuring that new lessons could build progressively on previous lessons and that there would be a familiar element in new work which the less able pupils could relate to from

previous lessons.

It is tempting to suggest that the characters and settings which were included in the developed materials arose as a result of careful research into the type of character most likely to attract and hold pupils' attention. The fact is that the particular characters chosen were arrived at on the basis of a hunch, which worked and which was, as a result, further refined in the course of the work. These central characters were an elderly couple, Mr and Mrs Brown, who lived in Hightown, a town at the top of a hill. And the stories were mainly set in Hightown Park where the changing seasons could be reflected in the kinds of activities which went on in the park. To reinforce the surname of the characters, it was suggested that they were dressed in brown, and each was given a distinctive feature - Mrs Brown wore glasses, Mr Brown had a pipe.

For some reason these characters proved immediately attractive to pupils - possibly because of the secure, grandparent image they evoked. More importantly, these characters became the symbol we required to signify that a drama lesson was about to take place. Staff had merely to mention that 'we are going to do Mr and Mrs Brown' and pupils immediately grouped with the expectation of doing some form of drama. Equally importantly, it transpired in field trials that the use of dramatisation based on these characters proved an easy introduction to drama for those staff who had little experience or previous skill in taking drama. This point will be dealt with more fully in the evaluation in a subsequent chapter. In the present context, two examples taken from teachers' feedback notes may serve to illustrate the point.

An instructress from a rural school wrote -

"The central figures - Mr and Mrs Brown - very good - each child relates to them in some way remembering various activities they have done. The Browns and their world are real to the children and the mime and acting in this connection is valuable and beginning to be really enjoyed. Having the Browns as central characters makes it really easy to get the children to grasp what acting is all about. They really look forward to hearing about their latest antics."

The second comment was made by a head teacher in a hospital school. She wrote -

"We have no younger children in the SMH category but this is a hospital school and the children's general knowledge and experience is very limited so we thought that perhaps there would be some value in using the package intended for the earlier stages. Despite the range of IQ all participate to a lesser or greater extent. For the lower IQ obviously a fuller breakdown of the

programme is necessary. Material is easy to use Activities are almost within the experience of even our children and various activities carried out in reality at later date on outings - eg. picnic, parks, feeding ducks, etc. Children always remember Mr and Mrs Brown and we've now got some brown clothes so that the children can put these on whenever we act any of the stories. This helps the children with the lower IQ."

Summary

To sum up, therefore, staff could see how it was possible to accept and use children's contributions in the course of the work as part of the dramatic action. But they required a focus for the work in order to facilitate its introduction and to gain pupils' attention in the initial stages without wasting time and without lengthy verbal instructions or explanations. Dramatisation appeared to make this possible and was an activity which staff felt confident of tackling and to which pupils responded with enthusiasm. The form of dramatisation which appeared to hold most potential for involving all of the pupils was that of narrative dramatisation in which staff and pupils worked in unison.

Dramatisation, therefore, formed the introductory activity in each series of lesson themes. In order to maintain continuity in the work and to facilitate progression, the same central characters appeared in each series of lessons, the same characters being retained in the materials for older pupils in order that lessons from either pack might be combined to cater for a wider range of development or interest levels. In the lessons for the older pupils the settings were extended to include other places of social interest and additional named characters who served the dual function of introducing more complex interactions between characters and also of introducing more complex ideas within a framework which had become familiar to pupils. In this way it was hoped that it would be possible to develop a progressively structured scheme of work, rather than a series of isolated lessons.

The particular choice of central character appeared to be a fortuitous one as pupils could readily identify with these characters. They provided the symbol of drama, which art materials, a move to the hall or the sound of music may provide for the other aesthetic subjects. This symbol proved to be an effective alerting device for attracting pupils' attention and for creating an expectancy set for the form of activity to follow. This appeared to hold good not only within those schools involved in the research and development of materials, but also within schools involved in the field trials. Since the researcher, by virtue

of her peripatetic status, had not experienced the difficulty in introducing drama work experienced by general staff, it is doubtful whether this format would have been arrived at without the active collaboration of general staff, and the inputs they provided in discussion.

Additional Activities

Clearly, however, a series of lessons which were based only on one specific form of dramatisation would be unrepresentative of the spectrum of dramatic activities available, and would substantially reduce the opportunities for extending staff's skill in the presentation of other forms of dramatic activity and other methods of approach. Thus, it was decided that, although each series of lessons would be introduced by a dramatised story, subsequent lessons on the same theme would introduce a different range of dramatic activities and suggest how these might be tackled.

Although the actual stories used had progression which was fore-known to both pupils and staff, there was an attempt - both in the dramatisation and in the additional activities - to introduce an element of choice for pupils and staff. For example, the second series of lessons for younger pupils begins with the basic story - 'Mr and Mrs Brown go to the park, listen to a concert and return home!'. In the dramatisation it is suggested that much can be made of the dressing and choosing of clothing to wear on the outing. In the follow-up lessons the work is extended into mime and movement based on playing various instruments under the leadership of the teacher. In a subsequent lesson children are encouraged to take on the leadership role and to direct the action of other children, thus giving them more autonomy within the lesson. The concepts of loudness and softness in relation to sound are explored in discussion and in teacher-directed movement and sound work, and this leads on to a speech game, and to interactive dramatic play in which both pupils and staff take on different roles and act out in unison the animals and objects which can embody the properties of loudness, and the forms of softness - softness in sound and tactile softness. This particular lesson was developed, as were all the lessons in the materials, partly as a result of the planning being discussed within this chapter, and partly as a result of the developments which actually occurred in practice when material was tried out with pupils. In this, as in all lessons, there was an attempt to achieve a balance between teacher-direction, which seemed to be necessary to evoke a response from the less

able pupils, who tended to copy the teacher or other pupils and who seemed to find difficulty in contributing a novel element to the work, and pupil choice - the more able pupils having demonstrated that they were eager to contribute novel input and to exercise some freedom of choice in the responses they made within lessons.

Thus, although there was a fairly tightly structured general progression in the work, which did not allow a total flexibility in the presentation of any given lesson, there was a degree of flexibility introduced in both the subject matter suggested for following up the themes, and in the variety of dramatic activities suggested for doing so. And, in order to present material which was as representative as possible of the range of dramatic activities available, these activities varied in their level of complexity, in the extent of pre-planning and involvement they required of staff, and in the particular methods of presentation they called for. Again, it was not envisaged that staff in field trials would use all the suggestions given, but that they would choose those which appeared most suited to their needs, and would extend the dramatic activities which seemed best suited to their own particular teaching styles. And as each aspect of the lesson suggested was given in some considerable detail, it was hoped that each would act as a demonstration of the skills required for its presentation, thereby obviating the need for lengthy and detailed theoretical teachers' notes on methods.

Staff suggested that material which contained a great deal of teacher's notes to be read through and assimilated before the material could be used, could result either in staff not using the material or - human nature being what it is - using the material without reading the notes! This might reduce the effectiveness of lessons and prevent teachers from seeing them as useful. And this, in turn, could give a false impression of the value of drama at this level. Thus, by taking staff's advice on this point, there was an attempt to avoid introducing 'theory' into the lesson plans, attempting instead to devise lesson plans which would be virtually self-explanatory in terms of the range of possible learning outcomes that might be achieved using the various activities suggested.

c. Total Communication

In the earlier part of the thesis it was argued that one reason why signed systems appear to be effective in encouraging verbal language is that they make use of both verbal and non-verbal means of

expressing the same thing. It was argued that some researchers have suggested that there may be an overlap between the neural control of speech and that of certain motor activities, particularly serially organised manual movements. It was noted that the use of movement and gesture, coupled with speech, within the drama lesson, do not approximate to the precise organisation of movement and speech which is characteristic of signed systems. It was, however, postulated that the pairing of sound and movement within the drama lesson can make information presented accessible to a number of sense modalities and may have a similar effect to that obtained by the use of total communication in signed systems teaching. And it was argued that it ought to be possible deliberately to incorporate the use of this device in drama lessons which were aimed at the development of skills in communication.

It has already been shown that dramatisation appeared to be a drama activity which was appropriate to the capabilities of both staff and pupils, and it was argued that, for this reason, the dramatisation of stories appears as a major activity within the developed materials. Dramatisation lends itself particularly well to the pairing of sound and movement - particularly dramatisation of the type in which the adult demonstrates elements of the work and invites pupils to act in unison with her. This type of dramatisation also allows pupils to make a comment on the work and to have that comment translated into words and movement in a dramatic action, as was demonstrated earlier in this chapter. It appeared, therefore, that the use of dramatisation as a major activity would also make it easier to incorporate the total communication device in the presentation of lessons, and many of the stories contain repetitive movements which can be carried out to the accompaniment of the appropriate words such as up/down, back/forward, in/out. There are also opportunities for the introduction of occupational mime based on such actions as lifting, pushing, pulling, rocking, etc.

It was, however, also possible to extend the pairing of sound and movement in the follow up activities which arose out of the stories. For example, the story dealing with a band concert leads on naturally to movement work involving follow-my-leader to a given verbal signal. Similarly, a lesson on Autumn leads on to a rhyme involving the concept of growth and enabling pupils to move in a particular way in response to the words in the rhyme. While a lesson based on the festival of bonfire night, for the older pupils, provided opportunities for pupils to interpret in both movement and sound the various different types of fireworks,

the leaping of the flames and the occupational movements of the crowd in preparing, eating and sharing the appropriate bonfire night foods.

It was hoped that the pairing of sound and movement in this way, and the opportunity afforded for repetition of the same sounds and movements in a variety of different contexts, would not only strengthen pupils' conceptual understanding of the language used but would also help to extend their repertoire of effective spoken language. The extent to which this device was effective will be discussed in the following chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that the choice of subject matter for the lessons and the dramatic activities chosen to introduce that subject matter both made it relatively easy for staff to demonstrate a range of naturalistic movements and gestures and, in an imaginative context, to pair these with appropriate verbal language.

d. Babble

The pairing of sound and movement described above need not be restricted to the use of actual words and their representative actions. Earlier in the thesis it was argued that the use of single speech sounds, phonemes or combinations of sounds may be incorporated into a drama lesson as a means of providing a socially acceptable opportunity for linguistically impaired pupils to practice the elements of sound production and to update and trace the movements of the tongue and other organs involved in speech. And it was argued that it, as some researchers suggest, there are no critical periods for the development of speech, then it is as important for the older speech-impaired child to have the opportunity to practise the babble which precedes intelligible speech as it is for younger pupils who are just learning to use language.

To incorporate this device within lessons, however, proved to be more difficult to achieve in practice with older pupils. It has already been noted that the use of animal sounds, rhymes and jingles or the verbal representation onomatopoeically of sounds in the environment - all of which appeared suitable for younger pupils - were less well suited to the chronological interests of a number of the older pupils. The bonfire night theme mentioned earlier was one series of lessons in which it was possible to incorporate environmental sounds and to do so in a way which was not patronising to the older pupils. Two other lessons, based on a visit to a busy town and the seaside, also provided a means of introducing sounds which would allow pupils to practise the elements of babble within a subject context which was more adult. These were

useful with the least able older pupils but, generally speaking, it was more difficult to incorporate this element without artificiality into the work with older pupils, and the device itself appeared to be less effective in achieving its aim with the older pupils. For example, although a number of pupils did incorporate some of the sounds used in lessons as a kind of sing-song accompaniment while they were engaged in other tasks such as painting or sewing, suggesting that they were finding the making of the sounds pleasurable, there was little noticeable effect on their articulation in speech generally. It may be, therefore, that there is a critical period for the development of the neural connections involved in tracing the mechanisms of the vocal tracts. Conversely, it may simply be that the use of this device in drama lessons was insufficient or insufficiently well incorporated as to provide the practice necessary to effect an improvement. Again, this point will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

But, the lessons which did incorporate this device in the materials for older pupils were, in fact, included in the package which was disseminated to other schools. There were two reasons for this. The first was the fact that the subject matter of these lessons, and the noises contained within them, had proved useful in attracting the attention of the more withdrawn and less able older pupils, and staff felt that in schools where there was a high proportion of such pupils, these lessons might be more within their capabilities than some of the other, more complex, lessons included in the materials. The staff in School D, in particular, felt that these lessons were just within the capabilities of many of their older pupils - the older pupils in this school being, in general, the least able of those in all the schools.

For the more able and more developmentally mature pupils, this device was replaced, in a number of the lessons, with the guessing games referred to earlier, and with other devices such as 'secret' messages which pupils could record on the tape-recorder for others to listen to and interpret. The ease with which other pupils could interpret the message was an indication to the pupils of the clarity of the articulation achieved. This, and similar activities, proved popular with the older pupils and appeared to have an effect on the clarity of their articulation in general.

Thus, while it was relatively easy to find ways of pairing words and movement in the lessons for both older and younger pupils, it was more difficult and less effective to incorporate the elements of babble

within lessons for older pupils. Practice in articulation could be achieved by other means, but these were more effective with the more able pupils who already had some language ability. The deliberate use of onomatopoeic sound in the lessons for younger pupils, on the other hand, was both easy to incorporate and appeared to be effective not only in encouraging more positive attitudes to the making of speech sounds but also in helping pupils articulate and communicate with a greater degree of clarity.

Attention, Motivation and Recall

When discussing behaviourist learning principles earlier in this thesis it was argued that, although drama is never likely to have the precise aims and assessment procedures associated with behaviourist theory, many behaviourist learning principles may be incorporated in lessons in order to facilitate pupils' learning, retention and recall. It was argued that all drama specialists see a need to attract and maintain attention, to maintain high affect characteristics within lessons, to provide some form of reinforcement as motivation for participation, and to present material which is geared to the specific needs of the learner group involved. It was also argued that, although not all specialists would accept the use of imitative techniques within a drama lesson - believing them to stifle spontaneity and imagination - many specialists do advocate the use of these with young or mentally handicapped pupils. Similarly, although not all drama activities lend themselves to being broken down into their component parts and taught in small successive stages, some activities do lend themselves to this approach. And it was argued that to break activities down in this way may facilitate retention and provide opportunities for recall and elaboration at each stage in a lesson or series of lessons.

It has already been argued that staff felt that they were better equipped to attract and maintain the attention of pupils when the activity being presented was one which, like dramatisation, has a fairly proscribed framework. And, by linking the stories with concrete objects such as puppets, with repetitive rhymes, with music or with illustrations, it was possible to increase the attention span of the less perceptually aware children, as the use of these devices acted both as reinforcement and as perceptual stimuli. Within a story format it was also possible to break down the material into component parts and to provide the opportunities for practice which pupils appeared to need.

During the development of resources those involved in presenting the material to younger pupils found little difficulty in motivating pupils to participate. For the majority of the younger pupils engaging in drama appears to provide sufficient enjoyment as to be a motivator in itself. The enjoyment of pupils also appeared to act as a reinforcer to staff to continue with the work and they experienced little difficulty in maintaining the affect characteristics postulated as necessary to create an appropriate learning climate for the practice of drama. Staff indicated that they were surprised at the high energy level required to present and direct the work but suggested that this was offset by the satisfaction of seeing pupils so enthusiastically involved. Not all pupils, however, enjoyed the work to the same extent. There were one or two who did not appear to find it rewarding, and a small number of others who only found certain aspects, such as movement and music activities, pleasurable. These children were not the less able, less perceptually aware or withdrawn pupils. These more withdrawn pupils tended to respond particularly well to the work, in comparison to their general response levels. The more hyperkinetic pupils, on the other hand, needed a great deal of staff support throughout the work in order to maintain their interest and participation. This may have been a general reflection of their inability to concentrate on any one thing for a period of time.

Being aware that staff using the materials in field trials would, almost certainly, have at least one such child within a teaching group, suggestions were given in the teaching notes which accompanied the materials as to how to keep such pupils involved. These included practical points such as the need to keep such children in close, physical contact with the teacher, and the need to provide some lively activity in lessons which could take up the energies of these pupils. One member of staff commented that the presence of a difficult, hyperkinetic child within a group does tend to make the lesson a less enjoyable experience for both pupils and staff. She suggested that it might be helpful to other staff members faced with such children to be reassured that this was so. In the teachers' notes, therefore, it was suggested that a highly disruptive child might be better catered for by one-to-one tuition outwith the group unless there was another adult present who could be in close proximity to the child throughout the group lesson. This suggestion was included in order to prevent staff feeling that they were responsible for failing to present the work well enough to engage and maintain the

interest of such a child, when, in fact, most people, regardless of their level of skill, would find it difficult to do so.

Attracting attention, maintaining affect and engaging the interest of older pupils can be more difficult. Again, the use of dramatisation helped overcome this problem, as did the use of games and the inclusion of music in some of the lessons. It did, however, appear to be more difficult to include the kind of objects and rhymes which were effective in stimulating the younger pupils. In the process of development, therefore, there was a need to find equivalent reinforcers for the older pupils. Work involving the use of telephones proved reinforcing for some, while the use of the tape recorder both to provide sound effects and to record pupils' own voices encouraged an enthusiastic response from others. The use of these devices also enabled the material to be presented in small stages and allowed opportunities for repetitive practice of certain aspects of lessons without pupils becoming bored. And suggestions were given in the developed materials for a number of activities which might be developed in this way, using devices such as a telephone or tape-recorder.

Summary

To sum up, therefore, staff in all three schools were already using, with some success, teaching programmes structured around behaviourist learning principles. These were not presented as rigidly as was the case in School A, and staff appeared naturally to attempt both to maintain high affect within lessons and to vary the range of social reinforcers used. As there were a number of pupils within all three schools and of all ages who were lacking in perceptual acuity, who were withdrawn and passive, or whose conceptual ability required that material be presented in small, successive and repetitive stages, there did appear to be a need to build into lessons attention-getting devices, and reinforcement which would ensure continued participation, imitation and repetition. The use of dramatisation lent itself naturally to the incorporation of these elements, as did a number of the sound and movement activities designed to provide total communication and the practice of babble. The incorporation of these principles within the material for older pupils was possible but more difficult to achieve. And all but a very small minority of pupils responded with enthusiasm to the work. Because of their familiarity with the principles involved staff felt relatively self-confident of their ability to present drama lessons which

were structured in this way and, in the course of the research, were able to suggest additional activities which they had incorporated into lessons in order to provide more repetition, reinforcement or perceptual training in the work. All of these elements are a feature of the developed materials which were disseminated for field testing.

Subsidiary Aims in the Lessons

All of the preceeding discussion has centred primarily on the means whereby the lessons developed in the course of this project could be directed towards the development of communication skills - an aim which appeared not only to be congruent with staff's curricular priorities, but also one which enabled staff's existing skills and knowledge to be utilised in the development, planning and presentation of lessons. At the start of the chapter, however, it was argued that there are a number of other possible aims for drama lessons, and that two of these - the development of imaginative play in younger pupils, and the development of social skills in older pupils - formed the subsidiary aims within lessons. At this point, therefore, and before going on, in the next chapter, to examine and evaluate the effectiveness of materials in meeting their aims, it is necessary to establish the extent to which these subsidiary aims were reflected in the developed materials.

The Development of Imaginative Play

In Chapter Four it was argued that for mentally handicapped children the simple provision of opportunity for free play may, in itself, do little to encourage the emergence of more mature play behaviours since such children may be unable to make effective use of this opportunity without adult help. It was postulated that as a result of engaging in drama under the guidance of an adult, pupils should develop skills in imaginative enactment and that these skills might generalise to spontaneous play situations outwith lessons. It was argued that, in addition to the increased opportunity afforded to pupils to practise play skills acquired were -

- a. the potentially motivating effect of the work as a result of pupils' enjoyment of it;
- b. the necessity for action and interaction among the participants, leading to more socialble, corporate play within lessons;
- c. the contention that, as in role-taking and enactment events are presented in a sequentially ordered context, this may enable pupils to

make flexible mental associations between causally related events, thereby enabling more coherent and structured episodes of spontaneous play.

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that, in developing lessons, considerable attention was given to discovering ways in which pupils' enjoyment of the work could be enhanced by choosing material which was both experientially familiar and appropriate to their levels of development and general interest. Thus, the potentially motivating effects of the work have already been dealt with. Similarly, it was noted that the emphasis on drama as a group activity created a need to discover ways of ensuring that even the least perceptually aware and withdrawn pupils could be encouraged to participate in the work.

For such pupils, participation, of itself, may be one way of enabling pupils to interact more socially with others within lessons. But, in order further to enhance social interaction, and, in particular, to increase the extent of co-operative behaviours engaged in within lessons, there was a definite attempt made to devise situations in which pupils could either work together on a corporate task or in which each pupil's individual contribution was important to the whole activity. For example, in the winter theme one of the obvious activities leading out of the story was the building of an imaginary snowman. All of the pupils were initially encouraged to practise the element, doing so in unison with the teacher. This did not, however, involve any co-operation between pupils as each was engaged in representing, for himself, the building of his own snowman. By suggesting that pupils then co-operate in the building of an 'enormous' snowman, using the elements of behaviour already practiced in the individual tasks, it was possible to encourage pupils to interact with others in a corporate task. Similarly, in presenting the concepts of 'back/forward, in/out', etc, it was relatively easy to devise ways in which pupils could interact co-operatively with others - as, for example, when pupils acted out the back/forward movements involved in sawing with a two-handed saw, when one pupil swept up leaves to be gathered by another and placed in the bin sack held by a third, or when one pupil acted as a leader in a 'follow-the-leader' game based on playing different percussion instruments with the appropriate onomatopoeic sounds.

It was equally easy to ensure that material was ordered sequentially in the presentation as a direct result of the choice of dramatisation as a major activity in the work. In dramatisation, it is not only

easy to present material sequentially, it is, in the initial telling of the story, virtually obligatory to do so in order that the plot of the story - however simple that plot may be - is understandable. An example of such a simple plot comes in the first lesson in the materials for younger pupils, where the dramatisation is based on a story-line in which Mr and Mrs Brown get dressed to go out to the park, go to the park, feed the ducks and return home. In the dramatisation it was possible to strengthen the sequential and causal connection between the various aspects of this plot by emphasising the need to dress before going out, the need to gather the bread before going to feed the ducks, and the subsequent undressing and resting after coming back in from the park.

The other element which clearly must be present in lessons if they are to encourage the development of imaginative play is some means of enabling pupils either to express the imagination they already possess (if imagination is a separate dimension of mental activity) or to develop their imaginative abilities (if imagination is simply a dimension of thought which comprises the ability to remember and recreate remembered experiences in novel combinations).

Earlier in the thesis it was postulated that the elements which might facilitate imaginative development were -

- a. subject matter based on real or familiar experience and juxtaposition of real and imagined experience in broadly similar situations;
- b. the provision of objects which could be used symbolically to represent other objects within a lesson, and the need to make children aware of the possibility of using these objects in a symbolic way;
- c. the use of what has been described as the hypothetical 'what if' in order to encourage pupils to recombine ideas in novel ways.

It has already been argued that the first of these conditions was met in the materials as part of the general strategy for achieving communication development. The other two conditions are less well represented in the materials, however. There were two main reasons for this, and both centre on the attitudes and abilities of staff, rather than on the needs and capabilities of pupils.

First, it was argued earlier that Heathcote's method of approach is perhaps best suited to the exercise of the hypothetical 'what if'. By taking a role in the drama she challenges pupils to respond and to make novel associations. Staff within the development schools, however, were extremely reluctant to attempt the 'Heathcote method', even after they had gained some skill in the presentation of drama by other, simpler

means. They simply did not feel confident of their own ability to 'think on their feet' to the extent necessary for this method of working and felt that they - and the teachers within other schools - would fare better with more proscribed methods. Thus, while there are a number of 'Heathcote type' activities and methods suggested in the developed materials, this type of approach is not well represented. Secondly, because of the familiar subject matter, based on the reality principle, there are no 'bizarre' stimuli or 'challenging' objects or people in the environments suggested for the classroom work in the materials. There is also an attempt to ensure that the materials may be used with the minimum of disruption as this, staff felt, would predispose other staff to use them. Thus, in so far as imagination may be encouraged by the use of bizarre stimuli and symbolic objects in the environment, and in so far as children can be encouraged to use their imaginations by the challenges offered in the Heathcote type approach, then it must be noted that the materials developed in this study were not strongly slanted towards the development of imagination.

The Development of Social Skills

One of the suggestions made earlier in the thesis, when considering the social development of pupils, was that even among pupils who are not severely emotionally disturbed, behaviours such as passivity, aggression or hostility to others may limit the extent to which a child is capable of relating to others and of behaving appropriately in social situations. It was suggested that, with such children, there might be a need to represent drama in 'social need groupings' rather than in class groups. In this way, it was argued, it would be possible to tailor lessons so that the more passive pupils received maximum stimulation, while groups of hyperactive or aggressive children could be given lessons which were more tightly controlled, more cathartic in their themes, or contained material which would induce concentration and calmness in the acting out. But it was argued that the latter grouping would not only make the teacher's task more difficult - she would be faced with a totally passive or potentially disruptive group - but that there might require to be changes in the school organisation or timetabling to enable staff to take these groups separately from their normal classroom groups.

In practice, the idea of social needs groupings was quite impractical. First, because staff were quite capable of dealing with the individual

child in their class groups who was either very passive or potentially disruptive, and they could see no justification for making separate groups of this kind. Secondly, there appeared to be very real advantages in not placing pupils in groups of social need. With the younger children in particular the more passive pupils seemed to benefit from the opportunity to copy their more active or vocal peers, while the potentially disruptive children could either be contained fairly easily within the group activity or required to be taken on an individual basis.

There was, however, an emphasis on social development in the choice of subject matter for the lessons. As indicated earlier, staff had asked that materials be based on real and familiar experience. In the case of the younger children, this simply represented a widening of the perimeters of their environment by directing their attention to the specific features of weather and its consequences. For the older children, there was an attempt to incorporate some of the ideas discussed in the earlier, theoretical analysis. The concept of autonomy of choice, the idea of meeting emergencies, the ability to use the telephone and to be aware of the work of 'helpers' such as doctors, plumbers, TV repair men etc, were all elements which linked into and extended the kind of social development programmes which were being carried out within the schools.

Drama as a Form of Knowledge and Experience

It has already been noted that staff included provision for art, music and physical education within their existing curricular schemes. Of these three subjects, only one, physical education, appeared to be provided as a means to an end, rather than as an experience, which was regarded as valuable in its own right. Staff suggested that the value of physical education lay in its potential for helping motor development, co-ordination and group interaction. Music, on the other hand, seemed to be regarded as a valuable experience. Staff were not particularly concerned with what pupils learned to do as a result of music lessons. Rather they felt that music was important as it was something children could enjoy doing. Similarly, although they felt that art work could develop skills such as hand-eye co-ordination, or a sense of colour, they felt that it was important that children should have the opportunity for art work as a form of expression. Trained teachers, in particular, regarded art work both as a form of expression and, to some extent, a therapeutic device which could reduce pupils' pent up feelings

of frustration. Instructresses were more inclined to see art work as a finished product which would give children the self-satisfaction of having created something.

In the theory of drama, drama, too, has been advanced as a means of expression and as a valuable experience in its own right. It is interesting, therefore, that staff were reluctant to regard drama as an isolated curricular element in the way that music, physical education and art work were regarded. For example, although staff saw benefits in linking drama to art and music, they did not necessarily link their existing art and music work to their programmes of language or social skills training. Sometimes, art work would be a follow up to a particular language lesson. But there were many occasions when the pupils were given no direction as to the subject matter of their art work, and staff did not seek to create links between what children did in art and the topic being used in the language development work. Music also appeared as a separately timetabled activity which did not have any particular links with other on-going work. From discussions with staff, it appeared that they did not see any great value in drama as an experience, but they could see it as having value as a method of introducing other learning.

This attitude may be partially explained by the fact that those staff members who themselves have had experience of drama in college of education courses, have not perceived themselves to have benefited from the experience. And this, in turn, may be partially explained by the ideological, cultural and educational biases which were discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, and which were advanced as reasons for the neglect of drama. It cannot wholly be explained in this way, however. Some staff had had no prior experience of drama, while there were others who professed no ability in either art or music and no particular liking for engaging in either, but who nevertheless regarded both of these as important experiences for pupils.

One clue as to the reason why teachers were not disposed to see drama as a valuable experience in its own right came from the feeling, expressed by a number of teachers, that drama was simply 'playacting', with no basis in reality. They could see that this was a necessary part of development in its manifestation as spontaneous dramatic play, but felt that much of the value of this play lay in its spontaneity. In such play pupils could express what they wished to express and not what they had been directed to express. Thus, if a child wanted to experience taking on a mother's role in a particular way, the child

could do so in that way and was not constrained to react in ways imposed by another. He could slip in and out of roles as he wished to do so, and could express in his play his changing interests, pre-occupations or fears. Thus, they suggested that the value of a child taking a role in the dramatic situation which had been set up by an adult lay not in the child's experience of the role, but rather in the learning gleaned from the subject context in which the role was set.

There appeared, therefore, to be a basic divergence of views between those theorists who suggest that the mentally handicapped child needs to be taught both how to play and how to enjoy play, and staff who see their role as the providers of the stimulating play materials which will encourage the development of imaginative play but who see no value in intervening in this play. And yet this divergence did not extend to other forms of play. Staff showed pupils how to engage in manipulative play and interacted with them in their play with 'educational' toys such as formboards or jigsaws. But their belief in the value of spontaneity was also reflected in their earlier assumptions that drama was essentially a 'free creative activity' in which the teacher's role was one of providing a topic for the children to act out, but not, in any way, directing the way in which they proceeded thereafter. The irony of this was that it was this feeling that it was somehow 'wrong' to intervene which contributed to their fear of chaos developing and their resultant reluctance to admit to using drama in their teaching. For some reason the provision of finger-games or the simple acting out of songs and rhymes was not regarded by them as doing 'drama'.

Certainly staff did not use drama in any systematic way. Such activities as they did use were mainly 'timefillers' - activities which children enjoyed and which could be fitted into odd moments while waiting for lunch or buses. And there was no real purpose to the use of these activities. They were simply presented for enjoyment. One or two staff members admitted that they felt a little guilty about using these simply for enjoyment as they felt that the work they did with pupils should have some educational purpose. Thus, on the one hand, the dramatic activities which staff introduced to pupils purely for their enjoyment were not considered as 'drama', while 'drama' was not considered a valuable form of experience unless it were a free, spontaneous activity. Moreover, the idea that drama was concerned with 'fantasy' rather than 'reality' and with 'playacting' seemed to rob it of serious educational purpose. One or two staff, for example, suggested that some pupils

already seemed to live in a 'fantasy world' and that it was important for them to distinguish between reality and fantasy. One example quoted was that of a child who was linguistically very competent. On occasion, this child would describe in some detail an experience of, for example, a meal out, and would say that it had occurred the day before. When staff talked to his parents, however, they discovered that this particular meal had taken place almost a year before and that many of the details the child has introduced were imaginary. Staff were inclined to regard this child as having 'too vivid an imagination', while the educational psychologist suggested that there might be a degree of psychoticism present. Both felt it important that he should be able to separate fact from fiction, hence the need to link the drama work to real experience and the insistence of teachers that the themes should be realistic ones which could be used to teach pupils about the realities of the world around them.

All of these considerations resulted in the development of curricular materials in which drama was the introductory activity in any series of lessons, and in which additional drama activities were introduced in building on these lessons, but which also included suggestions on how the work might be linked to other activities which did not contain any dramatic elements. This is important for two reasons.

First, the present author, in common with most drama specialists, has been trained to regard drama as an important experiential element in the curriculum. Had the materials developed in this project been developed purely on the basis of work carried out with pupils, rather than as an attempt to involve teachers in the work on a collaborative basis, it is very likely that the materials would have contained only those activities which could be justified as 'drama'. It is equally likely that the development of skills in the drama process would have been given a high priority level in the aims of the lessons. Certainly, examination of existing text-books on the theory and practice of drama in mainstream education, suggests that most specialist writers present their suggestions for activities on this basis. If general staff do not share this specialist view of drama, this may go some way towards explaining why they find it difficult to use such textbooks as resources in developing lessons, and why they are reluctant to incorporate the activities suggested in their teaching. From the feedback received from other teachers in the later stages of this project, it appeared that the ideas for following up the work in other areas gave staff a reason for

using the materials which appeared to be acceptable to them. They could justify their use of the materials on the grounds of the learning effected, and, it appeared, they could also justify pupils' enjoyment of lessons by suggesting that pupils got more out of the work than simply enjoyment of it. Thus the decision to incorporate other activities did seem to influence the take-up rate of the materials by staff in field trials, and seemed to provide a way out of the 'catch twenty-two' situation described earlier in the thesis, where it was argued that staff may remain sceptical of the value of drama until they have proved its worth for themselves, while, at the same time, they may be unable to prove its worth because they are dubious not only of their own ability to tackle and develop it successfully, but also of where it 'fits' in their programme of education.

It may be, therefore, that the decision to include other activities, and to use the drama activities as a link between these, actually resulted in more timetabling of drama as a separate activity. Because, from the feedback received in the later stages, it appeared that the drama activities were taken on a regular weekly or twice weekly basis, and served to introduce the 'theme of the week', which was pursued in other ways and at other times in the day. And a number of staff actually noted in feedback that they had persevered with the drama work, "although they weren't very good at presenting it", because the "pupils seemed to get such a lot of enjoyment out of it", and it "really seemed to get them talking and taking an interest in things".

These points will be returned to and argued more fully in the evaluation of the materials and the reactions of pupils and staff to these, in a subsequent chapter of this thesis. In the present context it may be sufficient to note that the theoretical ideal of a curriculum in drama was modified, as a result of the practical collaboration with teachers, to curricular materials in which drama was a central element, but which could NOT be described in theoretical terms purely as a curriculum in 'drama'.

Secondly, the decision to aim the materials at the development of communication, and to link this to other areas of the curriculum, seemed to provide a means for staff to reconcile their view of drama as a spontaneous, creative activity with the need for some teacher direction and control in the work. If lessons were aimed at communication it was regarded as appropriate to direct the work in order to enhance pupils' communication skills. Thus, pupils could be shown how

to perform a certain action in mime in order to help them understand the concept involved. Demonstration of this type was regarded by staff as essential as part of a language development programme. It seemed to be less acceptable to them as part of a free creative activity. Similarly, interactions between adult and child in a dramatic activity designed to elicit conversation or introduce specific items of vocabulary, were regarded as legitimate, whereas such interactions in the context of spontaneous play appeared to be regarded more as interference. Thus, by aiming lessons at the development of communication skills it was possible to encourage staff to take a guiding role in dramatic play situations without their feeling that they were imposing their will on pupils and preventing their freedom of expression. Pupils were, after all, free to express themselves in their later spontaneous play as they wished. By interacting with pupils in this way within the lessons in the later stages of the project, staff lost their 'fear of chaos developing' and began to see how they could achieve a balance between spontaneity and direction in the presentation of drama. And again, this had an effect on the format of the developed materials, in that staff felt that it was not enough simply to suggest that a particular activity be done, but that it was necessary to present that activity using the form of words which would incorporate the kinds of direction and control which were appropriate to achieving this balance. This resulted in lesson outlines which were considerably more detailed and prescriptive than the present author had envisaged at the start of the project. Although an analysis of existing materials had suggested that they were insufficiently detailed as to provide the inexperienced staff member with explicit instructions on how to present specific dramatic activities, and although it had been assumed that, for inexperienced staff there would be a need for step-by-step instruction on methods, it had not been envisaged that these would be presented in the form of the actual language which might be used by staff in presenting the activities.

In all of the foregoing discussion there has been an attempt to show the relationship between the theoretical postulations advanced in the earlier parts of this thesis, and the practical and attitudinal constraints which led to modification of these principles in the design and development of the actual materials. In the final part of this chapter it will be noted that, in addition to these aspects which had some ^{basis} in theory, there were also in the materials a number of other aspects which were included purely as a result of staff's input to the

work and as a result of the practical work carried out. These aspects are -

- a. the provision of materials which would create tangible links with the children's homes;
- b. the inclusion of 'performance' as a possible activity for older pupils;
- c. an example of a feedback chart devised by a member of staff as an alternative method of assessment;
- d. the provision of ancillary teaching materials such as illustrations, taped music for use in music and movement sessions, sheet music, a tape of the songs and rhymes included in lessons, examples of follow-up art work which children might try.

Links with Home

The 'links with home' which were included in the materials were mainly individual examples of children's art work which were done as a follow-up to the drama activities. The experience with John and Adam, with other children and with the home diaries of the more profoundly mentally handicapped children, had indicated that the work could generate a desire to communicate about it to parents. The links with home were suggested by one member of staff as a positive step towards encouraging this by providing something tangible which parents might be prompted to ask about and which, hopefully, children might attempt to explain.

Throughout the research and development period it did seem that children were talking about the work at home. For example, one child, who had very limited speech, brought in a painting done by an elder sister. This contained many of the ingredients in the previous day's lesson and it can only be assumed that the child communicated these to her sister, since it seemed to be stretching coincidence too far to assume that she had got the colour of the bench, the clothes and other details right by chance. Other parents also seemed to be aware of the work through their children and, in School C in particular, approached the head teacher at parents' night to ask how they might become more involved in helping with this aspect of the work at home. Significantly, the children in institutional care did not appear to have communicated to the same extent as the majority of home-based children. Whether they had less opportunity, or whether the effect of institutionalisation inhibited communication was not clear.

Although these links with home were included in materials for field trials, the majority of teachers made little mention of this aspect in their feedback. Not being fully aware of the home/school relationship within the schools, it is difficult to say whether this aspect of the work received much attention. Those who mention it had, in fact, forged close links between home and school, but it cannot be assumed that those who did not mention it had not done so.

Ancillary Materials

From the initial conception of the work it had been envisaged that there could be a need to include any ancillary materials necessary for the drama work in the package of materials. Finding ancillary materials, such as music or pictures, can take up a major part of the preparation time involved in developing drama lessons. It was felt that, if such materials were included in the pack, this would cut down on the time staff would have to spend outwith lessons in looking for materials. This ought to leave them more time to adapt or modify the actual lessons themselves for use in the classroom. Since the preparation time involved in drama lessons appeared to be a significant factor in staff's neglect of it, it was felt that anything which cut down on this would be helpful to those staff who had not used drama before and might tip the balance in favour of their trying it out.

Staff in the development schools also felt strongly that materials were an essential part of the resource pack. They suggested that the inclusion of these materials would effectively remove 'excuses' to postpone the introduction of the programme until the necessary ancillaries had been procured. They also suggested that a checklist of items necessary for each lesson should be included with each set of lesson plans in order that staff could see at a glance the kind of materials they would need to have ready for the lesson and would not find that, half-way through a lesson, they were short of a necessary item.

The development of these ancillaries was mainly left to the researcher who, with the help of an art teacher, a lecturer in physical education, a music specialist and the audio-visual department at the university, had better facilities for the development and production of these. With the exception of the illustrations, all the ancillaries were tested in the development schools before being included in the programme.

Illustrations

Staff felt that illustrations were necessary in order to provide pupils with additional information on the items mentioned in the stories. In practice, it was found that the younger pupils responded best to illustrations which had moveable parts or to which parts could be added as lessons progressed. During the development phase these illustrations were large and covered with fablon so that pupils could handle them easily.

These proved popular with pupils who would spontaneously take them and play with them or show them to visitors. They also seemed to help pupils sequence their re-telling of stories. Even the poorer pupils could give some shape to a story with the aid of these illustrations, and, in the re-telling, frequently included details developed in the dramatisation, rather than simply those present in the original story stimulus.

The illustrations which were included in the resource packs, however, were neither as large nor as 'moveable' as those used in the development stage and, in the next chapter it will be argued, represented the triumph of expediency over research. They served their purpose much less well and were the one aspect of the programme about which there was virtually unanimous criticism. This will be discussed more fully in the context of the arguments to be presented in the following chapter.

Performance

Finally, in the analysis of drama activities carried out, it had been assumed that any kind of 'staged performance' would lie outwith the capabilities of the majority of severely mentally handicapped pupils and it had been assumed that this aspect of drama would not feature in the resource pack. However, in practice, it transpired that a number of the older and more able pupils were not only keen to participate in classroom drama but were keen also to exhibit their work to any visitors who entered their classroom. The head teachers and class teachers felt that the pupils gained confidence from their work and suggested that we should try to put on a show for the older and better pupils to perform. The researcher, as a drama specialist who had been brought up in the tradition that it was unwise to restrict performed drama to the 'better' children as this would have a bad effect on the morale of the others, was not entirely happy with this situation, but

decided to go along with it as an experiment.

The nativity was the obvious choice of subject matter and a short nativity play was evolved from pupils' classroom dramatisation of a version of the Christmas story. It had been expected that only the more able children would be able to participate in this, but, in the end, considerably more pupils showed a desire to become involved. The version of the play used in School C, where there was a higher complement of linguistically competent pupils was rather more complex than that used in the other schools. The pupils in Schools C and D performed their play in the hall for parents as part of the Christmas party. In School B pupils simply acted their play out in the classroom before staff and another class.

In both cases, however, the work engendered so much conversation both during and after the event that staff felt that it would be worthwhile to include both versions of the play in the resource packs for other staff.

Again, the inclusion of this element was a direct result of staff attitudes and practical findings, and had not been anticipated from the theoretical analysis. Pupils' ability to engage in this form of work seemed to stem directly from their enjoyment of it and from their desire to show it off to others.

It is this "showing off" element which a number of drama specialists have taken exception to, suggesting that it leads to shallowness in the work and a surface rather than personalised interpretation of its content (Slade, 1965; Way, 1967). Such writers suggest that performed drama can lead also to competitiveness rather than co-operation, and that it perpetuates the 'failure' syndrome with the best pupils getting the best parts and pupils who normally fail in school, failing to get any part at all. Their argument is that those pupils who are unable to succeed in other areas of the curriculum are likely to be equally limited in their ability to take, sustain and communicate a role in performance. In discussion with general staff, however, it seems that the specialist's view of performed drama is not shared by general staff, and that this is one aspect of drama which general staff appear to value more than do specialists.

General staff, for example, were of the opinion that their pupils have very few of the normal opportunities afforded to children to show off their skills and prowess and to be admired for tasks they have performed. They felt that performed drama gave some of the children an

opportunity to gain praise for behaviour which was social, rather than anti-social, and that it could be conducive to further socialisation. They felt that pupils had the self-satisfaction of having carried out a task successfully, gained a boost to their self-confidence by the praise of others, and that the performance itself provided a peak experience which engendered communication between pupils and parents. The charge that it can be 'elitist' was dismissed by them since they believed that most pupils could be given some part in the proceedings. They suggested also that those pupils who could not take part - because they did not wish to do so - appeared to thoroughly enjoy the experience of watching the others, and that this did lead to increased interest and attention in those pupils also. They also argued that the work was very co-operative since all the pupils had to work together towards the given end of performance if the performance was going to be viable. Moreover, it did encourage parental interest in the life and work of the school and gave parents an opportunity to 'feel proud' of their children. Staff suggested that this last asset was often overlooked by educationalists who examined only the children's side of the question and did not take account of the fact that if parents had the opportunity to feel pleased by their children's demonstrated abilities, this would communicate itself to the children and result in their being further reinforced in this form of social activity.

Given that general staff appear to feel so strongly that performed drama is an important element of educational drama, it may be necessary to reconsider the specialist position and to suggest that the pendulum swing away from this form of drama may require to be corrected in favour of taking into account the expressed views and claimed benefits put forward by general staff. The experience of the present project certainly suggests that there are some mentally handicapped children who are capable of engaging in performance, that they can benefit from doing so, and that it may provide them with an additional topic for communication with parents, staff and with each other. For children like John, whose case was presented briefly in the previous chapter, performed drama may provide a lead in to a recreative activity in later life - either as a participant in amateur drama or as a member of the theatre-going public.

Summary

To sum up finally, therefore, of the possible aims towards which

lessons might be directed, the development of communication skills was given priority. The main reasons for this emphasis were -

- a. the fact that pupils had a clearly defined need in this area;
- b. that there was strong theoretical evidence to suggest that drama has something to offer in this area;
- c. that staff saw drama as a means of extending and reinforcing their existing language development programmes;
- d. and, because staff already had some considerable knowledge of language development programmes and of the kinds of knowledge they wished pupils to acquire as a result of these, there was a strong possibility that staff would be able to take an active part in the planning of lessons, even in the early stages of the work and before they had fully developed their skills in the presentation and development of drama activities themselves.

The expected outcomes from lessons were conceived as a hierarchy of aims, ranging from the simpler to the more complex language skills, but excluding the most basic level of teaching which sought to enable the child to understand that communication is possible - it being assumed that all children in the school already were aware of their communication potential, even if they presently lacked the ability to express themselves, or to wish to express themselves, in words. These outcomes were stated in the form of expected behaviours, but the behaviours themselves were not specified as precise targets for any individual child or group of children, nor as precise outcomes from a single lesson or series of lessons, the assumption being that existing capabilities and prior experience would both affect the extent and the nature of the learning possible in any given case.

The subsidiary aims were the development of play skills in the younger pupils and development of social skills in the older pupils. While staff were interested in noting whether there would be any observable effects in the areas of emotional development, the control of anti-social behaviours, decreased passivity or increased imaginative ability, no specific attempts were made to direct lessons towards these areas. These were regarded as possible outcomes rather than as intended outcomes from the work.

In judging the extent to which the aims of the programme had been met, anecdotal evidence was considered admissible as a means of assessment. But, in order to record a profile of pupils' abilities at the

start of the programmes, and to record any changes which occurred over the duration of the programme, simple profile and identification charts were devised and produced.

Of all the possible teaching strategies and methods which might have been adopted, the following figures most prominently -

- a. a choice of subject matter which was familiar and linked to environmental reality;
- b. the use of dramatisation as a major dramatic activity;
- c. the pairing of sound and movement in an attempt to present the work in a total communication system;
- d. the use of onomatopoeic sounds to provide practice in articulation;
- e. the incorporation of behaviourist learning principles such as the need to attract and maintain attention, the use of imitation and modelling, opportunities for recall and overlearning of sequentially presented material; the conscious provision of reinforcement - either social, concrete or intrinsic;
- f. for older pupils, the use of subject matter geared to areas of developing social awareness.

Of the possible criteria for lessons identified in the earlier theoretical analysis the aspects least well represented in the materials were -

- a. the use of dramatherapy or any form of drama which relied on the use of cathartic themes or overly-boisterous movement;
- b. the use of strongly exaggerated movement techniques;
- c. the use of the less tightly structured and freer drama activities such as improvisation or the open-ended story;
- d. the use of 'Heathcote-type' methods involving bizarre stimuli, an emphasis on person-in-role; careful preparation and staging of the environment and the objects within it, and the 'challenging' of pupils' perceptions, responses and creative imaginations by the teacher in role.

The primary reason for missing these aspects - or at least for representing them less well - was the fact that staff felt they lacked the skill and the commitment which would allow them to use these approaches effectively and they preferred to rely more on the simple, more proscribed and teacher-directed techniques with which they had some familiarity and which would enable them to ensure that the work did not become chaotic - chaos being a major fear in their attitude towards drama.

The other aspect of drama which was less well represented was the use of drama, and the development of skills in drama, as a form of experience, rather than as a means of effecting learning by the use of the drama process. It had been postulated earlier that, for the mentally handicapped child, the experiential element of drama might be important for their general cognitive development. Staff, however, were much more inclined to see the role of drama as a service one - a means of teaching communication, or about the environment, etc, and were clearly less happy with the idea of drama 'for drama's sake', although this attitude towards this aspect seemed to change as the project proceeded.

The value placed on drama for its own sake appears to represent an area in which there can be considerable divergence of view between the specialist and inexperienced generalist. Moreover, the fact that inexperienced general staff appear to value highly the one aspect of drama which is denigrated in the specialist literature - the aspect of performance - seems to widen further the gap which exists between the specialist and the generalist view.

As a direct consequence of general staff's involvement in the project, and because there appeared to be a need to take account of their views in the development of resources, the materials developed do contain examples of performance. Moreover, the materials are not simply representative of 'pure' drama activities, but contain the means of linking drama to other areas of the curriculum and provide follow-up lessons which, although linked to the drama process, do not themselves constitute lessons in drama. Thus the materials represent a progressive scheme of work in which drama is the central ingredient, but do not represent a curriculum purely in 'drama'. Because of this, there was a need to include other, ancillary materials in the packs. These included illustrations for the stories, art materials and music. These provided a stimulus for the follow-up activities and a tangible link with the pupils' homes. The inclusion of these elements, and the design of the materials as a scheme of work in which drama was the central but not the only ingredient, both reflected constraints which had been placed on the materials by practical experimentation, and which could not have been anticipated simply from a review of the theoretical and specialist literature on the subject.

In the following chapter, in discussing the dissemination and evaluation of materials, it will be argued that these design criteria,

and particularly the input to them by general staff, had important consequences in terms of other staff's acceptance of the materials for trial and assessment.

PART 4
EVALUATION

CHAPTER 12

An Evaluation of the Reactions of Pupils and Staff to the Process of Drama in the Collaborative Research and Development Stage of the Project.

CHAPTER 13

An Evaluation of How Pupils and Staff in the Field Trial Schools Reacted to the Developed Materials.

CHAPTER 14

Some Implications of the Project for the Curriculum Research and Development Process - A Discussion.

CHAPTER 15

Recommendations and Conclusions.

PREFACE TO PART FOUR

In this final part of the thesis there is an attempt not only to evaluate the reactions of pupils and staff to the process of drama, but also to compare and contrast the reactions of pupils and staff under different conditions. There will be an attempt to show how far the findings supported the theoretical formulations put forward in the earlier chapters and to show the extent to which it was possible to adhere to the stated methodological intentions. An attempt will also be made to arrive at some more general recommendations and conclusions about the role of drama in the special education sector and its potential value to pupils and staff as a learning and teaching resource within general curricular schemes.

CHAPTER 12

An Evaluation of the Reactions of Pupils and Staff to the Process of Drama in the Collaborative Research and Development Stage of the Project

Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that the practical work carried out with pupils and staff had modified some of the earlier theoretical formulations and had enabled a reformulation of ideas on the type of activity, method and aims which would be acceptable to general staff and within the general capability of the majority of pupils. It was also argued earlier that the lack of suitable teaching materials did appear to be a significant factor in staff's neglect of drama at this level, and that the reaction of staff within the collaborating schools suggested that the development and production of curricular packs would be a plus factor in enabling other staff in other schools to try out drama.

Consequently, in the practical work carried out during the first year of the collaborative project the emphasis had been on discovering the ways in which pupils appeared to respond to different types of drama activities. During the research and development phase, more emphasis had to be placed on whether pupils appeared to benefit in the predicted areas from engaging in the activities. And, although it was intended that the materials should be capable of being used in a variety of different ways and for different purposes within the classroom, and although it was recognised that different outcomes could well occur as a result of these differences in usage, it was felt to be important that the materials had gone some way towards proving their credibility in effecting pupil learning with the small sample of pupils within the collaborating schools before they were disseminated for more general testing. If, at this stage, the lessons failed to achieve any of the predicted benefits, the numbers involved were sufficiently small to enable a shift in the research perspective to be made.

At this stage in the project the 'users' of drama lessons and materials were also the developers. Their involvement in the project was not simply restricted to trying out lessons or ideas suggested by the developer. They also made an active contribution to the materials developed by suggesting elements of design, the actual wording

and content of lessons, and in determining the objectives for lessons and some of the follow-up work suggested. It had been predicted that, as a result of involvement in the project, these users would find that they had changed some of their general classroom behaviours, and developed a degree of skill in the presentation of drama, and had arrived at an assessment of its value which was based on their own personal experience of it.

In this chapter, there will be an attempt to show the ways in which staff did change as a result of their involvement in the project. It will be argued that their adoption of drama as a result of their involvement with the project is based at least as much on their considered assessment of its value to their pupils as on any influence or persuasion which may have been exerted, albeit unconsciously by the researcher. Staff did continue to use and develop drama after the termination of the research project, but did not extend their repertoire of teaching methods to include those not incorporated in the developed materials. A number of staff also noted changes in either attitude or behaviour as a result of involvement. A case in point being the change in staff's attitude to interaction with pupils in their dramatic play, and in their attitude to the experiential value of drama.

In the case of the project staff arrived at an assessment of drama which suggested that it was having an effect on pupils in the directions aimed at - primarily in the development of communication, social and play skills. In this chapter it will be argued that the pattern of progress was such that there were few children who were not showing some observable changes in behaviour by the end of the research and development period. It will be suggested that, in spite of individual differences in teaching style resulting from the fact that different people were involved in the presentation of lessons within the three schools, there was a degree of consistency seen in the effects. While it was difficult to be certain of the extent to which some of these effects were directly attributable to the drama programme, some effects were so closely tied to the dramatic stimuli that we felt we could be reasonably confident that the work had value as to be prepared to submit the developed materials to the critical scrutiny of staff from other schools.

Consequently, a trial run of materials was produced for dissemination to other schools. While this pack was undergoing field

trials, the second pack of materials for older pupils was researched and developed within the collaborating schools, with the help of other staff and older pupils in the schools.

It had been decided that if teachers in these other schools appeared to be highly critical of the first pack and resistant to the ideas contained within it, the second pack would not be produced in disseminable form. Instead, research into the reasons for staff's criticism would be carried out. There would be an attempt to discover whether it was the materials which, as a result of poor conceptual thinking, inappropriate structuring, wrong choice of subject and/or method, etc, had proved ineffective and alienated staff, or whether it was staff's own lack of ability in the presentation of drama which had proved more of a barrier to innovation than had been anticipated; or, alternatively, whether staff appeared to be passing judgment on the drama process itself and rejecting it as inappropriate to their needs and aims in special education.

If, on the other hand, staff reacted positively to the first pack and made requests for the second, there would be an attempt to disseminate it to those schools who made this request. However, because the second pack would not be ready until a late stage in the project, and because its release for field testing would depend to some extent on the reactions to the first pack, it was envisaged that detailed consideration of the results of field testing of this second pack would constitute a continuation of the research beyond the life of the funded project and that evaluation of the field trials of this pack would not form part of the present thesis.

In this chapter, however, there will be an attempt to provide some indication of the principles adopted in the second pack, on the criteria by which it was assessed at in the research and development stage of the work, on the reactions of pupils and staff within the collaborating schools, and on the assessment arrived at regarding the effectiveness of this second pack within these schools.

In the final part of the chapter there will be an attempt to sum up the assessment made by staff of their own and their pupils' response to the work and to indicate the areas about which we hoped to achieve some information when the materials were used by others in field trials.

The Research, Development and Testing of the First Pack of Materials within the Collaborating Schools

As indicated earlier, the initial research for the materials was carried out during the first year within the schools already described. The development and testing of the first pack was carried out over the following eighteen months. Two of the head teachers, three classes (a total of twenty pupils), and six members of staff were directly involved in the work, but other staff gave support to it by taking classes to release these staff members for discussion, and by giving their comments on the production of resources.

In one school (B), the lessons were presented by the researcher, and repetitions of the lessons and any ancillary ideas were tried by the instructresses in charge of the class on other days when the researcher was not present. In the other two schools the staff used the material alone with their classes and relayed back the information obtained to the researcher who acted as a liaison between the schools involved. This division of presentation was arrived at because the researcher wished to test the materials at first hand and, conveniently, the staff in School B did not yet feel confident of tackling the work

on their own. In School C the class teacher was primary trained and had a qualified nursery nurse to help her in the classroom. She indicated that she preferred to try out the work on her own, in her own classroom, and with the help of the nursery nurse. She felt that the researcher's presence as an observer would, in the early stages at least, be inhibiting. She was one of these staff members who had been left with a legacy of embarrassment from personal experience of drama in college of education, but she was, nevertheless, keen to try out the work in the privacy of her own classroom. In School D the teacher was a relatively inexperienced young instructress. She was prepared to try out the lessons, was enthusiastic about doing so, but was not sure how effective she might be if left entirely on her own. The head teacher, primary trained and with some experience of drama, agreed to be on hand to give her help and support should she require it at any stage in the project. Thus, although the sample was small, it did represent a number of different levels of staff training and experience and enabled comparisons to be drawn between the results obtained by different teachers with differing styles of presentation.

It has already been argued that the main aims of the lessons in Pack I were the development of communication skills; the subsidiary

aims being an increase in the amount and complexity of dramatic play, both solitary and interactive, and that the development of social skills was an important aim in the Pack for the older pupils. It has also been argued that each of the individual lessons was slanted more towards one particular aspect. For example, some lessons were biased more towards encouraging verbal communication around the topic after the lesson, while others were slanted more towards co-operative play or to the kind of movement and sound work which might be helpful to the more passive and less verbal pupils. Even so, it was expected that benefits, if any, would occur as a result of the accumulative effect of the work done over a period of time, rather than as a direct result of work carried out in any one lesson. Since earlier lessons were reinforced by repetition in later lessons, it was difficult to ascribe learning or memory effects to individual lessons. Moreover, it was difficult to be sure which aspects of the work were responsible for any changes observed since this work was being carried out alongside the normal class work which would have been done in any case. It was possible that some of the gains made were as a result of the interaction between the two, rather than the result of the drama work on its own. Since the work was being carried out over a fairly lengthy period, it was possible that some of the gains observed would have occurred in any case as a result of the child's making a developmental gain over that year. Nor was the developmental gain achieved over the previous year a good baseline measure, as it has already been noted that mentally handicapped children's learning tends to be patchy, and to occur in 'fits and starts' rather than as a smooth learning curve over time. We could not, therefore, be certain that the observed changes were ascribable to the drama lessons, except in those cases where the links between the lessons and the subsequent behaviour were so marked as to be capable of no other interpretation. However, the fact that common trends emerged over the three schools suggests that the lessons were having an effect on pupils' behaviour in general terms.

The Effects Observed

1. An Increase in Dramatic Play

One of the most marked trends occurring over all three schools was the extent to which the livelier and 'better' Down's children extended and developed their range of spontaneous dramatic play over

the trial period. For example, in School C, one child who had not previously shown much interest in the shop corner began, following a lesson in which shopping was a central theme, to play at shops both on his own and with other children. He appeared to have grasped the concept that customers are dealt with in rotation, that money changes hands and that change is given. As this represented novel behaviour for this child, and evidence of an understanding not previously displayed in play, staff regarded this behaviour as an advance on his previous, aimless and manipulative play. When the next lesson introduced the idea of occupational mime - sawing, hammering, etc - this same child began to develop play sequences based on these aspects, and as his teacher reported, 'he was very busy mending the windows and furniture all over the room'. Similar examples were to be found within the other schools, and it seems to be stretching coincidence too far to suggest that the diversity of the play and its closeness to the dramatic play within lessons were unrelated. Staff were prepared to regard this diversity as a benefit in its own right. It must be noted, however, that not all children went on to combine these diverse play behaviours. Some children did do this - mainly the 'best' of the children in terms of their intellectual ability or their ability to engage in drama with a degree of skill. Others simply varied their play according to the new stimulus being introduced in the lessons. In almost every case, however, the increase in play was accompanied by either an increase in language flow or by an increase of purposeful gesture and/or onomatopoeic speech. Again, since these were both features of the dramatic stimuli in lessons, it was assumed that these increases were a direct result of the work carried out, together with the links created between the drama work and existing language development programmes. At the very least, therefore, the drama work appeared to be a helpful adjunct to such programmes.

The less able pupils and the more withdrawn Down's children showed more improvement in the areas of communication and gesture than in that of spontaneous dramatic play. The simpler dramatic activities, music and movement with an imaginative element, speech and action rhymes, and sound sequences occurring within stories, appeared to be particularly effective in helping the less able and more passive pupils.

Although such pupils were capable of engaging in dramatic play as part of the drama lesson, they did not exhibit a marked tendency to initiate such play spontaneously outwith lessons. Occasionally, however, one

of the more able children would initiate the play and the less able would be persuaded to join in. This was particularly evident in School B where John (see Case Study, p.342) attempted, not always successfully, to involve the other children in the class in interactive dramatic play.

2. Increased Vocalisation and Language Flow

In some of the children, the general effects noted were very small. But staff indicated that they regarded these small gains as significant if they represented the first time a pupil had exhibited a particular aspect of behaviour, or if the pupil in question was one whom other methods of teaching had failed to help make any significant degree of progress. For example, one of the few children who did not naturally respond to music, and who had failed to respond or to participate in music lessons over the previous year and a half, began, while painting, to hum the tune of one of the songs used as a theme in one of the drama lessons. She subsequently added a few of the words to her humming, and began to add single words which were related to the dramatic action but which were not, in fact, part of the song. Since this was new behaviour for her the class (School C) regarded it as a sign that the work was having an effect in changing her attitude towards both music and speech. This was not immediately obvious in her attitude towards the music lesson, not did she show any marked increase in vocalisation except when painting. Towards the end of the second term, however, she began to take more obvious interest in both music and speech and occasionally looked as if she were enjoying a music lesson. Occasionally also, she would volunteer a comment in response to the teacher's prompting in either a drama lesson or a language development lesson. Again it seemed as if there was an interactive effect between the work done in drama and the programme of language development.

In School D there was a similarly withdrawn, wheelchair, child who showed little active interest or participation in the drama lessons. But, when a visitor entered the classroom (a psychologist) she wheeled her chair over to the illustration of the park which had been used in the course of a lesson earlier that day. She brought the illustration over and led the visitor to my gym bench at the end of the room, then pointed to the bench picture. Although very limited in her speech, she was able to make the visitor understand that she

was making a connection between the bench in the illustration and the actual bench in the classroom. The visitor was clearly puzzled as to why the child was making this connection and why she seemed anxious to convey it, but she responded appropriately to the child with the result that the child seemed pleased to have been able to communicate. This type of response occurred on several occasions after this, and again, the teacher was heartened by this behaviour since this child was one of the least able in the group and one whom the teacher found difficult to interest in general work. These examples illustrate the type of anecdotal evidence on which we based our conviction that pupils were responding to the drama work and benefiting from it, to some extent, over the time-scale of the project. Of the twenty pupils who were involved in the study, fourteen children showed definite recorded evidence of having benefited in the predicted directions from the work. There were five areas in the charts, each of which was subdivided into a number of items related to the aspect under consideration, and, in addition, the sixth category, speech, was assessed in the form of a number of statements which required a yes/no answer. Table 7 shows the total number of pupils who made recorded gains in the assessment charts already referred to by moving from one category to a higher one in the course of the year.

Table 7 - Pupil Gains

Language	10
Gesture	8
Concentration	8
Social Skills	6
Imagination	5

Increases in behaviours relating to dramatic play were not assessed in the charts in the same way, since items which related to the child's general ability to participate in this, in art/craft activities, in music/movement activities and in group activities in general were subsumed within the more general headings above.

Since each of the broad categories above represent a number of separate items, changes noted could refer to any one, or to more

than one, item within that general category. For example, within the general heading of 'language' a child might show both an increase in his response to verbally presented material and an increase in his willingness to initiate conversation. Similarly, a child might show a general tendency towards increased interaction in social situations, or only a tendency to do so in one aspect of group work. In each case the improvement noted would only count as one improvement since only one aspect of the chart was involved. Thus the increased language score indicates that ten separate children had improved in some aspect of their linguistic ability.

3. Language Development

Clearly, the most general improvement was in the development of language, and, as had been predicted from the earlier work, much of this improvement was in the form of increased language flow, rather than showing itself in improved clarity of speech or in new forms of speech. For example, those pupils who had reached the three to four words utterance stage at the start of the project were, in the main, at the same stage by the end of the trial period. There did, however, appear to be a general increase in vocabulary and in the use of language. Similarly, those children who had tended to use single words or holophrases at the start of the programme, had not progressed to more complex sentence structure, but tended, on the whole, to use increased purposeful gesture to supplement their single word utterances.

On the other hand, a number of the pupils who had very little speech at the start of the programme, and who already relied heavily on gesture, had begun to attempt single words and, more commonly, onomatopoeic sounds. With some of the least able pupils linguistically, there was also some evidence to suggest that pupils were prepared to initiate more conversation in the form of gesture than formerly. For example, like the wheelchair child described earlier, children might attempt to pull the teacher or another adult to a different part of the room and would gesture to indicate what they wanted, or what they wished the adult to do. Some of the children had always been able to do this in order to have their desire for physical help met - for example, in order to be taken to the toilet, dressed, or given a drink etc. Now, however, the children were initiating these behaviours in response to more abstract needs. For example, one child had developed an interest in house play and would now try to get the adults to come

into the house corner, to sit with her and to pretend to drink tea out of the toy cup provided by the child (School B). The only word used in this whole sequence was 'tea' but the child was clearly the initiator in the interactions and in charge of the events taking place.

Comparisons Across Schools

The children in School B appeared to make the greatest gains over the trial period, with those in School D benefiting least. These differences were, however, slight, and there was more similarity across schools than we might have expected given the different conditions in each and the differences in presentation by the staff involved. For example, there was less parental involvement in School D and less information could be gained on some of the pupils' out-of-school behaviours. The pupils in School D were also of generally lower ability than the pupils in the other two schools, and many were from a lower socio-economic grouping. But, when individual children were compared with children of similar general ability in one of the other schools, there was a remarkable similarity in the pattern of response noted by staff. Thus, for example, the response of a lively Down's child in School B was likely to be more similar to the response of a similar child in another school than to the response of a child with different personal characteristics or ability level within his own class group. From this we concluded that the ability level of the child was possibly the most significant factor in determining the type of response a child would make to the lessons.

We found this somewhat surprising since we had assumed that the 'better' or the 'more experienced' the teacher, the more chance there might be of pupils benefiting from the work. Certainly, the pupils in School B did benefit marginally more, and in that school the work was being presented by the most experienced staff member, the researcher herself. On the other hand, the balance of the gains was biased because, in this school, there were a higher than average number of more able pupils, and pupils who came from homes where there were educated and supportive parents. When the children were compared on a one-for-one basis with children of comparable ability in other schools the apparent increase in gains seen in School B was less obvious. Similarly, when the findings from School D were analysed in the same way, we would see that the more able pupils in that school had responded in a similar way to those schools, the general impression of fewer gains being created by the fact that there were fewer 'good' pupils in this school. Table 3 shows the comparison across schools.

TABLE 8 Comparison of pupils' progress across schools

School	Pupil	Aetiology	A.&C.	S.Sk.	Im.	Ges.	Lan.**	
B	Boy 1	Lively Down's	*	*	*	*	*	
B	Boy 2	Lively Down's	*	*	*	*	*	
C	Boy 3	Lively Down's	*	*	*	*	*	
C	Boy 4	Lively Down's	*	*	*	*	*	
D	Boy 5	Lively Down's	*	*	*	*	*	
C	Boy 6	Down's	0	*	*	*	*	
C	Boy 7	Down's	NO RECORDED CHANGE					
B	Boy 8	SMH (brain damage)	*	*	*	0	*	
C	Boy 9	SMH (brain damage)	0	*	*	*	*	
D	Boy 10	SMH (aphasic)	*	0	0	*	0	
C	Boy 11	SMH (epileptic)	0	*	*	0	*	
B	Boy 12	SMH (epileptic)	*	0	*	0	*	
B	Boy 13	SMH (maladjusted)	NO CHANGE					
B	Boy 14	PMH	NO RECORDED CHANGE					
D	Boy 15	SMH/CP	NO CHANGE					
B	Girl 1	SMH (brain damage)	0	0	0	*	0	
C	Girl 2	SMH (very passive)	NO RECORDED CHANGE					
D	Girl 3	SMH (very passive)	*	*	0	*	*	
D	Girl 4	SMH/CP	0	0	0	*	*	
D	Girl 5	PMH	NO CHANGE					
Total number of improvements shown -								
Number		Possible total	Achieved total	%	No Rec. Change	No Change		
Boys - 15		75	45	60%	2	2		
Girls - 5		25	7	28%	1	1		
Boys & Girls		100	52	52%	3	3		
All - School B		35	21	60%	1	1		
All - School C		35	20	57%	2	0		
All - School D		30	10	35%	0	2		

** Key to abbreviations -

A. & C. - Attention and concentration

S.Sk. - Social skills (comprising ability to work co-operatively, to interact without aggression or undue passivity, etc.)

Im. - Imagination

Ges. - Gesture

Lan. - Language

Staff Reactions

Staff's reaction to this finding was also interesting. When asked whether they felt that it was disheartening that the greatest gains had been made by the most able pupils, they were emphatic in their denials. As one member of staff in School D put it -

"On the contrary, I'm delighted to see them coming on. OK so some of the poor wee souls haven't come on as much. But then what can you expect? We're delighted if we can get any thing out of some of them. And look at how M.... has come on. She's even beginning to take an interest in toys now. She never did that before."

'M' was a child who had shown very little interest in the work throughout the first year but who had gradually begun to take part in it during the second year and evidently enjoyed doing so. The staff also seemed to be pleased that the class taken by the researcher had not improved so markedly against their classes. As the teacher in School C put it -

"It doesn't make me feel guilty. I don't feel I've let the kids down. You know. I've not made too bad a job of it. I mean I'm pretty sure that I'm not going to make a muck up of it now so I don't mind starting it. Before, well, I hadn't a clue. I mean, in college I felt so lousy I just didn't take anything in. But doing it in my own classroom I can see the kids enjoying it and it doesn't make me feel so daft prancing about and things."

In fact, one of the interesting comments to emerge in the course of discussions earlier in the work, following an occasion when the researcher had clearly handled a lesson badly and it had been virtually unproductive, was the fact that this particular member of staff was glad to see that an 'expert' could have an 'off day' and could 'fail' in exactly the same way as those who were less well experienced and untrained. It transpired that one of her fears concerning her ability to take drama stemmed not only from her memories of embarrassment in college drama lessons, but from the fact that she had seen a number of filmed and videod demonstrations of the work of Heathcote and Sherbourne. She felt that their work had been so faultlessly executed that it left her feeling totally inadequate and reinforced her intention not to use drama 'if she could help it'. The laughter and the discussion engendered by the researcher's ineptitude on occasion appeared to bring the work more within the bounds of the possible for this staff member at least. Moreover, these rather less than perfect demonstrations were useful in identifying why a lesson had gone off the rails, and whether this was simply due to teacher mishandling or whether it was

due to some other factor such as poor material, the wrong methods etc. On some occasions also, it was possible to identify factors such as 'a high wind', 'general excitement' or some other extraneous factor as the main reason for the work being more difficult or less productive than usual.

On most occasions it was possible to plan against such contingencies and so avoid the most obvious pitfalls. On other occasions the disrupting factors were so situation-dependent, or so child-dependent that contingency planning was not possible. And it was agreed between the researcher and staff that one of the skills required in a lesson like drama, which encouraged diversity of response, was the ability to evaluate these responses and unforeseen circumstances and to decide whether to attempt to redirect the course of a lesson, whether to terminate a lesson that appeared to be unproductive, and at what point in the lesson this decision should be taken. We concluded that there were certain general pointers which would help in the decision making - for example, are the children still attending and interested so that work can be redirected easily; are they losing concentration, in which case it might be better to terminate the lesson; is it a case of stalemate, with the lesson neither progressing nor deteriorating - would a new stimulus help? And so on. We also concluded that recognising the signs of lack of concentration, competing interests, stalemate, etc was more a matter of 'feel' than of 'rationalisation'. The staff indicated that they had now reached the stage in their presentation of drama when they could sense when a lesson was going to move forward productively, and when a lesson was having rather less effect. They also indicated that this ability was one which had developed as a direct result of 'doing', coupled with the discussion following demonstration lessons. As it had been envisaged that staff would learn by doing, this aspect of their behaviour seemed to suggest that this policy had been a relatively successful one.

The staff also indicated that they had found the apparent enjoyment of children rewarding. They found that they were able to sustain the high energy input required for the presentation of drama when children were showing their enjoyment and when lessons were clearly progressing. Children's enjoyment of the work seemed to provide staff with as much satisfaction as the other benefits identified. With the exception of the unusual circumstances indicated earlier, and the occasional instances in which individual, hyperkinetic children

became over-excited, staff did not find any difficulty in maintaining control of the lessons, and the 'chaos' they had anticipated and feared simply did not arise.

On occasion, however, staff indicated that lessons had gone on for much longer than they had envisaged that it would be possible for children to maintain their concentration - in some cases, between forty minutes and an hour. Sometimes, too, pupils would want to repeat particular parts of a lesson over and over, and staff occasionally found some difficulty in terminating the lessons when they felt that repetition was becoming stereotyped, or when they judged that the lesson had simply gone on long enough.

This problem was not one encountered by the researcher, for two reasons. First, as an experienced drama teacher, the researcher had developed, over a number of years, strategies for winding down and declimaxing lessons so that they could be ended naturally in the appropriate time-limits. In the main, these strategies were not ones which had been carefully thought out. Rather, they represented an intuitive response to the need to fit lessons into a specific time-slot to suit the timetable allotted in either primary or secondary school. Secondly, as a peripatetic teacher the researcher could, physically, remove herself from the scene at the end of a lesson and had, consequently, experienced little problem in terminating lessons. The problem seemed to be very similar to that encountered in finding the 'way in' to lessons for general staff, and highlighted once again the finding that the peripatetic specialist and the general class teacher can face quite different circumstances in presenting lessons even to the same group of children within the same school. In the end, the particular strategy adopted in the materials and used by staff, was to introduce into lessons a final section in which 'Mr and Mrs Brown' either went to sleep or engaged in some gentle or sedentary activity designed to calm and declimax the lesson. Even though this approach seemed somewhat contrived, staff found it a useful device for signalling the end of lessons and the return to other forms of work. Gradually children began to recognise the signal and, although they sometimes tried to go on, were generally prepared to accept its message.

Staff's Adoption of Drama

As a result of their involvement in the research and development process, all of the staff adopted drama as a regular part of their

curricular scheme. In all three schools staff timetabled it as a separate activity on a once or twice weekly basis, and, over the first eighteen months following the project continued to use the developed materials as their major stimulus and source of lessons. This was interesting in that staff's initial priorities in the early stages of the project had been to provide material which would link to other areas, rather than providing drama lessons on the same kind of basis as, for example, lessons in music or physical education. Following the project, however, they appeared to be convinced of the value of drama - specifically as an aid in the development of communication and play skills - and were prepared to accord it status as a separate time-tabled activity.

This was one of the most marked changes in attitude among staff as a result of the project. That it occurred may be partially attributed to the fact that, as far as staff were concerned, drama had 'proved its credibility' by the reactions of pupils to it. And they, themselves, had found the work less difficult to present and develop than they had anticipated, even if it proved to be rather more exhausting physically than at least two members of staff had imagined it would be. On the other hand, it would be unwise to read too much significance into this change of attitude in that staff had made a considerable investment of time and effort in the project. They were enthusiastic that it should be viable. And they clearly liked the idea of their schools being credited, in the developed materials, with the kudos of having been instrumental in the research, development and initial testing of the materials. Given this degree of positivity in staff's attitude it is not, perhaps, surprising that they adopted drama with such vigour. At the present time, however, staff are still using drama with their classes and do not necessarily rely on the materials developed in the course of the project as their source of lessons. As one of the staff members from School B put it -

"sometimes I go back and pull out the lessons just to get some ideas. But a lot of the time I just use whatever idea crops up. Like last week we were talking about supermarkets, and I wanted to get the children to use words like 'heavy' and 'dear' so we all acted out going to the supermarket. We had a great time. There was a great blizzard blowing and we all had to fight our way up the hill. Then we had to push open the big heavy doors. It was terrific. You should have heard the language I got. Then, when we'd loaded up our heavy bags from our trolleys and we were all going home, Adam went away and sat down over there. I said 'Come on, Adam. You'll need to get

your shopping home now that you've bought it'. And do you know what he said? 'No me Mrs M..... I'm waiting for a taxi'. So then, of course, everybody had to take a taxi home. And so it goes on

(Question - 'and do you have much bother in thinking up ideas or developing then now?')

"I never have any bother. The things just seem to grow up. I mean we take the lessons a lot further than we did when you were here. Really, that's why I don't use the lessons much now at all. Because they're a bit too simple for this lot. They've got so used to Mr and Mrs Brown that they can act them without even thinking about it. So I concentrate on the language. And it really is terrific what they can give me sometimes."

From this transcript a number of interesting points emerge.

First, it seems that this staff member no longer regards herself as a novice in the use of drama. The sentences 'I never have any bother' and 'the things just seem to grow' imply a confidence that she will have little difficulty in either handling a lesson on an ad hoc basis or in planning what to do in lessons. Secondly, and this is a substantially similar point, she has adopted a rather proprietorial approach towards drama. The 'lessons' developed in the research project have been relegated to the status of occasional props for ideas. And their value has been downgraded - 'we take the lessons a lot further than when you were here'; 'they're a bit too simple for this lot'. Implicit in the downgrading of the lessons is an upgrading of the teacher's own status and ability in relation to drama - 'you should have heard the language I got'; 'it really is terrific that they can give me sometimes'; 'I concentrate on the language'. Thirdly, it is clear that this teacher has developed her own style in relation to the presentation of lessons. The use of the word 'we' in relation to activity, the attempt to include the child who had apparently opted out, her easy acceptance of the joke that she had misread the situation, and her subsequent agreement that all the children should copy the initiative of the child point to an easy relationship with regard to discipline and control in the lesson. This was in marked contrast to her early behaviour when she confessed that she 'hadn't a clue' how to go about the business of teaching drama, and her preference that the researcher continue to present lessons in the testing of the resource pack. Interestingly, too, although she had contributed quite substantially to the resource packs, she clearly did not regard these as being so much her own work as work which was initiated by another - which, in fact, it was. Clearly, however, she places a higher value

on the work which she has subsequently carried out without help.

Traces of this attitude were to be seen in School C also, with staff being anxious to show that they were in control of both the subject matter and conduct of their lessons. And it was almost as if they looked back on the lessons developed during the research period with some disparagement. 'They were alright then, but they're not as good as what we've been able to come up with since' seemed to be the prevailing attitude.

In all three schools, therefore, and as a result of having been involved in the research, staff had become pretty firm 'champions' of drama. The process by which this had happened seemed to be fairly similar in Schools B and C. In both cases, as staff became more confident of their own ability to handle drama work, they began to rely less on suggestions from the researcher and to develop their own ideas, based, it appeared, on very similar principles to those advocated in the teaching materials developed in the project. They had not, for example, extended their repertoire of teaching skills to encompass the more demanding 'Heathcote' or 'Sherbourne' approaches. But they had adopted a rather 'not invented here' attitude to the lessons in the resource pack, while clearly valuing their own efforts at introducing novel themes and ideas within what was essentially the same structure and method of presentation.

In School D there had been a rather different pattern of progress. School D still used the materials to a large extent, and it was clear from the pictures on the walls and the activity of the pupils that there had been little change in the lessons. Where there was a very marked change, however, was in the quality of pupils' spontaneous interactive play. On one visit to the school recently, I watched a group of six to nine year olds playing together for over half an hour. The play itself was well structured and progressed along completely logical lines. It began with one child putting on a policeman's hat. Another then began to make a 'phone call. The language was so garbled that it was impossible to make out what was being said. But, as soon as he put the 'phone down, he said something to the others. They pulled out a camp bed and donned nurses uniforms. The two boys then went and attended to some sort of an accident, and a patient was put to bed. There then followed a prolonged and highly ritualised 'operation', during which the concentration of the children never wavered. The patient in the bed was a boy. But the

nurse pounded on his chest and produced a baby (a black doll) which was handed to the 'mother' with obvious joy by all concerned. The teacher's remark -

"They've got the wrong sex, the wrong colour, and the wrong place! Their sex education may be lousy. But what do you think of that play? A far cry from the first lot, eh?"

It was clear from her tone of voice that she was very proud of the pupils' play ability. But it also seemed that she was taking little credit for this herself. On further questioning, it appeared that a trained nursery nurse had been allocated to the school on a temporary basis, for a year. She had been given training in drama as part of her nursery nurse course, and was very keen to work on it, and to encourage the children to engage in dramatic play. This particular group of children were quite considerably 'brighter' than the group who had participated in the research project and, under the guidance of the nursery nurse, had, in the teacher's words 'taken to drama like ducks to water'. It was interesting to see how the staff in this school had become totally 'converted' to the value of drama as 'play' and were not particularly concerned over what children learned as a result. Their main criterion for its value had become participation in the experience itself. They were content to use the materials more or less unadapted as they were regarding them more as a stimulus for the children's own spontaneous play, than for any other purpose.

It was also interesting to note that all of those staff who were primary school trained had changed their attitude regarding the relative difficulty of presenting drama at primary or special school level. Whereas before they had felt that it would be easier to take drama with a group of primary children who could understand and use language and who would quickly learn what was expected of them in a drama session, they were now convinced that, in organisational terms at least, it was easier to take drama with mentally handicapped pupils. The reasons they gave were that the small numbers made it easy to oversee the whole group at the one time. The fact that children entered into the work with such enthusiasm was rewarding in special schools where it was good to see pupils taking an interest in their environment. But they felt that the same degree of enthusiasm would, in the primary school, lead to so much noise and chaos that it would be difficult to maintain any order or discipline in the classroom. This comparison was particularly interesting in the light of their earlier comments regarding

one of their reasons for not using drama in their special school teaching - namely, their fear of chaos developing! Evidently, although they had proved to their own satisfaction that they could take drama with their classes in special school, their old mistrust of their ability to do so was still persisting in their attitude to the primary school. The fact that they were still wary of 'chaos' in the primary classroom suggests that the premise that staff will not be able to assess drama until they have had personal experience of teaching it is supported to some extent. In the area in which they had had personal experience of taking drama with their classes staff had clear ideas of its potential value to them and their pupils. And they were also aware of the limitations of it. They were not, however, prepared to generalise this knowledge to the primary sector and, in order to judge whether it was or was not easy to teach within the primary sector, staff seemed to require personal experience of doing so.

Changes in Teaching Practice as a Result of the Project

It has already been noted that one of the changes that occurred as a result of staff's participation in the project was their adoption of drama as a regularly timetabled activity. Their change in attitude towards its experiential value was another obvious change, while their confidence in their ability to tackle and develop the work was in marked contrast to their earlier, tentative approach to their own skill, and their present mistrust of their own ability to exercise this skill in a different kind of teaching situation.

There were, however, a number of other, rather more subtle changes in general teaching practice. Some staff were quite openly aware and explicit about these. Other staff made not mention of them, or else denied that changes had occurred. For example, the teacher in School C and one of the staff in School B noted that they had adopted a much 'livelier' classroom manner in general since the inception of the project. As the class teacher in School C said -

"I never really thought about 'making noises'. And if I had I'd probably have thought I was going potty. I mean, the other night I was standing doing the dishes and I'm rubbing away and saying to myself 'zinty tinty tuppeny bun, the cook went out to have some fun'. My husband thought I'd gone mad. But I was actually enjoying the rhythm of the words. That's something I'd never have thought of before. And I'm sure it's helped me just to make all these exaggerated sounds in the stories. Well, I think it has anyway. I feel as if I sound better, if you know what I mean."

The teacher in School B remarked that she had previously been a bit worried if the children were moving around the room too freely and making a noise. She was concerned in case the head teacher (whose room was next door) thought she was incompetent. And, on a couple of occasions when the head teacher had popped in to see what was going on she had felt that she was being criticised. Now she thinks that the head teacher was simply interested and she had the confidence to let the children move around and 'even' to be 'really' boisterous and noisy sometimes, because she feels that it is controlled movement and noise which she can put a stop to at any time simply by feeding new information into the group activity. This has spilled over into her general class management which, she feels, has become rather more relaxed and less restrictive, with the result that she appears to have fewer confrontations with the child in the class who is inclined to be difficult to manage. Whether there is a connection between her attitude to drama and her present classroom manner is difficult to say. She might have evolved this style in any case regardless of having been involved in the drama project. But, watching her at work with the class, it does seem as if her interactions with pupils are more supportive and less restrictive than they were in the early stages of the project.

The other member of staff in School B did not feel that her teaching practice had changed in any way as a result of being involved in the project, but agreed that her colleague's manner had changed from one of 'shyness' to 'confidence'. In fact this member of staff did not appear to have changed in her general approach, except in so far as her ability to present drama was concerned. And, even here there was no marked change as she generally took a supportive role in any drama work, leaving the more active presentation to her colleague. She said she thought drama was 'very good for the children'; she said she would be active in its presentation if she had sole charge of a class; and she did contribute to the discussion and planning in the course of the project. It was never entirely clear from her general behaviour and her manner whether she wholeheartedly agreed with what she said, or whether she was simply accepting the general ethos of enthusiasm for the work, without necessarily sharing in that enthusiasm herself.

One of the staff in School D had noted considerable changes in her general practices since she had been involved in the project,

but, although she suggested that some of these were occasioned by the project (her varied use of reinforcers, and her interaction with children in play being two particular examples), it was impossible to judge whether this was so since she had been very inexperienced at the start and her personal style would have developed over time in any case. The other staff member in School D noted a very marked change in her own attitude to the value of intervention in play - not simply dramatic play, but play in general. She said the drama project whetted her interest in the value of interaction in play, and the work of the nursery nurse increased this interest. And she has now read a great many books on the subject and attended a one-day conference run by a local college of education. This did seem to be borne out in her general interactions which had increased both in the amount of time she spent with individual children and in the nature of the comments she made to them. Again, however, it must be noted that she had, even at the start, been one of the staff members who spent a considerable amount of time working with and encouraging the less able children. What appeared to have occurred was an extension and consolidation of her earlier behaviour rather than a radical change in behaviour or attitude patterns.

The head teacher in School C has now moved to another, larger special school. She requested both packs of material for use in that school, and drama appears as a regular activity for both young and older pupils. She said that her new staff seemed a bit surprised when she suggested that drama was 'on the menu, as it were' but that they simply accepted that she was a 'new broom, and got on with it'. It is not yet known how this work is going, but, according to the head teacher, staff appear to be coping well with presenting the material, though they seem reluctant to depart from the text of lessons or to try out any ideas not in the packs.

Staff's Perception of the Limitations of Drama

In the main, staff's perceptions of the limitations of drama were, in themselves, limited by the extent to which staff were prepared to look beyond the methods and activities suggested in the packs, to those which had been proposed and demonstrated as possible methods in the early stages of the project. For example, staff did not really accept that drama could be used by them with their pupils as a means of developing their pupils' problem solving ability. And, indeed, in the developed materials there is little emphasis on this aspect, in

spite of the fact that much of the current literature on drama sees this as one of the more important contributions drama may make to a child's development. As indicated earlier, this lack of emphasis may be attributed to the fact that the methods which staff were prepared to try were not those which were ideally suited to this form of drama presentation. Staff's view of the limitation in this case is, therefore, coloured by their view of what they would be able to attempt in the presentation of drama, and is not necessarily a true picture of the limitations of drama in a different teaching context.

On the other hand, staff had found that with special school children it was difficult simply to 'burst' into drama, and to use drama spontaneously as an additional method of teaching other subjects. They found that they had to prepare the ground and let the children know that it was time for drama before starting dramatic activity. This was feasible when embarking upon the 'half-hour drama lesson'. But if this degree of presentation was embarked on each time an idea of acting out presented itself in the course of general teaching throughout the day, a great deal of time could be wasted, both in setting up the dramatic activity and in winding it down at the end. Staff suggested, therefore, that there was a limit to the extent to which drama was useful as an additional methodology outwith the timetabled drama period. Interestingly, Stenhouse made a similar point at the 1981 Annual Working Conference of the National Association for the Teaching of Drama. He argued that -

"drama is a discipline, not a way of teaching anything but a way of exploring human acts and social situations. It fits education, it fits the conditions of education as many disciplines don't It's an occasion, not a continuous thing. Dramatic action is a complete and bounded world of thinking with its own dynamic and its own principles Drama is a form of activity bounded in time and space. It tells its tale through the imitation of human behaviour or the representation of human behaviour It is about tutored sensitivities towards the relationship between materials and their use in this activity Drama in education depends on understanding drama, knowing about education is not enough."

(Stenhouse, 1982; p.30/31)

The conference document shows that the delegates at the conference did not take up Stenhouse's point about drama being 'bounded in time and space' in such a way that it 'fits' the timetabled period in schools. Nor did it take up the point that drama is not primarily directed towards teaching specific facts, but is, rather, a means of encouraging personal experience of what specific facts may mean in

relation to other concepts and environmental circumstances. It may be that the reason for these omissions was the fact that the majority of delegates were specialist drama staff who would be accustomed to working in timetabled 'slots', rather than general staff who have been encouraged to see in drama a method of teaching which can be used in other subject areas such as history, religion, or geography. Because the specialist is geared towards the teaching of drama, it may be difficult for the specialist to appreciate the 'change of gear' necessary for the generalist to make in moving from imparting facts about history or some other subject to acting out these facts in such a way that their personalised meaning is made plain. Whether this is perceived as a problem in mainstream schools would require verification, but staff within the special schools collaborating in this project, certainly felt that there were limits to the extent to which drama could usefully be employed spontaneously in the teaching of other subjects.

Staff made an additional point in this context. They noted that while it may be enjoyable for children to act out an idea introduced in the language development session, this is best done outwith the language development sessions. They suggested that the introduction of an acting out activity during the actual language developed programme sessions could mean that the structure of the language development programme became less defined and the presentation of learning less systematic. Whereas, if the acting out of these ideas is introduced at another time as a separate drama lesson there appears to be more transfer of effect, with the learning introduced by one mode being reinforced by the other. Thus staff suggested that the language development programmes they were using represented a relatively efficient, rapid and systematic means of introducing specific items of vocabulary and syntax. They suggested that, while it was possible to introduce additional and specific vocabulary in the course of a drama lesson, the learning was more haphazard, slower and less systematic. As they saw it, the strength of drama lay less in its ability to generate specific items of vocabulary as in its ability to generate in children a desire to use language and/or gesture as means of communicating interests and information rather than simply needs or physical wants. This seems to provide some support, in a naturalistic context, for the laboratory findings of Dansky who, it was argued earlier in the thesis, found that -

"exploration training (very similar to the language developed programmes being used within the schools) increases a child's tendency to gain specific information about the specific stimulus properties of his immediate environment, whereas sociodramatic play training does not"

(Dansky, 1980; p.55)

On the other hand, children given sociodramatic play training improved significantly over the other groups in tests designed to measure associative fluency, comprehension, recall and construction of sequentially organised and causally related events. In the present project it was particularly noticeable that the acting out of events in sequence did seem to help some of the children retell events in the causally related sequence in which they had been acted out. And they did seem to be able to make more connection between cause and effect than had been the case previously.

The only other limitation of the drama process perceived by the staff within the schools was one which was practical rather than theoretical. It has already been noted that Heathcote and others have mentioned the need to work at 'high energy and low pace'. Staff felt that the specialist teacher might either be able to expend less energy, or, alternatively, might find it less tiring because of her commitment to and ability in playing a part of acting out a role. But they felt that general staff would be unable to present drama more than once or twice a week and still have the energy left over for other teaching areas! On the other hand, they were surprised at the extent to which the children could maintain concentration in acting out over longer periods than staff would have believed possible for some of the children. And this created a slight problem in that children were still fresh and keen to continue with the work when staff had, quite frankly, had enough! Hence the need to find some means of declimaxing lessons and indicating to pupils when a lesson was about to terminate.

The other area where staff might have regarded drama as being of limited value was in the teaching of those pupils who did not respond to the drama process. It has, for example, been noted that fourteen of the twenty pupils responded sufficiently well for a change to be recorded in their charts, three made small and isolated gains, insufficiently significant as to be recorded on the charts. The other three made no gains in any of the predicted directions.

Children Who Made Little or No Gains

Of the three children who showed no gain over the trial period, one has already been considered in some detail in the previous chapter. Eric (see Case Study, p.359) was one child who did not find engaging in drama an enjoyable and rewarding experience, and who showed no changes in behaviour over the trial period which could be attributed to drama. (Whether the presence of drama in the classroom has had a catalytic effect on his art work is open to conjecture and would require more verification before it could be claimed.) The other two children who showed no change over the trial period and who have continued to be either apathetic to or resistant to drama since were a very seriously handicapped and withdrawn girl in School C, and a cerebral palsied boy, also in School C. The girl has subsequently been transferred to a residential institution and it is not known how she is progressing. The boy is still in the school and has shown little sign of progress generally.

These three children did not appear to share common features which would explain their lack of response to drama. Eric was not, for example, markedly less intelligent than the other children in his group, whereas the girl in this case was. Her speech was also poor, but not worse than that of many of the other children. On the other hand the boy with cerebral palsy has a very specific speech disorder which makes communication of any kind difficult for him, and he may have found communication through his body (as in mime and gesture) just as frustrating as communication by speech, since he had little means of exerting direct neuromuscular control over either. It seemed, therefore, that Eric simply did not like drama. The girl was perhaps developmentally unready for drama, being more akin to the pupils in School A. While the cerebral palsied boy was perhaps limited in his ability to engage in the kinds of drama being presented within the school by virtue of his disability.

Of the three children who showed no gains on the charts but who showed isolated instances of change, one had showed little evidence of enjoyment within the actual class lessons, but had apparently taken enough in from the lessons as to be able to communicate something of it to her parents and elder sisters. Her father, in particular, seemed to feel that she had become more communicative over the year and he was keen to use and develop drama techniques with her in the home.

Whether her enhanced communicative ability was due to drama or simply a feature of her gradual development over the year is a moot point. She was one of the oldest children in her teaching group and had been in the school and exposed to encouragement and teaching over a prolonged period. It may be that she had simply developed to the point where the general teaching was beginning to have an effect. On the other hand, the fact that she had communicated about drama more than about other aspects of the curriculum suggested that the stimulation of drama work may have contributed. The other two children were relatively passive and, although they joined in drama lessons, there was little sign that they had assimilated anything of the lessons into their spontaneous repertoire of behaviours - other than an occasional instance of related play.

Staff did not consider that these children's responses showed that drama was of limited value. Rather, they suggested that it would be unrealistic to expect a 100% response rate from any teaching programme with their pupils. Staff seemed to have found the rate of response to the drama work acceptable to them as being of value in developing pupils' linguistic and play skills. Indeed, about half of the staff indicated that they had found the rate of response more than acceptable in that they had been able to elicit interest and evoke a response from one or two of the more passive and withdrawn pupils who had, in the past, failed to respond to other teaching methods and programmes of work.

The Response of Older Pupils to Pack Two

So far, we have looked only at the responses of the pupils and staff involved in the development and testing of the first resource pack. It has been noted, however, that the material was developed in two stages and that a second pack of resources for older pupils was researched and developed in the later stages of the research project.

Features of Pack Two

It has been noted also that in many ways Pack Two was similar to the first pack. The narrative framework was retained, and the same characters were used in order to maintain continuity between the two packs and to allow ideas from either to be combined in a variety of ways by staff in other schools. It was assumed that this would add to the flexibility of the material, especially where there were

teaching groups of considerably mixed ability. In the second pack, however, there was less emphasis on sound and perceptual training in the stimuli presented, and much more emphasis on making pupils aware of the people and events in their wider social environment.

In the dramatic activities there was more emphasis on role-play of a less stereotyped nature. Children were not simply asked to act out the arm-waving, traffic controlling characteristics of a policeman, but to adopt the perspective of a policeman and to extend their awareness of how he can help the community in other ways. As indicated earlier, although there was still an emphasis on the communication process, specific practice in speech sounds was a much less important aspect of the work than the use of real language in practical situations.

The ancillary materials provided were also similar to those included in Pack One. Again, examples of art work which could be tried by pupils and which could provide a link with home were included as a useful means of encouraging tangible links with home. Again, too, sheet music and a tape of songs for the lessons were included. These, however, were included mainly for use with those pupils who were operating at lower developmental levels and who were still lacking in much produced speech. It had been found that songs related to the drama work could provide a useful 'way in' with those pupils who found some difficulty in responding right away to dramatic stimuli.

The Aims of Pack Two

Although staff were still very much concerned with the development of communication skills in older pupils, their aims for pupils at this level centred around what one teacher described as 'communication for survival'. It was recognised that many of the pupils would never be able to lead a 'normal' life or to integrate fully into the community, and some would require some measure of continuing care for the greatest part of their adult lives. Nevertheless, staff felt that with the older and better pupils there was the possibility of their developing some measure of autonomy in certain areas of their lives. In Schools C and D in particular pupils were encouraged to make shopping trips to local supermarkets and to buy items requested by either staff or parents. Even so, staff felt that pupils were relatively unaware of how to choose clothing or any other item on the basis of 'style' and 'preference' rather than simply function. This was an area towards which the drama work was directed.

At this stage, also, although we are still interested in helping pupils develop their skill in the process of acting out, our main concern was on the use of this process to simulate and explore wider issues and themes. There was, therefore, less emphasis on the development on spontaneous dramatic play as an outcome of lessons, and more emphasis on the use of role-play within lessons as a means of extending both language and experience.

With the older pupils, therefore, the expected outcomes were even less precise than those for younger pupils and less capable of being encapsulated in terms of expected behaviours. Older pupils have already been exposed to several years of education within the school. Some have progressed steadily over this period, while others have progressed little or have remained at a very low developmental stage. It was considered, therefore, that the impact of the work with old pupils might be expected to be considerably more varied than that with younger pupils who could have much further to go in realising their developmental potential. This is not to imply that we felt that the older pupils were incapable of further development, but rather a realistic assessment, based on past progress, that we would be unwise to expect too much from the work when dealing with those pupils who had consistently failed, over a number of years, to make significant progress.

The types of learning we hoped for from the work at this level, therefore, varied greatly according to the ability of the pupils concerned. In general, the areas in which we hoped to see some improvement, and towards which lessons were primarily directed, were -

With the More Able Pupils

a. an increased ability to develop and sustain a role in role-play situations involving enactment of previous experience and rehearsal for future experience;

b. evidence, within the lessons, that such role-rehearsal and enactment has contributed to increased understanding of social situations such as those present in the lessons - eg. the use of the telephone; an enhanced appreciation of the more personal factors of preference involved in shopping; the ability to choose appropriate clothing for different social occasions etc.

c. an increase in language flow resulting from the stimulation provided within the role-play activities;

With the More Withdrawn, Less Verbal or Less Able Pupils

d. participation in the lessons and, possibly some increase in spontaneous dramatic play;

e. a possible increase in the use of language or gesture.

As can be seen, our expectations for the less able, older pupils were lower than those for the younger pupils. There were a number of reasons for this. First, the wide differences in ability already mentioned, the slow rates of previous progress in some pupils, and the passivity of others, all mitigated against a sudden and rapid improvement. Secondly, although we have argued that dramatic play is a naturally occurring feature of normal child development, this type of play tends to decrease with increasing maturity and to be replaced by more structured forms of ritualised make-believe play with clearly defined roles, rules and relationships. As children mature, they are likely to engage in less spontaneous dramatic activity and to be more interested in other activities such as hobbies, which may, or may not, include participation in some form of drama. Some of the older mentally handicapped children appeared to have very little capacity to understand and engage in spontaneous dramatic play - mainly, it was suspected, because of a lack of structured opportunity for such play in their earlier years. On the other hand, it is less socially acceptable for an older child to attempt to engage adults, or even other, younger children, in this form of play, and the child who does so outwith school is likely to risk rebuff and suspicion. Thus, while we felt that it could be helpful to their overall development if children learned how to engage in drama, we did not wish to place them in the position of being laughed at, rebuffed or treated with suspicion by other 'normal' children because they wanted to engage in the kind of play which 'normal' children outgrow by their teens. For this reason we concentrated on the more practical outcomes of the work, except in the case of those very backward pupils who really seemed to need to develop their dramatic play abilities, albeit late in their cycle of development. At the same time, it seemed to be unrealistic to expect that such children would develop markedly, given their existing limitations.

In the development of lessons, therefore, there was an attempt to introduce topics which could be covered at a variety of levels. Thus, for example, the first lesson in the series deals with finding a lost dog in the park. With the least able pupils this could be treated in a similar way to episodes within the first pack, and the emphasis being

placed on the dog and the reactions of the humans to it. With the more able pupils, however, we were able to focus more on the concept of lost and found, on discussion of what these concepts meant, and on additional role-play involving the reactions to the discovery of a loss - how important was the loss; what had caused it; what would happen if the lost object was never found; how could we go about finding it, etc? This type of work could reinforce the additional concept of 'caring' and lead on to talk and action about how to look after money, pets, etc, and on different ways of taking care of things under different circumstances to ensure that they did not get lost. Similarly, the lesson involving the plumber fixing a burst pipe could be treated as a simple dramatisation of the story or could be developed to allay fears which might occur when faced with an unexpected emergency; or to introduce the idea that certain tools are useful if used in the correct manner but need to be handled with care to avoid accidents. Thus, even more than in the materials for younger pupils, it was expected that the way the materials were used by staff in field trials would differ according to the mix of pupils in their care. This range of possible outcomes, and range of possible presentations of material, all contributed to the imprecision of the aims for materials with older pupils and made it more difficult to evaluate the affects of these in precise terms.

Rationale for the Development of Pack Two

Given that expectations for these materials were more varied than those for younger pupils, and given the constraints which make it difficult for some of the older pupils to participate in drama - (it was argued earlier that poor verbal ability may make mime and movement more suitable, but that it may be difficult to get pupils to engage in mime and movement as a result of a natural lethargy and disinclination to engage in movement work; it was also argued that the hyperactivity of an older child may lead to more uncontrolled and uncontrollable behaviour which may present problems in an active vocal activity like drama) - it is tempting to ask whether there is, in fact, sufficient reason to justify the development of resources at this level. Staff within the collaborating schools believed that this was for three main reasons. First, resources for use with older pupils are even less abundant than are materials for younger pupils. From staff's point of view, therefore, the development of such resources could provide an additional source of ideas and an additional method of teaching with

older pupils. Secondly, the early work done with older pupils had suggested that, if the initial passivity of some pupils can be overcome, the work can provide not only an opportunity to introduce ideas about social or communicative activity, but can also provide some form of emotional reaction which seemed further to reduce the general level of lethargy and passivity shown. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, staff made it very clear that they wished to continue with the development and research of material for older pupils and regarded the opportunity to do so as part of the original 'bargain' entered into in the early stages of the project. Moreover, staff who had participated in the field trials of pack one were expecting to have a second pack made available to them, and would have considered it a breach of the contract on the researcher's side if this failed to be forthcoming. This issue will be returned to and discussed in more detail in a later section. It is simply mentioned in passing here as an illustration of the pressures which urged that, in spite of the possible difficulties and constraints in presenting and evaluating drama at this stage in the school, staff considered the development of resources for this level a worthwhile exercise.

The Development of Pack Two

The method of development adopted was similar to that in the first stage. Following discussion with staff, the researcher prepared a first draft of the lessons proposed. This was then modified or adapted on the basis of how pupils reacted to it in practice and on how staff used the material. Staff's suggestions were included, both in the dramatic activities and in follow up work. In the materials, some of the follow-up activities were given in detail, others were merely included in the form of suggestions for ways of linking the work to other areas and for creating centres of interest of projects based on the themes introduced. As a result of staff's change of attitude regarding the experiential value of drama, however, the second pack is much more representative of a curriculum in drama per se, although the drama ideas are set within a context of social skill and communication development which places emphasis on the subject matter in lessons and the ways in which the form of experience provided by drama can be juxtaposed with real experience in visits or in working with materials and other properties.

The development of the second pack was carried out primarily in Schools B and C, because there were so few older pupils in School D

who were capable of responding to work which was more advanced than that in pack one. The staff in School D did contribute their advice and comment, however, and gave a number of suggestions for follow-up ideas - especially in art. As the younger pupils who were involved in the first pack have come up through the school, the second pack has been introduced to them with some success. And, as has already been noted, the children in this school are becoming quite skilled in the process of dramatic activity.

In Schools B and C, the number of pupils involved in the second pack was sixteen. In School B the work was presented either by the researcher or by the class teacher or instructress. In School C the work was presented either by the researcher or by the head teacher who, in this school, was a teaching head with responsibility for a class of older pupils.

Assessment Methods for Pack Two

The charts which had been developed to produce a profile of strengths and weakness in the younger pupils were less appropriate for the kinds of very varied outcomes expected from the older pupils. Because the expected outcomes were so diverse and situation dependent we felt that the method of evaluation represented by the charts was inappropriate to the information we wished to obtain. With the older pupils we relied even more heavily on anecdotal evidence based on observation of pupils during and after lessons. Since it seemed to be important also to assess how far the materials would be suitable to the needs of staff, there was also an emphasis on staff comments on the ease or difficulty represented in the materials. There was another reason for dispensing with the evaluation charts, and for not developing other methods for charting and monitoring progress in older pupils. However, consideration of this reason has been postponed to a later section in order to avoid repetition in the text at this point. Suffice it to say, that, since there were no formal assessment procedures adopted for the second pack, the assessment noted has to be in the nature of 'trends' and 'individual behaviours' rather than as a numerical index of the pupils who did or did not improve throughout the research and development period.

The Trends Observed

The trends which we had noted in the early stages of work with pupils continued to be borne out in this phase of the work, with the

more able pupils displaying eagerness and enjoyment in the work, coupled with a continuously improving ability to develop the role-play sequences within the work with less teacher direction than formerly. Such pupils often used some of the sequences of the drama lesson in developing 'conversations' on the telephone, or into the tape-recorder on their own following lessons. Most parents also reported an increase in language flow as a result of this work. Those children who were in institutional care appeared to show less evidence of an increased desire to talk about the work outwith school. It was not clear whether this was due to the fact that an institutional environment might make it more difficult for them to do so; whether it was a result of institutionalisation; or whether the drama work was less stimulating to these pupils - perhaps because of the settings which were, to some extent, based firmly on the concept of the 'normal' home rather than the institution.

Some of the most able pupils were so keen to show their drama work that we developed the Christmas plays described earlier. These grew out of improvised classroom drama and generated so much conversation both during and after the event that they were felt to be very worthwhile by staff. They were pleased both with the degree of confidence shown by pupils and also by the language engendered among those pupils (the younger or more passive) who elected to be audience rather than participants.

In School B, where there was a higher proportion of the more able pupils and only one very difficult child behaviourally, the teacher found that it was relatively easy to encourage the more passive children to participate in the class drama work. Their participation in the work did not, however, appear to have any marked effect on their general behaviour. In School C there was one very passive child who only participated in the drama work on about five occasions, and in relatively minor ways. In this same class, however, there were three boys who enjoyed the work so much that most of their free time was spent in activities associated with it.

Staff felt that, as a methodology for introducing topics and generating interest in these topics, drama does appear to be useful at this level. Its ability to generate enthusiasm, interest and language would appear to be most marked in the case of those pupils who have missed out on the development of dramatic play at an earlier stage but who are ready, both developmentally and linguistically, to take part

in this. It can encourage the more passive or withdrawn child to be less so within the dramatic activity but does not appear to affect the extent of a child's withdrawal in other situations except in a small number of cases.

The specific learning which occurs as a result of the work may well depend on the purpose for which the work is being used and on the way in which this is developed, reinforced or extended through other methods of learning or through real life experience. In our sample, we did find that the more able pupils were beginning to be able to express preferences when shown pictures of certain types of clothing, furniture and soft furnishings, and were starting to be able to give a reason for this preference. One child, for example, chose a red velvet skirt in preference to a red tweed skirt because she much preferred the texture of the sample of velvet to the sample of tweed she was shown. In her words, the tweed was 'itchy' and the velvet 'soft'. In acting out a shopping scene she was very clear and specific in her description of the imaginary garment she was buying - it had to be red velvet and long.

By the end of the year most of the children were able to recognise signs such as road signs indicating danger and a variety of the different symbols used in restaurants and shops to denote public toilets. An independent visitor was able to understand and respond appropriately to tape recorded messages made by the children. This represented a major step forward in clarity of expression as some of the children had been very slurred and inarticulate at the start. The work with the tape recorder in the imagined settings of the drama lesson had clearly had an effect here. Similarly, as a result of the practice with telephones the children could simulate simple telephone calls in which they were able to give at least their name and address and, in some cases, brief details of a message such as 'my mother is ill'; or 'I am not well. I will not be at school today'. Obviously, other schools, placing emphasis on other areas of learning to be achieved, would expect to see different outcomes from those in our sample. In general terms, however, it did appear that a considerable amount of repetition and reinforcement by a variety of means, in addition to drama, was necessary to effect the type of learning described above, and even then it was more likely to occur among the more able pupils.

With some of the pupils it did appear that lack of linguistic ability was going to be a continuing difficulty throughout life. In

School C, for example, there were a couple of older pupils who were still operating at linguistic levels which were lower than those of most of the younger children, both in terms of language comprehension and in the use of language. In practice, the work designed for younger pupils appeared to be better suited to the linguistic levels of these pupils, but the subject matter was clearly not particularly rewarding to them and they did not appear to enjoy the younger themes. Over the year, therefore, staff tried to ensure that less able or more withdrawn pupils were not prevented from understanding and participating in the work by the enthusiastic responses of the more able pupils who kept volunteering answers or participation in the work. They tried to provide opportunity for the less able to join in without being too 'exposed'. And there were some occasions when we found that if we ignored the less able children they would try to join in of their own accord, apparently attracted by the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the others. With the most withdrawn pupils active encouragement to join in could have the effect of making them shy away, whereas ignoring them in this way sometimes achieved the desired participation.

Staff Attitudes

It is difficult to evaluate staff attitudes at this stage of the work for two reasons. First, having spent some considerable time with staff and having become very familiar with them it was more difficult to be objective about their statements, attitudes and practices. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, by the time the second pack was in the research and development stage staff had been convinced that drama was a worthwhile addition to their repertoire of curricular activities. The work with the younger children had resulted in a general feeling among staff that drama was within their capabilities and that it achieved a better response from pupils than some other methods of approach. The dramatic stimulus did appear to attract pupils' attention and they were able to sustain concentration on a theme which had been acted out in a variety of ways in class. Staff were expecting that the drama work would have an effect on the development of language in the older pupils and were expecting that these pupils would benefit in terms of social learning from the work. That they did so may have been a result of the capacity of drama to generate interest, attention and recall. It may also have been that staff's attitudes acted as a self-fulfilling prophesy. Because they expected to see improvements, they were pre-

disposed to notice and make inferences on improvements which, under other circumstances, might have been missed or interpreted differently. Thus, it is difficult to estimate accurately the extent to which staff's perception of benefits was borne out in practice. What is not in doubt, however, is the fact that pupils did make gains, and that, in the case of the work with the telephone and tape-recorder, and in the case of some of the social learning achieved, these gains could unequivocally be attributed directly to the work done in drama lessons and reinforced in other forms of learning. Where it is difficult to be precise, is in determining the extent to which the gains would have occurred from the use of drama alone. We know that the use of the other methods used in the school - visits, discussion, practical work etc - can have some success in encouraging children to be more socially aware. We also know that the introduction of drama increased the results obtained quite markedly in some cases. But as there were very few areas in which drama was the sole method of introducing or exploring a theme or piece of information, it is not possible to say that the outcomes achieved could be attributed only to the use of drama. But the introduction of drama did appear to have a synergetic effect in that the sum total of the learning achieved by all the methods over the year was, in the opinion of staff, in advance of that achieved over the previous year when the drama programme had not been in operation.

Conclusions and Summary

On the basis of our observations and recorded data over the research and development period, it did appear that the drama work was having some effect on pupils' abilities in the areas aimed at. No numerical index of the extent or statistical significance of this was attempted. We could not, therefore, give an indication of the predictability or probability with which such changes might be expected to occur in other children of similar abilities when exposed to drama on a regular basis over a similar period of time. However the fact that there was some consistency in the effects noted across schools among pupils with similar aetiologies and developmental levels suggested that the effects we were recording were not wholly dependent on the style or ability of the teacher since in all three schools the material was being presented by different people with different degrees of experience. We were, however, all using the material in roughly the same way and this may have contributed to the consistency of effects noted. Moreover, the

researcher's personal teaching style may have had a biasing effect on the way in which material was presented by the others since it was her style which had been employed in demonstrations of practical work throughout the previous year. Watching staff at work, it did seem that there was some similarity between the researcher's teaching style and that which had been adopted by the staff in the collaborating schools.

The assessment charts which were used as a means of identifying pupils' general capabilities at the start, during and after the programme, show that at least 70% of the pupils showed changes in behaviour which were regular enough or marked enough to warrant a higher category rating on their charts in one or more areas. With such a small sample of pupils, and without an indicator of the statistical significance of the gains made, such percentage figures are relatively valueless as a comparative measure. But they do confirm that the changes we had aimed for were occurring in the predicted directions.

Examining these charts with the value of experience and hindsight, it is clear that they represent an even more crude evaluation tool than they appeared to do at the time. However, as a means of generating a fairly large amount of varied information about a small sample quickly and easily, they do fulfil their function. They provide a baseline for individual children and point up trends in operation at the start of the programme - for example, the fact that, at the start, there were more pupils who appeared to participate in and attend to music and movement activities on a regular basis than was the case with art and craft and other group activities. The point we failed to note, however, was that these trends may be as much representative of the nature of the provision made for the different activities within the schools as of the pupils' capacity for engaging in them. It is, therefore, necessary to interpret the charts on the basis of the different conditions obtaining with regard to each of the activities mentioned. In general, it appeared that more music and movement was done within all the schools, and since there was a qualified music teacher on the school rolls, the pupils' apparent aptitude for this form of work may simply represent a learned response to more or better teaching in this area over a prolonged period. This meant that, in some cases, pupils could not show an improved ability to participate in music and movement activities since they had already been recorded in the charts at the highest category of involvement - 'always participates with enthusiasm

and enjoyment'. But, in the case of dramatic play for which there had been little previous opportunity, the 'improved' ability recorded on the chart might simply represent a response to improved opportunity.

In spite of the limitations of the assessment charts, however, the teachers, who are ultimately people who will adopt or discard the innovation, appeared to feel that the results of their drama teaching, using the resource materials, were sufficiently positive to warrant releasing the resource materials for more general testing. The anecdotal evidence obtained from those parents who contributed information on pupils' out of school behaviours, appeared to support staff's assessment of the value of the work. Staff were sufficiently convinced of the value of the work to wish to continue to use drama with their classes after the research project had officially terminated. They also felt that the resource materials developed in the project would be capable of being used by staff who had not been involved in close collaboration with a specialist drama teacher as they were sufficiently detailed and self-explanatory, and as the suggested methods of presentation should not lie outwith the capabilities of general staff. Similarly, the methods of assessing and monitoring progress suggested in the materials were not, staff felt, unduly time consuming or difficult and ought, therefore, to represent a method of assessment which staff in other schools would be prepared to accept.

Staff were confident that the effect of the resource materials, as we had used them, was not negligible in

- a. encouraging the most passive and withdrawn pupils to take an interest in and respond in movement a speech to verbally presented information within lessons;
- b. enabling the less verbal pupils to increase their production of purposeful gesture;
- c. encouraging pupils to take an interest in the production of sound either in words, phrases, speech rhymes, songs or single sounds;
- d. encouraging language flow among the more verbal and vocal pupils in
 - i. play with other children
 - ii. in relaying information to parents or other adults.

There was less evidence to show that pupils had increased their language flow in interactions with staff or other pupils in more general terms. Similarly, although engaging in dramatic play within lessons had helped some of the more withdrawn pupils to participate in teacher-

directed group activity, there was less evidence to support a claim that this would lead to less withdrawn behaviour outwith an adult-directed situation. The practice represented by the presentation of opportunities for 'babble' had not led to the improved clarity of articulation among the less able pupils which had been predicted. The use of telephones and tape-recorder to provide similar opportunities for older pupils had resulted in some improvement in articulation. In a small number of cases this improvement was quite marked. It may be that the younger pupils still lack the muscular control necessary for clear speech, while the older pupils can achieve that control but, through lack of practice over a long period, do not habitually do so. Similarly, while drama can achieve an increase in specific vocabulary related to lessons, it does not appear to be the most efficient means of introducing single items of vocabulary or syntax. More structured and systematic language development programmes appear to be superior in effecting this type of learning. Pupils do appear to generalise information picked up in the drama lesson to other situations, and, especially when the activity used has been one which, like dramatisation, allows for the serial organisation of causally related incidents, pupils do seem to be able to retell information in a logical sequence and with an apparent understanding of the concepts involved.

The older and more able pupils had an improved appreciation of a number of aspects of social behaviour such as the exercise of choice and preference in shopping, and the interpretation of mass communication signs and symbols in public places. The combination of drama work, plus provision of experience with real materials or a real situation or visit, seemed to be more effective than the experience of reality on its own. The reason appeared to be the additional opportunity afforded by the drama lesson for recapitulation of past events and rehearsal for future events in an imaginary context in which the most important feature of these events could be highlighted and discussed.

Staff did not find undue difficulty in controlling the behaviour of disruptive or disturbed pupils during the actual drama lessons, but there was nothing to indicate that these pupils' generally disturbed behaviour had changed in any way for the better as a result of participation in the drama work.

Staff felt that drama was a worthwhile addition to their teaching programmes with both older and younger pupils in that the use of drama

added variety to the general curriculum, there appeared to be distinct benefits in terms of pupils' play, communication and social skills, and that drama added to the pupils' quality of life in that it added a dimension in the curriculum to which pupils could look forward with pleasure and could engage in with enjoyment.

Finally, the possible influence of the 'Hawthorne Effect' must be noted in relation both to staff's assessment of the value of the drama programme and to pupils' responses to the programme. Staff may have been enjoying the additional importance and status they were accorded as participants in a research project. Pupils may have been enjoying the extra attention and the novelty of the work. If either of these factors did significantly affect the extent to which pupils improved or staff perceived drama to be instrumental in this improvement, this should be noted not so much as a negation of the findings but rather as a means of highlighting the value of providing pupils with novelty of stimulus, variety and increased attention. Such factors may be insufficiently stressed as general teaching strategies, as may the beneficial effects of involving staff in research in their own classrooms. Rather than dismiss such effects as ones which cloud the issues under consideration, it may be of more practical value to seek to incorporate the Hawthorne effect as a positive element in learning and teaching.

While the Hawthorne effect cannot be discounted, it is a fact that staff continued to note pupil progress after the conclusion of the research programme and it is also a fact that staff have gone on to assimilate drama into their own repertoire of teaching behaviours and to regard themselves as competent in its presentation and assessment. For whatever reasons, therefore, staff have become convinced of the value of drama to them in their teaching and have responded to involvement in the research project by 'adopting' the innovation researched. This is in line with the findings from other collaborations between drama specialists and general staff. The difference in the present case is that the researcher tried to investigate drama, rather than to proselytise for it; tried to maintain an open mind of its value until that value had been demonstrated in practice; was guided by staff's ideas as much as suggesting ideas to staff; and demonstrated lessons as a means of generating critical discussion as much as a means of discovering how pupils would react to the specific methods, activities or subject matter used. The principle guiding previous collaborations between

drama and general staff has tended to be one of proselytising by the drama staff for the adoption of drama by the general staff. While this was not the principle behind the present project, it is possible that, as the researcher is a specialist drama teacher, an element of persuasion was exerted in spite of the attempt to maintain as 'open' a stance as possible. That this could not have had a significant effect on staff's attitude to drama, however, is demonstrated by their reactions to it after the researcher had withdrawn from the scene. Then staff became more 'proprietary' towards drama and, clearly, saw sufficient value in it to warrant its continuation.

In the following chapter we examine the reactions of those staff who used and tested the materials in field trials, and who, in the majority of cases, had contact with the researcher but little or no sustained in-situ guidance and demonstration. The fact that a significant number of these staff have also gone on to adopt drama provides additional support for the view that staff have found it to be of value to them in their teaching and are not simply reacting to persuasion. While the fact that the majority of staff noted similar effects to those noted in the research and development schools suggests that it is possible for staff to introduce drama into their teaching and to arrive at some assessment of its value, without being dependent on the in-situ guidance of a specialist teacher of drama.

CHAPTER 13

The Production, Dissemination and Evaluation of Pack One - An Analysis Based On the Feedback Provided By Staff Involved In the Field Testing

Introduction

In the previous chapter there was an attempt to describe and analyse the reactions of those pupils and staff involved in the initial research and development of the curricular materials. On the basis of this analysis it was argued that the materials could provide a means of teacher self-development - the in-built instruction on methods and assessment providing a means whereby staff might 'learn by doing'. It was also argued that the choice of subject matter, method, activity, and the range of follow-up suggestions provided, should make the material flexibly capable of adaptation by other staff to differing classroom needs. And it was suggested that the materials ought to be relatively easy to use, and capable of being used without being dependent on the sustained presence of a specialist in drama. Since the materials had been designed to be of an appropriate level of difficulty, and geared to the educational capabilities of severely mentally handicapped pupils, it was argued that the materials could provide an effective teaching resource whereby other staff might gain experience of drama and arrive at an assessment of its value to them in their teaching. And it was postulated that, among the younger children at whom the first pack was aimed, staff would see an improvement in the amount and complexity of play behaviours, the participation in the work of even the more passive and withdrawn pupils, an increase in vocalisation among the less able pupils, coupled with an increase in purposeful gesture. It was also postulated that the more able pupils, and, in particular, the more lively Down's children, would show enjoyment of the work and increased language flow as an effect of participation in it.

In this chapter there will be an attempt to examine the reactions of staff within the schools who volunteered to field test the materials. Using the feedback notes provided by these members of staff as illustration of the assessments arrived at, there will be an attempt to describe the reactions of staff involved in field trials and to compare their reactions to the materials (and to the process of drama) with those of staff within the schools involved in the initial research and

development.

It will be argued that there was a high correspondence in a number of areas between the findings of the two groups. Staff in field trials did see an improvement in pupils' play and communication behaviours, and did show an appreciation of pupils' participation in and enjoyment of the work. Staff tended to find materials effective as a learning resource, providing pupils with both education and enjoyment.

It will be argued that although the materials were relatively easy to use and adapt by staff who were working with similar pupils to those within the development schools, they seemed to be less suitable for use with pupils of either higher or lower levels of ability. More able pupils seemed to require a somewhat more open-ended form of drama work, more imaginative themes, and a higher degree of pupil-direction in the work. It was possible to slow down the presentation of material to make it suitable for use with less able pupils, but where such pupils were also hyperactive or behaviourally disturbed, staff found similar problems to those found in School A and the materials were regarded as less useful as a teaching or learning resource.

It will be argued also that the materials did provide a means whereby staff could introduce drama into their teaching repertoires without being dependent on an input of in-situ specialist provision. The majority of those staff who adopted drama as a result of involvement in the field testing also have noted a number of changes in their own range of teaching practices as a result. Among the staff who have not gone on to use drama as a regular part of their on-going curriculum schemes, a few have rejected it as a result of its proving to be inappropriate to either their teaching situation (mainly hospital schools), or inappropriate to the needs of pupils (all the more profoundly handicapped, or hyperactive, behaviourally disturbed). A small number of staff have had to abandon the work as a result of opposition from other staff members within schools where play is not considered to be particularly valuable or where there is a very strict application of behaviourist principles.

Before going on to look at the effects of the materials as reported by staff who used them in field trials, however, there will be a brief resume of a number of points, relating to the methods by which the field sample was arrived at, and to the constraints this placed upon the data collection and analysis. It will, for example, be argued that the field sample was a self-selecting group and, as such, was geographically

more diverse than had been anticipated. This had the advantage of enabling an analysis of responses over a wider cross section of schools and locales; the disadvantage that the collection of data and the provision of feedback had, in a number of cases, to be carried out by telephone and letter rather than in face-to-face contact within the school. Since it was not, in these cases, possible to observe the pupils in action, reliance had to be placed on staff's unsupported information. In a number of cases, however, it was possible to supplement staff's evidence with corroboration either in person, or by some other disinterested party who had occasion to visit the school for other purposes and who could report on their observation of the work in progress. A figure has been given which shows the number and type of users, the extent of feedback received from them, and whether this feedback was corroborated by other means.

The Envisaged Methods for the Selection of a Field Sample

Throughout the whole of the research and development period, the materials - the lesson outlines, the follow-up activities, and ancillaries such as music or illustrations - had been continuously modified and adapted in response to pupils' and staff's reactions to individual lessons and activities. Additional follow-up suggestions made by staff were also tried out, as were ways of simplifying the dramatic activities to make them more accessible to the least able pupils. As a result, we had arrived at what appeared to be a systematic and progressive scheme of work. This scheme was based on centres of interest, each of which was expected to constitute roughly one month's work. Each of these centres of interest was presented in the form of a lesson which was subdivided into a number of parts which could be taken in any order, which could be added to or omitted, and which could be developed in a number of directions. In each of these lessons drama was the central ingredient and the core activity, but other forms of work were included. The entire package was presented as a 'year's course' and it was anticipated that it would take staff roughly one academic year to cover the lessons. It was not, however, anticipated that any member of staff would attempt to cover every aspect of every lesson - the idea being to present staff with an element of choice in the materials.

The actual rewriting of the materials in a form suitable for dissemination was left to the researcher. The researcher also undertook the production of a trial run of fifty copies of the materials, funding for

this having been made available by the Scottish Education Department.

It had been envisaged that a trial run of fifty copies would be sufficient to allow interested parties to inspect and comment on the materials, and to allow for a trial sample of around fifteen to twenty schools. It was also envisaged that these schools would be located within a geographical area which would enable the researcher to visit the schools for the purpose of data collection and feedback. It had been assumed that such a sample would be large enough to generate comparative data but not so large that data gathering and analysis became unwieldy.

The Selection of the Field Sample

The intention had been to approach a number of schools with details of the project and to invite them to participate in field testing. Before this could be done, however, the researcher was asked to participate in a major in-service conference and to describe the work which had been carried out during the course of the project to date. During this talk, and in the practical training session which followed it, the principles on which the research was based were outlined. The fact that resource materials were ready for production was mentioned. The collaborative nature of the work was stressed and an explanation was given of the next stage of the work and the type of involvement which would be asked of those schools who tested the resources in field trials. Almost as an afterthought, an open invitation was given to the teachers in attendance that if anyone was prepared to become involved in the project in the way indicated they should contact the researcher.

It had been anticipated that a few of those present might volunteer and that these could be included in the field testing sample. In the event, however, the response was such that over forty enquiries were received. Some of these were of a general nature and came from educational psychologists, advisers and college lecturers who wished to have a copy of the resources, who wanted to know more about the work, and who were prepared to give professional comment on both. The bulk of the enquiries, however, - a total of 34 - came from ordinary staff members and head teachers working in special schools for severely or profoundly mentally handicapped pupils. Almost every one requested copies of the teaching materials, details of any training courses which might be available, and volunteered their participation in the research programme by using, testing and providing feedback on the programme.

The size of this response, representing, as it did, almost two thirds of those present at the conference, seemed to bear out one of the conclusions arrived at in the early stages of the research project - namely, that there was a sizable number of teachers who were not so much resistant to providing drama for their pupils as lacking in suitable resources to carry out the work. The type of questions asked by staff also seemed to indicate that staff were aware of their lack of knowledge in this area and simply did not know where to begin in the teaching of drama. It would be pure speculation to suggest that those who did not request information were either already knowledgeable, or, conversely, were resistant to drama, since this information was not volunteered and no follow-up to determine this was done.

It emerged that few of those requesting the materials and any previous experience of taking drama on a regular basis with their classes, and very few had had contact with visiting specialists within their schools. Their qualifications ranged from primary school training with or without additional qualifications in special education, to instructors and care assistants, again with or without qualifications and with varying degrees of experience in special education. They came from schools all over Scotland and the institutions in which they were employed covered a representative spectrum of the type of provision available in Scotland for mentally handicapped pupils with the more severe or profound forms of disability. As a group, they formed a fairly good cross section of the population special school staff. They did not, of course, represent a random sample since all were people who had, for whatever reasons, been motivated to attend an in-service training conference and who, in addition, were sufficiently interested in drama as to volunteer to participate in the project.

Drawbacks of the Self-Selected Sample?

It was recognised that if this group were adopted as the sample for field testing this could create problems in communication and data collection arising out of the diversity of geographical locations represented. On the other hand, the fact that the researcher would not be on hand physically to answer questions, to provide in-situ advice or demonstration, or to exert influence on the ways in which materials were used, could possibly produce a situation in which staff would give more realistic appraisal of the practical work of the materials in real-life conditions of use.

The fact that this was a self-selecting group did not appear to constitute a major drawback in that in any project of this kind the researcher can request, but cannot demand, co-operation. Consequently, any group using the resources for field trials would represent a group who had, at the very least, agreed to do so. Such a group might well contain schools where staff had no vested interest in proving the worth of the innovation and who could, therefore, be expected to be more critical of it than a group who were personally motivated to participate in the research. Such schools would not, however, be less biased than a self-selected sample, merely biased in different ways, some of which might not be any more overt and amenable to evaluation than were the biases of potentially interested volunteers.

The size of the group was, however, larger than had been envisaged. This could add to the problems of data collection and analysis, as could the geographical diversity of the group. A group of this size was just containable within the production run envisaged, however, and it was hoped that there might be a positive advantage in the geographical diversity since it would indicate whether resources were applicable to both urban and rural schools of varying sizes and types. It would also, it was assumed, enable comparisons to be made of the types of adaptation made by staff working in different environmental conditions and with varying degrees of personal contact with the researcher. Accordingly, it was decided that, in spite of the possible difficulties in data gathering, this group would form the sample for field testing.

The way in which this sample was arrived at meant that, almost inevitably, an element of central direction was introduced into the project. Although it was clearly spelled out to volunteers that materials were being presented to them for trial, adaptation and comment, rather than as either a full or finished drama curriculum, the fact that the volunteers had not been involved in the initial research and development meant that they had less knowledge of the reasoning employed in the course of the project and the basis on which certain activities or ideas were selected for inclusion. With a smaller sample in a more limited geographical area, the problems of centrality could have been postponed to a later stage in the project. If, however, the innovation is presented in the form of resources which, by their use, seek to change existing practices or to extend them in new or different directions, the users and the initial developers will ultimately become divergent groups.

The initial developers may hope that the new users will continue to adapt and develop the resources, and to use them as a means of testing ideas rather than as firm guidelines for procedures. But the tendency for resources to be regarded as guidelines cannot be overlooked. And, in effect, the acceptance of this group as the sample for field testing represented a short-circuiting of the collaborative process and a more complete and rapid divergence between the initial developers and the users than had been anticipated. It had, for example, been assumed that a relatively small geographical area would enable some contact between the collaborating schools and enable face-to-face discussion of feedback between the different parties involved.

Advantages of the Self-Selected Sample

On the other hand, the acceptance of the volunteer group as the field testing sample did not represent a radical departure from the original research aims and intentions, one of which had been to discover whether it was, in fact, possible to introduce drama by means of a resource pack and whether staff would use such a pack in a variety of ways without being dependent on sustained personal contact and demonstration by a specialist. And, although the researcher could not visit all the schools in order to see the work being done and to obtain feedback at first hand, it was possible to maintain contact by letter and telephone. Moreover, all of the participants attended two general in-service training sessions at which they were able to find out about the general principles of educational drama. And, because the special education sector is a relatively small one, there were a number of opportunities for those participating in the programme to meet each other and to exchange information with each other and with the researcher at courses and conferences held in the various colleges of education.

This type of contact between the participants in the programme and between them and the researcher, is nothing like the series of planned and purposeful meetings which are generally organised to discuss issues in depth, and which appear to characterise collaborative research at the local level. The absence of such meetings, however, reduces the chances that the innovation will be artificially sustained by the proselytising zeal of the instigator of the research. It also reduces the effects which the 'hidden agenda' at such meetings can have on the conduct and attitudes of the participants in the programme. There is, for example,

no pressure to conform, or to prove that one is either superior or different from others in one's assessment or usage of the innovation. Nor is there any need publicly to defend one's useage, or lack of useage of the innovation in order to protect either one's own professional reputation or the reputation of the school to which one is attached. This may result in a situation in which the onus of implementation lies with the participants in the programme rather than with the instigator of the programme. In such a situation, the curriculum offering has to stand or fall on its own merits, and the hypotheses on which it is based have to be sufficiently robust as to be obvious to impartial observers who only need to be personally convinced that the hypotheses have been proved and who do not then require to convince others of the accuracy or otherwise of their assessments and assumptions.

Staff Turn-Over

Finally, any school-based curriculum project must take account of the natural turn-over of staff and the changing environmental conditions which can occur throughout the life of a project. At the present time, and with the implementation of new policies with regard to staffing and staff training following the legislative decisions and recommendations of reports such as The Warnock Report (HMSO, 1978a.) there is considerable movement of staff between schools, into schools, and from schools to training courses and vice versa. This has added to the natural turn-over of staff which one might expect to find with the period of a year to eighteen months. As a result, there was considerable variation in the extent of involvement across schools and among individual members of staff. Generally speaking, when a member of staff went on a training course and expected to return to the same school on completion of the course, the colleague who took her class in her absence continued with the programme and provided comment on it. In some cases this caused a delay between the time when one teacher stopped the work and another re-commenced it. This was particularly the case when the new staff member did not know the pupils in her colleague's class and had to spend some time in finding out about the children before starting on structured programmes of work for the session. Where a teacher expected to be transferred to another school following a training course, she generally asked to retain the curricular materials for her own personal use. If the school wished to continue to be involved in the project, another pack of resources was made available to the school.

Dissemination of the Packs for Field Testing

By the end of 1979 the first package had been researched, developed and tested in the collaborating schools, and, in 1980, was disseminated to the field testing sample. This comprised thirty schools. These represented -

Table 9a - The Field Sample

14	special schools mainly for severely mentally handicapped;
6	special schools with a population of profoundly, severely and multiply handicapped pupils;
5	hospital schools;
5	special classes or special units for either severely or profoundly handicapped pupils and attached to other schools for non-handicapped pupils.

In some cases only one staff member was involved in using and testing the materials. In other cases the involvement extended to other staff members, to parents, and, in the case of one small school, to all of the teachers and pupils within the school. There was, therefore, considerable variation in the extent of involvement across schools and among individual staff within schools. The amount of contact the schools had with the researcher also varied, as did the extent and the nature of the feedback individual schools provided. There were also a number of schools who dropped out of the project in the early stages. Table 9 gives a breakdown of the original sample of thirty and indicates the numbers and types of school which did not continue with the project.

Table 9 - The Original Sample

No. of Schools sent material	30
No. who used materials and provided feedback	23
No. who dropped out of project -	
Special Schools (S.H.H.)	2
Hospital Schools (P.H.H./multiple)	2
Special Classes (P.H.H./multiple)	1
No. who dropped out of project at this stage but rejoined project in the testing of second pack -	
Special Schools (older S.H.H./M.M.H.)	2

The Diffusion Rate

The drop-out and take-up figures are significant in a number of ways. First, those who found themselves unable to use the material in any systematic way and who therefore dropped out of the project were

mainly those institutions whose population comprised more profoundly than severely mentally handicapped pupils. This appeared to support the conclusions arrived at earlier in the project - namely that a population composed primarily of profoundly mentally handicapped pupils reacts less well to the provision of simple classroom drama presented by the class teacher, and may require either other forms of activity or other types of dramatic stimulus. Secondly, those who attempted to use the material designed for use with younger pupils with a class of older pupils who were rather less severely handicapped than those within the development schools found that it was not sufficiently testing or exciting to maintain the level of interest necessary for pupils to become fully involved in the dramatic action. They found the themes simply too young for their classes. (As both schools have subsequently used the material for older pupils and report that pupils responded well to this, it must be assumed that the conclusion that there is a need to provide older pupils with themes and activities more suitable to their chronological than mental age is, to some extent, supported in practice.)

It will be noted that the remaining two schools who dropped out of the project were ones which represented direct examples of the target population for the project - namely schools for severely mentally handicapped pupils. One of these gave no reason for not using materials, other than pressure of time, 'putting it off', and 'meaning to use the materials' at some point in the future. No further useful information was obtained in an exchange of letters and it was concluded that the materials, or drama or both had been rejected by staff within this school, although the reasons for its rejection were never made overt. The other school was in a very different situation. There, staff began to use the materials but were subsequently involved in a whole-school drama project initiated and run by drama lecturers from a local college of education. School staff were heavily involved in this, and most of the drama work carried out was that suggested by the college staff. This work was not unlike the work which would have been done using the project's materials in that it used a similar range of activities, and subject matter which related to the environment around the school. For example, reference was made to the work of roadmen fixing the pipes in the main road outside the school, and to the noises of the traffic. Where the work differed was in the extent to which the lessons were progressively structured. They did not, for example, build on a common

theme. Rather, they represented a series of disparate lessons illustrative of a variety of different activities. These all tended to be of roughly the same degree of difficulty for pupils, although some made more demands on the capabilities of staff in that they used some of the 'Heathcote' techniques suggested earlier. At least two staff had some previous experience in drama and were willing to work on Heathcote principles. School staff asked to retain a copy of the resources developed in the present project, however, and it is known that material for the present project is now being used interchangeably with material devised in the other project. In this school drama is now a regularly timetabled activity and classes have been timetabled in such a way that those staff members who appear to be best equipped to take drama can take responsibility for the drama work in the school and can see every pupil for drama work at least once a week.

Of the original sample of thirty, therefore, twenty-three schools were involved throughout the project in using, testing and commenting on the materials in use. The main evaluative emphasis has been placed on the information received from these twenty-three schools, supplemented with the information which was obtained from other interested parties who had requested information and copies of the resources for comment or scrutiny.

Of these twenty-three schools, twenty had older pupils in the school of the type which would make the school eligible for testing the second pack of resources. Of the twenty, sixteen did request the second pack. Three of those who did not do so were hospital schools who had found the material difficult to fit into the format of their individualised teaching programmes. The fourth was a teacher from a special unit who was moving out of special education, and there was some doubt as to whether the unit itself would continue in its present form. Of the sixteen who asked for the second pack, four found the material in this pack too advanced for the capabilities of their pupils, and subsequently returned the materials. They have continued to use pack one. Two staff in particular have developed their own variations on the themes suggested in pack one in order to devise a programme of work for their older pupils. Thus, of the twenty-three involved in the testing of the first pack, twelve have also been involved in the testing of the second pack.

A second sample of seventeen - again a volunteer group who asked for materials and asked to participate in the project - are currently testing the first pack, to which some modifications have been made.

These include an increase in the amount of rhymes and jingles for use with the less able pupils, and improvements to the illustrations to make them less fussy and easier to 'read'. Of the seventeen, eight are also involved in testing the second pack.

The total sample testing the second pack numbers twenty-three. With the exception of three, all of these either have been, or are, engaged in testing the first pack. Two of the three were the two schools who dropped out of the programme in the early stages. The other is an adult training centre whose staff asked to be included in the second pack trails and who made personal representation to the researcher on possible ways of developing drama with older trainees.

The total number of schools involved in testing any of the materials was forty-three, with the additional four schools involved in the collaborative research and development making the total forty-seven. As the HMSO figures (Scottish Educational Statistics 1974/5) give a total of 120 establishments, including hospital schools, independent or residential schools and special classes, which cater for severely mentally handicapped pupils, the figure of forty-seven represents a diffusion rate for the innovation which is somewhere in the region of 37% of the total provision available.

The Locations of Those Involved in Field Tests

Table 10 - The geographical areas covered by the dissemination.

Strathclyde	23
Grampian	6
Central	5
Islands	3
Tayside	2
Fife	1
Borders	1
Dumfries and Galloway	1
Highland	1
Lothian	0

As can be seen in Table 10 the only region not represented in the samples is Lothian. Strathclyde, on the other hand, is represented by schools as far apart as Cambeltown, Oban and Largs. Lothian's lack of representation in the sample was due simply to the fact that no-one from the Lothian region had volunteered to take part in the project. This was because those in the first volunteer group were drawn from those

attending a conference which was being held in the West of Scotland. Lothian and the Borders were holding a parallel conference. No attempt was subsequently made to extend the dissemination of the project into the Lothian region for the purely practical reason that the researcher could barely keep pace with the work involved in maintaining contact with those already involved.

The Number of Pupils Involved

Because of the varied nature of the feedback obtained from staff, some of whom did not give details of the number of pupils in their classes or schools, it is not possible to give an accurate assessment of the number of pupils who were exposed to drama teaching in the course of this project. But the average number of pupils in classes for the severely mentally handicapped is given as nine. The average in the classes mentioned in the present project seemed to be somewhat lower at around seven. In some schools, however, more than one class was involved. At a conservative estimate, the number of pupils who received regular drama tuition in the course of the project was somewhere in the region of three to four hundred.

Table 11 - Analysis of Extent and type of feedback by schools.

School	Requested by			Type of User			Type of Feedback			Confirmation		Eligible for Pack 2		Requested Pack 2		Contact/Researcher		
	HT	T	I	HT	T	I	S	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	H	M	L
1	*					*	*				*	*			*			*
2		*			*				*		*	*		*				*
3		*			*				*		*	*			*			*
4	*					*		*		*		*		*			*	
5	*	*		*	*	*			*		*	*		*				*
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7		*			*				*		*	*			*		*	
8	*		*			*		*		*		*		*			*	
9	*					*			*	*		*			*		*	
10	*			*	*				*	*		*		*		*		
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15		*			*				*	*		*		*				*
16	*			*		**			*	*		*		*		*		
17	*				*	**		*		*		*		*			*	
18	*			*	*				*	*		*		*			*	
19	*				*	*		*		*		*		*				*

Table 11. (Continued)

School	Requested by			Type of User			Type of Feedback			Confirmation		Eligible for Pack 2		Requested Pack 2		Contact/ Researcher		
	HT	T	I	HT	T	I	S	A	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	H	M	L
20		*			*			*			*		*		*			*
21			*			*			*	*		*		*		*		
22	*				*	*			*	*		*		*		*		
23			*			*			*		*	*		*		*		
	15	6	3	6	12	17	2	7	14	14	9	20	3	16	7	7	7	9

Key to Symbols:

HT Head teacher (could be trained teacher or former instructress)
T Trained teacher
I Instructress

The amount of written feedback received comprising -

D detailed information on number of pupils, the nature of their handicaps, specific pupils' difficulties, pre- and post-programme information, the number and duration of lessons together with specific information on how material had been used/adapted/followed up, information on teacher self-development.
A Similar to the above but with less specific detail - Adequate.
S Scanty - sufficient information to give some idea of the extent and nature of use, the general effect on pupils and teacher but little detail or evaluative assessment.

The amount of contact with the researcher -

H High contact, comprising visits to the school, personal meetings with staff member/s, telephone calls and/or letters;
M Medium - similar contact to above but with fewer or no visits to school;
L Low - no visits to the school, few personal meetings, main contact by letter and/or telephone.
Confirmation - whether the information related by teachers could be confirmed by an independent source such as a member of the Inspectorate, Adviser, College staff, student or teacher in training.

General Trends Emerging From Feedback

As indicated earlier, the second sample of the first pack, and the second pack itself, were both produced and disseminated too late in the project's life for their field testing to be evaluated in this thesis. Some information on these samples has already been obtained, but, in many cases, the field testing of these samples represents on-going work which has not yet been reported on by the staff concerned. Table 11 gives a more detailed breakdown of the twenty-three schools on whose feedback the evaluation of the materials in the first pack is based.

Before going on to attempt a more detailed analysis and assessment of their feedback, it might be appropriate, at this point, to indicate those general findings which may be stated with a fair degree of confidence, and which relate to the extent of the usage of the materials by those staff involved in field trials. These are that -

- a. Materials were used regularly by all the teachers in the sample on a once or twice weekly basis.
- b. The duration of lessons varied from around 15 minutes to 40 minutes, depending on the degree of handicap.
- c. In general, pupils could sustain concentration for longer periods than teachers had expected.
- d. Subject to the comments made later in the chapter, teachers found the material relatively easy to use.
- e. No teacher in the sample attempted to work through all the suggestions for follow-up etc as given.
- f. With one exception - all teachers carried out some form of follow-up activity linking the material to general class teaching, outings, etc.
- g. Teachers were, in general, more enthusiastic and less critical of the programme than might have been expected from the amount of coverage drama had previously received in their curricular schemes.
- h. It is known that at least 75% of those involved in the programme are still taking drama on a regular basis with their classes - in some cases repeating the programme with minor variation with the same or another group of children, in other cases merely using the programme as a reference or source of ideas or as a basis for developments of a similar type.

Discussions on these General Findings

Few of these general points, however, can be taken as an indication

that the materials achieved anything other than the introduction of drama on a systematic basis into the curriculum within schools where there was at least one staff member prepared to volunteer to join the project. This simply reinforces one known fact of curriculum innovation - namely, that it is easier to introduce an innovation when the aims of the innovation and the schools involved are, to some extent, congruent. The fact that schools were prepared to volunteer to join the project suggests that they were unlikely to be actively hostile to the aims and practice of drama in general terms. The stated aims of the materials were an increase in communication skills, spontaneous interactive dramatic play and social awareness. These had been priorities of the staff in the development schools, and they appeared to reflect the priorities of many of the staff within the field sample. The fact that the majority of those in the field sample adopted drama into their curricular schemes as a result of their involvement in the project cannot be taken as an indication that staff who are presently resistant to or apathetic about drama would have reacted similarly. In fact, from the feedback notes of a number of staff, it appears that there is some evidence to suggest that some teachers either do not share the above aims or else do not regard drama as an appropriate means of seeking to achieve these aims. Some of the staff who used the programme did not receive support from colleagues who regarded drama as a noisy unproductive element in the curriculum. This comment may serve as illustration

"I started off full of glee and gusto with eight kids, age range seven to eleven who had no experience of 'drama' and who were encouraged to 'be good' at all times. Being good entailed nothing more than sitting at tables, armed with HB pencils and lined paper and copy writing all day!"

She goes on to describe the pupils' very positive reactions to the work, noting that

"above all they have enjoyed it - enjoyed it tremendously. Whatever you call it, I reckon it will always be Mr and Mrs Brown to those kids."

She notes, however -

"I may add that, owing to staff opposition I shelved the programme in February."

Her colleagues were opposed to the activity and noise engendered by the drama work and felt that children should not be encouraged to 'waste their time' in playing. Clearly such a reactionary attitude is unusual in special schools. Nevertheless, it does appear that in schools where there is a strong emphasis on quiet, orderly behaviour,

or where staff are using behaviourist principles in very strictly structured ways, there is less likelihood that staff's attitude to drama will be as favourable as is the case in schools where a more progressive attitude is adopted. In another case, for example, a teacher was enthusiastic about the programme and reported specific improvements in pupils' communication skills as a direct result of its usage. The ethos of the school, however, was totally behaviourist and other staff felt that the use of drama was undermining to the kind of strict behaviourist regime they were attempting to create. In order to maintain relationships with other staff members, this member of staff discontinued her use of the drama material. She subsequently changed schools and is now using the materials again with the support of other staff within her new school where there is a different educational ethos.

It is interesting to note that in both of the cases cited above, the drama programme had to be shelved as the reaction from others was so hostile, and the benefits claimed by those using the programme had clearly not convinced colleagues that drama was a worthwhile curricular activity. There were a couple of cases, however, where the opposite occurred. In these cases the responses of pupils encouraged staff who had been sceptical of the relevance of drama to look more closely at its practice and the effects achieved. In one of these schools the head teacher (she did not initially request the material) has now made provision for the staff member initially involved in using the materials to take another group of children in addition to her own class for regular drama work in the central hall. In the other school, a member of staff who had not been involved in the project initially, contacted the researcher in order to find out whether she could have help in devising individual programmes of work for her pupils, none of whom were capable of operating within a group. She made this contact on the basis of her observation of the reactions of the other class involved in the programme and her feeling that drama appeared to be achieving more response from these pupils than the methods they were presently employing - mainly individual programmes based on behaviourist principles. She felt that whereas pupils had not appeared to respond to concrete or social reinforcers they did seem to find some intrinsic reinforcement in the drama activity, and she hoped to find a similar response occurring among her own pupils. Although the response was very slow in coming, it did occur and this member of staff has now become almost biased in

favour of drama as a teaching tool, whereas formerly she had been sceptical of its relevance.

Such ideographic data cannot be taken as evidence that staff will or will not react in any particular way to their colleague's introduction of drama into a school. The examples quoted above do, however, show the two extremes of acceptance and rejection of drama, and they suggest that while drama may be rejected on the grounds that it does not fit with the general aims and ethos of the school, it can be accepted on the basis of its proven value in effecting a response from non-verbal or apathetic pupils.

It would appear, therefore, that the materials had gone some way towards proving two of the hypotheses postulated in the earlier stages of the project. First, it does appear to be possible to introduce drama into schools by means of a resource pack which is geared towards the capabilities of pupils and general staff. It is not strictly necessary to have a specialist teacher on hand to give in-situ support or guidance to staff who are using such a pack, providing the materials are easy to use and give detailed instructions on possible methods of approach. And it does appear that staff can develop their ability to use the simpler and more directed drama techniques through using such a pack of materials on a regular and systematic basis.

Secondly, it does appear that staff can arrive at a personal assessment of the value of drama to them in their teaching through the use of such a pack. Those staff who requested and used the pack did, in the main, decide that drama had some relevance to them in their general teaching. Consequently, they continued to use the pack on a regular basis or adopted other forms of drama work which, by trial and error, they had found useful with their pupils. And it has been noted that in a few cases this had an effect on their colleagues who also arrived at a personal assessment of the value of drama on the basis of vicarious experience of it in the school. Not all staff did adopt drama as a result of their involvement with the programme. Their positive reaction to the materials suggests that they were not simply rejecting drama on the basis of a poorly conceived or unsuitable curricular offering, but that they were rejecting it either because they felt other methods of teaching suited themselves or their pupils better, or because the organisation of the educational establishment (eg. the type of organisation in some hospital schools where the scatter of age and ability is very varied) was not particularly well suited to the practice

of drama. In most cases staff were able to give a rational explanation as to why they had adopted or rejected drama. While the possibility that these explanations were simply rationalisations of emotional reactions cannot be discounted, it is a fact that, before involvement with the programme, many staff were unable to give any rationale for or against drama. At the very least, therefore, staff have become aware of SOME of the principles and methods of drama and can indicate rationally where these do or do not 'fit' with their curricular priorities. This does seem to be an advance on a situation in which staff were not even sure whether or when they were using drama, and what a drama lesson with their pupils might consist of. One can argue, therefore, that, as a result of their participation in the project, staff have become more knowledgeable teachers. If this is so, if as Stenhouse suggests

"there can be no curriculum development without teacher development."

(Stenhouse, 1980; p.44)

and if

"by their meaningfulness curricula are not simply instructional means to improve teaching but are expressions of ideas to improve teachers"

(Ibid)

one can argue that the curricular offering had achieved one of its aims - that of providing staff with a means of self-development through practice in their own teaching situation. Staff now knew more about drama at both the practical and theoretical level and can exercise that knowledge in making an assessment of how useful the drama activities and methods suggested in the curricular offering are to them in their own teaching environment.

It has already been mentioned in passing that staff based their assessment of the curricular materials on two main factors -

a. how effective are lessons in achieving their stated aims of helping pupils improve their skills in play, in communication and their social awareness?

b. how effective are the lessons as a teaching resource - are they easy to use/can they be adapted easily to meet differing needs/ is the preparation level they require acceptable/are the methods for monitoring and recording progress useful? And so on.

It is towards these areas we now turn for a more detailed assessment of staff reactions and comments.

The Curricular Offering as a Teaching Resource

In Table 11 on page 470 there is an indication of who, initially, made the request to have the materials and to volunteer their school or classroom as a testing ground for the project.

It will be noted that many of the requests for the pack came from head teachers rather than from other members of staff. No significance should be read into this. It simply reflects the mix of staff present at the conference. And, where there was more than one delegate from a single school, the request would tend to be made by the most senior member of staff present. What does seem to be noteworthy is that where materials were requested by a member of staff other than the head teacher that staff member tended to regard the materials as her own personal property, to be used by her only. Whereas in other schools where the request had come from the head teacher, materials would be delegated to staff to use and there tended to be more staff members involved in the project. However, the degree of enthusiasm or otherwise expressed by those using and testing the materials did not appear to be affected by who had made the initial request for these.

The Drama Personality Type?

In passing, it may be noted that head teachers frequently mentioned that material had been delegated to a particular member of staff who was regarded as being 'suitable' for this work because she was 'enthusiastic', 'lively', or 'had an out-going personality', etc. Such comments would appear to confirm the early findings that many staff regard personality as an important element in the teaching of drama. Skill in teaching drama tends to be regarded as a natural concomitant to the personality traits described above. The Inspectors' Report on Learning and Teaching in Primary Four to Seven, makes a similar point with regard to the teaching of the other 'expressive arts' or music, art and physical education. It notes -

"the Survey revealed the presence in our schools of a few devoted, gifted, often highly individual and on the whole successful teachers, who achieved high standards of work with their classes. Such teachers tended to be regarded by their colleagues as 'special' people who confirmed in them their own view of themselves as 'ordinary' people without any particular talent and unable to undertake with much success their common task."

(HMSO, 1980; p.33)

The fact that over half of those testing the materials were described by others as being particularly suitable in terms of

personality type makes it difficult to assess the extent to which specific personality traits are a significant factor in determining how well a teacher may be able to tackle a drama lesson, or are merely perceived to be so by other staff who require a 'reason' for not tackling this form of work themselves. Certainly, within the collaborating schools in the first stage of the work, there was only one staff member who could be described as 'quiet', 'shy', or 'retiring' and she was the member of staff within School B who tended to leave the more active presentation of drama to her colleague, whom she described as 'confident'. On the other hand, a number of those who used the programme most enthusiastically in field trials certainly did not conform, overtly at least, to the extrovert or confident stereotype. Some systematic attitudinal and personality testing might have yielded interesting findings here, but by the time this was realised it was too late to do anything about it. An analysis of the correlation between particular personality and attitude traits and skill in the presentation of drama would, however, be an illuminating piece of research.

How Easy Were Materials to Use?

What is certain is that almost all staff, regardless of personality type, found the resource pack easy to use in the classroom, assuming their pupils were in the correct age-range for the materials and were severely rather than profoundly mentally handicapped. The ease with which staff were able to use the materials may perhaps be attributed to the fact that, in the research and development phase, a conscious attempt was made to 'de-mystify' drama and to develop lesson outlines for the resource pack which would not make too obviously heavy demands on teachers' inventiveness, creativity, or personal acting ability. This is not to suggest that it was assumed that staff using the materials would lack these qualities, but rather to suggest that the general effect aimed at was one in which staff would not stop to question their ability at least to make a start to the work. It is difficult to express this concept in abstract terms, but it was hoped that staff would react something along the lines of the head teacher who said -

"Well, that looks easy enough. There's nothing there that my staff couldn't have thought out for themselves, if they had the time. They're already doing some of these things anyway so this shouldn't be beyond them."

Thus, largely due to the advice given by the staff who collaborated in the research and development, the temptation to go for the 'original'

or 'inventive' ideas was avoided, and there was an emphasis instead on the obvious, the familiar and the simple. As already noted, this approach seemed to be reasonably successful in most cases in that staff not only reported that the materials were easy to use but that, had the ideas or themes been any more 'difficult', 'fantastic' or 'abstract', they would have been beyond the comprehension of some of the less able pupils in the age range aimed at.

Two specific comments may serve as illustrations. The first comes from a head teacher in the Tayside region -

"all together I feel the course is very suitable for our younger children and has been successful in that an improvement has been noted with all the children involved, and the staff have been moved to attempt something which they would have considered impossible six months ago."

The second comes from a hospital school in which the pupils were in an older age range (12-18), but who were in the IQ range 25-35. The head teacher wrote -

"..... we found it very easy to use and really useful. We have no children in the SMH category but this is a hospital school and the children's general knowledge and experience is very limited so we thought that perhaps there would be some value in using the package intended for the earlier stages."

The class teacher who had responsibility for actually using the materials wrote -

"..... despite range of IQ all participate to a lesser or greater extent. For the lower IQ obviously fuller breakdown of the programme is necessary. Material was easy to use but has taken longer than you suggested. The testing is by no means completed yet (just over a year after having started programme). First five stages are thoroughly covered with revision as suggested in the package. Activities are almost within the experience of even our children and various activities carried out in reality at later date on outings"

The teacher in charge of a small special unit wrote -

"..... the package of drama activities has been especially useful to me. I have a small group here but the age range is from 5-18 years. I know the package was put together for the 6-10 year old age group, but I thought at the time I could use it successfully with my group and it has indeed been a great success"

The children's age gap and size gap blended beautifully with the material and I was able to bring them together in a group and hold them together most successfully

The material was easy to use and I had no real problems except for the illustrations which were I felt too small for our needs. So we made the figures about 15 inches tall and copied the background illustration to about 4 feet by 5 feet. The children were then able to handle the figures more easily and move them about the background"

I am enclosing a copy of a diagram I used to explain to the parents on our open night how the drama project brought in the different subjects in the curriculum and how we used it as the basis of our whole curriculum over last term (see Figure 11 p. 486) The only thing is that I haven't nearly got half-way through the package yet so it looks as if it is going to take well into next year before it is completed. I will keep sending you a report on how we are getting on until I have used the complete set of lessons"

While two members of staff from larger schools in the Strathclyde region made substantially similar points. One wrote -

" but I had to break down the material into smaller units and repeat the lessons several times when working with these poorer children"

The other notes -

"..... this is a very deprived area so I had to adapt the material to suit the area and break it down into smaller units to suit the younger ones there was a general increase in participation by the non-verbal children. It is so good to have material that they can join in with. There's so little available for pupils at this level to join in with. Even the poorest children could join in as the material is not dependent on the verbal ability Children were interested in the material and enjoyed it It really is a help just to have material available and not to have to rack your brains and think of something to do every time. I particularly liked the progression of stories by using the same characters, and the fact that the material could be adapted to make it as simple or as complex as necessary. (When we used it with the brighter children we upgraded the ideas to make them more exciting and this worked well.)"

My main criticism would be the illustrations which were too small, and too 'busy'. We have some partially sighted children and I appreciate that they need to learn to discriminate but I think even children without sight defects might see them as a little blurred. We used them as a basis for making our own illustrations which were much bigger and which cut out a lot of the unnecessary details."

Comments such as those made above are fairly typical of the type of general comment made by staff. In well over half of the cases these general comments were supported by more detailed comments on the nature of usage, specific benefits to individual children, and specific criticisms.

As can be seen from the sample above, the general feeling among staff was that those dealing with the least able pupils had to present the materials in even smaller units than those suggested in the lesson plans. Staff also found that more repetition of the various lessons and stages were necessary with the less able pupils before they were able to respond positively to the lessons. On the other hand, it was clear that most staff were able to achieve a response from their classes,

most reported that the pupils enjoyed the work and there was a fair proportion of staff who were clearly prepared to adapt or change the material to achieve a better fit between the materials in the pack and the needs of their own group.

The illustrations are a case in point. The illustrations used in the research and development stage were large, clear and covered in sticky back plastic so that they could be handled by the pupils. They also had moving parts which pupils could put on or take off, etc, in talking about or re-telling stories. For ease of packaging and in order to meet cost constraints these illustrations had been scaled down. What is clear and unfussy in an A2 drawing becomes unclear as part of an A4 reproduction. Moveable parts, being difficult to package, were reduced to the minimum, and, again, scaled down to size. The result was illustrations which looked nothing like the originals used in the research stage, and which were clearly a major source of staff criticism. This point will be returned to and discussed in the light of the general points it raises in relation to the development and production of curricular materials within a research project. The point to be highlighted in the present context is that, although many staff were critical of the illustrations, this did not lead to their not using illustrations or making the lack of illustrations serve as a reason for not using the materials. Rather staff seemed to be willing and able to adapt both the materials and the illustrations and clearly found this degree of adaptation a less onerous task than starting to develop lessons and visual aids from first principles - "it really is a help just to have material available and not to have to rack your brains and think of something to do every time"/ "so we made the figures about 15 inches tall"/ "this is a very deprived area so I had to adapt the material" etc.

Only two members of staff reported that the material was too easy for their pupils. Both had less severely handicapped children in their teaching groups. One was happy with the themes suggested but felt that the method of presentation implicit in the working of the lessons was too teacher-directed to suit her approach and the needs of her pupils. She found, however, that when she "adapted the material to put more emphasis on role-play rather than the story, the pupils responded better and we noted an improvement in imaginative play apart from the actual drama lesson". The other teacher was even more critical. She wrote -

"the material was easy to use and the right length but I did not find it stimulating. This may have been because of such a mixed group. The more severely handicapped enjoyed it more. The less handicapped were bored..... As a teacher who has some background of speech and drama I am not very happy with a 'bland' diet but appreciate that this is not the case for everyone"

She goes on to describe the kind of drama work which her better pupils were able to respond to without boredom -

"exciting themes developed from TV. The Iron Man (very successful and stimulating), Robin Hood (great fun for the kids this one), The Seven Little Kids, Choosing Shoes and lots of small improvisation situations"

It is interesting that the type of work she describes as being successful with her more mildly handicapped pupils was very akin to that which staff in the developing schools wished to avoid with their more severely handicapped pupils. "Exciting themes", for example, were regarded as less than helpful by the staff within the developing schools as they felt such themes carried with them a high potential for disruptive and difficult behaviour among children who were already behaviourally disturbed. Ideas like Robin Hood and The Iron Man represent that type of fantasy which, by choosing to go for the reality principle in the material, was explicitly avoided. While the more open-ended and less proscribed activity of 'improvisation' was one which staff in the developing schools were, on the whole, less adept at tackling. It would appear, therefore, that the very qualities which appealed to staff with little or no background in drama and which appeared to make it possible for them to use the materials easily with the severely handicapped pupils, were the qualities which made the choice of subject 'bland' for a staff member with training in drama, and 'boring' for pupils who were capable of engaging in and understanding an element of fantasy.

At the opposite end of the spectrum there was one member of staff who found it impossible to use the material with her pupils. She had a total of twelve children of varied ages within a special class. Her pupils were of 'very low ability' and required 'almost constant one-to-one tuition which, of course, we can't give them because there just isn't enough staff'. In addition, many of the pupils within her group had severe behavioural problems similar to those observed among the pupils within School A in the present project. The fact that this member of staff found it almost impossible to use the materials with her pupils is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it supports the conclusions arrived

at on the basis of work within School A, and suggests that, where there is a high proportion of difficult pupils with very low level of ability and who require one-to-one teaching, the provision of drama by the general class teacher may be an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task. Secondly, this member of staff was very keen to introduce drama and asked to retain the materials for her personal use at some point in the future 'just in case' she should ever move from working with profoundly handicapped pupils. In her own words, she wanted to be sure of having 'something to work with, because it's well nigh impossible to find material that is suitable even for severely handicapped children'. This comment would appear to support the view advanced earlier that a number of those staff who volunteered to become involved in the research project, were not, in fact, particularly interested in becoming researchers within their own classrooms. They simply wanted material to use with their classes and were prepared to trade their involvement in the project for the opportunity of acquiring these materials.

General Conclusions on the Materials as a Teaching Resource

Tables 12 & 13 give a breakdown of those who found the materials easy to use/effective as a teaching resource/who made minor or major adaptations to the material in order to suit the needs of their own pupils/who claimed to have achieved a degree of expertise in the practice of drama as a result of using the materials etc.

It will be seen that the majority of staff did find the materials a useful addition to their teaching repertoire and were able to use or adapt the materials with a fair degree of ease. It does appear, however, that these materials are only appropriate to the needs of a fairly narrow band of pupils - those with the more severe forms of mental handicap, who may have additional problems of passivity or withdrawal, who may have additional language difficulties, but who are not severely behaviourally disturbed. The selection of familiar, everyday, themes and the use of a behaviourally oriented, teacher-directed format for the introduction of material had brought the presentation of drama within the general capability level of staff with little or no prior training in or experience of teaching drama, and their experience with the materials had encouraged the majority of such staff to continue to include drama as an element within their curricular schemes. For staff who already had some background knowledge of drama and who had developed

some skills in drama, a somewhat 'freer' more open-ended approach appeared to be more suitable as a method of approach. Similarly, pupils with the more mild forms of handicap appeared to require subject matter which contained a higher degree of stimulation and 'fantastic' or imaginative content in order to arouse and maintain their interest. For pupils who are operating at lower developmental or linguistic levels a fuller breakdown of the material is necessary. It needs to be presented in even smaller units which contain only one central idea, and there had to be a larger element of repetition in the work. Where such pupils form the bulk of a teaching group, and where, in addition, the majority of pupils suffer from some form of behavioural disturbance, the materials are a less useful teaching resource.

The aspects about which staff had most critical comments to make were the illustrations and the assessment charts. The illustrations were unsuitable in size and format, the charts were either rejected without comment or regarded as superfluous. Both points will be taken up in the context of the following chapter. One aspect which appeared to be particularly useful to staff and which encouraged the use of the materials was the provision of ancillary materials and the linking of the drama work to general centres of interest. Many staff commented on the usefulness of this approach. The most striking example came from the staff member referred to earlier who adapted her curricular scheme for the year to make the drama project the central element in this scheme. Similarly, many staff noted the usefulness of lessons in linking real experience of visits, etc, with the vicarious experience of these in drama.

As a teaching resource, therefore, the materials appeared to have gone some way towards illuminating some of the criteria which may be required in drama materials for use with pupils in special education by general, rather than specialist staff. They provide an indication of the kind of resource which such staff find acceptable as an introduction to the practice of educational drama under normal conditions of classroom usage within schools for severely mentally handicapped pupils. They also provide corroborative support for the view that the provision of suitable teaching materials, containing in-built instruction for use, can go some way towards redressing the neglect of drama by general staff at this level. And they support the finding that there is a need for further research into the applicability of drama within schools where there is a high proportion of profoundly mentally handicapped and behaviourally

disturbed pupils. At this level the production of suitable teaching resources may be a very minor consideration in the overall neglect of drama. Other factors such as the general classroom atmosphere, the numbers of staff employed, and the priorities of staff may be of equal, if not more, importance.

Figure 3

EXAMPLE OF THE DIAGRAM USED TO EXPLAIN THE DRAMA PROJECT TO PARENTS

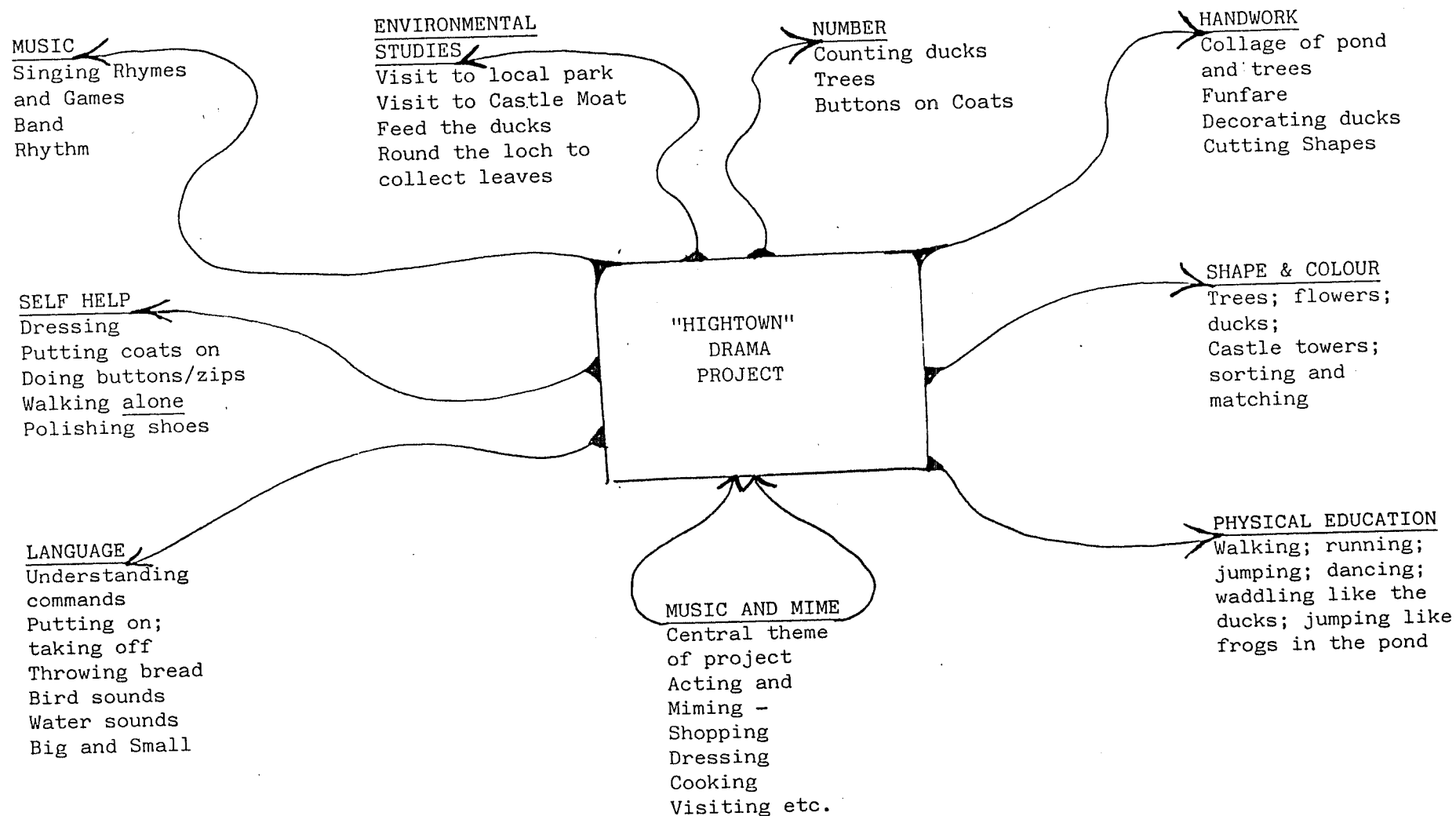


TABLE 12

Ease of Usage and Adaptation of Materials

Total number of schools	23
Total number of users	35
Material used without adaption	7
Materials used with minor adaption	12
Materials used with major adaption	8
Materials rejected as a teaching resource	5
Materials rejected - other forms of drama used	3
Not known	3

TABLE 13

Comments and Criticisms on the Materials
As A Teaching Resource

Material an effective teaching resource	26
In-built instruction for self-development useful/effective	22
Material too easy (not stimulating)	2
Materials too difficult (even with modification)	3
Staff appreciative of ancillary materials (tapes, music, art-work)	21
Staff critical of - illustrations	18
assessment charts	16

The Materials as a Learning Resource

So far in this chapter we have looked at the materials as a teaching resource and as a means of teacher self-development. There has been an attempt to show the extent to which the comments made by staff in field trials either supported or contrasted with the findings from the research and development stages of the work.

Some reference has been made to the reasons given by staff for their acceptance, rejection or criticism of the materials in these capacities. These reasons include, however, some reference to the effect of materials on pupils. And it was clear that most staff members judged the effectiveness of the materials as a teaching resource only partially on their ease of usage, flexibility, suggested method and content, etc. The main concern appeared to lie with their appropriateness to the needs of

pupils. Thus, the effectiveness of materials as a learning resource appears to be correlated with their perceived effectiveness as a teaching resource. Staff who perceived them to be ineffective as a learning resource tended to reject them as a teaching resource. This is interesting in view of the finding arising out of the early 'state of the art' survey conducted at the start of the project, which was that -

"only about one in ten of the general staff interviewed appeared to be rejecting drama on the basis that it has no relevance to the needs of their pupils the possible educational value of drama to pupils appeared to be a factor to which the majority of general staff had given little consideration."

(Chapter I, pages 18-20)

There is little direct relationship between the reaction of staff within the field sample and the reaction of those contacted in the early survey - there is only around a 30% degree of overlap between the two populations. Nevertheless, a subjective reading of the reactions expressed by the two groups, suggests that those who had no prior experience of teaching drama tended to base their rejection of it on grounds such as their lack of skill, the difficulty in presenting it, the possibility it holds for chaos in the classroom, the lack of suitable resources and so on. Those who had experience of the teaching materials were clearly still interested in such factors, but to this had been added the additional dimension of the effects of their teaching on the development of pupils.

In the feedback of staff it was possible to identify two separate types of user. The first tended to emphasis enjoyment, and to highlight the extent of pupil participation and subsequent involvement in imaginative dramatic play as evidence of the effectiveness of materials. Such users were less likely to provide specific details of individual pupils' progress. Such users tended also to minimise any criticism they had of the programme by suggesting that these were not difficult to overcome in practice, and that, in any case, pupils' evident enjoyment of the work compensated for any difficulties involved in modifying or adapting material.

The second group tended to place emphasis on the ways in which pupils' skills in communication had developed as a result of participation in the programme. These users gave more information on pupils' abilities prior to and after using specific parts of the programme, and

provided more detailed information on the ways in which this learning had been achieved. For example, there would be an indication of the ways in which material had been adapted to make it suit the needs of pupils, or of how the lessons had been added to by items from their existing repertoire of teaching programmes.

Neither group was composed predominantly of either teachers or instructresses. Both groups contained a mixture of each. The type of comment provided by the first group may be illustrated by the following selection of comments -

"..... the children enjoyed the stories and the acting. Each story could be repeated several times with increased enjoyment my young children loved being Mr and Mrs Brown and their interest in the characters transferred to their general play with each other"

(Teacher, Strathclyde Region)

"..... I like the way lessons finish. A rest for the Browns and the children just copy them! This gives credibility to the gift of relaxation and rest. This is tremendously useful as our children find it difficult to relax"

(Teacher, small Strathclyde school)

"..... I would shout down anyone who denies that Downs' kids have a natural aptitude for mimicry. Not all do, I agree. It depends on the degree of handicap. But enough do to make the statement bear out. I've one at the moment who studies other kid's weird behaviours, practices the behaviour, studies again and keeps this up until he knows he has perfected it! His criterion for perfection agrees with mine. The drama work gives a chance to channel this behaviour in useful ways. What I don't understand is why I never thought of using drama for this purpose before. It seems so obvious now! All of a sudden 'C' has something to play at. He now copies Mr and Mrs Brown's behaviour and when he has that off to a 't' he has learned something and he doesn't need to copy weird social behaviours any more. An obvious advantage"

(Instructress, Strathclyde Region)

"..... as I had a chute in my room I asked the kids to bring in hard-boiled eggs with hilarious results. We decorated them and rolled them down the chute which we had covered in green crepe paper. We then ate them - one kid shell and all! Good roughage I thought! The kids loved this lesson and I took the liberty of combining the picnic and the Easter lesson so that we could make the eating of the eggs part of the picnic idea. The children cottened on right away. I see a real improvement in this aspect of their behaviour. They just get right in there now and start acting. The only problem is getting them to stop. They can keep their concentration for longer than I can keep up the energy to stick with them. But we are now getting to the stage where I know that they will be able to add some ideas for themselves so I don't worry so much about my contribution to

the whole thing. Now I can afford to hand over to them while I 'get my breath back'"

(Instructress, Borders Region)

"..... I have found the lessons to be most popular and successful and I feel that the children have derived a great deal of pleasure and stimulation from them the material was just at the right level for the 6-10 years age group. I found it stimulating and based most of the follow-up on your ideas one little girl who loves music thoroughly enjoyed playing in our own band as a follow up to lesson two. Two other children who were very reluctant to be Mr and Mrs Brown, loved being the ducks and catching the bread in their beaks (mouths)"

We set up a little shop selling pretend sweets and ice-cream. I acted as the shopkeeper. Then the children came and bought the items and went off home to prepare the picnic with the items they had bought. The children did all this with very little help and seemed to understand exactly what they were doing"

We even put on a little play which we developed from a dramatisation of a girl being given bulbs for her birthday. She plants them and they begin to grow. The children acted being the bulbs and the sun and the rain. The wheelchair children used the musical instruments devised as a follow-up to lesson two to be the illustration of the rain and the sun. It worked very well and the parents in particular were amazed at the concentration of the children and the language we got out of it."

(Head teacher, small rural school, Strathclyde Region)

The comments above are fairly representative of those staff who appeared to see the materials primarily as a means whereby pupils might be stimulated and find enjoyment. There is little attempt to contrast pupils with each other, and there is little attempt to quantify the results achieved in relation to other methods of working. The general impression created is one in which staff have 'discovered' drama - eg. 'what I don't understand is why I never thought of using drama for this purpose before'. The tenor of their comments is, therefore, less critical than appreciative - eg. the children enjoyed the stories/ I like the way lessons finish/children have derived a great deal of pleasure etc. And there is a general impression that staff did not so much adapt the lessons to their needs or the needs of their pupils, as fit the lessons to the needs of pupils and their own classroom conditions - eg. the use of the chute/the behaviour of the Down's child/the emphasis on rest and relaxation/the use of the band lesson to encourage the participation of children who liked music etc. It is worth noting also that a phrase like 'I took the liberty of' cropped up on several occasions in feedback notes. The inference made was that staff were not entirely clear that they were

free to adapt or change lessons at will. As this was clearly stated in the teachers' notes which accompanied the lessons, one wonders to what extent the notes were used and to what extent staff simply used the lesson plans and outlines. If staff within the research and development schools are typical, one might assume from their comments that teachers' notes tend to be neglected in favour of the 'actual nitty gritty' of lessons. Hence the insistence of staff on the need to include very detailed instruction in the actual wording of the lessons, making these more detailed and precise than the researcher had envisaged being necessary. The feedback of at least this section of staff suggests that staff's assessment of the neglect of teachers' notes may be accurate and that the inclusion of instruction in actual lesson plans is, in practice a more productive method of communicating with those who use or assess the materials.

From feedback such as that illustrated above, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the materials were having an effect in the areas of interest. Staff were clearly convinced of their usefulness but gave few examples of the criteria on which they based their assessments. Nevertheless, from the comments which were made it seems clear that the general trends noted in the research and development phase were being borne out in this phase of the work when materials were being used over a wider cross-section of schools. It was, for example, clear that some pupils were developing their abilities in dramatic play both within and outwith lessons. There were a number of references to the abilities of Down's children, not only as participants in play, but also as leaders of such play both within and outwith lessons. Like the staff in the development schools, some staff found drama an enjoyable but tiring activity to present, while several mentioned the fact that pupils could sustain their concentration for longer than had been anticipated. There was clearly no staff bias against performance, as was demonstrated by the number of staff who developed classroom drama work into some form of performance for parents or other children, and most of the staff who mentioned performance mentioned its socialising effect and its effect on language development. While most members of staff referred to improved communication skills as a result of participation in the programme, few within this group of users gave any specific details of the type of improvement noted.

Comments such as the following were fairly typical from this group.

"..... if you just read stories they don't work. But if you work at them they work for you. The children enjoyed the acting and asked to do it again. Even my little hyperactive girl joined in and showed the kind of concentration she only normally shows when she is getting dressed to go home! As a follow-up to the out/in lesson we set up a dentists's area with a dentist's chair and a pretend drill and so on. I know the connection with out and in is a bit tenuous but it seemed to follow on naturally at the time. This proved very popular with the children. The language heard within a single session was -

Dawn (the most able child in the group with a good level of verbal ability) -

"drill/filling/dentist/teeth/rotten/bad/needs to come out/nurse, give me the drill."

Dawn can usually manage to understand and say something in language development sessions but this was a particularly good day for her. The acting out of dentists seemed to catch her imagination.

David (Down's)

"teeth out/gurgle, gurgle, gurgle - swish (the noise of him rinsing out after the extraction!), dentist/drill/sore."

This is good for David as he mumbles a lot and has problems with his speech. Here the words were very clear.

Anita (hyperactive)

"in/out/sore/boohoo (pretending to cry)."

Anita also used a lot of gesture and joined in really well as the nurse who handed the instruments to the dentist.

Andrew (the least verbal child in the group)

"No actual words but lots of sounds appropriate to the meanings."

(Teacher, Grampian Region)

Such comments give a much more detailed picture not only of the characteristics of the children involved but also of the circumstances under which specific items of language development occurred. Generally speaking, those staff who were working with the more 'average' severely mentally handicapped child found that a response was achieved fairly quickly and easily, with observable benefits in communication or play behaviours being noted almost from the first series of lessons. Those dealing with the less able pupils found a greater time lag between initial introduction of lessons and any observable benefits which they would attribute to the work. It was not uncommon for there to be a three months time-lag between the start of the programme and the first 'breakthrough' in linguistic or play development. For example, a teacher from a rural school in the Strathclyde region, whose feedback was provided in the form of daily diaries of the work carried out, wrote -

"17th March Easter Story

After three months doing drama at least three times per week, including Mr and Mrs Brown every time, the children still do not know Mr and Mrs Brown or Hightown. Tell half the story and listen to songs. Feel disappointed. Roll about like Easter eggs.

18th March Despite of, or perhaps because of, yesterday's disappointment, return to Easter story. Tell all the story and felt better telling it. Probably my being discouraged yesterday put the children off. Much, much better response. This lesson, especially the songs, becomes the children's favourite after initial lack of response.

20th March Tell all story and introduce finger rhyme. Talked about boiling eggs - mimed Mrs Brown put on the eggs. Mrs Brown's chocolate egg, or Mr Brown's painted eggs - which would you prefer? Non-verbal children indicate by mime and pointing just exactly what they would prefer! Listened to and sang songs. Rolled about like eggs"

By 27th March she notes -

"Children can now identify Mr and Mrs Brown by pointing but not verbally"

By 31st March her comment is

"The children now 'vocalise' along with the songs, no words clear but at least the attempt at sounds are being made....."

By 15th April, almost four months since she started the programme, she writes -

"Told story of Mr and Mrs Brown's picnic. Acted making sandwiches, going to the park, eating the picnic. Least verbal of pupils responded by saying 'Mrs Brown' when asked 'who's this?'. Tremendous excitement!"

After this initial response, however, the children seemed to have made rapid progress, so that by the end of May she is able to give a page-long list of the language the children have started to use and indicates that they now understand completely what is involved in 'doing drama'. Her very detailed comments not only illustrate the gap which seems to exist between initial presentation and understanding, but also shows the very slow pace and degree of patience required in the regular presentation of the work. The phrase 'tremendous excitement' also conveys something of the extent of the investment this member of staff made in attempting to gain a response from her pupils who are not only severely mentally handicapped, but, in most cases, physically handicapped also. The fact that a number of staff were willing to make this degree of investment in the work suggests that staff were prepared to keep an open mind as to the value of drama and to persevere with the work until either they achieved a response or until, as was the case with one of the staff referred to

earlier, it became clear that pupils were not going to respond to the work, or the work itself did not fit in with the classroom constraints operating in that teaching situation (c/f pages 473-5). This is somewhat at odds with their previous lack of drama practice in their teaching and seems to lend support to the assumption that staff tend to neglect, rather than reject drama, and that their neglect of it stems from factors which do not necessarily include the value of the work to the pupils' educational development. This comment must be tempered somewhat by the comments made earlier on the fact that this was a self-selecting sample who had sufficient interest in drama to volunteer to try the programme out. Even so, more than ninety per cent of this sample had previously been among those who did neglect drama and it was obvious from the feedback received that at least some of these were discovering its educational potential for the first time.

General Conclusions on the Materials as a Learning Resource

It did appear that the trends noted in the research and development stage were being borne out in this stage of the work. Pupils were responding by participating in the work with apparent enjoyment, and there was an indication that their participation in drama was having an effect on their general play and communication abilities. The drama work seemed to provide pupils with a topic for communication, and play, and led to an increase both in the flow of language and in the acquisition of new items of vocabulary or an increased use of existing vocabulary.

It also seemed that the nature of pupils' responses to the work was, as had been noted in the earlier stages, governed less by the specific teaching style of the person presenting the work, and more by the level of ability of the individual child, and the aetiology of his handicapping condition. With the less able child there was a time-lag both in responding to the work and in showing any transference of effect to communication or play behaviours. But after the initial time lag progress tends to be relatively rapid. Such children appear to need a greater degree of structure and teacher-direction within the work if they are to be able to participate in it.

In general, staff found it more difficult to engage and hold the attention of hyperactive children than of the very withdrawn and passive child. Whether this was a feature of the 'bland' themes chosen for the work, or whether it simply indicates that drama can

stimulate the passive child but may be in danger of over-stimulating the hyperactive child is not clear. On balance, it seems that the more hyperactive child who is also less able than the average severely handicapped child requires a very matter-of-fact and calm approach in both the materials used and in the methods of presentation. Where the hyperactive child is also rather more intelligent than his peers, there seems to be a need to engage his attention by the provision of a more exciting and imaginative range of subject matter. As with the profoundly mentally handicapped, working with the more able, hyperactive children - especially if their hyperactivity is accompanied by behavioural difficulties - seems to require a more specialist degree of skill. General staff tended to find that the exclusion of such children from teaching groups in drama was a necessary last resort with the most difficult children. Among the population of severely mentally handicapped children, however, there does not appear to be a high proportion of such severely behaviourally disturbed and hyperactive children.

Almost without exception, staff reported that those lively Down's children who seem to have a natural aptitude for drama can find enjoyment and stimulation in even the simplest forms of dramatic activity. Among such children also there tends to be a degree of natural leadership and, in spontaneous play, such children may attempt to guide the play of others or, at the very least, to interact peacefully or co-operatively with others in dramatic play.

Staff included so little information on pupils' out of school behaviour that it is difficult to judge the extent of their support for the postulation that the work can, in some cases, have a greater effect on pupils' out of school communication skills than on their general play or communication behaviours in school. The very few staff who made reference to this aspect do support the assumption but their comments were both too few and too detailed to provide any general indication of this trend.

Finally, the degree of investment staff were prepared to make in attempting to gain a response from pupils, in adapting materials, in presenting the work on a regular basis, and, in some cases, in writing up detailed and lengthy feedback notes, suggests that staff are, as had been predicted, 'open' to new ideas and practices and are prepared to try these out in the privacy of their classrooms with a relatively open mind as to their eventual outcomes. They are also prepared to persevere over a period of time - probably as a result of their own experience

of the time involved in achieving observable results from programmes of work with pupils of low levels of ability. And there appeared to be little difference in this respect between instructors and teachers. Differences could be detected in the ideological persuasions of individual members of staff, and in the ethos of individual schools, but there was no evidence to suggest that, as a group, teachers or instructors conformed to any particular ideological 'type' which would render them either more or less disposed to regard drama as valuable or otherwise.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

To sum up, of the thirty schools which formed the field sample for testing materials, seven dropped out almost immediately, mainly on the grounds that the materials were unsuitable for the capabilities of the pupils which formed the bulk of the schools' population. A total of thirty-five staff from the remaining twenty-three schools continued with the project, tested the materials and sent feedback on the results obtained. The extent and quality of this feedback varied across schools, as did the extent to which the feedback was corroborated either by the researcher in person or by some other independent observer. However, sufficient feedback was obtained to discern a number of general trends and to enable comparisons both across schools in the field sample and with schools involved in the earlier research and development stage.

After involvement with the project a total of thirty-two staff from twenty schools have continued to use drama as a regular part of their curricular scheme. Only two of these had regularly used drama prior to the start of the programme. Of these two, one rejected the materials as unsuitable to the needs of her pupils, but continued to use the forms of drama which she had been using prior to the start of the programme. Thus, almost one-third of those who initially requested materials for use in drama have gone on to include drama in their teaching. In the majority of these cases the decision to do so is a direct result of personal experience with drama in the course of using and testing the curricular materials developed in the project.

There is a section of special school staff who are opposed to the use of drama either on practical or ideological grounds. The practical grounds are those in inapplicability to the needs of profoundly mentally handicapped pupils, or difficulty of implementation within certain settings such as hospital schools and small units where the range of age and ability is very varied and where the ratio of pupils to staff is high.

Ideologically, in those schools which have strict behaviourist regimes and where little premium is placed on the value of play there may be opposition to the use of drama on the grounds that it creates an unsettled (active or noisy) atmosphere and that its spontaneity runs counter to the strict application of schedules of reinforcement and extinction for very specific purposes. There were only two such schools in the present sample. However, since the sample represented a volunteer group who could be expected to be rather more in favour of drama than the 'average', this figure does not give a representative picture of the number of staff opposed to drama. From the survey carried out in the early stages of the work, and from conversations with advisers and other personnel conversant with conditions within schools, it may be estimated that not more than 10% of staff give the impression of being actively opposed to the introduction of drama, and of this 10% around half may have good grounds for their opposition in that they work with the most profoundly mentally handicapped pupils for whom it is difficult to make drama readily accessible as a regular curricular element.

From the information and requests sent to the researcher in the course of this project, it is clear that there is a substantial proportion of special school staff who are interested in the potential educational value of drama, although currently ignorant of the extent and nature of that value. This project has demonstrated that many such staff, who currently neglect drama, would be both willing and able to provide pupils with regular opportunities for it if materials were available to them for use with classes. On a limited scale, this project has demonstrated that the introduction of drama need not depend on prolonged in-service training or on the sustained physical presence of specialist drama staff within schools. The provision of materials, suited to the abilities of pupils, containing methods which are self-explanatory and not outwith the capabilities of staff, and aimed at areas of pupil development which are congruent with staff's general educational priorities can encourage staff to use drama on a regular basis in their teaching. Staff's continued acceptance of drama after the termination of the present project suggests that they have found drama to be of value to them in their teaching.

The areas in which the present project demonstrated that drama can be of educational value to pupils were primarily those of communication, play and social development and in the degree of participation and enjoyment shown by even withdrawn pupils in the drama work. Because 'drama'

can not be taught in isolation from the subject matter or activities which form the content of the lesson, it is not possible to determine the extent to which experience of the enactive imaginative process of drama was responsible for these developments, and the extent to which this process acted as a catalytic agent reinforcing other forms of experience and enabling the child to make sense of and see associations between the items of information to which he was exposed in the course of the project.

Moreover, the drama process was being used in tandem with well established learning principles in the methods of presentation employed. The need to catch and maintain attention, the use of repetition to strengthen memory and facilitate recall, the pairing of sound and movement in a total communication presentation, the use of perceptual training by the provision of opportunities to develop and engage in babble and auditory discrimination, the use of intrinsic or social reinforcement are all methods which have been demonstrated to be effective in helping mentally handicapped pupils overcome learning difficulties. And it must be assumed that the use of these methods had at least some influence on the extent to which pupils learned as a result of the programme. However, the extra dimension within this programme was that of the enactive, imaginative process of drama. This process certainly made lessons enjoyable for many pupils - more enjoyable than lessons which did not contain this process. Pupils' willingness to participate and their continued concentration span testify to this. This enjoyment may, in itself, have added to the value of the work in that it created a peak experience to be recounted after the event, while the subject matter provided a topic for that recollection.

In addition, although the process of drama represents a discrete educational experience, the fact that this process has to be contained within subject matter which overlaps into other areas of experience may be one of the reasons why the peak experiences of drama facilitates communication more than does a similarly enjoyable experience of engaging in, for example, art or music. To recount an experience of music a child might sing the song, or hum the tune of the musical experience. To recount an experience of art he might describe verbally the elements he put into a picture created. Equally he might simply show the finished picture or create another one like it. But the raw materials of the drama experience are words (or sounds) and movement set within the context of an "event". In order to recount the drama experience it is

therefore almost inevitable that the child will recreate some of the sounds and movement sequences involved in his experience of that event. Thus an enjoyable drama experience would appear to have both the potential to generate communication and the potential to enable that communication through the use of the sounds and movements rehearsed and lived through as part of the experience of drama. The fact that the drama lesson cannot occur as a solitary activity (even when a child is not co-operating with others in drama, he is, at least, working with an adult or alongside others in a shared task) may enhance the potential it holds for communication between the participants in the course of the work. While the fact that drama shares the same process as that of spontaneous make-believe play, means that children who find this process enjoyable within the drama lesson will be motivated to repeat their experience of the process outwith lessons, with a further possible increase in conceptualisation, in communication and in sociability.

What the present project did not attempt to demonstrate was that drama could benefit pupils in the areas of problem-solving ability, imaginative or creative development, in the reduction of aggression or other forms of behaviour disturbance (other than withdrawal or passivity) and in the reduction of emotional trauma. It was postulated at the theoretical level that certain forms of drama activity and method might be capable of generating benefits in these areas but it was argued that the present project was not aimed at these areas, nor were the methods and activities for aiming lessons at these areas of development included in the materials. Thus the present project did not demonstrate that staff were capable of learning the whole range of possible drama methods and activities through using a pack of resources. Nor did it demonstrate that the whole range of activities and methods can be communicated by this means. Indeed, the practical experience gained in the early stages of the collaborative project suggest that some of the more difficult, situation dependent and open-ended drama activities and techniques - those which, theoretically at least, do appear to hold potential for the forms of development we have been discussing here - require a degree of acting skill, knowledge of drama principles, sensitivity to the value of intervention and the timing of intervention, and a degree of practical experience of 'doing' drama at an adult level which is only likely to be achieved or achievable as a result of a prolonged course of training. The nature of this training, and the fact that drama training makes demands upon the personal qualities of the trainee in a way that

the acquisition of factual knowledge does not do, means that staff require a degree of commitment before attempting to acquire this training. In addition, the limited numbers of training places available makes it likely that only those with obvious aptitude for the work will be accepted for training.

If these observations are accurate - and the case remains unproven at the present time - it suggests that the role of the specialist may be to provide pupils with those forms of drama training which may be difficult to communicate quickly and easily to general staff, and which such staff may find difficult to attempt. While an increase in the provision of teaching materials and resource packs could, in itself, increase the amount of coverage drama receives by general staff in special schools.

That the lack of drama provision is a cause for educational concern would appear to be demonstrated by the present project. The perceptions of staff for the benefits of drama were such that it seems likely that pupils who do not have opportunities for this form of curricular experience are deprived in two ways. First, they are deprived of the opportunities to benefit from this form of experience - and the project has demonstrated that these benefits can be quite pronounced in some cases. Secondly, they are deprived of the enjoyment of the experience itself. This not only detracts from the quality of curricular experience offered to pupils in terms of their general enjoyment of the school day, but may have more serious consequences in that it reduces the amount of reinforcement given to pupils to engage in and learn from spontaneous play and reduces opportunities for pupils to learn that 'learning' communication or other skills can be both possible and enjoyable. While the latter aspect may not be a cause for concern among those who are ideologically opposed to the value of play and enjoyment as a part of the learning process, the former consideration must surely be a cause for general concern. If drama can help pupils to develop their communication abilities, the failure of staff to provide this form of teaching may be disadvantaging at least a section of the pupil community - those for whom this method of communication development is particularly effective. From the evidence of the present project these would appear to be certain Down's children who learn quickly and easily through the medium of drama; some of the more passive and withdrawn pupils in whom the stimulation of the drama process appears to generate a desire for communication and an awareness that it is possible for them to communicate; and those children who have, over a

period of time, developed an aversion to verbal communication because it is associated with difficulty, lack of success and frustration. Their enjoyment of communication within the experience of drama may overcome this aversion and does appear to lead to an increased desire for vocalisation or the use of language.

The reactions of staff within the present project have, therefore, shown that there may be some justification for proselytising for the inclusion of drama within the special school curriculum - at least in schools which cater for severely mentally handicapped pupils. It has shown that personal experience of drama may enable staff to assess its value and that the outcome of this assessment tends to be a reduction in staff's neglect of drama. It has shown that staff can be encouraged to achieve this personal experience of drama both through collaboration with a specialist, or in an investigative research project, and through using a pack of resource materials and learning by 'doing' the simpler forms of dramatic activity with classes. And it has shown that staff can be willing and able to develop their skills in the teaching of drama through the use of such a resource pack. It is recommended that the production and development of such packs may increase staff's ability to take drama with their pupils and result in a corresponding decrease in the neglect of drama, with an attendant increase in pupils' opportunities to benefit from the form of experience. And it has been suggested that, since the numbers of specialist staff are likely to remain low in the near future, such staff may be productively employed either in a consultancy capacity within individual schools to help staff develop their own forms of drama work, in collaborating with staff in schools in the development of teaching materials, or in the presentation of those more advanced forms of drama training which general staff may find more difficulty in learning.

These are the main conclusions, findings and recommendations arising out of the assessment of the materials developed in the project and tested by staff. In this chapter there has been an attempt to provide a factual account of the dissemination and evaluation process and to show, by using staff's own comments, the general trends emerging from the work over this period. A number of other points arose out of this aspect of the work. These relate less to the inferences one may make on the practice and provision of drama and more to the inferences one may make about the method of curriculum research and development employed in the project, and to the research process in general. In the following chapter there

will be an attempt to examine these other issues and to suggest that the commonality of problems encountered in curriculum research and development projects amounts to what is almost a methodology in its own right. It suggests that, rather than attempt to work round the constraints imposed by the methodology described in the present project, there may be a need to extend the concept of the method to include the constraints as a legitimate part of the process of research. It will be argued that this may create a somewhat unwieldy theoretical model, but may be a more accurate representation of the reality which the model seeks to represent.

CHAPTER 14

A Discussion of Some Additional Implications Arising Out of the Practical Research

Introduction

In the evaluation carried out in the preceeding chapters the emphasis has been on the curricular materials and on how staff and pupils reacted to these and to the process of drama in more general terms. We have looked mainly at the issues raised in Part 2, and there has been an attempt to show the extent to which the theoretical formulations put forward within that section of the thesis were investigated, supported or refuted by the practical experimental work carried out.

One aspect towards which no evaluative input has, as yet, been directed is that of the research methods employed within the project itself. There has not, for example, been any attempt to show how far the envisaged methods were translated into practice, nor, indeed, to examine the extent to which their theoretical applicability was reflected in their practical usefulness. In this chapter we look briefly at these issues, and it will be argued that the results of this project have provided information which suggests that there is no need to eschew the more proselytising methods of curriculum research and development, and that there may well be a case for some centralised initiatives to ensure that drama does receive the curricular attention which this project suggests it may merit.

It will also be argued that the adoption of the 'materials route' in the later stages of the present project raised a number of practical and methodological difficulties. The specific nature of these difficulties is relatively unimportant in that they may be peculiar to the circumstances surrounding the present project and may have little general applicability outwith these circumstances. What does appear to have some general importance is the extent to which almost all of those projects which include a package of materials as a central ingredient in the research demonstrate that the production and development of these materials becomes an over-dominant feature of the general research. It will be argued that the present project was no exception, and that it could be hypothesised that this is not so much a 'fault' in the research design as the inevitable outcome of under-estimating the time, effort and resources required to include a

materials component within the project. It will be argued that it might be more productive to recognise that the dominance of materials will be a feature at a certain stage in the research process, and that there is a need to take this into account in the initial stages of the research and when estimating time-scales, budgets and manpower resources.

An attempt will be made to look briefly at the differing perspectives which general staff and the 'academic' researcher may bring to a research project, and, again, it will be argued that such differences are virtually inevitable. It will be suggested, however, that some of the problems of data collection which appear to be endemic to the form of curriculum project described here might be obviated if it were recognised that one aspect of this differing perspective is the value each party places upon the recording, the collection and the analysis of data. It will be argued that as the researcher is likely to have more to gain by ensuring that such data is collected, it could be unproductive to leave the task of recording and collecting the data to staff, whose motivation to ensure that the task is carried out may be low.

In the final part of the chapter there will be an attempt to examine the implications of the findings of the project for the future of drama in special education. It will be argued that the provision of materials and information, through a resource centre of the type described by Warnock, and utilising the expertise which staff have already gained in the collaborative projects such as the present, might do much to reverse the neglect of drama within schools for severely or mildly handicapped pupils. It will be argued, however, that different circumstances appear to operate within schools for profoundly handicapped pupils and that, in this area, the most pressing need is for research which will generate more information on the role of drama within such schools. Whether such information will be forthcoming may depend on the extent to which policy makers see a need to set up and fund the necessary research.

Practical and Theoretical Issues Arising out of the
Production of Curriculum Materials

The Collaborative Process

In Chapter Two it was noted that Nisbet described the pattern of collaborative research as one in which

"objectives are defined by participants and modified in the course of experiments leading to small but incremental changes in practice. These 'field development studies' are based on a philosophy which rejects the mechanistic notion of research as something which is invented in one place and can be applied somewhere else."

(Nisbet, 1981; p.173)

It has been argued in the two previous chapters that, in the stages of the project leading up to the production of the teaching materials, this collaborative model had been maintained reasonably well. The users were also the developers, and, in the course of the development, their involvement in the project had a considerable effect on the aims, the wording and the content of the lesson plans produced.

On the other hand, although the users involved in field trials may also be regarded as participants in a collaborative research effort, the nature of their collaboration is somewhat different. Like the original developers, the new users can give feedback which can result in the modification of resources to take account of constraints occurring in practice. They can suggest possible reformulations of aims based on practical findings. They can provide information which will help validate, negate or extend the hypotheses on which the materials have been based. But, because they have not been involved in the initial development, such users will, almost inevitably, have less knowledge of the basic premises and principles which went into the formulation of the materials in the first place.

Where there is close and sustained contact between the participants of the project, as was the case in the collaborative phase of the work, there can be open discussion between all the parties concerned. Suggestions on modifications to materials or methods can be conveyed unambiguously with relatively little discussion. Since feedback is continuously available, a variety of approaches can be tried out and their effectiveness judged in a relatively informal manner. Because of the familiarity with the materials and the purposes for which they are being used, it is also relatively easy to supplement the lessons,

as they are written, with additional verbal explanations. There is also a tendency for a form of 'shorthand' dialogue to come into operation between the participants in the work. A simple anecdote prefaced by the phrase 'do you know what X did today?' can convey a wealth of meaning to those who are familiar with the child and his particular problems or idiosyncrasies. Because of this, minor problems can be sorted out quickly and informally.

For those involved in field trials, on the other hand, the fact that information is being conveyed via the written, rather than the spoken word, may add a dimension of formality to the communication. For example, the prosodic features of verbal communication, and the supplementary non-verbal information which ^{are} consciously or sub-consciously absorbed during verbal exchanges, are both missing from the written word and the flavour of them cannot easily be incorporated into the written text. Material which is committed to print may have a more authoritarian tone because the actual wording has to be tailored towards explicit meanings. This may result in lesson plans which appear more complete and directive than intended, while constant reiteration that material can be adapted to suit other purposes may lead to tedium in the text. The lack of such repetition may, as it did in this project, lead to a situation in which users feel they are 'taking liberties' if they do adapt and change the lessons.

In the production of resources for trials, therefore, it can be difficult to maintain a balance between 'suggestion' and 'instruction'. In effect, the instructions provided in materials can come to be regarded as authoritative, the users of the materials the recipients of that authority, rather than collaborators in a combined piece of research. The users may challenge the authority; they may accept or reject it, but they are unlikely to regard themselves as aligned with it in the way those involved in the initial collaborative stages of a project may be.

It can also be difficult to maintain a balance between attempting to ensure that the lessons are representative of what has been discovered in practice in the earlier stages of the work, while, at the same time, ensuring that it is not so narrowly prescriptive that it becomes teacher-proof - the antithesis of what was intended. Within the present project the tendency was to err on the side of clarity in the lesson outlines, even if it meant a degree of foreclosure in the text. The result, as was argued in an earlier chapter, was materials

which staff, on the whole, found easy to use and well suited to the capabilities of the pupils for whom they were intended. They were, however, regarded by most users as a complete or finished curriculum, rather than as the focus of speculation which they were intended to provide.

Problems in Relating Theory to Practice

The idea of the materials as a means of testing a series of hypotheses, or as a means of engendering critical discussion on what the process of drama may mean to pupils and staff within special schools in Scotland, was - as was argued in Chapter 2 of this thesis - considerably influenced by the writing of Stenhouse. He suggests that the curriculum research and development process is one in which the

"curriculum, like the recipe for a dish, is first imagined as a possibility, then the subject of experiment. The recipe offered publicly is, in a sense, a report on the experiment. Similarly, a curriculum should be grounded in practice. It is an attempt so to describe the work observed in classrooms that it is adequately communicated to teachers and others. Finally, within limits, a recipe can be varied according to taste. So can a curriculum."

(Stenhouse, 1975; p.4)

This analogy captures the spirit of what was attempted in the present project. But a major source of practical difficulty was encountered in determining which were essential ingredients, and which could be varied to taste; and in deciding at which point the recipe ceases to be a recipe and becomes merely the account of an interesting culinary experiment which has little general applicability outwith that particular kitchen. To maintain the analogy, probably the closest description of the developed materials is that of a prepared food mix which requires the addition of an egg or some other ingredient. By her addition to the final project, the cook can feel she has invested some personal input and that the finished product bears some stamp of individuality.

A number of precedents do exist for this approach to curriculum development. (Crawford, 1975; Shipman, 1974; Brown, 1976/80) Such projects show that in terms of the extent to which staff go on to

accept the materials and adopt the innovation they contain, the 'add an egg' approach may be popular with staff and acceptable to them as a means of altering and varying their curricular practices.

The trouble with an analogy, however, is the fact that it can be easy, in using an analogy, to avoid the real issues which can, and do occur when the analogy is translated into the practical application of theoretical principles. The 'add an egg' approach may be popular with staff, but evaluative accounts of projects based on such an approach suggest that the staff involved in such projects tend not to see themselves as collaborators in the curriculum research and development process (Crawford, 1975; Brown, 1980; Shipman, 1974). They suggest also that staff have failed to develop their own skills in curriculum development and planning and look instead to the development team as the central suppliers of materials. Some staff may even feel 'let down' if materials either fail to live up to their expectations or are not produced in the quantity which they regard as necessary for carrying out the innovative programme. While their view of the innovation may, as was argued earlier, not accord with that envisaged in the earlier stages of the research.

Within the present project there was an attempt to ensure that we were all 'speaking the same language' in relation to drama by including an explanation of what we in the development schools had agreed upon as an appropriate definition and analysis of drama, its aims and its activities. And it seems clear from the feedback provided by staff that they did not feel that the materials had been inadequately researched or were inappropriate to the pupils they were aimed at. On the other hand, the fact that those staff who used the materials in field trials are still using them in almost exactly the same ways suggests that they have not gone on to exercise their own skills in curriculum development or planning as a result of their involvement in the project. The fact that a sizable number of such staff have asked to be informed of any further materials which may be developed suggests that there is a willingness on the part of staff to 'take and use' materials, even to make minor modifications in order to use them more easily with classes, but less willingness to regard involvement in the project as a means of personal self-development in the area of lesson planning and development.

In addition, because the materials formed part of a research study, staff were being asked not only to assess the materials, but to do so overtly and in communicable terms. This makes demands on staff and places them in a position of 'obligation' towards the researcher. In effect, staff are being asked to fulfil a contractual agreement by making an assessment in return for materials. Again, in such a situation,

staff are less likely to see themselves as collaborators, and more likely to regard themselves as either beneficiaries or critics. Within the present project, a number of staff made comments like 'thank you for producing such a compact learning kit', 'we have enjoyed using your programme', or 'thank you for sending your drama materials. We are looking forward to using them'. Comments such as these suggest that staff looked upon the materials as a 'gift' - albeit a gift with strings attached! - rather than regarding themselves as researchers in their own classrooms. The fact that staff did provide an assessment of the materials, and of their own practices in relation to these, cannot be taken as an indication that their involvement in the project had added to staff's ability to take a critical stance in relation to their own practice.

From the comments they made, it was clear that a number had done so. One member of staff noted, for instance, that

"the package certainly made me observe more closely children's reactions. It is borne home to me that a very early start to this type of work is required"

(Instructress, Strathclyde region)

Another noted that

"I liked your emphasis on starting with where 'they are at'. It is so easy to assume our children possess skills which they don't, and are understanding when they aren't. I found that using the package I began to notice little things which I hadn't seen before"

(Teacher, Strathclyde region)

Comments such as these, however, were the exception rather than the rule. All that can be said with certainty, therefore, is that all staff, to a greater or lesser extent, fulfilled their part of the contract entered into. But it is suspected that the most critical stance was adopted mainly by those who would, naturally, have adopted such a stance in relation to any set of teaching materials, regardless of their origins.

Thus, while the notion of a curriculum offering as a series of 'hypotheses' to be tested in practice may be valid in the context of the kind of close collaboration possible in the initial research and development stages of the project, an attempt to set that offering in a form whereby it may be tested by a wider cross-section of staff may result in the kinds of problems discussed above. Stenhouse's view of the teacher as a researcher may also be relatively easy to implement

when the work is confined to a small collaborative sample. It may be more difficult to implement when the curricular offering is being tested by groups other than those involved in the initial stages of research and development. And, while it may be 'mechanistic' to regard research as something which is invented in one place and applied elsewhere, the experience of the present project suggests that it may be more realistic to regard it in this way when dealing with the dissemination stages of a curriculum research and development project in which a central ingredient is a package of materials.

The Generality of the Problems Encountered

That the experiences of the present project are not unique is evident by the references to many similar problems and findings in the curriculum research and development literature. Shipman, for example, in evaluating the Keele Integrated Studies Project - a project which, like the present one, was as much concerned with examining reactions to a process as to the materials which formed the product - had this to say about the production of materials within the project:

- "1. The production of materials for publication came to dominate the life of the project in a way that excluded other developments and increased the movement towards centralisation.
2. The concentration on materials can partly be seen as an evasion of the less accessible problems of definition and research.
3. Materials were not the main thing asked for by either teachers or advisers.
4. Materials produced were regarded by the teachers as too difficult and they found they needed to spend a considerable time modifying them.
5. The publication arrangements were a compromise, forced on us by time, which left the senior units unpublished.
6. Controversies over materials produced sharper tensions within the team than any other aspect of the project's work."

(Shipman et al, 1974; p. 153-4)

The fact that Shipman was referring to the commercially produced resources rather than the raw trial materials does not make his comments irrelevant to the present project in that Bolam, one of the researchers in the project, concedes that Shipman's comments may be equally applicable to both. He attributes the dominance of materials to three factors -

- a. the fact that materials were an envisaged and important aspect of the work from the start as a means of generating change and providing data on the extent and nature of that change;

b. the fact that the project was so short-lived that insufficient time was available for detailed field testing before the commercial production of materials;

c. the fact that insufficient attention was paid to diffusion of the innovation in the early stages of the project meant that resources were insufficient to meet the demands put on the team in the production of materials. Demands on time, money and effort were all in excess of those envisaged.

Within the present project, the criticism levelled by Shipman at the Keele Project provided a cautionary warning. The 'add an egg' approach was a response to the need to provide materials which were easy for staff to use and which did not involve them in the time-consuming adaptation which staff had argued were a deterrent to their using some of the resources which already exist. There was no element of commercial publication within the project, thereby removing one possible constraint. Within schools for severely handicapped pupils materials were one of the main things required by staff, and, it was in response to the research findings in the school for profoundly handicapped pupils that the 'materials route' was discarded as being an inappropriate method of research within that sector of the handicapped community. On the other hand, the actual production and development of materials took longer than had been anticipated. This meant that the field testing of the senior units was not accomplished within the life of the project. Demands on time, money and effort, were all greater than had been envisaged when the project was conceived. The fact that there were no overt tensions in the production of materials could well be due to the fact that, although staff provided a considerable input to the resources, the actual task of producing and disseminating these was left to the researcher. But the researcher had under-estimated the extent of this task and, just as in the Keele Project, the consequence of this was that the production of materials did dominate the life of the project at one stage.

One aspect of this dominance has already been referred to. The actual wording of the text proved more difficult and time-consuming than had been anticipated. Problems centred on two main issues. First, how to express the process of drama in unambiguous terms and in such a way that the instruction given does not convey the impression that the methods suggested are definitive, and without giving so much information that the more experienced teachers feel either patronised or alienated.

Secondly, how to maintain a balance between closure and adaptability in the lessons themselves. It has already been argued that the degree of closure effected in the present project was perhaps greater than would have been desirable if the materials were to achieve the critical testing and adaptation envisaged for them. The crucial point in the present context, however, is not how far the materials achieved their objectives of flexibility, etc, but rather the fact that our perception of the need to find a balance necessitated the writing and rewriting of parts of lessons several times before these could be produced for dissemination. While this was an essential part of the production process, the consultation and re-writing involved took longer than expected and increased the perceived time pressures.

Secondly, because of the budgetary constraints on the project, and in order to keep costs down, the University had made reprographic facilities available. But the time involved in the reproduction of even fifty copies of the materials was considerable, and added to the perceived time pressures.

Thirdly, if the field trials were to be of sufficient duration to yield any comparative data, there was a need to have the first pack available for testing by the middle of the period of funded research. The fact that time was perceived as a 'problem' made it difficult to stand back and think objectively about alternative or easier methods of production, or, indeed, of whether all the aspects identified as necessary elements in the research and development stage had been given proper consideration in the production of materials.

A striking example of this was the illustrations to go with the lessons. The need for illustrations arose out of the actual research conducted within schools. And, while it might have been anticipated that it would be a good idea to include some visual aids, it could not have been anticipated that the format of lessons would be such that every lesson necessitated illustrations. The funding to make such illustrations available on a commercially produced basis could not, therefore, have been anticipated at the start of the project and included in the projected materials costs. Moreover, the illustrations used in the initial stages were large in size and contained moveable effects. The commercial reproduction of these would have been prohibitively expensive. While the fact that the field sample was more geographically diverse than had been anticipated added to the problems in that the illustrations had to be scaled down to a size applicable to

post and packaging. It has already been argued that the end product, while relatively cheap to produce and disseminate, failed to achieve the effect aimed at, and was the target of criticism by staff in field trials who found the illustrations a source of frustration in their attempts to use the materials. Again, the important point in the present context is not the effectiveness or otherwise of the illustrations, but the fact that research considerations were forgotten in the search for solutions to the practical problems encountered in the production and dissemination of materials within the time and budgetary constraints operating.

Thus, the specific problems encountered in the present project do appear to reflect the problems encountered in other projects of a similar type. Within a research-centred approach to curriculum development, however, it is not possible to say at the start of the project what the curricular materials will require to comprise or even if materials will, in practice, turn out to be major components of the research. In the case of a project which is dealing with a 'process', it may be difficult to predict in advance of the practical research, the extent to which that process will be capable of encapsulation within a material resource. It may, therefore, be difficult to assess in advance, and with any degree of accuracy, what actual costs in terms of time, money and manpower effort are likely to be necessary to accomplish the aims of the research. The experience of the present project, and the published accounts of the others mentioned, suggest that the general tendency is to underestimate all of these costs from the start, with the consequence that materials do come to dominate the project and to over-rule other considerations such as research findings which ought to be more important than practical exigency but which, under the perceived pressures, are not treated as being so. Such problems can be avoided if the research takes place in schools, by schools, for their own benefit and at their own instigation - if, in other words, the users are the developers. If, however, the research centres on an area about which little is already known, the impetus for change is likely to come from outwith the school. In such a situation, the instigator of the change might well be tempted to emulate the present project by seeking to compare the findings obtained from a small sample with those obtained when the sample is widened to include a larger cross-section of staff. And it could be that problems such as those outlined above are the almost inevitable concomitants to such a situation.

The Question of Shortcomings in the Research Process

Stenhouse, in arguing for the research model in curriculum development, suggests that

"A curriculum without shortcomings has no prospect of improvement and has therefore been insufficiently ambitious. What we ask of a curriculum offering is not that it should be right or good but that it should be intelligent or penetrating. Its dilemmas should be important dilemmas. Its shortcomings should reflect real and important difficulties Such a developmental style points towards a tradition of curriculum research which focusses on the study of problems and responses to them rather than on the invention of ambitious solutions before the problems have been properly studied."

(Op. Cit.; p,125)

While the present author would applaud the ideals embodied in that statement, the experiences of the present project suggest that these ideals may be difficult to attain in practice - at least as far as a post-graduate research project is concerned. First, because of the difficulties already referred to in estimating the time, funding and effort which may be necessitated by the production and development of the curriculum offering if this is to be offered for testing beyond the ideographic sample involved in its initial research. Secondly, because a post-graduate project of the type of specialist skills which may be required if certain areas of the project are to be able to pose the 'right' kind of questions before attempting solutions. In the present project, the findings obtained from the school for profoundly handicapped pupils was a case in point. It appeared that in order to research the 'real' issues involved in the use of drama at this stage, there was a need for a team research effort and for the kinds of observation and analysis skills which the present author did not possess, nor could readily acquire without some prolonged specialist training.

But even if the project is one in which the research is being conducted by a group which comprises a variety of areas of specialist expertise rather than by a single subject specialist in collaboration with staff, it may be difficult to envisage in advance of the practical research experiments the actual nature of the specialist input which may be needed at various stages in the project. Ideally, one could argue that the pressures of time should be resisted in favour of taking the time necessary to seek out the appropriate agencies of specialist advice or guidance as they are required when new questions crop up in the course of the research. Even if such agencies do exist (and it is by no means certain that such agencies will exist if the subject being

researched is one which is breaking relatively new ground) this ideal may be difficult to achieve in practice and it may be more realistic to suggest that any curricular offering produced under such circumstances will have shortcomings which are neither intelligent or penetrating, but are simply shortcomings.

Faults in the Assessment Procedures

The most glaring example within the present project must be the assessment charts which were devised as a means of generating some data which could be standardised and compared across both samples of schools. It has already been argued that these charts were far from ideal in that they represented a compromise between the need for some uniform measure which could be applied across schools, and the appreciation that, in practice, detailed and time-consuming assessment procedures were unpopular with, and liable to be ignored by, general staff. It was argued that staff in special schools feel they already spend a considerable time in the charting and monitoring of progress as a direct result of their using behaviourist schedules and teaching programmes based on an assessment of individual pupils' specific needs. Staff appear to appreciate that the recording and charting of information is an integral and necessary part of these programmes, but it is a part which tends to be regarded as a difficult or boring chore.

While staff do see a need to assess pupils' development, and the effects of their teaching practice, they also profess to know pupils well enough to be able to make such assessments, and to assess the effects of new materials or practices, without systematically recording these. Staff felt that the filling up of charts was simply a recording of what they already knew to be the case.

On the other hand, they did find that annual or biennial assessments carried out by external personnel such as educational psychologists and medical staff could be more informative, since such people not only provided a fresh view of the individual child but also could provide, as a result of their experience of a wide range of children, theoretical or comparative information which could sometimes guide teachers towards possible new ways of tackling longstanding difficulties.

Within the present project staff's attitudes to the charts may be summed up in the following points -

- a. the majority of staff in the field sample did not like the charts or find them a useful part of the programme;
- b. the majority of those who were not in close contact with the researcher, and even some of those who were, did not fill the charts in either before, during or on completion of the programme;
- c. a sizeable number of those who did not fill in the charts were, nevertheless, prepared to write out pages of detailed feedback;
- d. even those staff who did use the charts and found them useful as a means of directing attention towards aspects they might otherwise have overlooked, feel that 'if they were a permanent part of a drama programme they would be offputting as it would mean yet more paperwork to do',

The unpopularity of 'paperwork' only partially explains the neglect of the charts, as is demonstrated by the number of those who provided detailed written feedback. The actual design may also have contributed to their neglect. Their lack of detail, stemming from the knowledge that too much detail would be self-defeating in that staff would not fill them in, made them too general to be of use in pinpointing fine variations in individual pupil behaviours. They could show where gross changes were occurring, but, as staff already required to know this in order to fill in the charts, the recording of this information was regarded as superfluous. It is ironic, therefore, that charts which were deliberately made less detailed than they might have been in order to ensure that staff would be able to find the time to fill them in, proved equally self-defeating as a result of their generality and lack of fine detail.

Conflict Between User Needs and Researcher Needs

There may, however, be another, more fundamental reason for staff's neglect of the charts. And this may have little to do with details of design or the factor of time. While the rest of the materials within the curricular packs were user-oriented, the charts were considerably less so. It is possible to argue that they fulfil a number of user oriented functions in that they provide staff with a means of determining which children are likely to be ready for group work and which are more likely to need one-to-one instruction. They can also show trends which would indicate whether an individual child needs more help in developing play, co-operating, language, gesture, etc and can direct the teacher to the appropriate lesson areas. However, the main usefulness of the charts lay in their potential for generating comparative data for the researcher.

Users appeared to be much more interested in the curricular materials as they related to their own teaching situation and less concerned with whether their feedback added to or detracted from the general trends reported. And it is perhaps significant that an example of one teacher's feedback notes from the development stage which was included in the pack appeared to be a more palatable and popular means of recording data among the field trial staff than was the use of the charts. The chart in Appendix C shows the teacher-devised feedback notes which a number of those in the field sample adopted. The fact that this more personalised user-developed format was a more popular method of data recording highlights the distinction which may exist between aspects of a research project which are regarded as useful or necessary by the researcher and those which are so regarded by other participants in the research.

In any post-graduate research project, however, one of the aims of the researcher - regardless of what the other aims may be - will be to amass information on which a thesis can be built for submission for academic purposes. The choice of research methods for the collection and recording of data may be influenced by this aim as much, perhaps, as by other determining factors such as the nature of the hypotheses formulated, the type of data which will be required to support or refute these, the amenability of this to different forms of data collection of the various techniques available - (and this may well be influenced by the academic discipline from which the researcher has emerged) - and by practical exigencies such as the time-scale of the research, and the costs and efforts involved in administering and analysing the chosen methods. Regardless of the specific type of data collection methods adopted, however, the researcher is likely to have a degree of self-interest in ensuring that the data is collected, that information is recorded and fed back. The charts in the present project represented the present author's attempt to ensure that the project yielded not only anecdotal information but also some more uniform comparative data as well. The self-interest inherent in this attitude, the researcher's own lack of specialist knowledge of how to go about devising and developing this sort of assessment device, coupled with their lack of detail, made the charts virtually valueless in the field trials stage as a means of generating data. And it could be argued that the shortcomings of these charts are neither penetrating or intelligent. They merely represent one of the mistakes which occurred as part of the learning process

which must surely accompany any post-graduate research project, and against which it would be extremely difficult to plan in advance since 'ignorance', by definition, includes a lack of knowledge of what one does not know as well as that lack of knowledge of which one is aware.

The Provision of Feedback - A Conflict of Interests

The feedback provided by staff in the trial stages of the project does, however, raise an additional point, and one which, again appears to be fairly general within projects which rely on staff relaying information on trial materials to those involved in assessing the general reactions. There does seem to be fairly general agreement that there can be difficulty in ensuring that feedback is provided by those assessing the trial materials. And again, there may be a conflict of interest between the researcher who needs material on which to build a thesis, and staff who are only providing feedback because it is part of a contractual agreement entered into by their acceptance of the materials for trial.

Shipman (1974) also refers to this conflict of interests in his evaluation of the Keele Project. He notes that

"In the first two terms of trial the team tried unsuccessfully to design schedules that would be filled in and returned by teachers. (This led to a shift in emphasis towards participant observation as the chief source of feedback and put further pressures on the already overworked co-ordinators.) Looking back, it is as if the project was operating at two levels. On one level the work had to stand up to academic criticism. Simultaneously, the project was operating at a much more practical level helping teachers in the classroom to develop suitable material and methods of working."

(p.29)

"The provision of feedback was a condition of joining the trial. Forms were prepared to help teachers report on their experience. In practice, schools rarely co-operated This failure to provide feedback frustrated the intentions to involve teachers in the development Again it seemed to be the effort required in producing feedback combined with reluctance to publicise problems that stopped this active participation The teachers were mainly concerned with the immediate problems facing them in the classroom. They were grateful for the ideas and materials, and often were convinced that integrated studies was both educationally desirable and liable to motivate children more than traditional subject teaching. But their main concern was with concrete problems Principles of integration, the niceties of team teaching, and the commitment to feed back experiences to the project were often ignored."

(p.80)

As in the Keele Project, in the present project few of the teachers in the field sample spontaneously furnished the researcher with the promised feedback. The researcher had, in every case, to visit, to 'phone or to write to the school in order to prompt staff to provide the information they had promised. The alacrity with which some staff replied to these prompts showed that they had, in many cases, been keeping regular and detailed notes of their lessons. And the extent to which staff had taken the trouble to record their work in detail, did not appear to have been influenced by the extent to which the researcher was likely to be able to maintain physical contact with the school. Teachers within 'high contact' schools could provide feedback in interview. But, in several cases, the staff interviewed did not go on to support their interview with the additional written commentary which they had said they would provide. On the other hand, a number of staff working in the more remote areas not only provided detailed written comment but, in three cases, actually provided completed assessment charts as well. There were, however, two schools who provided minimal information and a further seven whose feedback was considerably less detailed than the researcher would have wished.

The interesting point appeared to be that the adequacy or otherwise of the feedback sent to the researcher did not appear to bear any relationship to the extent to which the materials were used, or the value placed upon their use by staff. For example, in five of the cases where feedback was adequate but undetailed, staff were observed teaching the lessons from the materials regularly and with apparent competence and enthusiasm. In each case, the observations were carried out by an independent observer who was not in the school for the purpose of examining or assessing staff's teaching, but had to be there either as a student or in order to carry out assessments of pupils. Thus it was not that staff were reluctant to provide feedback because they did not wish to be 'critical' of the materials. Rather, it seemed that some staff did not regard it as important to provide detailed feedback. They obviously believed they had fulfilled their part of the contract by the somewhat 'sketchy' information furnished. There appeared to be little difference in this respect between instructors and trained teachers, although head teachers and those in sole charge of a special class or unit tended to provide more detailed information with less prompting. This may simply reflect their position of greater responsibility, or it may be that those who have reached such positions of responsibility

have done so because of their ability to deal with the paper work and other commitments which go with the post.

In any case, it appeared that, while it was in the researcher's academic interests to ensure that data was obtained, staff's priorities were towards the everyday needs of their classes - the collection and recording of data being regarded more in the nature of an academic exercise commissioned by the researcher rather than a means of obtaining diagnostic or evaluative information on the programme itself.

As Gleeson notes -

".....the effort to change the curriculum through such progressive concepts as active enquiry and teacher impartiality often met with strong resistance from teachers who experienced such innovations as externally imposed and irrelevant to their immediate problems. Unfortunately, much of the teacher 'reaction' against such innovations has been explained in terms of their conservatism; there has been little attempt to understand their reaction as a normal and critical response to pressure imposed by the functional models of curriculum development itself.

Another interpretation of teacher reaction might be that the assumptions of curriculum developers are not sufficiently grounded within the practitioners' frames of reference"

(Gleeson, 1979; p.195)

Gleeson goes on to point out that there is an assumption that the standpoint of the researcher or curriculum developer who has taken theory as well as practice into account must be superior to that of staff who appear to simply make decisions and judgments on the basis of practicality. He argues that, even in collaborative research projects, such an assumption will inevitably create a schism between the objectives of the 'academic' and the objectives of staff. He points out, however, that neither set of objectives ought to be regarded as superior, but that there should be an acceptance that there will be differing perspectives and that there will always be a tendency for staff to provide 'token participation' as a sop to the researcher or curriculum developer, while the researcher, by asking staff to provide more critical or evaluative information than they see the practical need for, may, in fact, be adding to staff's practical workload by 'imposing further constraints upon teachers in their already contradictory work'. He goes on to add that teachers involved in curriculum research and development projects may have to

"operate within politically vulnerable circumstances in conflict and in doubt, so that it is essential that curricular reform should support rather than frustrate them in their task. It would seem

to be to this end that curriculum development programmes should be directed."

(Ibid; p.197)

The present project was not so much aimed towards curricular reform and innovation as towards enabling staff to assess, through personal experience, the value of drama to them in their teaching. It is ironic, therefore, that some of those staff who clearly saw drama as being of value and did use the drama materials both regularly and enthusiastically were also those who relayed back the least information on their practice to the researcher. One can only speculate why this should have been so in the present case. It may be that the provision of feedback was regarded by staff as an additional constraint upon their time and effort, or there may have been other reasons such as sheer forgetfulness or lack of organisation. The general lesson which can be drawn from this situation, however, is that, in any curriculum development project which involves collaboration between an 'academic' researcher and general staff, there is going to be a conflict between the interests of the two parties. And it seems somewhat unfair to expect general staff to take the trouble to 'do the researcher's work of recording and relaying back feedback on the programme' if there is little reward to them in doing so. If, on the other hand, it is accepted from the outset that the researcher is not an altruistic benefactor seeking to help staff and support them in their contradictory task of imposing an education upon those who have had no say in determining whether or not they wish to have an education, but that the researcher, like the staff, is engaged upon a task of his own choosing and for which he is being 'paid' - (in terms of career prospects, qualifications or academic kudos) - it may be possible to begin an academic research project from a more realistic methodological standpoint.

Stenhouse argues that the academic researcher or curriculum developer should not be 'the man with a mission' but should be an investigator seeking to understand and describe what goes on in schools in the process of a curriculum research and development experiment. This was the theoretical standpoint taken by the present author at the start of this project. As the project progressed, however, it became clear that the fact that the researcher's 'mission' formed part of the hidden agenda in the project, made the project no less mission oriented. The mission was to carry out a piece of research which could

be written up for academic submission. And no matter how all other practices are described in theoretical terms, it must be noted that this objective was the underlying motivating factor in the research. This may appear to be so glaringly obvious that it does not require stating. However, when one reads accounts of curriculum research and development projects; when one examines the general literature of the curriculum research and development movement over the last two decades; and when one examines evaluative accounts of projects which seek to illuminate this process, one cannot help but be infected by the general air of piety and idealism which the literature exudes. And what appears to be particularly insidious is not the actual descriptions, which do, in fact, allow of such human frailties as greed, self-interest, or insensitivity, but the recommendations which, in general, go on to assume that simply knowing that such human errors can occur will prevent their occurring on other occasions. Given the model of human history, this assumption would appear to be somewhat optimistic.

As Martin suggests, the 'rational' model of research - and in this we may include the process of curriculum research and development - is one in which there is a sequential structuring of the research process from the first formulation of the problem to be studied, through the stages of selecting an appropriate research method and design, to the collection and analysis of data. In the final stages -

"the researcher uses the results of the study to confirm or revise the theory. This last step, from results back to theory, makes the rational model cyclical as well as sequential."

(Martin, 1982; p.18/19)

Martin goes on to argue that the reason for the prevalence of this approach is that it has

"a logical justification. It is an effective structure for presenting research findings. It is perhaps an idealized guide to how research ought to be conducted. The rational model does not attempt to provide an accurate description of the process whereby research actually is conducted."

(Ibid)

She goes on to cite a number of published sources which do give more realistic descriptions of the research process in action.

(Parlett & Hamilton, 1972; Shipman et al. , 1974; Nash, 1973/76; Harlen, 1975; Hamilton, 1977; Hoetker, 1975; Hargreaves et al., 1972; Boydell, 1978). There is now no shortage of

accounts which purport to give a realistic

picture of what happens in research. But, as Martin observes -

"these latter sources, however, have as their objective the improvement of the quality of research, rather than the provision of a theoretical model that describes the process whereby research decisions are actually made."

(Ibid)

And she goes on to make the plea that research reality be incorporated into research theory, thus obviating the 'panic' facing every inexperienced researcher who is unaware that the reality of his disorganised efforts at research are more in keeping with the reality of other's efforts than they are with the theories which have been propounded to explain and describe these efforts.

The present author would make a similar plea in regard to the reality of curriculum research and development theory. Rather than seek to avoid or cure problems created by lack of economic or manpower resources, pressures of time, difficulty in obtaining feedback from staff, the differing personal perspectives and self-interests of the various participants in the research effort, it might be more productive to assume at the start of the research that such issues will be a natural part of the research, given that it is being conducted by human beings who are not, in general, motivated by an altruistic mission, but by enlightened self-interest; by human beings who have a limited set of skills which will predispose them to make certain methodological choices because they suit the skills of the researcher rather than the problem being researched; by human beings who find certain aspects of a subject more interesting or congenial than others, and who will, therefore, pursue these at the expense of other areas; and by human beings whose shortcomings will, on occasion, be merely shortcomings and not the product of important and considered dilemmatic issues. Acceptances of the human error factor in research design may not lead to 'better' curriculum research and development projects in terms of the results obtained by these, but it may help dispel some of the current myths about the difference between what 'ought' to happen and what 'does' happen. What 'ought to happen' is only relevant in so far as it reflects what is humanly possible, rather than what is idealistically proposed as theoretically desirable.

Stenhouse himself argues that

"the ideal is that the curricular specification should feed a teacher's personal research and development programme through which he is progressively increasing his understanding of his own work and hence bettering his teaching."

(Op. Cit.; p.143)

But he also notes that

"the actual production of materials is probably the least rewarding aspect of curriculum development in terms of personal professional development. Research participation and the study of one's own classroom are the educative part of the process and teachers producing materials have less time for that."

(Ibid; p.222)

The present author would contend that those staff who have not been involved in the actual development or production of materials are, as a direct consequence of their lack of involvement, less likely to adopt a research perspective in relation to the use of these, and less likely to regard the curricular offering as a means of testing hypotheses rather than as teaching materials which are ready for use. The actual production of resources may represent a transition point between the investigative-collaborative research paradigm and the more centrally directed and externally managed process of disseminating a product for testing. While the theoretical model proposed by Stenhouse seems to be feasible within a small group of people who have committed themselves to the investment of time and effort involved in collaborative research, it seems to be difficult, if not actually impossible, to maintain the same spirit of enquiry when the project is widened to include the larger-scale testing of hypotheses which are embodied within a curricular pack.

The findings from the present study also suggest that it may be unwise to regard the extent of feedback supplied by staff as a measure of their perception of the usefulness or efficacy of a curriculum pack. Since the recording and collection of data appears to be a general problem in projects of this type, it may be necessary to assume at the start that staff will need prompting to provide feedback and may provide less detailed, less analytic or less systematically recorded feedback than the academic researcher would wish. Such an assumption, coupled with the realisation that the production of materials is likely to take up considerable time and resources, might enable the researcher to give some thought to how her hidden agenda of academic requirements might be met without necessarily relying on staff's provision of data. The use of additional personnel as observers is one procedure which, out of necessity, some projects have adopted. Within the present project the presence of these observers was fortuitous rather than planned. Had more thought been given to this aspect at the start of the work, visits from observers could have been built into the

project as an integral part of the research design. Similarly, a realisation that charting and monitoring pupil progress was a more pressing need for the academic researcher than for staff who knew their pupils well and who had no need to generalise their observations outwith their own school or classroom, might have resulted in a different form of data recording and collection. It might, for example, have been possible to make use of the expertise of others in devising more sensitive measures which were not left to be filled in by general staff but were filled in by the researcher, in whose interest it was that such information be collected. Whatever method is chosen may depend on the individual project. The crucial point would appear to be that the obtaining of this kind of detailed information should be the responsibility of the researcher. It should not be expected that staff, for whom such data may have no intrinsic value in classroom terms, will be highly motivated to co-operate in its collection and feedback. Nor should staff's failure to provide such detailed feedback be regarded as a 'fault' in terms of the application of curriculum theory. Rather, it should be accepted that the issue of data collection and analysis is one which reflects the differing perspectives of academic researchers and general staff. Neither perspective is 'superior'. Each is geared towards the practicalities which each regards as important.

If, on the other hand, the intention of the research is to seek to 'change' rather than simply to illuminate curricular practices during a research and development project, the adoption of the 'materials route' - in spite of the difficulties involved in its implementation and the degree of centrality it may introduce - may have much to recommend it. For example, within the present project it was noted that the willingness of staff to become involved in the close collaborative research was, to some extent, influenced by their knowledge that one of the outcomes envisaged for the project was the development of teaching materials. It appeared to be this materials component which gave the project its practical credibility with staff - in the early stages at least.

During the field testing stage also, teachers in schools other than those directly involved in the project became aware that the project was in progress and that a pack of materials was 'on offer' as part of the research design. As a result, the researcher received many telephone calls and letters requesting information on the project, asking where materials could be obtained, or requesting materials and

participation in the project. As the request received far outweighed the budgetary capacity of the project to supply, it was not possible to accede to all the requests. However, the fact that this project, unlike most projects in drama, had a base of materials, seemed to be a major factor in attracting interest to the project. From the practical point of view, many staff appear to be less interested in critical testing or involvement in research than in having materials to use with classes. This may indicate that staff do not necessarily want to neglect curricular aspects like drama, and supports the earlier conclusion that staff are not so much resistant to the provision of drama as simply lacking in either the personal or the curricular resources to incorporate it into their work.

From the theoretical viewpoint, the experience of the present project suggests that, while it may be difficult to produce curriculum materials which are faithful to the spirit of a process oriented and research oriented curricular model, it need not be detrimental to the process to attempt to do so. For example, it is a fact that more teachers are using drama now than was the case at the start of this project. This does not necessarily mean that they are using it skillfully, intelligently, or in the critical spirit intended. Nor does it suggest that, through the use of the materials developed in this project, staff are providing either a full, a balanced or a systematic curriculum in drama. Nevertheless, for a number of mentally handicapped pupils, drama is now a curricular probability, whereas formerly it was merely a remote possibility.

It could be argued - and, in fact, it has been argued by a number of drama specialists - that drama which is badly taught or badly represented in the materials used for teaching it may be as

ineffective as no drama at all. The comments made by general staff within the present project would appear to contradict this. The one common factor linking the reactions of virtually every person who sent feedback, however scanty, was the comment that pupils seem to gain a high degree of enjoyment from involvement in drama. While this may be insufficient *raison d'être* for the inclusion of a particular aspect within the curriculum, it is certainly no reason for excluding it. If, as research in other areas seems to suggest, enjoyment can provide an emotional response which will motivate a desire to share and communicate with others, then, in the case of pupils whose motivation

for communication may be naturally low, enjoyment may have some positive educational advantage.

Purely in terms of the numbers affected, the materials base does seem to have led to a wider acceptance of drama than would have been the case without such a component to extend the work beyond the small collaborative sample. It lends support to the hypothesis that drama can be introduced to schools by the provision of suitable teaching materials. It demonstrates that staff see sufficient value in drama as to go on to accept it as a regular element of their curricular schemes. And it suggests one method whereby the neglect of drama might be redressed relatively cost-effectively and over a fairly short time-scale.

Implications of the Research Method for the Redress of the Neglect of Drama

As a result of the methods used in the present project it has been argued that a number of staff now regard drama as being of value to them in their teaching. Extrapolating from their evidence, it has been argued that drama does have value for the severely mentally handicapped child, that this value may be sufficient to warrant educational concern if drama provision is not made available, and that many class teachers are both willing and able to make the simpler forms of drama provision available to their classes on a regular basis. If these extrapolations are accurate - and there may be a case for further research or replication to discover whether they are - they have implications for the methods which might usefully be employed at the policy level to seek to redress the neglect of drama.

Since this project appears to have demonstrated that there is educational justification for seeking to redress this neglect, methods of curriculum research and development which seek to act as agents of change, rather than simply as investigative or illuminative procedures, could be appropriate. There could be a case for the grass-roots approach which seeks to identify staff's needs for materials or support, or, indeed, for a centre-periphery approach which seeks to research, develop and disseminate, in collaboration with staff, a series of centrally developed learning units for use in drama within special schools. There could also be a case for the Scottish Education Department to make funding available for such a venture, or to exert some pressure to persuade publishers to commission new textbooks and materials for use

in this area.

The problem would appear to lie in convincing publishers that such materials would be commercially viable. One publisher has, in fact, taken a lead here and commissioned a practical textbook based on the findings from the present project. If this proves to be commercially successful other publishers may follow suit and ask other authors to provide practical texts for use in devising lessons with handicapped children. However, in absolute terms, the potential market for this type of book will be limited, and it is unlikely that the volume of sales could justify the commercial production of more than a few such texts. The alternative strategy of centralised funding to set up a research team to create new teaching materials could prove a costly venture, given that drama is a minority subject within the curriculum.

An alternative approach could be to utilise the expertise which has already been established in a number of schools as a result of their collaboration in this, or in other drama projects initiated by college of education drama staff. The Warnock Report has suggested that a number of special schools should function as resource centres, providing help and materials for their colleagues in other schools. The expertise which staff have built up in the course of collaborative projects could be put to good use within resource centres of this kind. In addition to stocking materials and providing information, such centres could provide a venue for training schemes for specialist drama students and for general staff who wish to see drama taught, to learn to teach it, or to devise curricular schemes or materials for their own use. Such a proposal could be relatively cost effective in that manpower and buildings are already costed within the system. Staff prepared to run additional courses outwith school hours would only require to be paid on an hourly basis. Materials, produced by those within the resource centres - by either staff or students - could be tailored towards the needs of specific, or even small groups of children, in a way that mass produced items cannot be.

The costs of producing materials might require to be borne by the local authority, or, through grant funding, by the Scottish Education Department. The costs of producing such items as part of academic training or research projects should not be excessive. The total grant funding made available by the Scottish Education Department and the University for the production of materials within the present project was around £1,000. Even allowing for inflation, costs of this order

do not seem to be impossible to meet, given the grant funding available to such agencies as the Scottish Education Department or the Scottish Council for Educational Technology.

As already noted, however, drama is a minority subject. Even if staff adopt it as a regular element within their curricular schemes, the evidence from the present project suggests that it is unlikely that its use would be more frequent than once or twice a week. It would, therefore, be on a similar level of curricular provision to that of art, music or physical education - all of which have been linked with drama in government papers as forming the core of the expressive or creative arts. Since such documents suggest that the inspectorate accord the expressive arts a degree of importance within a balanced curricular scheme, one would expect that policy makers would lend financial support to schemes whereby the neglect of these elements could be redressed as cost effectively as possible.

The latest Inspectors' Report on the curriculum within Scottish special schools for mildly mentally handicapped pupils (HMSO, 1981) echoes mainstream curricular recommendations when it suggests that subjects like art, music and drama are needed to enable the pupil to develop skills which will allow him to avail himself of opportunities for enriching his personal experience, and of having access to various ways of recording and interpreting experience, but it adds the rider that although

"a contribution to the curriculum ought to come from recreative and expressive activities, which are of special significance for the mentally handicapped pupil. Art, music and drama do not play much part in the curriculum. Again we would suggest that the mentally handicapped pupil may be relatively less disadvantaged and may even show some talent in them, and it is therefore a question of how to provide them. The case for finding an answer is strong. They are activities that call for a personal response and improve the quality of living. They offer opportunities for demonstrating skills relatively unhampered by verbal constraints. They are sources of experience in which the executive skills involved are less important than the enjoyment of taking part. For some pupils they are ways of boosting confidence. As leisure activities they can be carried over into everyday life. All in all, the expressive arts are the language of a whole range of human experience which mentally handicapped people should be in a position to share with their able contemporaries."

(HMSO, 1981; p.24/5)

The present project would appear to have demonstrated that severely mentally handicapped pupils can derive a similar range of benefits. The arguments presented above suggest one possible method whereby staff

could be encouraged to extend the curricular provision of drama by providing them with access to information and materials which they could use in the teaching of drama. The reaction of staff within the present project suggests that the majority of staff would be willing and able to avail themselves of this facility if it meant that they could obtain teaching materials of the right level of difficulty for their pupils, teaching materials which were easy to use under normal classroom conditions, and teaching materials which staff are unwilling to undertake.

The present project has also demonstrated that the use of the collaborative-investigative research paradigm may be somewhat premature in relation to the use of drama within schools where the population consists mainly of pupils who are profoundly mentally handicapped, emotionally and behaviourally disturbed. Here, the provision of teaching materials would appear to be a relatively low priority. If the project's findings have been accurately assessed, there may, in this sector of the special school system, be need for the kind of systematic laboratory approach to research which was discounted within the present project. Since the present project has highlighted the possible need for specialist drama provision within such schools, research of this kind could generate data on which future policy decisions regarding the use of drama, and the staffing provision to be made, might be arrived at.

Here, however, the prognosis would appear to be less hopeful. The possibility of such research being set up and funded - especially over relatively long time-scales and utilising the resources of a team of researchers with a mixture of expertise - would appear to be relatively low. Drama is a minority subject. Schools for the profoundly handicapped represent a minority population within the population of handicapped people as a whole. And, as this population is itself small in relation to the totality of educational provision which comes under the aegis of the Scottish Education Department, it may be some time before the role of drama in the education of profoundly mentally handicapped people is adequately researched. In the meantime, it may be necessary to rely for information on the kind of limited case study material produced by projects like the present one. An accumulation of such studies may, as Stenhouse suggests, illuminate some general trends and enable provision theories to be constructed. The time scales involved before such data could be accumulated, however, suggests that the present generation of profoundly handicapped pupils is unlikely to be the beneficiary from such research.

CHAPTER 15

Recommendations and Conclusions

Introduction

Throughout the preceeding chapters the findings from the project have been analysed and evaluated, and a number of conclusions and recommendations have been advanced in the context of the discussion and argument arising out of these findings. It has been argued that these conclusions cannot be regarded as definitive since this project was one which sought to break new ground and to provide researched information on a subject into which there had been relatively little previous enquiry. Any conclusions or recommendations advanced must, therefore, be regarded as tentative proposals which require further validation by replication or additional research.

In this final chapter of the thesis, the main conclusions and recommendations arrived at in the earlier analysis will be presented under four main headings -

1. First, the role of drama as it appears to relate to the needs of pupils and staff within schools for the profoundly mentally handicapped.

2. Secondly, the role of drama within the curriculum of schools for severely handicapped pupils. Within this section will be subsumed a number of proposals concerning the nature and type of drama materials general staff will be prepared to use, and an indication of the methods and procedures about which there must be considerable doubt since they were not adequately researched or represented within the materials developed in the project.

3. Thirdly, the role of the drama specialist in the overall curricular provision which may be offered within special schools.

4. Finally, a number of pointers towards areas where there is, as yet, little in the way of accumulated research data and which could represent potentially fruitful areas for further research.

The final paragraph of the chapter represents a focus for speculation on the methods used in the project, and the nature of illuminative research in general.

Drama Within Schools for the Profoundly Mentally Handicapped

The Pupils

Throughout this thesis the term profoundly handicapped has been used to refer to pupils who are the most seriously handicapped within the general population of mentally handicapped children. It is recognised that no single demarcation line exists to determine whether a child is severely or profoundly handicapped. But, within the population of mentally handicapped pupils, there are a number of children who are so seriously damaged mentally that they have failed to develop the characteristics of the normal two to four year old child. Children who have great difficulty in comprehending the spoken word, who appear to have no concept of the symbolic thought involved in acts of pretence, and who tend not to imitate spontaneously, may be unready for drama. Such children may well be capable of responding to the stimulation involved in simple speech and movement activities with no enactive or symbolic component. It may be crucial to their development to provide such children with these forms of stimulation, and to do so over a prolonged period in order that their effects may be maximised. The provision of such stimulation may also enhance the quality of life for such children by providing them with an enjoyable experience to which to respond. General staff within schools may not, however, be best equipped in terms of training and knowledge to present these forms of stimulation in the exaggerated manner which appears to be necessary in order to evoke from pupils a response. Specialist staff trained in music, in physical education or in drama may be more appropriately trained and committed to this form of curricular provision. And it is recommended that, where possible, given the existing shortage of specialist staff in these areas, specialist staff be encouraged to spend part of their peripatetic teaching time within schools for the more profoundly handicapped pupils.

Within schools for the profoundly mentally handicapped there are also a number of autistic and behaviourally or emotionally disturbed pupils. Some of these pupils appear to have been designated as profoundly mentally handicapped on the basis that it was not possible to contain their behaviour within other schools, and parents are unwilling for them to be committed to full-time institutional care. Such pupils may have developmental levels similar to those of the children described

above. A number of such children may also have developmental levels and a measured intelligence in excess of what one might assume in a 'profoundly' handicapped child. For these children, the symbolic, enactive process of drama may be within their conceptual framework of understanding - even if they have not demonstrated previously that they are capable of engaging in this process by their observed play.

To discover which of these children can respond to the process of drama, and to discover ways of making drama accessible to them appears to be a task which demands the kind of expertise in teaching drama which one might associate with the specialist drama teacher, coupled with a knowledge of mentally handicapped pupils and their needs. Since the task of presenting drama to such pupils demands a high level of personal energy and involvement, it is unlikely that staff engaged upon such a task would be able to view objectively the process as it was happening. It has been suggested, therefore, that, in order to find out more about how such pupils can and do relate to the process of drama, there is a need for further research into the processes involved; and it has been recommended that such research take place outwith the school milieu and within a laboratory setting which is equipped with facilities for observation and recording. It has been recommended also that such research be carried out not by an individual drama specialist but by a drama specialist who is part of a multi-disciplinary team which includes members equipped with expertise in observation and analysis and with a knowledge of clinical psychology and education. Since the rate of pupil progress may be both slow and erratic, it is recommended that such research would require to be carried out over a period of several years in order to judge accurately the extent and the nature of any benefits which accrued.

Since the number of such children is likely to be small, it has been reluctantly conceded that the implementation of such research might not, in the present climate of educational accountability, be considered a cost-effective exercise in terms of the numbers who might benefit in relation to the costs which would be incurred in funding such a project.

The Schools

Within schools which cater for pupils with the more profound forms of handicap, classroom conditions are unlikely to be suitable for either group drama or for the provision of one-to-one interaction between

individual pupils and members of staff. The presence within a single classroom of a number of difficult, disruptive or aggressive children makes the task of staff in interacting with individual pupils an extremely difficult one. Provision for stimulation through music and movement may require to be made on an individual basis outwith the classroom in order to prevent potential disruption to the work. This may reduce the opportunity general staff have to observe the work and to learn from observing specialists at work with pupils. It may, however, be necessary to trade off staff's opportunity in return for opportunity to work undisturbed with pupils.

The Staff

It seems strange that within schools which cater for pupils who appear to need the most sensitive, the most skilled, or the most knowledgeable educational provision, there should be a high proportion of untrained, inexperienced or temporary staff. This comment must not be taken as a denigration of the work carried out by such staff. Rather it is a comment on the priority level which policy makers appear to afford the education of the profoundly handicapped pupils within former day-care centres. Staff within such schools are poorly paid in relation to other staff within the special education sector, they have fewer holidays and they work under conditions which many other workers would find intolerable. It is outwith the scope of the present thesis to make comment or recommendations on this general situation, except in so far as it reflects on the role and value of drama. But it does appear that the question of whether there is a need for drama provision (or for provision for other forms of stimulation through music and movement) is of secondary importance to the conditions obtaining within such schools. The present author would present as a focus for speculation the contention that the conditions within schools, coupled with the lack of highly trained staff, may be exacerbating rather than helping the handicapping conditions of at least some pupils within these schools. There may be an urgent need to reappraise the general provision within such schools, and to re-examine the policy of grouping together so many difficult or disruptive children within one establishment, and alongside other pupils who may need a secure and orderly environment in which to develop. Only after such an appraisal has been carried out will the question of the curriculum to be followed become meaningful. At the present time, it is not a question of the curricular provision which

ought to be made available to suit the educational needs of pupils. Rather it is a question of what can humanly be accomplished by staff working under the existing conditions. Moreover, so long as existing conditions persist, there may be considerable difficulty in attracting any specialist music, physical education or drama staff into such schools on any regular or peripatetic basis.

Drama Within Schools for Severely Mentally
Handicapped Pupils

The Pupils

The majority of pupils within schools for the severely mentally handicapped appear to be capable of understanding and engaging in the symbolic, enactive process of drama. Even those children who are more seriously handicapped can, within a group in which there are other children to provide a lead, join in group drama by imitating staff or other children.

The effects on pupils of joining in drama activities will obviously vary according to the specific activities being used, the purposes for which they are being used, the methods or presentation, and the particular emphasis which the teacher places on any area of development. In general, it would appear that drama provides pupils with

- a. enjoyment;
- b. stimulation;
- c. motivation for communication;
- d. opportunity to practise the gesture, the movement, the sounds or the language involved in communication;
- e. enactive experience of information presented in a logical, sequentially ordered way, which may facilitate retention and recall and assist the child in his subsequent recounting of a drama experience;
- f. a peak experience which increases the likelihood of its being the topic for communication after the event;
- g. opportunity to engage in acts of pretence within a structured framework of dramatic play; this may lead to an increase in the amount and complexity of spontaneous dramatic play engaged in outwith the drama lesson;
- h. opportunity to interact with others in a social, corporate task; this may increase the potential for peaceful co-existence or co-operation outwith lessons;
- i. opportunity to anticipate, to recapitulate on or to rehearse real or imagined situations; this may enable the child to learn about the properties involved in the events, the situations or the people enacted.

The evidence across schools within the project suggested that pupils with similar aetiologies and dispositions reacted more similarly to the

process of drama than did the individual members within any one teaching group. This led to the conclusion that, providing pupils are given drama provision regularly over a period of time, the extent to which an individual child responds to drama and benefits from it in any of the areas suggested above may depend as much upon the child's personality, his ability and the nature of his handicap as upon the degree of skill or the particular teaching style of an individual member of staff.

Given that theoretical analysis suggests that the skill of the teacher may be of considerable importance in the presentation of a subject like drama, and given that drama teaching is often held to be both personality and talent dependent, this finding obviously requires verification by further research. It may be that the forms of drama embodied in the curricular materials developed in the project are not only less demanding in terms of teaching skills, but are less dependent on skillful presentation than are some of the more advanced, situation-dependent and open-ended forms of drama activities. Since these were virtually unrepresented in the materials, there is also a need for some research into whether the use of such techniques can be encapsulated within a pack of materials, whether staff can acquire skills in these methods by 'doing' and whether pupils react or benefit differently when exposed to these different forms of drama.

Within the present project, it was concluded that -

a. Hyperactive, behaviourally disturbed or aggressive children react least well to the forms of drama presented within the materials. Such children appeared to show few benefits from the work, and, in some cases, had to be excluded in order that they would not destroy the enjoyment of other children within the group. It was concluded that such children may require either one-to-one tuition, other forms of drama or specialist teaching.

b. Lethargic or passive pupils, on the other hand, may be stimulated to participate in drama and may show more general animation and interest in their environment as a result of this participation. The forms of drama used in the materials appear to be well suited to evoking a response from such pupils, and capable of holding their attention and concentration over at least a fifteen minute period.

c. Virtually all pupils, regardless of handicap, showed some improvement in the area of communication in the course of the project, and showed an increased desire to communicate as a direct result of their enjoyment in participating in drama. The more able pupils showed

this improvement fairly rapidly; the less able could take at least three months before showing improvement. After the initial gains, subsequent gains appeared to be more rapid and consistent.

d. The pupils who respond best to the process of drama are those lively Down's Syndrom children, who have sociable, outgoing personalities. Such children are relatively less disadvantaged here than in some other areas of their development in that they appear to display some talent for mimicry and for the forms of expression involved in drama. Some pupils show a degree of acting talent which is more in keeping with their chronological than mental age, and more like that displayed by normal children of the same age. For such children drama appears to be a natural mode of experience and expression. It can provide an outlet for imagination, and, in some pupils, an opportunity to exercise qualities of leadership. For such pupils, in later life, drama might provide a much needed recreative leisure activity. It is recommended that some thought be given to whether such pupils might, in their final years of schooling, be integrated with non-handicapped pupils within drama groups or theatre workshops. It would appear to be of considerable importance to ensure that such pupils are given regular opportunities for drama within their school lives in order to allow them to develop their skills in this area.

The Staff

In the main, staff within schools for severely mentally handicapped pupils are not antagonistic to drama nor resistant to making it available to pupils. They do not consider themselves to possess expertise in the presentation of drama, nor do they feel able, in general, to develop their own curricula in drama from first principles. They are, however, willing to attempt to follow the guidelines provided in a series of lesson outlines, and appear to be crying out for materials which they can take and use with classes. Some staff, at least, are willing to become involved in a collaborative research project of the kind described here. Staff who were closely involved in the research have developed a degree of confidence in their ability to present drama and to adapt lessons or develop them to suit the needs of their pupils. Such staff could provide a pool of expertise for the kind of resource centre suggested by Warnock, and could work alongside either drama specialists or drama students in training in devising a range of materials which might be used by other staff who are less willing or

able to develop materials for themselves, but who are, nevertheless, keen to see drama introduced into their curricular schemes. While the present project identified a whole range of complex and interactive factors to account for the neglect of drama, the practical experience of the project suggests that the simple expedient of providing more and suitable, teaching materials for staff to take and use could go a long way towards redressing the neglect of drama, and enabling general staff to acquire a degree of expertise in the presentation of the simpler and more direct drama techniques and activities.

The extent to which staff are willing and able to use the more complex drama activities - such as the approach advocated by Heathcote, or the uninhibited movement approach suggested by Sherbourne - requires further clarification. At the express wish of staff such approaches were not well represented in the materials, and were not, consequently, researched and tested in field trials. The fact that such approaches have acquired considerable prominence within training schemes in colleges of education appears to have contributed to the feeling of general staff that the provision of drama requires skills in presentation and enactment which are in excess of those they believe themselves to be capable of acquiring. But, where a member of staff has become committed to the presentation of drama, and has used the forms of drama discussed above, she appears to be less likely to find the prescribed forms of drama activity and forms of presentation embodied in the present project's materials satisfying or stimulating. And this appears to be particularly the case when such a member of staff has the more mildly handicapped pupils who appear to respond rather better to the more advanced forms of work than to those embodied with the present project's materials. Again, this is a finding which would benefit from clarification by further research.

The Role of the Drama Specialist

It has already been noted that there may be a role for the drama specialist within schools for the profoundly handicapped, although it has also been noted that conditions within such schools are difficult and 'drama' per se may be less appropriate to the needs of most pupils than the simple stimulation provided by music and movement. There is also unlikely to be any career structure for the drama specialist within such schools. Those who wish to find advancement in their careers, or who are committed to the practice of drama in aspects such as theatre

arts, are unlikely to be attracted to this sector of education.

There is certainly a role for the specialist drama teacher within schools for severely handicapped pupils. This role is unlikely to be that of a peripatetic teacher, and more likely to be that of a consultant or collaborator with staff in helping to devise curricular schemes and techniques and in developing materials. As a consultant the specialist could provide the impetus and information for curriculum development with pupils and staff within individual schools, and geared to the specific needs of these schools. In this way it would be possible to build up over a period of time, the degree of expertise which would enable the specialist gradually to decrease her input to and presence in a particular school, allowing the staff to take more personal responsibility for implementing the work. This, in turn, would free the specialist to move to another school, enabling potentially more schools to be served by a single specialist than would be the case if she were employed purely in a peripatetic teaching capacity.

Again, the lack of an obvious possibility for career advancement may act as a deterrent to some specialist staff who, in mainstream education, might look forward to becoming principal teachers and heads of departments, with the attendant salary increase these postings imply. If, on the other hand, some schools were utilised as resource centres, staff might find that they achieved a degree of professional kudos as a result of working with or within such centres. The experience so gained might enable career advancement of a slightly different kind - towards lecturing or advising, for instance, rather than towards a role within a mainstream school. Such staff would, however, have to spend some time (or training) in finding out about the needs and capabilities of mentally handicapped pupils before they could present themselves in a consultancy role within schools or resource centres.

There is a pressing need for specialist drama staff to undertake systematic research into their specialism - whether in mainstream or in special education - in order to increase the body of available knowledge on the principles and practices of drama in education. The few accounts of research which exist, and the experience of the present project, suggest that it is by no means easy to find an appropriate methodological strategy for researching drama and for collecting and analysing data on its practice. The drama specialist may also lack the training in research method, design and data analysis which would predispose her towards practical research. As a result, drama specialists may continue

to pour the bulk of their research effort into a study of text and an analysis of dramatic literature. While such research may be important, it is of less practical value than research which is aimed at discovering how real characters react within a real educational setting to the practice and process of varying forms of dramatic activity.

Finally, in view of the fact that specialist drama teachers are few in number, that their number is unlikely to increase markedly in the foreseeable future, and that virtually none is, at present, working within the field of special education, the role of the drama specialist may be largely academic unless some way is found of attracting them into special schools. The setting up of resource centres, the provision of opportunity for career advancement, or the funding of research projects could attract some specialist staff. In absolute terms, however, the numbers involved are likely to be so small that, for the near future at least, the provision of drama in special education is likely to remain the province of the general staff, with some help from those specialists who are currently working within college of education drama departments.

Pointers Towards Future Research

It has already been suggested that one area urgently in need of systematic research is that of the role of drama in the education of those autistic, behaviourally and emotionally disturbed pupils, currently within schools for the profoundly handicapped. It has also been suggested that there is a need for further research into

- a. whether the more advanced forms of drama activity can be communicated and encapsulated within teaching materials;
- b. the extent to which these techniques could be acquired by general staff with no specialist training in drama.

To this we might add a third dimension. The present project has provided a number of staff with materials and, it appears, has enabled them to develop a degree of expertise in presenting the simple forms of dramatic activity embodied in these materials. It would be interesting from a research point of view to discover whether such staff were more or less willing to acquire other skills and to present other forms of activity as a result of their initiation into drama in the course of the present project - whether their successful use of the simpler techniques had hardened their resolve not to use drama which involved disruption of the normal classroom environment, special preparation, and consistent role-taking on the part of the teacher; or whether, as a result of

finding that they could use the simpler drama techniques, they would be encouraged to attempt the more advanced forms of work.

It would also be interesting to discover whether curriculum materials which, unlike those in the present project, contained only drama activities and which did not link into general centres of interest and other areas of curricular experience would produce similar reactions from general staff, and result in similar benefits to pupils.

One thing the present project has demonstrated is that, although staff may require to justify their initial introduction of drama on the grounds that it can enhance communication, social or other skills, their subsequent assessment of its value may be based as much upon its experiential and enjoyment value as upon any tangible outcomes which its use may produce. The staff concerned, however, were those who were sufficiently well disposed towards the practice of drama as to be prepared to volunteer to become involved in one stage of the present project. It would be illuminating to discover the extent to which those who had no prior bias towards drama - or who were antagonistic to it - were persuaded to change their attitudes on the basis of observed benefits; or whether the observation of benefits depends to some extent on the viewpoint adopted by the observer. It may be that those of us who were predisposed towards seeing pupils benefit because of their obvious enjoyment in the work saw benefits where no benefits existed, or exaggerated the benefits which did accrue. Further research might provide information or refutation of the present findings and, in any case, could add to the information presently available.

Methods in Curriculum Research and Development

The methods adopted within the present project were productive in relation to the neglect of drama with schools for the severely mentally handicapped, merely illuminative in relation to schools for the more profoundly handicapped.

The present researcher concluded that, while it appears to be relatively easy to maintain an investigative stance in the collaborative stages of a project of this kind, the production of a package of materials for more general testing within a wider sample of schools makes it extremely difficult to maintain the features theoretically ascribed to the collaborative-investigative model adopted. At this stage the work becomes more centrally directed, there is a schism between the developers and the users of curricular materials, and the

the different perspectives of the academic researcher and the general staff in schools become more obvious.

The academic researcher may have a certain vested interest in ensuring that the work produces information or results which can be written up for academic purposes. Staff have an interest in ensuring that their involvement in the project helps rather than hinders their everyday activity within the classroom. One area of contention may be in the extent to which staff are prepared to take a critical stance towards their teaching practices, the extent to which they are prepared to invest time and effort in recording and assessing these and in altering or adapting curricular resources. Staff's perception of the need to engage in these activities may be at odds with those of the academic who has to acquire and collate data, or who has an ideological commitment to the ideal of teacher-based enquiry as the way forward in curriculum research. It may also be that the academic engaged in curriculum research sees considerably more need for the concept of 'curriculum' and for research into this concept than does the class teacher who is engaged on the business of helping pupils in the way that she has been accustomed to do by experience and training.

It may be that the way forward is, as Stenhouse suggests, dependent upon

"the creation of different expectations in the system and the design of new styles of project in harmony with these expectations will be generated only as schools come to see themselves as research and development institutions rather than as clients of research and development agencies."

(Op. Cit.; p.223)

On the other hand, it might be that the curriculum research and development movement has fallen into the trap of believing that only those who value curriculum research and development skills are likely to be capable of taking the critical stance necessary to better one's own teaching. If schools do see themselves as clients of research and development agencies - and it is by no means certain that they do see themselves in this way when they are not involved with external curriculum research and development personnel - it may be because the curriculum reform movement has insisted in its literature that staff either should, or should not see themselves in this role. Similarly, if staff see themselves as research and development institutions it may be as a result of training, as a response to the need for new materials and courses in response to changing pressures which are not being met

by existing procedures and materials, or because they have been conditioned to regard themselves in this way by the curriculum research and development literature which provides a large component in Open University, in University and in training college courses for teachers.

There could be a case for suggesting that staff in schools need not see themselves as either the clients or the instigators of curriculum research and development, but as teachers whose unique contribution to education lies in their ability to communicate to pupils, to communicate about pupils and to complement the work of academic researchers or curriculum developers by making their teaching practices available for scrutiny and comment in the light of the practical constraints which operate within the classroom. Certainly, there was a feeling among many of the staff involved in the present project that the upgrading of skills in research and in curriculum development had resulted in a consequent downgrading of the skills of the teacher. A number of staff suggested that the current lack of professional status among members of the teaching profession might be attributed to the pervasive notion that 'teachers' are second class citizens in the academic world, that the ability to teach is a relatively low level skill compared to the skills of the researcher or the writer, that professional advancement is not dependent on one's ability to teach (the job for which one was employed and paid) but on one's ability to proliferate qualifications, on one's ability to be involved in the 'right' piece of research at the right time, and on the extent to which one's name appeared on the lists of consultative committee documents circulating in staffrooms.

All of the foregoing is presented as a focus for speculation about the gulf which may exist between the researcher or curriculum developer and staff in schools, and about the basis for their differing perspectives, motivations and interests. It does, however, reflect the view of a considerable number of general staff met with in the course of this project. Such staff make the point that staff within special schools are not even 'second class' but a considerably lower species of citizen. It could be of importance to discover why staff feel that others have such a low opinion of their worth, and to discover how to reverse this trend, if not for the sake of staff, then at least for the sake of pupils who, by implication, are the co-inhabitants of this devalued educational sector.

APPENDIX A

Copy of Questionnaire Distributed by

Ken Byron

to Strathclyde Schools

APPENDIX A

Copy of Questionnaire Distributed by Ken Byron to Strathclyde Schools

RESEARCH PROJECT INTO THE USE OF MOVEMENT AND DRAMA IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

This note is to explain the questionnaire you are being asked to complete. I am trying to discover how teachers and others responsible for the education of handicapped children (henceforth, I'll refer to them all as teachers) of handicapped children view movement and drama; how they feel both can benefit their pupils; and in what way they use them or might like to use them.

Two things particularly need to be stressed -

1. What is being meant by movement and drama?

Some of you working with severely handicapped children may feel that 'drama' is an inappropriate activity for your children. But I am using the word 'drama' in a very elastic way - it might include performing little plays, but is more likely to involve informal 'acting out' of situations, stories or at the simplest level make-believe play (eg. with dolls, teddy bears, Wendy houses, toy cars etc) of individual children.

With the most severely handicapped children drama and movement will be often indistinguishable from musical activities, as it is with all very young children (simple rhythmic responses to sound - the distinction whether it's music or whether it's movement/drama is not really a useful one).

2. The Intention behind the Questionnaire

There are no hidden expectations behind the questionnaire about what you ought to be doing in movement and drama with your children. It is simply an attempt to understand what a fairly random sample of teachers do in these areas and what benefits they think it can bring to the children. I recognise that as teachers we all tend to work mainly in our areas of strength and that for some teachers movement and drama are areas in which they feel slightly unsure of themselves. I would like to add that the second stage of the Research Project will be to set up a series of 'movement and drama' projects in special schools, in which a number of practical approaches will be tried out and tested. I intend that these should be designed on the basis of teacher-responses in the questionnaire, trying, for example, to demonstrate possible activities in areas where teachers feel uncertain. Eventually these activities will be reported in a booklet designed to act as a guide to 'movement and drama' activities for teachers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

.../

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Outline briefly below the kinds of movement and/or drama activities you use with your children.

Please indicate whether each activity listed is Regular (R) or Frequent (F) (not necessarily regular) or Occasional (O).

2. What do you feel to be the overall educational priorities for your children. List them briefly.

3. Of what benefit do you think can movement and drama be to your children and where does this benefit fit in with your overall scheme of priorities (see question 2). (NB. This is a question about qims not about how much movement and drama activity you can fit into a school week.)

4. Are there aspects/kinds of movement and drama work you feel either

1. you know little about?

or

2. you lack confidence to tackle?

or

3. are prevented from trying by other reasons?

Please list below, with appropriate explanations.

APPENDIX B

The Charts Devised for

Inclusion in the

Developed Materials

APPENDIX B

How to Use the Charts

The Identification Chart

Not all children have reached the stage of maturity at which they can participate in and benefit from group activities. A child who is very aggressive, highly emotionally disturbed, or who is simply incapable of understanding what is said to him, may well prove so disruptive in a group that he will make the teacher's job virtually impossible and prevent other children from benefiting from the lesson also. Your own skill and knowledge of the children is your best guide as to which children should participate. The identification chart, however, provides a useful check list to guide you in cases where you are unsure of a child's readiness or with a new class. As a general guide, children with a score of 5 or under in Section 1 and a score of 4 or under in Section 2 are unlikely to be ready for group work. (To score charts award one point for every YES answer in Section 1 and one point for every NO answer in Section 2.)

Such children need one-to-one attention and unless this can be provided by another adult in the classroom working along side you, it is best to exclude the child from the group activity initially. I appreciate that this is not as simple in practice as it sounds. However, it might be possible to have a reciprocal arrangement with another teacher or to ask the head teacher to make suitable arrangements for the child for the ten to twenty minutes you require. If such arrangements are impossible, at least try to ensure that the child is settled in an activity he really enjoys before starting work with the rest of the class. But be prepared for interruptions! If the child does attempt to join in, allow him to do so but make sure that you stay close to him so that you can anticipate any aggression etc, and deal with it before it disrupts the lesson.

Of course, the aim with such a child is to attempt to get him to the stage of readiness where he can join in the group activity. Do this by providing plenty of one-to-one activities with the child and by other methods appropriate to his case - eg. behaviour modification programmes to control aggression; individualised language programmes etc.

Profile Charts

(As with the identification charts, you will require one for each child.)

Every teacher requires some feedback as to the effectiveness of her teaching. In a drama lesson the best feedback is the evidence of your own eyes and ears - especially if you have trained yourself to look for the evidence as you teach. Is a child responding who normally does not do so? Is a child volunteering speech or gesture for the first time? Do the children appear to be involved in and enjoying the activity? Do they want to do it again? Can they remember anything about it later? These are the kind of factors a teacher looks for in assessing children's response to her teaching. However, a teacher can become so closely involved with her pupils that she may fail to notice progress - or lack of it - especially since progress in the case of severely mentally handicapped children is a very relative term.

The profile charts may prove helpful here both for diagnostic and evaluation purposes. I suggest that you fill in the charts before you start the series of lessons using a black pen. This will give you a profile of the strengths and weaknesses of each child, and will help you give individual guidance to children where appropriate in the lessons. For example, a child may readily mimic or imitate an adult's speech or gesture but will rarely or never initiate speech or gesture. Such a child can be helped by lessons which involve choice and discrimination - eg. the Christmas lesson or lesson six. Another child may be unready for speech, but have a good range of gesture, lessons like No. 2 and 4 are useful here as they rely heavily on mime but encourage 'noise-making', the first stage in the production of speech sounds. Similarly, an unco-operative or aggressive child may be encouraged initially to join in group activities which do not involve close contact - eg. building the winter snowman, being in the band (lesson 2). Once peaceful co-existence has been established, lessons like No. 5 and 6 can be useful in helping co-operation. The charts can help you diagnose difficulties in specific areas in this way.

These charts, however, may also be used as instruments for evaluation. Half-way through the school year, fill in each chart again, this time in green or blue and note any differences you find. It is unlikely that you will find great differences after such a relatively short time. But any improvements or regressions should be noted. If a child has regressed there is obviously cause for concern. The regression could be due to medical or social factors outwith your control. If this is not the case it is worthwhile to ask yourself (or consult with the psychologist or head teacher) if there is anything in your general relationship with or handling of the child which could be causing difficulties. With regard to this programme - is the child ready for group activities? Is he requiring more - or less - individual attention? Is the material too complex or too easy for him? Is he getting sufficient rewards (praise, success, interest etc) to motivate him? Would another method of approach be more appropriate for this particular child?

Fortunately, such unexplained regressions are rare. If improvements are shown this will give some indication that your general teaching is having some effect. How much any of the material in this package has contributed to this effect only you, knowing the child and his previous pattern of progress, can judge.

Finally, at the end of the school year, fill in the chart again - this time in red. Again note any differences.

These charts have been designed as a quick and easy method of recording a child's abilities and progress. Small individual improvements will not show up on the charts as they are not sufficiently fine instruments of evaluation. However, to provide such a fine evaluation you would require a battery of tests which is very time-consuming and most teachers simply do not have to much time to devote to what is, after all, only a small part of the curriculum.

Thus, for many children you may see no difference in the charts after a year, but have noted differences in response in the actual classroom. However, where improvements are noted in the chart these represent significant progress and evidence that you are working on the right lines.

IDENTIFICATION CHART

Name

Date of Birth

Section 1 (Ring the appropriate answers)

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does the child appear interested in listening to conversation? | Yes | No |
| 2. Can he concentrate on what is being said for short periods of time? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does he remain attentive while listening to short stories or poems? | Yes | No |
| 4. Does he appear willing to participate in conversation, or, if lacking speech, use gesture in response to conversation? | Yes | No |
| 5. Is he capable of responding to commands or instructions given to the whole group? | Yes | No |
| 6. Does he co-operate with other children in free play situations- | Yes | No |
| 7. Does he co-operate with adults in play situations? | Yes | No |
| 8. If he does not co-operate with other children will he allow others to play without disrupting their play intentionally? | Yes | No |
| 9. Does he behave peaceably most of the time? | Yes | No |
| 10. When he misbehaves do you usually manage to deal with this without too much difficulty? | Yes | No |

Section 2 (Ring the appropriate answers)

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does he frequently show a lack of concentration so that his attention has to be recalled constantly? | Yes | No |
| 2. Does the child require a great deal of prompting before he will respond to questions by word or gesture? | Yes | No |
| 3. Does he almost always require to be given instructions or requests individually before he will comply or indicate that he has understood? | Yes | No |

Name

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 4. Does he frequently wander off to play by himself, appearing to take little or no interest in others in the room? | Yes | No |
| 5. Does he withdraw from contact with adults (teacher included) preferring to be left on his own? | Yes | No |
| 6. If approached by other children does he show signs of aggression? | Yes | No |
| 7. Is he frequently aggressive (unprovoked) towards other children? | Yes | No |
| 8. Is he frequently self-abusive? | Yes | No |
| 9. Does he frequently display bouts of temper or emotional outbursts (prolonged crying, screaming, irrational laughter etc, for no apparent reason? | Yes | No |
| 10. Does he have any severe physical disability which would make it difficult for him to participate (safely) in group activities? | Yes | No |

PROFILE CHART

Name

Date of Birth

Date

Always	Often	Occasio- nally	Never
--------	-------	-------------------	-------

Section 1 - Concentration

Child listens attentively to:

requests or commands

instructions

story/poem or other spoken
word

Child shows evidence of
concentration:

in play with toys

in art or craft work

listening to music

in other situations
(give example)

Section 2 - Social Skills

Child will participate:

in art or craft

in music and/or movement

in group activities
generally

Child will co-operate:

with teacher (or other
adult)

with other children

with teacher and other
children in general class-
room activities

Name

Always	Often	Occasio- nally	Never
--------	-------	-------------------	-------

Section 3 - Imagination

Child uses toys/dressing up materials etc in spontaneous roleplay

Child shows imaginative use of materials in art/craft etc

Child gives other indication of use of imagination - give example

Section 4 - Gesture

Child can mobilise whole body in gross movements as in dance/PE etc

Child can imitate adult in mime or other fine movement

Child will spontaneously use mimed actions during free play

Child effectively uses gesture to replace speech

Child effectively uses gesture to supplement speech

Section 5 - Language

Child will respond by word and/or gesture to:

spoken command or request

instructions

story, poem or other group activity

Child will participate in conversation with:

.../

3.

Name

	Always	Often	Occasio- nally	Never
teacher (or other known adult)				
unknown adult				
another child				

Child will initiate conver-
sation with:

teacher (or other known adult)	
unknown adult	
another child	

Section 6 - Speech

Here are a number of statements about the child's speech. Tick the statements which most closely describe the child's abilities in this area.

1. Child appears to have difficulty in understanding the spoken word.
2. Child appears to understand but does not readily respond.
3. Child appears to understand most of what is said and will frequently respond by word or gesture (with prompting)
(without prompting)
4. Child has no effective speech.
5. Child mainly uses one-word utterances, eg. milk; out; me (meaning give me) etc.
6. Child frequently uses two-word utterances or phrases, eg. bad dog; me good; no want, etc.
7. Child uses simple sentences, eg. I want a drink; Me want go out; etc.
8. Child uses complex sentences, eg. My dolly has a red dress; She wants a walk in the pram, etc.
9. Child's articulation is generally clear.
10. Child's articulation is indistinct.
11. Child has specific problems in articulation (give details).

APPENDIX C

Alternative Method
of Recording Assessments

FOLLOW UP CHART DEvised AFTER VISIT FROM DRAMA TEACHER ON 08.11.78

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DATE	SUBJECT	FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY - LINKING EXERCISE	COMMENTS
09.11.78	STORY-TELLING Repeat of Mrs McL. story, using same visual aid. Spec. language "on and off".	a. Guided Creative: Made collage of duck pond and 3 ducks. b. Music: Song about 3 little ducks.	Children all joined in this activity each contributed to either cutting or sticking. Main benefit derived was language. Words heard: Three/ pond/lady/man/coat/specs./park/hill/ brown.
13.11.78	OUR NEW COLOUR "BROWN" Aim to find things which are brown and place on our table.	a. Music: 5 little ducks b. Guided Creative: Made brown (muddy water), duck pond from brown paper - 1 big and 1 little.	The children remembered about the 3 ducks and had no difficulty when we went on to 5 ducks. Words heard: Five / water/dirty/muddy/big/wee/in/ out/down/up.
14.11.78	PAINTING Introduced brown paint. We mixed colours our- selves to get brown Painted picture of duck pond and 5 ducks.	a. Cookery: Breaking the bread to feed ducks and putting into paper bag. b. Dressing Up: Putting on clothes, ie. coat/jacket/specs./and bag for the bread. c. Movement: Throwing bread to the ducks. Being ducks and catching the bread in our beak.	Children were able to follow my instructions easily. Some even counted the pieces of bread. I gave each child a paper bag for his bread. It's a pity we couldn't visit a real duck pond, but we did the next best thing and fed the birds by throwing our bread out of the window - we watched and saw some little birds come and eat it.
20.11.78	COOKERY Dough shapes of ducks.	a. Story: About the duck pond. b. Song: 5 Little Ducks. Intro- Mother Duck.	Children all joined in making duck shapes (they asked to take them home). Some of the children could follow the actions of Mother Duck, others the little ducks.

APPENDIX D

The Schools Involved In The Project

APPENDIX D

Schools involved in the project

Pack 1 - First Sample in Alphabetical Order

Aird School, Stranraer.
Anna Ritchie School, Peterhead. (Assessment Unit)
Bell's Brae Primary, Shetland. (Special Class)
Beechwood School, Aberdeen.
Caldwell House Hospital School, Uplawmoor.
Cambuslang School, Cambuslang.
Cherrybank School, Perth.
Coldside School, Dundee.
Deanbank School, Coatbridge.
Drummore School, Cban.
East Bay School, Helensburgh.
Elderslie Hospital School, Elderslie.
Greenburn School, East Kilbride.
Invergarvan School, Girvan.
Kelvin School, Glasgow.
Kildean School, Stirling.
Langbrae School, Lenzie.
Lilybank School, Port Glasgow.
Mary Russell School, Paisley.
Meadowcap Unit, Rothesay.
Meadows School, Argyll.
Merchison Hospital School, Johnstone.
Rockvilla School, Glasgow.
Rudolph Steiner School, Aberdeen. (Private Sector)
Saint Peter's School, Galashiels.
Springhill School, East Kilbride.
Stornoway Primary School, Isle of Lewis. (Special class)
Victoria Park School, Newmains.
Waverly Park Hospital School, Kirkintilloch.
Wellpark School, Glasgow.
Wilton School, Hawick.

Pack 1 - Second Sample in Alphabetical Order

Balwearie High School, Kircaldy. (Special Ed. Dept.)
Carronhill School, Stonehaven.
Dunlop House Hospital School, Kilmarnock.
East Park School For Infirm Children, Largs.
Linburn Lodge, Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.
Linburn School, Glasgow.
Lintwhite School, Bridge of Weir.
Milton School, Glasgow.
Ramsay School, Banff.
Royal Scottish National Hospital School, Larbert.
Saint Andrew's School, Inverurie.
Saint Charles School Carstairs.
Stanecastle School, Irvine.
Stanmore House School, Lanark.

.....

Pack 2 - Sample in Alphabetical Order

Anna Ritchie School, Peterhead.
Auchentoshan Adult Training Centre.
Balwearie High School, Kircaldy. (Special Ed. Dept.)
Beechwood School, Aberdeen.
Cherrybank School, Perth.
Dawson Park School, Falkirk.
East Bay School, Helensburgh.
East Park School, Largs.
Langbrae School, Lenzie.
Linburn School, Glasgow.
Milton School, Glasgow.
Ramsay School, Banff.
Rockvilla School, Glasgow.
Royal Scottish National Hospital School, Larbert.
Rudolph Steiner, Aberdeen (Private School)
Saint Andrew's School, Inverurie.
Saint Charles School, Carstairs.
Springhill School, East Kilbride.
Stornoway Primary School, Isle of Lewis. (Special class)
Victoria Park, Newmains.
Waverly Park School, Kirkintilloch.
Wellpark School, Glasgow.

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