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PRE-FIVE SERVICES AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:

SIX CASE STUDIES IN STRATHCLYDE REGION

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Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
in the Department of Education

April 1991

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SUMMARY

The research is designed to investigate Strathclyde Region's Pre-Five Sub-Committee's policy of making provision for children with disabilities in mainstream pre-five services. Existing practice in providing for children with disabilities is identified as a natural research topic.

The literature is reviewed; that which is specifically relevant to pre-fives is set in the context of the literature on school age children. Written policies on integration at national and local government level are examined. The rationales for these policies are discussed. Neither offers a decisive direction for research into practice. Three traditions of enquiry in the field are reviewed. The educational psychology tradition faces methodological difficulties and its hypothesis testing mode is not suited to investigating practice. The educational case study tradition is relevant to the research topic but in practice has tended to leave theoretical questions unexamined. The sociological tradition has provided theoretical insights but these refer to a different group of school age children. Criteria are established for a satisfactory approach.

These criteria are used to identify an appropriate research approach. An open ended micro-ethnographic, case study method is indicated. As the research is concerned with subjective and inter-subjective meaning, phenomenological and symbolic interactionist concepts are relevant to the description of provision. A more general framework for theoretical analysis is required and a broadly structuralist approach is proposed. The key concept in the analysis is that of pedagogy. An analogy is drawn between pedagogy and language. Reasons are advanced for treating case study descriptions as texts. Some criticisms of a structuralist approach are considered and a modified position is described. This refers to ideas drawn from post-structuralism, particularly those of deconstruction.

Specific research methodology is discussed. A standard format for the case studies is described. The methods included are outlined; namely, a purpose-designed interview schedule, extensive unstructured observation, a structured observation schedule and audio recording. Each method offers triangulation for the others. Piloting of data-gathering methods is discussed.

It is argued that three forms of account should be given of the case study data: a descriptive account, an analytical account and a substantive theoretical account. Methods for providing the first two forms of account are discussed. The concept of perspective is seen as particularly relevant.

Case studies of two day nurseries, two nursery schools and two children's centres are described. The descriptions cover the setting, access, informants, provision for children in general and provision for children with disabilities. The last topic looks at the experience of one particular child who was observed in detail. Intertwined with the descriptive information are summaries of the pedagogical perspectives which are embodied in the work of the establishments.

These pedagogical perspectives do not offer a means of relating micro and macro social features and means of doing so are discussed. The case studies are treated as texts which are analysed by looking at discourses within them. These discourses are ideal-typical constructs derived by a comparative method. The necessity of looking at absent discourses which are part of these ideal typical discourses is argued. The absent discourses are seen to be present in the form of traces; three forms of traces are discussed, traces of psychological theories, repressed political traces and traces of historical discourses.

A substantive theoretical account is provided in which these traces are detected in discourses which refer to nursery provision, the curriculum and disability. Interactional and organisational practices are also discussed. The implications of each discourse for children with disabilities is discussed throughout. The complex nature of pedagogy in pre-five services emerges.

Conclusions are reached about the implications of the case studies for the policy and its development.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the research was to carry out an investigation which would illuminate Strathclyde Region's policy on Pre-Fives with Special Needs and Disabilities'. The form of illumination which was sought was one of increasing understanding of what the policy entails in order to enhance the debate with which it should be surrounded. Research can contribute to these aims by providing fresh insights, an enriched vocabulary and a framework for analysis.

The policy was detailed in a Report by the Director which was approved by the Education Committee (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1987). Its essence was the following statement:

> Services should be organised in such a way that any provision can accommodate and meet the needs of children with a handicap or chronic illness, however severe the condition. The emphasis should be on directing extra resources and support to the community where the child is. No child should be denied access to a service on grounds of health or disability. (para. 6.2)

Although the statement represented a commitment to what was described as "integration", the preceding paragraph in the report made it clear that the commitment was a qualified one:

> The Pre-Five Committee have no agreed statement of philosophy on integration of young children with disabilities in mainstream provision. Such a statement of aims would be useful both to clarify the position to users of the service and to shape the direction of further work ... . However, it has to be recognised that within existing resources, such a statement will be in the short term unattainable, and will require a great deal of fleshing out ... to put into practice. (para 6.1)

These two statements summarise Strathclyde's policy and its position on 'implementation' of the policy. Like all written statements of educational policy, they stand in a complex relationship to the practice which they ostensibly attempt to regulate or promote. In particular, written policies on 'integration' have to be seen in relation to the enactment of those policies in a number of "arenas" (cf Fulcher, 1989). These include: the bureaucratic-political arenas in which resources are allocated and management decisions are taken; the arenas of "street level bureaucracy" (Kirp, 1982) where educational decisions about individuals are taken; and the arenas of the individual establishments where 'integration' may occur.

It is not meaningful to talk of one of these arenas as more important or significant than another. Relevant research could be carried out in any arena or into the relationships between arenas. In this case, the arena of the establishments was selected for the following reasons.

Characteristically, the written policy did not represent a wholly new departure for pre-five services in Strathclyde. There had been previous recommendations favouring 'integration'[2]. Many street level bureaucrats, particularly educational psychologists, had actively sought integrated placements for individual children. A number of pre-five establishments had themselves taken initiatives in 'integrating' children identified as having 'special needs'.

There was thus a wide range of examples of the policy already being enacted but these examples were varied and largely undocumented. There were no grounds for assuming that they had a common basis because the principles which were part of this practice were not recorded or amenable to public discussion.

A consequence of this situation was that a rich and untapped source for research was readily available. An obvious topic for research which sought to cast light on this policy was the nature of existing attempts to provide for children with disabilities in pre-five services.

The thesis is divided into three parts. In Part One, the literature on integration is used to explore the nature of the research questions which result from the selection of this research topic. Part Two considers the theoretical and methodological approaches appropriate to the tasks which are involved in answering these questions. Part Three reports the research carried out and the analysis of the data.

Before proceeding with Part One some preliminary questions have to be addressed. The first concerns the children to whom the policy refers and the question of appropriate terminology for identifying them. The second concerns the terminology used to describe the establishments in which the case studies were carried out and the people who worked in them. The third concerns the term 'integration' and its implications.

Children

The committee paper already referred to (SRC, 1987) reveals the ambiguity about the children in whose interests the policy was developed. Its title refers to "Children with Special Needs and Disabilities" but it is unclear whether these are the same group, one group and a subset or two different groups. The "statement of aims" goes on to refer to three further conceptions of the relevant group(s); those with a "handicap", those with "a chronic illness" and those with a "condition".

The term used in the educational literature in the UK is "children with special needs". The reservations now expressed about this term are outlined in chapter one but, in any case, it does not identify the relevant group of children accurately. As used in the Warnock Report, it suggests a continuum of need so wide that one child in five has a "special need" at some stage in his or her education. It is clearly not the intention of the policy statement to refer to this wide group.

The alternative usage 'children with disabilities' is preferred here because it better identifies that group of children who are in many cases excluded from mainstream pre-five services. It also aligns the research with an emergent critical literature with which it shares common conceptual ground.

The usage does have significant disadvantages. Firstly, it was not current amongst the staff who were involved in the research. Secondly, its flavour, and some of the literature, identifies it with people with physical or sensory impairments rather than the larger group with learning difficulties. Finally, it is also a term whose usage is disputed. It is widely argued that it is misleading to talk as if individuals 'have' a disability. While it is unarguable that some people have impairments, it is reasonable to claim that it is the absence of accessible social provision which disables them.

No indisputable terms were likely to emerge and a working definition was needed. For the purposes of the field work it was possible to use an operational definition: a child had a disability if he or she was identified as having a disability. The field work looked at the experiences of individual children identified by nursery heads as having impairments which significantly affected their learning. The actual term 'disability' was rarely used by the heads or anyone else so that some negotiation over definitions was necessary.

However, this operational definition was not sufficient for discussion and analysis. A more explicit definition was required for these purposes. The term *children with disabilities* is used authorially throughout the thesis with the following meaning:

- children with disabilities have clear impairments of their physical or sensory functioning or a marked difficulty with learning;

- as a result of this impairment or difficulty they have been identified as exceptional and as warranting exceptional educational concern.

Alternative terminology is used in the literature and where it appears in the thesis it is enclosed in quotation marks. The 'special needs' terminology was used in interviews with staff because of its familiarity. This is discussed in chapter four.

The use of the term 'children with disabilities' in this way is by no means wholly consonant with its use elsewhere and it is open to criticism for identifying disability with impairment. However, it does so because this connection is made in the services in which the research was carried out, it is not implied that the connection is a necessary one. Similarly, it treats the impairments and learning difficulties of some children as 'real' phenomena, but this does not imply a failure to recognise that any significance that is attached to an impairment is a matter of social construction.

Establishments and those who work in them

When Strathclyde integrated its pre-five services it became necessary to develop a generic term which could be used to refer to day nurseries, nursery schools and family centres. The term in general use is the inelegant 'establishments' and this is used throughout. However, in the interests of variety and conciseness the friendlier term 'nursery' is used synonymously. This risks offence to those who work in nursery schools who jealously guard the school aspect of their identity, but no comment on this point is intended .

The aptest term for those who work in nurseries may be the generic 'worker'. However, this was not a term in general use in the nurseries. Further, a readiness to employ it can reveal a refusal to grant those who work in pre-five services the same status as workers in other sectors of education. The widespread usage 'staff' is, therefore, usually employed, with 'educator' as an alternative.

Integration

The term "integration" has been exhaustively discussed and many definitions offered and it is not proposed to contribute another here. It has been justly criticised, for example by Hegarty et al (1981), who claim that it is a "catchword" with vague positive connotations not subjected to rational scrutiny. Strathclyde's policy paper contains, at

least, two competing accounts of integration: on one hand, it presents integration as a matter of the under-development of services, while on the other hand it presents integration as a response to the difficulties of individual children.

As even its critics accept, the term persists because it is a useful, if ambiguous, shorthand for 'the inclusion in mainstream services of that group of children with disabilities who have in some circumstances been excluded from them'. It is used here in this ambiguous way, but without any implication that segregation is a natural situation which has to be overcome by applying special measures to those identified as having disabilities.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Report by the Director was one of a series of policy statements developed for Pre-Five Services in Strathclyde. This followed the publication of a major report establishing a unified pre-five service which brought together services previously provided by the Social Work and Education Departments (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1985). The aim of this initiative was to provide a more coherent and integrated pre-school service.

Part of the initiative was the establishment of a small policy development group at regional headquarters. The research was carried out during a secondment to work with this group.

2. For example, the Member Officer Group Report on Physical Handicap (Strathclyde Regional Council, 1981) recommends priority places in nurseries for children with "physical handicaps".

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. Introduction

The general introduction has put forward as a research topic the nature of existing provision for children with disabilities in pre-five services. This topic raises two research questions. The first is a descriptive one, enquiring into the characteristics of this provision, while the second is a theoretical one, enqurlring into the reasons for these characteristics. The aim of this chapter is to identify the research tasks which are entailed in these questions and to begin to consider the methods which are appropriate to undertaking them. It does so by identifying central issues in the relevant literature.

There is a literature which refers specifically to provision for pre-school children with disabilities but it is clear from the review undertaken by Clark (1988, Ch 14) that it is very limited in both empirical investigation and theoretical content. This conclusion can also be drawn from the introductory text of Robson (1989) and from the earlier reviews of Cave and Madison (1978) and Grubb (1982).

Because it is so limited in scope, it is helpful to set this literature on provision at the pre-school stage in the context of the wider literature on school age children. Despite differences of emphasis, the central issues are the same. The chapter first examines the implications of the general literature for the research questions. The literature is examined under three broad categories:

- the written policy and legislation within which integration policies have been developed;
- the social and educational ideas which underlie these policies;
- the relevant research and theoretical enquiry.

This discussion is used to place the literature which is directly relevant to pre-school services in context.

Clark notes that there has been a good deal of research carried out on children with specific conditions or forms of impairment; much of this is medical research which, as Wedell (1985) comments, lacks relevance to education and is not discussed. There is also an extensive literature on specific teaching methodologies developed under experimental conditions this is referred to only insofar it bears on general issues.

2. Written policy and legislation

A useful distinction can be made between written policy and the policy as it is enacted (a similar distinction is made by Macdonald, 1981). Written policy is used by the State and by intermediate bureaucracies in their attempts to regulate both the resources available to people and their behaviour. However, written policies in the social field always refer to activities which themselves involve struggles over power and resources. These micro-political processes mean that policy is made and remade in the arenas in which it is 'implemented' so that the effects of written policy on educational practice may be quite oblique or even contrary. For example, the data provided by Goodwin (1983)' and Swann (1985a) indicate that national and local authority policies of integration may result in changes of language or provision which mask continuing, or even increasing, use of segregated provision.

Nevertheless, the research task was directly related to a written local authority policy which was quite explicitly set in a matrix of national and international policy. This matrix of codified policy had, therefore, to be considered as a potential source of a framework for examining practice.

National policy and legislation

The current period of thinking in the UK on children with disabilities followed the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People chaired by Mary Warnock (DES, SED, 1978) (henceforth the Warnock Report). Part of the context for the report was the growing movement in the English speaking world and Scandinavia towards integration[2,3]. It offered only qualified support for integration, arguing for a continued need for specialist provision.

A number of countries have established a legal framework for integration. In Scandinavia, in the context of general social laws encouraging "normalisation", there is a legal preference for integrated provision (eg, Danish Ministry of Education, 1981, 1986). There is continued support for the principle with the qualification that there is a need for a range of services (Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, 1988).

In Italy, the legal position is one of total integration although this is not yet enacted in many regions (cf. Salvi and Cecchini, 1987). In the USA, Public Law 94-142 guarantees the right of all children with "handicaps" to an education in "the least restrictive environment", a phrase which implies integration but is open to interpretation (cf. Abeson and Zettel, 1977; Fulcher, 1989). The US legislation has to be seen as part of a system of constitutional rights[4] (cf Gottlieb, 1981).

In the UK, legislation followed the Warnock Report but was framed differently in Scotland than in England and Wales. There is no clause in the 1981 Education (Scotland) Act equivalent to that in the 1981 Education Act which imposes a duty on education authorities to provide for children "in an ordinary school" subject to certain safeguards. This duty has recently been reinforced in England by Circular 22/89 (DES, 1989). Nor is there a Scottish equivalent to the exhortation of the 1987 Report of the Education, Science and Arts Committee of the the House of Commons that:

> It is important for an LEA to have a clear statement of its policy on integration, developed in consultation with parents and professionals as part of its overall policy on special education.

Parental choice is a necessary qualifier of, but not a substitute for, sensible strategic planning by an LEA."

The legal context into which integration fits in Scotland is that of parental entitlement to 'choice' in education. Thomson et al (1986) summarise the Education (Scotland) 1981 Act as embodying two features of the Warnock Report; the abandonment of categories of handicap and the encouragement of parental participation in multi-disclipinary decision making. Thomson et al (1988a) point out that the sole legislative basis for developing integration is parental choice of that option. As they also comment, it is not clear that a groundswell of parental desire for integration exists.

The main thrust of the Warnock Report was that the idea of discrete categories of children was misconceived and that it was preferable to think of a continuum of needs, some of which were "special"[5]. It was argued that a wide range of children - 20% of the school population - need significant help at some stage in their schooling.[6]

It was proposed that the planning of educational provision should take place at an individual level and categories of handicap should be replaced with the concept of "special needs". The legislation and its associated procedures were framed in terms of the concept of "recording" a child's "special needs". This concept has been subject to critical scrutiny, (cf Lewis and Vulliamy, 1981; Tomlinson, 1982, 1986, 1989; Booth, 1983; Galloway, 1985). The following points are significant here:

- the concept of "needs" sounds objective and neutral but, in reality, identifying a "need" is a decision about what, where and how a child should be taught, that is a value laden, political decision[7];
- the decision that some needs are "special" is equally political;
- the notion that any school ever fully meets any child's needs is quite implausible.

Recognising the political nature of decisions about special needs raises questions about the effects of a policy based on the concept. For example, Tomlinson (ibid) argues that the apparently benign approach conceals the reality that as more children are brought within the category of having "special needs" a larger group is marginalised and laid open to measures of control by being given 'special' treatment.

Two main conclusions can be reached for research which aims to describe and analyse existing provision. The first is that national policy in Scotland is, by international standards, relatively weak. It is also equivocal and so does not provide a decisive direction for investigating practice. Secondly, the potential that the special needs concept might appear to have for investigating practice - by looking at how 'needs' are being 'met' - is not fulfilled. It is severely limited by prior questions of a political character concerned with how needs are identified and how these needs relate to the organisation of services for all children.

Local authority policy

In many countries, national policies of integration depend upon the development of policy at the local government level at which responsibility for education lies. Scandinavian national policies are implemented locally and there is evidence of local variation in practice (cf Fulcher, 1989). In the USA, integrated services at State and District level have been encouraged by the tying of Federal funding to the policy direction and by the use litigation by parents (cf. Kirp 1982). Nevertheless, there is significant local variation with Massachusetts and the city of Madison in Wisconsin as the best known pioneering examples. Local initiatives also appear to be the pattern in Italy, with Parma, Arezzo and Perugia identified as pioneers (cf. Salvi and Cechinni, ibid.)

The major policy document on children with special needs in the UK since the Warnock Report has been produced at local authority level. This is the report produced for ILEA in 1985 by a committee chaired by John Fish (The Fish Report). A number of UK local authorities have produced policies on integration, in Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway has most fully implemented such a policy (cf. Anderson, 1987; Dumfries and Galloway Region, 1983).

Although Strathclyde's Education Department as a whole had developed a policy for Learning Support in Primary and Secondary Schools (SRC 1988) the management consultants who reviewed policy in the Department (Inlogov, 1988) identified the absence of a clear policy in relation to children with special needs and integration. A policy statement is currently being developed.

Implementation of post-Warnock policy has varied from Authority to Authority and scepticism has been expressed about whether more integration is occurring. The standard reference in considering the development of integration in England and Wales is that of Swann (1985a). He shows that while there were grounds for claiming that more children with physical and sensory disabilities were being mainstreamed over a period from 1978 to 1982, DES figures showed that specialist provison was increasing overall, particularly for children with learning difficulties.

Rutherford (1987) has suggested that the picture in Renfrew Division over the period was different with a decline in proportionate numbers in MLD provision. Up to date internal figures in Strathclyde show a ten year decline in the proportion of children in special schools. However, a major study of Recording at Edinburgh University, funded by the SED, Thomson et al (1986), (1988) and (1989) suggests that Swann's conclusions are broadly supported in a Scottish context. Incidentally, their 1988 report indicates that the pattern of integration of physically and sensorily impaired children was not detectable in later figures.

The main conclusions Thomson et al reached about the placement of children with recorded "special needs" were: that there was a wide variation in practice between authorities; that the proportion of children receiving separate special schooling remained fairly constant over a ten year period (before which it had been expanding); and that the pattern of children transferring from mainstream into special education continued "in contradiction of the rhetoric of integration".

At the time when the research was being carried out there was no clear general policy on integration in Strathclyde. The evidence is that local authority policy has not been a wholly successful vehicle for developing integration and that ambiguities abound. It therefore does not offer a clear direction for research into the enactment of such policies in establishments.

Written policy and pre-fives

The Warnock Report identified provision for pre-school children as a priority area for development and looked favourably on the priority placement of children with 'special needs' in mainstream nursery provision.

Nevertheless, the post Warnock legislation in Scotland distinguished between the entitlements of children before and after the age of five. However, an amendment to the 1981 legislation was introduced through the Self-Governing Schools Etc. Act (1989). This replaced the previous "power" of education authorities with a "duty" to Record the special needs of two to four year olds. This is explicitly intended to provide more information and choice for parents. Nevertheless, there is no legal obligation on, or financial allowance to, local authorities to provide for children's special needs before the age of five and no legislative support for integration.

Strathclyde's pre-five integration policy arose out of a more general development of policies for its pre-five services. These were centred on the concept of integration of pre-five services, formerly supplied by separate departments of the Regional Council, into a

unified structure where all services were located within the Education Department. The purpose was to provide a more flexible set of services which met parents and children's needs, ideally through "community nurseries" with a range of services available through "one door" (SRC, 1985). The integration of services for children with disabilities into local pre-five services was a logical extension of this approach. However, the committee paper already referred to, presented the translation of these ideals into practice as requiring further work at various levels.

National policy in relation to pre-fives, then, is even more equivocal than it is for older children. Strathclyde's policy in relation to integration in its pre-five services is unequivocal but practically unrealisable, offering a direction for development rather than guidelines for examining present provision.

Overall implications for the research question

It is possible to take the policy process at face value. This would see 'policy makers' as identifying a direction of development for services which is then 'implemented' by those who work in those services. Using this implementation model it is clear that the limited written policy on integration provides little information about how it might be carried out. It provides equally little guidance for examining existing integrated provision.

This confirms the earlier argument that taking the policy process at face value is, in any case, misleading. As a result, research concerned with the nature of provision cannot be conducted in terms of a classic managerial pattern of the translation of the aims of the policy into operational objectives for which indices are then established. Any policy has multiple objectives developed in all the arenas in which it is enacted. In most arenas these objectives are not written down or fully articulated; investigating the objectives which have been developed is a necessary task for research in any particular arena.

3. Rationales for policies of integration

Fulcher (1989) analyses how national and local policies on integration emerge from the competing discourses of different interest groups. These discourses employ characteristic sets of ideas, or social theories, which offer rationales for specific courses of action. It is at least plausible to suppose that if these rationales are examined, the aims that actuate, or should actuate, practice will become apparent. The most significant ideas in social theory related to integration have been those of equal opportunities, comprehensive education and normalisation. Each is discussed in turn, its relevance to pre-fives in Strathclyde indicated and its potential for developing relevant research tasks considered.

Equal opportunities

The term 'equal opportunities' is espoused by a number of groups and organisations. Its, often unacknowledged, concomitant is an acceptance of the uneven distribution of positive opportunities in society[9]. It seeks to alter the access of different groups to these opportunities. The concept of equal opportunities is widely used as an underpinning for policies which are concerned with those disadvantaged groups which do not conform to traditional economic and class definitions. Its general premise is the *right* to fair treatment for all.

Those who adopt an approach centred on the 'rights' of disabled people do so in the context of an understanding that their experience has marked similarities to that of other marginalised and discriminated against groups in Western society, primarily women and black people. The term 'disablism' has been coined on an analogy with 'racism' and 'sexism'. The segregation of people with disabilities from the rest of society, whether it is by limitations of physical access, reduced employment opportunities or educational categorisation is seen as an infringement of their right to full citizenship (cf Shearer, 1981; Sutherland 1981; Stone, 1984).

Increasingly, it is argued that people with disabilities should take the central role in defining their own services (cf Oliver, 1988). The situation in education is complicated by the fact that the legal and *de facto* rights of children with disabilities lie with their, usually able-bodied, parents.

Complementary to the rights argument is a social view of disability which sets out to contradict the widespread view that disability is a characteristic of individuals. Usually, such characteristics are medically defined and seen as defects or deficits in the individual. An alternative point of view is that disability is a social construct or creation (cf. Oliver, 1988; Wilson, 1989; Scottish Council on Disability, 1989). Firstly, the decision that some individuals should be considered disabled depends on social judgements. Secondly, the organisation of services in such a way that people with disabilities cannot participate depends upon a perception that there is a "normal" person for whom services are designed[3]. In the field of education this perspective is enlarged by considering the number of children who, despite no identifiable impairment, have been treated as disabled and medically and psychologically examined and offered 'special' or remedial provision.

Strathclyde Region's pre-five policy as a whole has been strongly influenced by the equal opportunities perspective. A central reason for developing daycare services is the equalisation of opportunities for women, who are generally responsible for childcare. The equal opportunities perspective has also been seen as a key component in the operation of services and is given considerable prominence, for example, in a statement of "policy principles" widely circulated amongst parents and pre-five staff (SRC, 1987, 1989).

Equal opportunities policies are seen as having particular importance at the pre-five stage because, it is argued, children develop the bases of their later attitudes at this stage. It is seen as particularly important that all young children see people with disabilities as part of the community.

Equal opportunities approaches suggest a direct method for examining practice. It is possible to look at how provision responds to

equal opportunities 'issues' by considering how it embodies anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-disablist practices. Generally, such approaches look for stereotyping, for instance, in the images that are presented or in the interactions that occur in an establishment.

Three difficulties would have resulted from choosing an analysis of 'disability awareness' as the main research task. The first reflected personal experience; none of these approaches had permeated Strathclyde pre-five establishments fully, but anti-disablism was much the least prominent (as is generally the case). Measuring 'awareness' would have produced a negative result, predictable in advance.

Secondly, pre-five establishments are structured with reference to many factors other than providing for children with disabilities: the fact that they are called nurseries or schools, their location within the education system, the age of the children, traditional practice and so on. They are also arenas for the enactment of policies, in the widest sense, which relate to matters other than disability. The research had obviously to concern itself with the messages that were communicated about disability but these could not be understood without reference to a matrix of messages on other topics.

Thirdly, measures of awareness would not themselves have offered a method for discovering why provision took the form that it did.

Comprehensive education.

An explicit link is often made between the ideas of equal opportunities and comprehensive education because both discourses are based on a rights perspective.

The Fish Report put children with special needs and their access to mainstream education into the context of ILEA's review of equality of opportunity in primary and secondary schools. It adopted a long-term strategy of working towards the inclusion of all children in comprehensive schools seeing separate provision as "an interim solution" on the way to that goal. It explicitly identified such improved access with "the comprehensive principle" in education.

Tomlinson (1986) identifies this idea as a central legitimating one for policies of integration:

> Supporters of integration use a variety of arguments to justify their position, but a major argument is that post-war egalitarianism is now firmly established in Britain via a comprehensive education principle, and that overt selection by ability or disability is no longer permissable (p57)

The Fish Report, carefully qualified its rights position by arguing that the right to equal access to mainstream education is, on occasion, in competition with every child's right to an appropriate education:

> The Committee accepts that there are limits to the special educational needs which can be met within comprehensive schools ... But the comprehensive principle implies that schools ... should continually strive to provide for more individual needs and to offer equal opportunities to all. (para 1.1.20)[10]

The concept of comprehensive education is a central one in the thinking of the major recent research project on integration in the UK, Hegarty et al. (1981, 1982). They view their research as not about integration but about "children with special needs in the ordinary school"[11].

Again providing a link to equal opportunities perspectives, they point out that integration, as it has often been presented,

> tends to concentrate on the minority group and what is entailed in its assimilation into the mainstream. ... In other words integration is at root a problem for the minority group.

In contrast they argue that:

> The education of pupils with special needs must be seen in terms of the education system as a whole. Separate provision developed

> at least in part because of system difficulties: ordinary schools were not sufficiently differentiated and could not cope with the wide range of needs they faced, so it seemed that the most effective procedure was to set up alternative institutions free of the constraints of the ordinary school. If it is now widely accepted that the ordinary school system should cater for these pupils wherever possible, the ordinary school system must change. It must become more differentiated and take on a range of functions that it had previously rejected or were not assigned to it.
> ...If the changes are are such as to affect staffing, the curriculum, patterns of socialisation ... the implications for the school are far-reaching. What is at stake here is an extension of the comprehensive ideal. (pp 19-20)

At first sight, comprehensive education may appear irrelevant at the pre-five stage. However, an analogous principle to that of comprehensive education underlies Strathclyde's pre-five strategy. Its attempt to resolve the differences between nursery schools and day nurseries has many parallels with the bringing together of senior and junior secondary education. In both cases the intention is to provide one service which caters for all the children in a community irrespective of their personal circumstances.

At the heart of the comprehensive ideal are two processes which are in tension with one another: inclusion and differentiation. This can be illustrated using an example from a nursery where a child was part of a large group in a nursery listening to a story which she did not understand. This may be read in several ways: as a positive inclusion of that child, as a negative failure to differentiate provision to cater for her needs, or as a result of the logistics of the shift system for staff lunch breaks. Each of these readings may be accurate from differing points of view. The reality of comprehensive education is that balances have constantly to be struck amongst the competing ideals and practical constraints. The comprehensive principle itself does not provide a method for analysisng these balances.

Thus the comprehensive ideal and the concepts of inclusion and differentiation are important elements in current practice. Research on provision for children with disabilities has to make reference to these concepts but they do not themselves offer a sufficient framework for investigating provision.

Normalisation

Wolfsenberger (1972; 1983) is the key advocate of this approach to services particularly for people with learning difficulties, which has its origins in Scandinavia. It involves the:

> utilisation of means which are as culturally normative as possible to establish and/or maintain behaviours which are as culturally normative as possible. (1972 p.28)

This replaces a remedial emphasis in services where the aim is to enable those with disabilties to 'overcome' their disabilities. Patently, for many people a remedial aim is wholly unrealistic whereas the aim of normalisation is one which can be achieved at any level. Further, the normalisation concept recognises that the aims for any individual need to be ecologically valid; they should allow him or her to live as normal life as possible in his or her immediate surroundings and in his or her society. The perceived advantage of this relativistic approach is that once culturally normative behaviours are identified they can be made operational.

This has become the key legitimation amongst professional advisors on children with disabilities for presenting integration as in the interests of the children themselves. This is particularly the case at the pre-five stage; social interaction has been given great prominence in the literature on integration in pre-five services. The most frequent response to an open question on the advantages of integrated provision for pre-fives with special needs in a survey carried out amongst educational psychologists in Strathclyde (Jefferies, 1988) was the presence of "normal models".

The principles of normalisation are specifically intended to provide operational concepts which could have been used to guide investigation. However, as Booth (1988) says, the difficulty is that these depend upon a consensus about culturally normative behaviours. The example of provision for deaf children can be used to illustrate this point. One model of normalisation for the education of the deaf is to foster the development of an approximation to the speech of hearing people. However, an alternative principle of normalisation may lie in fostering the use of the most accessible language, in this case Sign. Thus normalisation can be used to justify each of the strongly opposed methods in deaf education - the oral and total communication methods.

Therefore, the question of what constitues a 'normal' experience is one which research ought to address. It cannot be taken as a given which can be used to direct enquiry.

Overall implications for the research question

The difficulty in seeking a framework for the examination of practice in general social and educational ideals is that they refer to an abstract, somewhat Platonic world. It may be posssible to use these ideals as yardsticks against which to measure practice but doing so does not explain how and why practice deviates from the expression of the goals of equal opportunities or comprehensive education. As Davies (1973) says of attempts to describe schools as organisations:

> Etzioni (1960:259) argues that any goal model of an organisation involves the mistake of 'comparing objects which are not on the same level of analysis ... when the present state of an organisation (a real state) is compared with a goal (an ideal state) as if the goal were also a real state.' (p257)

Therefore, none of these underlying ideas is able to provide the basis for a description of practice. Each impinges on practice in a partial way and each leaves questions about why practice is as it is unaddressed. Although these ideas do not provide a decisive direction

for the enquiry they do form part of its substance. One reason for this is because practitioners draw on them in describing and explaining their practice. As Ball (1989) says:

> The changing political and educational rhetorics ... in which schooling is embedded can provide new and powerful vocabularies of motives and structures of legitimation ... in the micro political arena. (p140)

4. Research and theoretical enquiry

Four major traditions of academic enquiry into disability can be discerned. One, the medical tradition, does not offer a way of investigating educational practice and so is not considered here, although the influence of its underlying assumptions is discussed in chapter six. The first tradition referred to is that of 'educational psychology', using the term to denote the empiricist, hypothesis testing paradigm which has dominated the field. A tradition of enquiry into educational practice which is not based on hypothesis testing and which uses distinctively educational concepts is then discussed. Finally, work in educational sociology is discussed. Of course, such divisions are artificial and they are crossed by some work.

Educational psychology

Educational psychology has provided the dominant set of ideas for looking at provision for children with disabilities. The main question that research framed within this tradition has attempted to answer has been the commonsense one of whether integrated provision 'works better' than separate provision. Typically, the approach to answering this question has been one of comparing groups on measurable outcomes.

Hegarty et al (1981) point to a:

> ... spate of studies comparing special and ordinary classes for mentally retarded pupils ... there is a broad consensus about these studies: in general they are methodologically inadequate and do not yield findings that consistently favour a given type of educational placement. (p. 53)

The view that results of efficacy studies have been equivocal is one which is echoed in a number of later reviews of the question, for example, Madden and Slavia (1983), Zigler and Hoddap (1986) and Danby and Cullen (1988). Danby and Cullen elucidate the methodological difficulties in forming experimental and control groups on criteria sufficiently rigorous to produce generalisable results, random assignment rarely being possible. They also sound a note of caution about the translation of findings which have been obtained mainly in the USA to a UK situation where terminology and provision are quite different.

Studies in UK settings have been very rare. Thus Casey et al (1988) report no other studies comparable to their own. They used a 'natural experiment' where children with Down's Syndrome assessed as having moderate learning difficulties were placed in mainstream or special schools according to the placement policies of their local authorities, all London boroughs. Their results, measuring academic progress, favoured the mainstream group.

However, because their study did not look at variations in practice within the boroughs, explanations other than mainstreaming are not ruled out. In those boroughs with an initiative in integration, work with 'integrated' children may have been highly valued. There may equally have been a novelty effect with mainstream teachers who had presumably never worked with a child with Down's Syndrome before. Teaching support may have varied.

This reveals a general limitation on the research mode within which such studies are conceived: the 'agricultural-botanical' strategy. They are designed to compare the effect of different treatments on equivalent populations. If, like integration, these treatments occur outwith tightly defined experimental conditions, the level of explanation is necessarily limited. It is impossible to say which of the multitude of factors involved in differentiating the groups caused the effect because the complex treatment condition is treated a 'black box' with only inputs and outputs being measured.

For this reason, any study framed in these terms would be quite unable to address the present research question which consists precisely of asking what can be learned from the multi-faceted, uncontrolled 'treatments' constituted by nursery attendance.

It is worth making the point that, although the question of whether integrated provision works has proved difficult to answer and any results are likely to be unrevealing, it is a significant question. An accumulation of results from methodologically careful studies is potentially important (cf Carlberg and Kavale 1980[12]; Zigler and Hall 1986; Danby and Cullen, 1988). The fact that no clear advantages have been shown for one form of provision has provided powerful arguments against the continued development of special provision (cf Galloway and Goodwin, 1979).[13] A review making this point was highly influential in promoting mainstreaming legislation in the USA (Dunn 1968)[14].

A less general question which has been framed within the educational psychology tradition asks which teaching methods work best for children with specific impairments or difficulties. Approaches based on behavioural psychology have frequently been evaluated in this way (cf, eg, Farrell ed, 1985) These studies usually focus on specific interventions in controlled settings and so are of limited relevance to considering practice as a whole in uncontrolled settings. Further, in non-experimental settings different outcomes have to be balanced against one another; for instance, a specific programme might produce cognitive gains but result in social isolation for the children engaged in it, or it might draw staff resources from more diffuse but enriching activities. Demonstrated experimental effectiveness provides no means of comparing those outcomes with one another.

Where psychological theory is used directly to influence practice, such as in teacher training or schools psychological work, general propositions are often extrapolated from this type of research. As Swann (1985b) says, "Many practices in special education are justified by appeal to the findings of psychological and related scientific research." Swann argues that these appeals are generally not well-founded because the evidence so frequently comes from research on groups, usually small groups:

> The logical fallacy of applying group results to individuals has been identified many times, notably by G.W. Allport ... without apparently restraining most psychologists working in education. Since individualised approaches are now claimed as the distinguishing feature of work with special needs children this means that, scientific psychology should be *less* relevant to special education than other areas, rather than the more common, opposing view. (p32)

Swann takes as an example the most generally accepted formulation in relation to children with learning difficulties - the idea that they lack the ability to learn 'spontaneously'. This view is a central legitimation for the intensively structured teaching approaches which are often seen to represent good practice in special education. He demonstrates that the evidence on which the proposition is founded is very limited and argues that the notion of a spontaneous learning deficit reduces to the tautology that children with learning difficulties have difficulty with learning.

Both forms of educational psychology research face the same limitation. Because of its empiricist commitments such research has been concerned with the measurement of outcomes. The choice of which outcomes to measure is invariably treated as non-problematic but even outcomes which appear non-controversial, such as reading scores, are problematic. Such choices are always value laden and political: it is a political judgement that to lack skill in reading is more socially handicapping than having attended a special school or having been on a

special programme. It is particularly apparent that deciding what to measure is not a neutral process in pre-school provision where academic achievement cannot be treated as a self evident criterion. In pre-five services the curriculum is generally unstated and overlaps considerably with informal learning. In these circumstances, it is obviously premature to treat measures of outcome as if they were a settled question'[5].

The fact that the measurement of learning outcomes is treated as self-evident in the educational psychology research is a result of the view of science on which the tradition is based. In this view science does not concern itself with the political processes by which it is decided that it is important to learn *a* rather than *b*. Such questions are consigned to a separate area - that of moral and ethical judgement. Danby and Cullen adopt this position on the question of integration:

> There are both moral and educational assumptions which underpin moves to incorporate mentally handicapped people into ordinary schools *and it is important to distinguish between them* ... the educational debate not only considers integration in terms of its being fair but also in terms of its educational benefits. (p177, emphasis added)

This proposes that there are aspects of education which can be separated off from moral considerations. In considering integration a familiar argument (cf Lindsay, 1986) is based on the proposition that the decision to develop integrated provision can only be based on moral or social grounds but that how it is 'implemented' is a technical question, to be decided on technical grounds. However, every 'technical' decision in this context involves conceptions of the learning that is worth promoting, of the relationships that are proper between children and adults and so on. These conceptions are all concerned with culturally normative behaviour and so involve social and political judgements.

This 'positivist' approach will be considered in a more general way in the following chapter. As far as the present research questions are concerned, it is clear that neither of the educational psychology modes of research offers suitable tools for investigation, quite apart from the methodological difficulties a comparative study would face. Questions of which outcomes are valued, and why, are integral to any attempt to illuminate existing provision, they cannot be put into a box labelled 'philosophical issues'.

Educational case studies

Hegarty et al (1981) argue that the most important research objective in studying provision for children with disabilities from the point of view of educationists is "an examination of what goes on within programmes". This is a commonplace of the literature on educational evaluation. They examined a number of integration initiatives (cf Hegarty et al, 1982) by looking at organisational and teaching processes. They used the accumulated evidence to reach general conclusions about integrated provision: not that it is superior to the alternative but that:

> The resounding conclusion to come from this study is that integration is possible. Special needs can be met in the ordinary school to a far greater extent than is currently the practice. (p. 507)

Danby and Cullen (1988) argue that the basis for the evaluative judgements of Hegarty et al is not explicit or rigorous. Nevertheless, it is clear that they are based on a consensual model where researchers and practitioners agreed that a particular programme 'worked'.

The literature which falls into the category of looking at "what goes on in programmmes" is not extensive and Swann (1988) claims that:

> One of the side efects of the domination of special education by educational psychology is that books and journals fill up with studies of how pupils respond to experimental learning programmes while the stock of observations from ordinary classrooms ... is all but non-existent. (p86)

Early studies adopted a descriptive mode, for example Anderson (1973) and Cope and Anderson (1977). However, Jamieson, Parlett and Pocklington (1977) use case study information for "illuminative evaluation" not in the sense of "passing judgement" on the integration of visually impaired pupils but in oder to "marshall and co-ordinate the views and opinions of those directly involved"(p 213).

Hodgson et al (1984) carried out a more focused project, based on observation of adaptations of mainstream curricula for children with "special needs". They looked at the content of teaching, timetabling and sources of support. They were not concerned to question curricular content or the effects of providing some children with support but with reaching the point where they were able to provide "guidelines and teaching tips".

Croll and Moses (1985) looked at staff attitudes, processes of assessment and provision. Their study of classrooms used a systematic observation method to produce quantified results for comparison with a control group of pupils not identified as having special needs. It looked at grouping, curriculum content and interaction between the groups. They found significant differences between the groups and identify a "'slow learner behaviour pattern' (of) lower levels of engagement in work ... high levels of fidgeting and much more time ... spent on their own." (p133) This seems a circular approach since the fact that these children were identified as slow learners presumably had something to do with these behaviours.

Lynas (1986) reports a study of children with hearing impairments in schools. Primarily, this records the perceptions of the participants but strong conclusions are drawn. Although she did observe classroom practice the reporting of this aspect is limited and is concerned only with the transmission of overt lesson content which is unanalysed.

Gross and Gipps (1987) and Gipps, et al (1987) report on a study which considered the processes involved in integration in six local authorities. They did so at several levels; the administrative level, the support service level and the classroom level. Classroom experiences were reported in terms of children's social experiences, classroom organisation, on- and off-task behaviour and lesson content but no general theories were developed.

The case study research which has been undertaken has then largely adopted an 'educational' frame of reference heavily dependent upon a consensual, commonsense stance rather than a theoretical one. The style is one of 'factual' reporting of processes. Such 'factual' accounts fail to subject their own key concepts to analysis so that theoretical questions are only addressed in a limited way.

The lack of explicit theorisation may conceal quite contentious assumptions, as Booth (1988) argues in relation to Lynas's study. Lynas describes a process of normalisation in integrated provision which depends upon deaf children minimising their hearing difficulties and avoiding sign language. Her factual approach is quite silent on the very obvious ideological content of this normalisation strategy with its identification of education with oral language.

In general, the assumptions are less obviously contentious but they are pervasive. In particular, curriculum content and teaching style are largely treated as given, so that time on task, for example, is seen as an unproblematic measure. How justified such an assumption is at the school stage does not matter here. Curriculum content and teaching styles *are* problematic at the preschool stage.

The direct observation of practice through 'case study' methodology is of obvious relevance to research which sets out to describe current provision. The procedure of giving explicit accounts of what actually happens in non-experimental situations is a necessary starting point for any analysis. Nevertheless, if case studies are to add to our understanding of provision and the basis upon which it operates, the theoretical questions which are part of description cannot be neglected.

Sociological enquiry

The dominant traditions in the field have been those of medicine and educational psychology. Sociological enquiry has begun to question their assumptions and the way in which these assumptions are reflected in the character of special provison for children with disabilities. Unlike the educational case study approach, sociological work has been concerned with theorising provision whether in segregated or integrated settings. This theorisation can be categorised in terms of its focus on macro or micro social factors.

At the macro social level two main theoretical positions can be distinguished both of which can be found in the work of Tomlinson (1981a; 1981b; 1982; 1985; 1986; 1989). At the widest level, Tomlinson, like Sqibb (1981) and Soder (1984), considers the function of special education in a capitalist society. Viewed in the context of the role of the education system in social differentiation it is argued that it is significant that special education's largest group of pupils has come disproportionately from "the social problem classes" and, certainly in England, from black children (cf 1982 Ch 7)[16]. Special educational treatment provides direct measures of control over children who are 'difficult'. It also acts as a means of marginalising those who fall within its ambit and as a threat to those who do not. The marginalised products of this system provide a pool of unskilled labour which spends much of its time without employment.

A macro theory which Tomlinson uses in a complementary way involves a "conflict" approach which emphasises the role of interest groups rationally pursuing their own ends[17]. She argues that, although special educational provision is usually now described in humanitarian terms, it would not take its present form if it did not serve the interests of groups with the power to shape education. Her analysis suggests that special education serves the needs of mainstream teachers to work uninterrupted by children with difficulties and the needs of special educationists and the growing army of ancilliary professions for a clientele.

Integration can also be viewed in the light of each of these theories (cf Tomlinson, 1989). If the 'special needs' concept is applied beyond those in special education it means that an increasing number of children are deemed to need 'special' treatment. Tomlinson relates this to social change, particularly the disappearance of the demand for low-skilled labour and the consequent need to develop special programmes for the unemployable. The extension of special provision within schools may make it easier to place difficult to teach children in separate classes. It may increase rather than diminish the group of people with vested professional interest in the development of specialist services.

Both theories are powerful and account for many features of the growth of 'special' services in education but some of the evidence for each can be questioned (cf Bunn, 1987) and there are unresolved questions, not least the relationship between macro-economic factors and factors of rational self interest. Croll and Moses (1986) argue that it is implausible to suggest that the small percentage of children given special education is critical for the maintenance of a pool of labour[13]. The necessity for such an underclass in a capitalist economy can also be questioned (cf references Bunn, 1987). Plausible cases could be made for the pursuit of rational ends other than vested professional interest, including humanitarianism and perplexity about how to teach some children[19]; Tomlinson (1985) also refers, for example, to the "dilemmas" faced by comprehensive education.

Tomlinson has carried out empirical work (1981a & b, 1982) at a micro social level. This investigated the processes by which some children were ascertained as requiring special education and there are references to observational work in special schools. The methodology was mainly interview based and the perceptions of the participants constituted the data. This micro level data informs both the macro theories discussed above.

Ford et al (1982) have also carried out research in this area. As with Tomlinson, their work is concerned with the nature of the judgements which lead to some children being identified as exceptional and the means by which these judgements become confirmed by official processes. However, they do not use this data to develop a macro social theory. This is also true of a number of other studies which have looked at the identification of some children as deviant, using a variety of theoretical orientations (summarised in Furlong, 1985). These have been almost exclusively concerned with what Tomlinson terms "non-normative" types of disability; that is with children identified as exceptional in the absence of ostensible physical or sensory impairments or identifiable conditions.

Although some of this work has involved direct research in mainstream and special schools it has not fundamentally been concerned with the question of the curriculum or organisation of schools. Its main focus has been the well-established sociological question of how deviant identities are created and sustained by informal and formal social processes.

It has been argued, in relation to the case study tradition, that theorisation is necessary if the nature of current provision is to be illuminated. In relation to the educational psychology tradition, it was pointed out that any theory has to take political and social factors into account. In a broad sense, this means that the research question can only be addressed by developing a sociological perspective.

However, existing theories serve to problematise both segregated and integrated provision rather than to provide a detailed conceptual framework for addressing the research questions. There are also significant differences between the group of children which has been the focus of the empirical sociological work and children with disabilities as defined here. The research task that this indicates is that of developing a sociological perspective which is relevant to the specific micro-social settings in which provision is made for pre-fives with disabilities in Strathclyde.

5. The literature on pre-fives with disabilities

The limited nature of research and theorising referring specifically to preschool children has already been noted. In terms of the traditions distinguished so far, work has been mainly within the educational psychology tradition, although this work has embodied features of the consensus approach noted in case study research. Literature searches of both the educational and the sociological literature have not revealed any sociological work on under-fives with disabilities.

In the educational psychology sphere neither Clark's recent (1988) review nor the introductory text by Robson (1989) refer to outcome studies comparing the learning of children in mainstream and special settings carried out in the UK. Ludlow and Allen (1979) do report a study on children with Down's Syndrome whose parents received medical "counselling" via a form of playgroup and who attended some other provision outwith the home. They were compared with children who stayed at home or were institutionalised. They acknowledge methodological problems and can only conclude that some intervention is better than none.

It appears that in the USA the 1970s did not see the spate of outcome studies at the preschool stage that Hegarty and Pocklington note at the school stage (cf Turnbull and Blacher-Dixon, 1981, p78-87). In any case, there are serious difficulties in translating studies from the USA because neither special nor mainstream preschool provision is comparable with that in the UK.[20]

As at the school stage, a prevalent research model in both the UK and the US literature is the small scale experimental programme or intervention where results are reported from particular teaching methods or curricula (cf Turnbull and Blacher-Dixon, ibid.) Part of the experimental character of some of these is the provision of an 'integrated' setting, for example, in Anson House (cf Gunstone et al, 1982). Others have a specialist emphasis and are framed in behavioural terms, for example, the work emanating from the Hester Adrian Centre. These are of limited relevance to research in natural settings.

The main studies carried out in non-experimental conditions in the UK[21] are those reported in Clark and Cheyne (1979), Chazan et al (1980) and Clark et al (1982). The context for the three studies was similar; the first two were carried out for the Warnock Committee while the third was largely a replication of the first sponsored by the DES immediately after the Warnock Report. A primary purpose was to gather data on the nature and prevalence of "handicaps" or "special needs" amongst under fives. Provision made for children so identified was also examined, with an emphasis on integrated nursery education. Two components were common to the methodology of all three studies: structured questionnaires/interviews and direct observation of children in nursery settings. In the Chazan study researchers also carried out psychological assessment. In all three, more intensive investigations, including the observational component, were carried out on sub-samples.

The data that is reported on prevalence collates information supplied by practitioners. Although no explicit theory about "handicap" is developed and the general tone is one of objective reporting of facts, there is an implicit theoretical stance adopted in which handicap is treated as an objective psychological fact about individuals.

This is illustrated by how Chazan et al treat discrepancies between researchers, teachers, health visitors and parents. Each group differed both in the children they identified as having "handicaps" and in the nature and extent of these "handicaps". Chazan et al acknowledge the implication that "the concept of handicap is ... relative" (p15). Nevertheless, they clearly consider that psychologists/researchers are able to identify its components accurately. Teachers are less able to do so and parents less so again. The 'true' assessment of the researcher is the yardstick against which others are judged:

> It would seem that teachers' judgements are much less unlikely to be *unrealistic* than those made by parents, and that parents could be helped to understand their children's problems more easily if they discussed them in detail with teachers. (p73,)[22]

This hierarchy from lay opinion to teacher opinion to researcher/ psychologist opinion is central to the implicit theoretical stance of these studies and the introductory texts derived from them (Chazan and Laing, 1981, and Robson, ibid).

The recommendations which are drawn from the research primarily reflect the opinions of practitioners; for example, that information, support and advice should be more readily available and that mainstream staff need training. However, as with the assessment of "handicap", the perceptions of practitioners are only granted conditional validity. For instance, Chazan et al looked at teaching approaches and while they did not feel able to make positive recommendations they did feel that,"it might be salutary to mention some teacher behaviours which did not appear particularly helpful to handicapped children." (p156). Similarly, Clark and her associates criticise the level of planning and record keeping observed as inadequate.

The difficulty with this is that the grounds on which these evaluative comments are made are unarticulated and unanalysed - no independent evidence is adduced for the superior validity of psychological assessment, the ineffectiveness of some teaching methods or the effectiveness of planning and record keeping. The basis for the conclusions is the authoritative opinion of the highly trained researcher, drawing on some general propositions in educational psychology. For example, the central recommendation in Robson (ibid) is a plea for "structure", an article of received wisdom in the special needs field whose largely unargued theoretical foundations have already been discussed.

One effect of this hierarchy of opinion is that specialism is highly valued. Thus the critique which Clark and her associates make of integrated provision is often based on a contrast with an implicit view of specialist provision or specialised services.

This perspective is apparent in the discussion of the observational component of their research. This consisted of recording the activities, social contexts and communications in which a number of "handicapped" children were involved and making a comparison with a control child in the same nursery. The implicit valuing of the specialist leads to these comments:

these studies of twenty five of the children identified as handicapped who were compared with control children attending the same pre-school unit revealed a similarity in pattern of activities of the pairs of children, which is to some extent gratifying but also reveals little evidence of special treatment for them ... It must be questioned to what extent in the pre-school units as presently organised it is feasible to provide a curriculum individually catering for each child's needs. 'Programming' in that sense is not a feature of many pre-school units any more than systematic written record keeping." (Clark and Cheyne, 1979, p224)

This implied contrast is made in the absence of any evidence that individual programmes are effective or that alternatives exist where such programmes are available. It can now be viewed in the light of the failure of comparative research to establish the effectiveness of specialised provision in which individual "programming" is presumed to occur.

It can be concluded that research whose theoretical basis is a combinination of practitioner opinion with expert evaluation is unlikely to be able to address the theoretical aspect of the research question. However, the principle of direct observation in non-experimental settings is directly relevant to its descriptive aspect. The methods by which this direct observation was carried out provide a source for research techniques which was, in fact, tapped, in a way discussed in chapter three.

There is a consensus amongst these researchers into preschool provision that social integration is a critical dimension of integration at this stage. Robson says, "ultimately integration must be measured in terms of the actual interaction between the special children and their peers and teachers" (p51). All three studies examined the extent of social interaction in their matched pair comparisons. All three studies report some differences between the two groups but also marked differences amongst children within the two

groups. Clark and Cheyne are cautious in interpreting their findings but strike a note of scepticism about whether "inclusion" is "indeed integration" which is echoed in Robson.

The significance of the unanalysed value position which informs the research is made apparent by comparing these comments with those of Herink and Lee (1985). They report very similar results but interpret them as evidence that satisfactory integration occurred for "retarded" children in Head Start "classroooms", despite the fact that, as might be expected, they did not engage in as much verbal interaction as "nonhandicapped" children.

Social interaction in integrated settings has been examined in several other smaller scale studies. Some of these studies have drawn inferences about provision in general and they have been used to add weight to conclusions about integrated provision, for example by Robson (ibid).

One set of studies has adopted an interventionist mode using behavioural strategies involving training "non-handicapped" peers to respond to "handicapped children. These are reported in the Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis, (eg Odom et al, 1985, Goldstein and Wickstrom, 1986, McEvoy et al 1988)

Others have been more descriptive. For example, Sinson and Wetherick (1981) used video-tape to look at interactions of children with Down's Syndrome in mainstream playgroups. The results are not quantified but they have video-taped evidence of increasing isolation of the children in their playgroups which they attribute to problems in making eye contact[23]. In a US setting, Guralnick (1980) found that children without "handicaps" tended to interact more with one another than with "handicapped" children. Sebba (1983) studied an experimental group of six "handicapped" and four "non-handicapped" children. Her results showed no difference between the groups.

Lindsay and Desforges (1986) report studies of (a) three "handicapped" and three control children and (b) four "handicapped" children. These were carried out in three integrated nurseries which differed in the amount of free play, their physical set up and groupings. Despite the limits of the studies they attempt to draw conclusions. They refer to Sebba's study:

> Comparison with our own findings suggests that many environmental factors, including size of group, relative proportion of handicapped children, and ratio of adults to children affect interactions between handicapped and non-handicapped children and hence the integration of the former. (p65)

This seems incontrovertible; none of the research has eliminated factors in the situation which influence interaction, whether the children are 'handicapped' or not. Sebba, Lindsay and Desforges and Robson share the positivist, causal assumption that further work would reveal the optimal buildings, ratios and balances of children and sizes of groups to produce social integration.

This is not self-evident; even in its own terms the research suggests that such an outcome is unlikely. The fact that marked variation is found amongst individuals within the 'handicapped' and 'non-handicapped' groups suggests that handicap is not a primary factor in determining how integrated children are. Clark et al tried to circumvent this difficulty by dividing the 'handicapped' group into those whom their teachers considered "over-reactive" and "under-reactive". Their finding, that over-reactive children engage in more interactions than their peers while under-reactive children engage in fewer, has limited explanatory value.

An alternative approach is to question whether the construct 'the handicapped child' which lies at the heart of these studies is a useful research tool. It is in fact inherently circular. One of the primary reasons for identifying a young child as 'handicapped', 'delayed' or 'in special need' is some impairment of his or her social skills. Research which shows that children identified in this way tend on average to make slightly fewer contacts or that these contacts are not always successful appears to re-state the original proposition.

At a more general level, a systematic observation approach is limited because it treats the content of interaction as irrelevant. All the children in a nursery receive constant messages about the individual abilities which are valued, the activities and the forms of interaction which are seen positively. This information is ignored in attempts to establish reliable, atomistic catgories of behaviour.

Social interaction is obviously a central aspect of any child's experience in an educational setting and an examination of the experiences that children have in this respect is clearly important to any description of provision. However, for the above reasons, it is unlikely to be productive to base description on the measurement of differences between groups. More importantly, any description ought to recognise the meaningful nature of social interaction and the fact that it takes place in a meaningful context.

6. Summary of research and theorising

The dominant model of educational research related to children with disabilities has been the educational psychology one. It has been concerned substantially with three questions: whether one educational arrangement produces better results than another; whether particular techniques work; and how children respond socially in various settings. These questions are potentially significant but the research which has been carried out has only produced clear cut results for experimental programmes. This research has relied on the dubious construct of 'the handicapped child' in it attempts to arrive at generalisable results. It has not produced evidence about how practice works and has ignored the social and political dimensions of education because of its positivist commitments.

Some theorisation of special educational provision has been undertaken from a sociological standpoint. Theories have been put forward at a macro level about the function of special education and at a micro level about the processes by which 'special' identities are created. In general, sociological work has not put forward theories about the processes within settings or about curricula or activities. Empirical work has dealt exclusively with school age children and has concentrated on children seen as troublesome or slow learning.

The research which has examined educational processes has generally avoided theorisation and has concentrated on producing observable facts. Nevertheless, a theory has been implicit which has largely reflected a consensus amongst practitioners.

7. Conclusions - research tasks and research approaches

The general introduction identified the nature of current provision for children with disabilities in pre-five services as the research topic. The introduction to this chapter suggested that two questions followed, one concerned with describing provision and the other with explanation. The relevant literature has been reviewed in a way that allows some conclusions to be reached about how these questions might be addressed; that is to say, the tasks that the research faces.

The first task is one of developing and employing suitable methods for directly describing provision. Examination of the literature indicates the following:

- the notion of policy implementation will not generate a method of enquiry, nor will examining the rationales for policies provide concepts of sufficient detail to describe provision successfully;

- research in the educational psychology tradition is essentially unsuited to examining the processes at work in natural situations;

- in principle, case study modes of research have developed relevant approaches to description.

The second task is one of developing a theoretical framework which will illuminate the specific processes at work in pre-five settings. Examination of the literature suggests the following:

- written policies and their underlying rationales provide theoretical perspectives but they are too limited and one-dimensional to provide theories rich enough to address the research question;

- in this sphere, educational psychology has been concerned to discover what works, not why provision is as it is;

- the case study research which has been carried out has failed to examine its own theoretical constructs and to develop relevant theories;

- existing sociological theorisation is relevant but lacks the necessary specificity.

It is possible to conclude from this that an acceptable method for undertaking the research tasks has to meet the criteria of:

- directly investigating what happens in pre-five provision, rather than measuring its outcomes;

- generating theoretical propositions through an open ended strategy, since the literature does not provide ready made hypotheses for testing;

- generating theoretical propositions which encompass political and social concepts, including those found in written policy and its rationales;

- providing theoretical concepts which are specifically applicable to analysing practice in pre-five establishments and their response to children with disabilities.

FOOTNOTES

1. Goodwin (1983) illustrates the fact that policy is remade in practice in a very direct way. She studied the implementation of the policy of providing extra peripatetic support teachers to facilitate integration in Sheffield. Despite its intention, the effect of this was to highlight the children's needs, resulting in an increase in the numbers of children placed in segregated provision.

2. There are countries in which integration is not a direction for public policy. The East European countries are generally reported as adhering to a segregated approach in which the aim is eventual integration into society, conductive education is an example.

3. The international movement conflated the question of the right of all children to an education with the question of integration. In Scotland the right to an education for all children was accepted in the 1974 Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland) Act.

4. The rights element in the USA is only part of the context; decisions about the education to which children are entitled are highly professionalised and bureaucratised through the Indivualised Educational Programme procedure. (cf Fulcher, 1989).

5. The concept of special needs was not 'invented' by the Warnock committee; it appears in earlier work (e.g. Gulliford, 1971).

6. In the same year, HMI in Scotland produced a report on Pupils with Learning Difficulties, which applied that concept to 50% of pupils. (SED, 1978).

7. At the simplest level, that of the placement of an individual child, different settings may result in different valued outcomes, for instance for a pre-school child one may provide better opportunities for rich language learning while another may allow carefully measured

progress on a language programme to be achieved. Balancing these out depends upon the value which is placed on different aspects of children's experiences, not technical evidence.

8. Booth (1988, p117) sees equal opportunities policy as "one of the main ideological vehicles for hiding the economic means whereby inequalities are generated".

9. A central point made by those involved in 'disability awareness' is the normality of the experience of disability (Sutherland, ibid; Strathclyde Region, 1988; Scottish Council on Disability, ibid)). Virtually everyone experiences some form of disabling illness or condition at some point and as people become older the likelihood of this increases. Similarly, almost everyone has, at some time, a difficulty with learning. Despite this, professional services treat disability primarily as something abnormal and regard it as self-evident that disabled people need 'special' provision.

10. The Fish Report made a clear distinction between providing equal opportunities for all children and ensuring equal access to these opportunities. "Many children and young people need sustained help to make use of the opportunities available to all" (para 1.1.47). This distinction attempts to mitigate the risks attached to an insistence on equality.

11. Hegarty et al comment, "Pupils with special needs do not need integration. What they need is education." They counsel against, "'the romanticisation of the normal'. The eagerness to place pupils with special needs in normal environments may be so great as to deflect attention from the unsuitedness of these environments."

12. Carlberg and Kavale carried out a meta-analysis of fifty studies as a way of drawing conclusions from accumulated studies. They point out the unsatisfactory nature of much of the evidence:

13. The burden of proof can be shifted so that instead of integration being defended as a "treatment fad" (Casey et al, 1988), segregation has to be defended. Much special provision is the result of post-war expansion and is not based on evidence that it is required.

14. The influential character of Dunn's review is indicated in Gottlieb (1981), Danby and Cullen (1988) and Fulcher (1989). Critically, it identified racial biases in selection for special education.

15. The extent to which unequivocal measures exist at the school stage is open to question. Any consensus about the content of schooling in the early primary years (cf SED, 1990) does not extend to methods.

16. Fulcher (1989) shows how these concepts apply to written policy.

17. Signon (1987) makes similar points about the USA.

18. A class conflict theory does not reflect the possibilty that children experiencing poorer nutrition, health and lesser 'cultural' opportunities may find learning more difficult than their peers.

19. Dessent (1987), for example, offers a sympathetic analysis in which special educational measures help teachers out of the ethical dilemmas of allocating resources within schools.

20. Woodhead (1985) comments on the general difficulty, which is relevant here, of translating from evaluated US pre-school programmes to ordinary UK provision. Danby and Cullen (1988) make a similar point.

21. The locations for the studies were: (a) Grampian Region, (b) two unnamed local authorities and (c) the West Midlands.

22. Teachers and psychologists also share a view of child development.

23. It should be noted that Sinson ran the Mencap special playgroup which the children also attended.

PART TWO

CHAPTER TWO THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE RESEARCH APPROACH

1. Introduction

One research task identified in the previous chapter was to develop and employ a method for describing existing provision. The second was to develop and employ an appropriate form of theoretical analysis. It will become clear that these tasks are not distinct but they are treated separately for the purposes of argument in this chapter.

The aim of the chapter is to consider the theoretical basis for research approaches which would enable both tasks to be undertaken. The criteria which were established at the end of the last chapter are used to identify and evaluate general traditions of enquiry within which suitable approaches might be framed.

One criterion was that research ought to investigate provision directly. A second was that it should use open methods which do not start out from well defined measures of outcomes. Methods of enquiry which look at real-life situations and attempt to describe them rather than to manipulate variables within them may be termed 'naturalistic'.

The first part of the chapter discusses the character and status of naturalistic approaches in social and educational research. Then the two traditions of enquiry within the social sciences which have made the fullest use of naturalistic methods in studying education are described. The relevance of each of these traditions to the research tasks is evaluated.

A recurrent theme in considering methods of naturalistic description is the necessity of analysing real life not just at a surface level but also at invisible, structural levels without which it would not have coherence and meaning. Theories which meet the criterion established in the previous chapter of being sociological and political can be seen as conceptualising this 'structural' level of information. Two very general sociological traditions are considered in order to arrive at a conclusion about a basis for developing theories.

The purpose in undertaking both research tasks is one of illuminating Strathclyde's policy of integration at the level of individual establishments. The last section in the chapter considers the implications of this aim of illumination.

Throughout the chapter, reference is made to various research traditions. It can be argued that a characteristic of social science is the absence of clear research "paradigms" in which "normal science" is conducted, in the manner described by Kuhn (1970) and traditions can be discerned on different bases. For present purposes, constellations of research methods and thinking are distinguished according to general theoretical ideas. Such a categorisation emphasises the rational aspect of these traditions but, as Popkiewitz (1982) argues, any research "paradigm" necessarily possesses an "ideological" character, the discussion, therefore, takes this aspect into account

2. Naturalistic research

One way of viewing the primary distinction between naturalistic research and other approaches to social science is in terms of a difference in aims. The aim of naturalistic research is not to reduce the complexity of the available information in ways which will alllow it to be manipulated. Equally, its primary aim is not to produce results which will generalise beyond the particular instance. The goal of naturalistic research is to capture the texture and complexity of social reality in the unique contexts in which it occurs. This means that, at least in the first instance, its aim is descriptive rather than the traditionally 'scientific' one of evaluating a previously determined hypothesis. (cf., Agar, 1980, LeCompte and Goetz, 1982, Hammersley and Atkinson, 1985).

This aim is fraught with difficulty because the relationship of any description of an observed phenomenon to the phenomenon itself is problematic. The concept of naturalism is underpinned by the idea that there exists an objective, 'natural' world towards which descriptions stand in a relationship of greater or lesser versimilitude.

It will be argued later that research looking at what happens in a 'real' setting, like a nursery, can only be undertaken if the researcher acts 'as if' he or she is describing objectively 'real' events. However, even if this assumption is made, it is not possible to describe 'real' events without using working hypotheses which allow them to be recorded; the most neutral of recording devices, the video camera, has a point of view. Where research aspires to 'pure' description, hypotheses are not absent, they are simply less overt and more informal than in studies which give them greater prominence. Ditton (1977) makes the following points about naturalistic social research:

> Naked experience is strictly unpresentable as it stands, it has to be theorised to be communicated. Thus we are inevitably faced, as Rock (1973) astutely notices, with a programmatic tension between phenomenalism (naturalistic reproduction-ethnography) and essentialism (depicting fundamental social processes-analysis). (p. 12)

It is, therefore, more reasonable to view naturalistic approaches as using different hypotheses to other approaches. The most basic working hypotheses which are employed are those assumptions which allow the researcher to act as a socially competent participant in everyday social contexts, including the one being researched. In the practice of educational research, therefore, naturalistic methods of investigation are similar to the ways in which people ordinarily come by their working knowledge of educational institutions. Two methods are paramount: observation, whether participant or not, and interviewing (cf. Cohen and Mannion, 1980).

Where research is carried out in a social context with which the researcher is familiar these basic hypotheses are extensive and complex. Any competent participant has a rich stock of knowledge about the nature of human interaction, purpose and meaning in human behaviour, styles of communication and so on. This, largely covert, knowledge is brought to bear in interpreting events, in recording them and in analysing them.

The use of these rich working hypotheses can readily be justified'. It would be perversely limiting and reductionist to disregard this stock of knowledge in investigating social events. Further, failing to use rich situational knowledge leads to inaccurate descriptions. This can be demonstrated in the field of language use where sociolinguists have shown the impossibility of assigning meaning to a sentence in its absence (cf, for example, Fillmore, 1973).

One central source of definition for naturalistic methods in educational research has been a reaction against the previously dominant tradition, that of educational psychology, whose influence in this field was discussed in chapter one. Although, as Giddens (1977, p29) notes, the term has become one of vague abuse rather than clear definition, the educational psychology tradition can be described as "positivist", following, for example, Cohen and Mannion (ibid) or Hammersley and Atkinson (ibid).

Positivist approaches, in this sense, characteristically place a strong reliance on empirical data derived from experimental or "quasi-experimental" (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) procedures. They seek objectivity through an insistence on replicability which demands precise measurement; therefore, the only legitimate data are those which can be made numerical.

Throughout the social sciences, such models of research have been subjected to considerable criticism. Their central assumption is that scientific research into social processes provides objective, neutral information of a kind supposed to exist in the physical sciences. Ideologically, because they treat ends in education as unproblematic and are concerned only with means of achieving them, such approaches are identified as conservative, suited to research which is not concerned to question existing institutions. It was argued throughout chapter one that the ends of education were necessarily a central concern of research into provision for children with disabilities.

Naturalistic methods attempt to describe unique events and they do not, therefore, adopt replicabilty as a criterion of adequacy. Their results are thus not presented as neutral or value free and researchers may explicitly adopt a particular stance. In practice, in education, this has generally been one of critical examination of received practice and wisdom[2]. It was argued in the previous chapter that, in failing to adopt an explicit stance, the case study research discussed had neglected theoretical analysis.

The primary criticism of naturalistic methods follows from what is seen as their limited commitment to objectivity. It can be argued that the absence of rigorous controls and the covert nature of the working hypotheses allow the researcher an unacceptable degree of influence over results (cf Smith, 1978). However, as House (1977) argues, such an argument contains a notion of objectivity based on two fallacies. The first is that one person's subjective account of an observation is less likely to be unbiased and accurate than one which is agreed by several people; this explains the preference for 'reliable' measurement which produces inter-subjective agreement. The second is that using an instrument leads to objectivity by precluding intuition, where in fact no instrument can be developed without the use of a good deal of intuition.

There are a number of arguments for asserting the validity of open-ended methods in preference to more traditionally 'scientific' ones in answering some research questions[3]. One is a procedural one in which it is argued that the adoption of experimental or statistical methods is premature in the current state of knowledge about many social phenomena.[4] It clearly applies in this case.

The most important argument, already alluded to, is that certain types of information can only be gathered using methods which make use of intuition and covert knowledge; above all information about the subjective meanings of participants. By definition, meaning cannot be directly observed but can only be inferred by another person capable of meaningful action. Provision for children in nurseries consists of a multitude of meaning-bearing activities which are perfectly accessible to a researcher using his or her existing knowledge and sensitivity but which would elude reliable measurement.

For these reasons, naturalistic research has a substantial history in the social sciences. Smith (1978, p329) identifies its "roots" as lying in "anthropology and several traditions within sociology". The traditions which he describes as "sociological" can also be seen as falling within the domain of social psychology. Each of these "roots" is discussed as it relates to the development of naturalistic research methods in education generally and to the specific research tasks.

3. The Anthropological Tradition.

Burgess (1984) describes the earliest stage of the anthropological tradition as the investigation of cultures other than the anthropologist's own, generally cultures regarded as 'primitive'. The traditional objective of anthropologists has been that of producing an 'ethnography' of one of these cultures in its entirety. As Agar (1980) points out, the term 'ethnography' is used for both a process, the activity of studying a culture and a product, an account of that culture or group.

The concept of ethnography was then extended to apply to sub-systems within cultures, frequently sub-groups within urban societies. A further extension of the approach was the study of institutions or parts of institutions within a society. It is apparent that in a significant sense such partial ethnographies can only be seen, following (Wolcott, 1975), as contributions "toward" an ethnography; an alternative is to use the term 'micro-ethnography'.

The use of ethnographic approaches to study schools and related institutions is thus one area of micro-ethnography and a substantial number of studies have been undertaken[5]. In the present case, the area of interest was quite specific. This meant that it was most appropriate to adopt a focused approach following a pre-determined plan over a limited period of time (two weeks) in each establishment. It can be asked how 'ethnographic' such a study is.

Some commentators, (e.g. Smith, 1978; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) take a relatively liberal view, accepting ethnographic and related approaches as forming a meaningful and coherent group distinguished primarily by a commitment to fieldwork using naturalistic methods. For Smith "being on site is the sine qua non of ethnographic research." However, Wolcott (ibid) has set out stricter "criteria" for accepting an approach as "ethnographic" in the field of education; these centre on the freedom for an investigator with a broad cross-cultural awareness to search for and define a descriptive research topic as part of a "compelling interest" in "his continuing enquiry into human social life and to ways that human beings confront their humanness."(p125) These criteria are echoed in the introduction to Spindler (ed) (1982).

On Wolcott's criteria research which investigates a specific aspect of a setting does not qualify for the description 'ethnographic' because it looks at a narrow part of the "ways that human beings confront their humanness". An appropriate term for research with this degree of focus is 'case study' research. The advantage of this usage is, as Wolcott says, its (literally) "unassuming" character.

Like ethnography, but on a smaller scale, case studies aim to describe human behaviour in its context. As with ethnography, description alone would result in a collection of 'travellers' tales'. To have any wider interest, analysis which enables the specific instance to be related to others is essential. The corollary of this search for analytical patterns is a search for regularities of human behaviour and knowledge. It will be argued fully later that such regularities can only be accounted for by proposing that in all aspects of social living people refer to 'structural' knowledge.

This concept is at the core of the structuralist approach to anthropology espoused by Levi-Strauss (1968). His claim is that it is possible to detect underlying structures basic to all human social life which find different expression in different cultures. A "linguistic analogy" in which language structure is seen as a paradigm instance of these underlying structures (Clarke, 1981 Ch7) is central to Levi-Strauss's project.

Anthropology can be framed within a range of ideological perspectives; at one time, racist notions about 'primitive' or 'native' culture were central. This legacy is one against which anthroplogists have generally reacted and although an anthropological perspective in educational research does not entail a specific ideological position, it has generally embodied a critical stance towards existing institutions. By treating sub-cultures as valid within their own terms and by studying disaffected groups, it has been used to challenge the mainstream view of education as a universal good. Anthropological accounts of other cultures have also been important to a critique which asserts the culture bound and political nature of Western education and thinking (cf. Keddie, 1971, 1973).

4. Sociological and Social Psychology Traditions

The most influential traditions in sociology/psychology on the development of naturalistic research in education have been those which can be termed "symbolic science", following Popkiewitz (1982). Popkiewitz identifies two key approaches which can be so categorised; symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. The two approaches share a concern with symbolic action, primarily mediated through language. While phenomenology emphasises subjective constructions of reality, symbolic interactionism emphasises the processes of negotiation by which individuals accommodate to one another.

The phenomenological perspective is not widely referred to in the literature on naturalistic research in education. However, as Demaine (1981) says, its theoretical position underpins:

> a whole range of work under the heading of 'classroom observation' ... particularly ... work which involves the imputation of meaning to behaviour (which includes most of such work) whether or not it refers to itself as phenomenological sociology. (p64)

Education presumes a a social world in which the subjective realities of individuals are mutually intelligible with a possibility of influence between individuals. The phenomenological views of Schutz (eg, 1970) have been viewed as relevant to the study of education (cf Young, 1971). Theoretically, phenomenology has contributed to the argument that educational knowledge is constructed rather than given. Methodologically, its significance has been to encourage research into the subjective perceptions of educators, learners and other interested parties such as parents (cf, Hargreaves, 1987).

In contrast to phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, in various guises, has been widely and explicitly used in naturalistic research in education (cf Delamont 1983). Such research looks at participants' understanding of a situation, the processes of negotiation through which they arrive at common understandings and the divergences between their understandings. The aim is to illuminate both general and situation-specific social processes.

Interactionist studies based in American social psychology, for example, those carried out using Flanders Interaction Analysis have, as Delamont says, a strong but covert ideological content favouring a "democratic" ethos (as opposed to the totalitarian one of America's perceived enemies). Nevertheless, it has been rare for any explicit discussion of the relationship of classroom processes to wider society to be undertaken in studies employing symbolic interactionist perspectives. In this sense, they have been psychological rather than sociological.

Sharp (1982) argues that the "self-contained ethnography" which she identifies with symbolic interactionism limits itself to observed phenomena, the participants' phenomenological accounts of them and the processes by which their world views become accommodated to one another. In her view, this results in a very incomplete understanding of a "micro" system such as a school or a nursery. Case study descriptions which remain self contained fail to capture the nature of the processes at work within the case because no case *is* self-contained; it is always part of a set of progressively wider social structures and, finally, of a specific society. A failure to recognise wider social processes invalidates any purely 'micro' analysis.

To understand what is happening in any case, Sharp argues, it is necessary to look at the "causal processes and generative mechanisms which are often invisible to the actors" but which are located within much wider social processes. The view of Sharp (ibid.) and Sharp and Green (1975) that ethnographic studies must therefore take place within a Marxist framework is, as Hammersley (1984) notes, a matter of asserting the uniquely scientific status of such an account rather than an argument.

Hargreaves (1978) criticises Sharp's view that symbolic interactionist descriptions necessarily ignore 'macro' levels of analysis, or even eschew analysis altogether. Similarly, Delamont argues (pp20-3), a separation between the psychological and the sociological is not necessary or desirable. Nonetheless, Giddens (1979) is able to state that "'symbolic interactionism' ... has from the beginning been hampered by an inadequate theoretical grasp of problems of institutional analysis."

It is also possible to argue at a less grand level that participants' subjective negotiations over the meaning of a situation do not encapsulate all the relevant information (cf Burgess, 1983). Subjective definitions and the negotiation of meaning are always constrained by external factors. For example, a key element in the symbolic order of a pre-five establishment is the disposition of the rooms in the building. Similarly, the numbers of staff, the availability and quality of materials, hours of opening, formal staff hierarchies and so on are not matters for subjective definition.

In virtually any case study it would be both wasteful and arrogant to disregard the subjective accounts of those who are involved. A broadly phenomenological approach is, therefore, effectively entailed in carrying out case studies such as are proposed here. Similarly, the inter-subjective processes involved in interaction can scarcely be excluded from research in a group situation. Both approaches meet the criteria for the task of description in that each offers a conceptual framework adapted to the direct investigation of uncontrived social situations. Nevertheless, neither offers a clear method for generating theoretical concepts of sufficient generality .

5. Structural analysis and pedagogy

In discussing both the anthropological and the symbolic science traditions it has become apparent that a description of the immediately observable features of provision for pre-fives with disabilities is a necessary but not a sufficient aim for the research. If the phenomena under investigation are to be described adequately, reference has to be made to a level of information which both lies beneath what is observed and goes beyond its boundaries.

The argument that such 'structural' descriptions of social phenomena are necessary is part of a wider argument about all aspects of human social behaviour. For instance, Chomsky (1957, 1965, 1972) has demonstrated that accounts of language which refer only to observable events simply fail to cover the known facts[6].

Exactly parallel arguments apply to larger scale social behaviour. To take a very simple example, it is impossible adequately to describe the behaviour of people boarding a train at 8.15 a.m. without referring to structural information about the routinisation of work and its separation from domestic environments in industrialised societies.

Such insights have led to the designation of a very wide range of theoretical positions as "structuralist" (cf. Piaget, 1970; Gibson, 1984; Sturrock, 1986). This central structuralist notion follows Saussure's account of the nature of language, contrasting *langue* with *parole*. One element in the contrast is the structural knowledge by means of which language users make sense of the second element, the sequences of sound or marks on paper which are actual instances of speech or writing. A similar contrast exists between all specific instances of human behaviour and the systematic knowledge that gives them meaning (Gibson, pp15-18, Clarke, 1981, p119 ff).

An equally significant implication of the idea of structure in the human sciences is that neither individual nor social behaviour can be seen atomistically. The concept of structure presupposes organisation which presupposes rules of coherence, self-maintenance and wholeness. (cf Piaget, 1971, Boudon, 1971, Glucksmann, 1974, Caws, 1988)

In education, neither educators nor learners act in a random way; their behaviour is rule-governed. Some of these rules are explicit and consciously followed, or broken, by the participants, others are quite unconscious. In their practice educators have to make reference to structural knowledge whose minimum components must include perspectives on learners, learning and the promotion of learning. They also refer to this knowledge in their reflections on practice.

One way of defining this structural knowledge is as 'pedagogy'. One criterion established for a satisfactory analytical approach in this context was that it should be capable of conceptualising practice and provision in educational settings. Pedagogy, understood as the complex set of rules which are integral to every educational event, is a concept which allows analysis of quite specific educative processes to take place at an abstract and general level. It, therefore, forms a basic component of the theoretical analysis.

Pedagogy may be seen from a phenomenological point of view or from a structuralist one; each view recognises that learners and learning are socially constructed. Phenomenology emphasises the role of individuals in a social context in constructing 'reality' (cf Berger and Luckmann, 1968). This contrasts with a structuralist emphasis on the power of the social structures which surround each individual.

Other criteria established for an appropriate analytical approach were that it should reflect the broad political and social context for provision for children with disabilities and that it should be able to refer to the rationales and rhetorics of written policy. This strongly suggests that a structuralist emphasis is more appropriate to the purposes of the research.

A structuralist view of pedagogy is to see it as socially derived; that is to say, educators do not, in general, create their own unique pedagogies. The weight of non-hypothetical experience suggests that this corresponds to 'reality'; while individuals do create the social worlds which they live, they create them in terms of 'commonsense' knowledge shared with others. For all purposes other than those of philosophical speculation, the physical and social environments in which people find themselves both pre-exist and persist.

To put this concretely into the context of pre-five establishments the room for re-invention by the staff is constrained by a number of external factors, the building, the hours of attendance, numbers, available materials and so on. There are also psychological constraints on re-invention, such as knowledge about childhood, normality and learning. These have diverse origins from the naming of an establishment, say as a school, to the training and socialisation of the staff and the incorporation of theory into educational discourse.

This being the case, it is possible to adopt the key structuralist approach of treating knowledge, such as pedagogy, in an abstract way independently of the individuals who employ it. If the knowledge that individuals employ is analysed in an abstract, de-personalised way it can more readily be related to the social and cultural knowledge in which the pedagogy is situated. By definition, education is a method of social and cultural reproduction. A description of the structure of any educational activity, such as provision for children with disabilities, ought to indicate which aspects of society and culture it embodies.

6. Functionalist and structuralist perspectives

Structuralist approaches take their place amongst a range of theoretical orientations from within which a synthesis between 'micro' and 'macro' levels of analysis may be attempted. Many approaches are described as 'structuralist' and it is necessary to specify how the term is being used here. This is done by contrasting a structuralist perspective with a functionalist one, with particular reference to education.

Structuralism and functionalism have been described as "the leading broad intellectual traditions in social theory over the past thirty or forty years", by Giddens (1979, p9). He points out the imprecision of both terms and the common origins of both traditons. It is more useful to regard each as possessing characteristic sets of ideas and emphases than as mutually exclusive world views.[7]

One functionalist perspective draws on an analogy with biology where structure is viewed as reflecting function in an ostensibly neutral way. For example, the idea of the evolution of industrial society and its need for a differentiated but socially cohesive labour force may be seen as determining the structure of education (cf Durkheim, 1956, 1961, 1969). This may be more mechanistically represented in the idea of 'human capital' which was influential in American structural-functionalism (cf references in Karabel and Halsey, 1977). A complementary functionalist view of education, following Parsons (1959), presents its function as one of helping maintain the consensus needed to sustain social life.

It is possible to distinguish between these 'structural-functionalist' perspectives and those which see the function of education in a more conflict ridden light. Rather than treating education as serving the organic development of society, it can be seen as reflecting the functions it serves for competing sub-groups. For instance, one variant of the Marxist view of education is the "correspondence theory" which sees its structural characteristics and its pedagogy as reflecting its function of reproducing class domination and oppression (Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

The Bowles and Gintis position has been criticised from within a Marxist framework (cf Cole ed, 1988) and they have revised their account (Gintis and Bowles, 1988) but the original formulation acts as a key reference point. As Demaine (1981 p103) comments, Bowles and Gintis's central argument that "different levels of education feed workers into different levels in the occuppational structure" is a "functionalist" one. It is consistently functionalist in arguing that all aspects of education, from the overt apparatuses of selection to detailed practices in the classroom, are as they are because of the social function they serve.

A functionalist, conflict-based perspective on 'special' educational provision can be found in the aspects of the work of Tomlinson* outlined in the previous chapter. These are the proposals that special provision performs a class function of exercising control over the "social problem classes" and an economic function of maintaining a marginal group in the economy.

The defining feature of functionalist perspectives for present purposes is that they propose that all social phenomena are motivated by, and have their effect as a result of, the economic or social functions they serve.

By contrast, structuralist perspectives are defined here by their proposal that social structures have an independent potency derived from their systematic character. People understand the world in terms of categories of thought and action. These categories are structurally related to one another to form a 'symbolic order'. This symbolic order provides members of a society with the habitual modes of thinking and acting which are essential to social life. All manner of existing social arrangements, from codes of dress to the form of economic organisation, are sustained by a general understanding that the elements of which they are composed form natural or inevitable categories. Thus Harland (1987) describes structuralist thought as "superstructuralist" in its reversal of the roles of the base and the superstructure as these are understood in determinist versions of Marxist theory[9].

Broadly, a structuralist emphasis in studying education consists of examining the ways in which education transmits aspects of the symbolic order in its society (cf Gibson, 1984; Atkinson. 1985; Sarup, 1988; Delamont, 1989). The symbolic knowledge which is transmitted through education necessarily makes reference to an economic order and to divisions of class and gender but it does not reduce to any of them. Similarly, some symbolic knowledge may be functional for one group or another but its character is not determined by that fact. To re-work one of Delamont's examples, opera may function as a form of "cultural capital" which helps sustain the position of an elite but the form of *La Traviata* is not determined by this function, nor are the rituals of opera going. The significance which attaches to each is likewise not exhausted by considering this function.

Language acts as a paradigm example of a social structure which determines both how people come to understand the world and to act within it[10]. This leads on to Giddens' (1979) view that in the social sciences:

structuralism may be most cogently defined as the application of linguistic models influenced by structural linguistics to the explication of social and cultural phenomena. (p9)

The closeness of the analogy to language needed to define work as structuralist is nevertheless a matter of debate (cf. Pettit, 1975; Sturrock, ibid, Caws, 1988). However close the analogy, structuralist thinking always refers to forms of knowledge which, like language, ultimately have social origins but which, by forming the medium and the substance of thought, have acquired an independent power to shape the world in which people understand themselves to live. As with language, any actual event only has meaning within the context of the whole system. Like language, structural knowledge exists independently of the subjective experience of any indidvidual.

It has been argued that the idea of pedagogy offers a useful tool for the analysis of educational settings. If pedagogy is defined as the knowledge to which educators refer in day to day interaction with learners then a strong analogy can be drawn with language. Like language, a pedagogy allows those who employ it to make coherent responses to given situations. Pedagogy and language share a potential for creative use; no attempt to educate is ever exactly the same as any previous one and each attempt involves constructing a novel response. A further feature shared with language, albeit to a lesser degree, is unconscious use; it is perfectly possible to be a successful educator without being able to articulate an adequate educational theory.

Structuralist thinking, then, offers a conceptualisation of pedagogy which can encompass its systematic character, its immanence in practice and its participation in a wider symbolic order. However, stucturalist perspectives are also relevant to the method for analysing pedagogy. Any account of a pedagogy, such as one derived from a case study is based on descriptions of practice by a researcher. The nature of such descriptions is made problematic by structuralist reflection on the character of language.

Structural linguistics is defined by its concern with the language system rather than its use to describe particular objects, events or even concepts. The strong structuralist position is that the relationship between language and the 'real' world is an arbitrary one. It is argued that words are 'signs' or 'signifiers' which are conventional not just in the sense that the sounds or letters of the word "chair" bear no relation to the object I am sitting on. The conventional character of signs cuts deeper; an inextricable part of any signifier is its 'signified', what it means, which can only be described relationally: "chair" means what it does, not because it refers to a unique set of objects but because its 'signified' is systematically differentiated from all other signifieds in the language. Pursued to its conclusion this means that there is no necessary connection between language and a world external to it.

It will be argued that this strong position cannot be wholly sustained for the descriptions of the cases which were studied. Nevertheless, there is an irreducible level at which the descriptions of the cases are 'texts' whose existence is independent of the events they describe; they are not those events themselves. The novelist John Fowles (1980) gives this eloquent expression:

> The real reality is a meaningless particularity, a total incoherence, a ubiquitous isolation, a universal disconnection. It is a sheet of blank paper; we do not call the drawings we make on the paper the paper. Our interpretations of reality are not 'the' reality, any more than the blankness of the paper is the drawing. (p146)

This implies that any form of analysis can be seen as equivalent to 'reading' the texts, or descriptions, of the case studies. The implications of this idea will be explored in the following sections and returned to in chapter six.

7. Criticisms of structuralism

Two criticisms of structuralism are considered. Mirroring the division which emerged in the previous section, the first relates to its overall conception of social reality, the second to the limits it appears to put on our capacity to apprehend any reality outwith language.

Structuralism has been criticised because in giving primacy to structure, sometimes to the extent of announcing the "death of the subject", it denies human freedom and portrays individuals as the passive victims of forces larger than themselves. Quite aside from the uncomfortable aspects of this 'decentring of the subject', it represents a serious lacuna in the theory. If there is no account of human agency in creating structural knowledge it is impossible to explain how structures arise. This is a key element in Giddens' (1977, 1979) critque of structuralism, echoed by Gibson (1984).

The strong structuralist position is that of Althusser which treats the portrayal of the individual as a force in history as a bourgeois delusion. However, other thought which falls within the broad category of structuralism recognises that social structures are in a dynamic relationship with individuals. Foucault, for example, emphasises the dual role of the individual as subject to social structures and as the subject who creates social structures in his use of the ambiguous term "assujetir".

In fact, the same difficulty with agency is faced by functionalist theories[11]. In giving primacy to economic and social functions there is a danger of being caught in a web of determinism in which no society would ever be capable of change because its structural characteristics would forever reproduce themselves. As Demaine (1981) argues, Marxist theories are particularly vulnerable to this criticism.

A corollary of determinism, also noted by Demaine, is the reductionism of treating one level of structure or one function as an essential determinant; for some Marxists this is the economic level but for others, for example Althusser, it may , except in "the last instance", be the ideological level. Equally, as Pettit (1975, pp77-80) argues, Levi-Strauss's proposals are radically reductionist in supposing that limited binary structures analogous to those of phonolgy can explain all cultural phenomena. Such reductionism also contradicts the basis of the case study approach adopted here with its aim of capturing some of the texture and complexity of everyday life.

The second criticism of structuralism relates to its treatment of the referential properties of language. This can be criticised from two directions; being seen from one side as going too far and on the other as not going far enough.

Saussure insisted on the arbitrary nature of the relationship between language and the world of objects and events. Yet, as Giddens points out, his illustration that *ox* and *boeuf* are arbitrary signs depends upon reference to something outwith language, that is the thing itself, to which both words correspond. This is a specific instance of a general argument that no system may refer only to itself - nothing can be all form and no substance (even apparently self-contained systems such as mathematics, chess or music).

In practice, structuralist thought has been most influential where a view of signs and language as self-contained creates the fewest difficulties; that is, in the analysis of cultural artefacts in general and literary texts in particular. It is, for example, widely accepted that Levi-Strauss is on his strongest ground when discusssing the structure of myths. In literary criticism there is a strong case for seeing imaginative texts as 'created' by their language, outside of which they have no existence.

However, it is more difficult to treat language as self-contained in other contexts. This can be illustrated using the contrasting newspaper headlines, "Dog Bites Man" and "Man Bites Dog". Here the role of language and linguistic expectations in creating a difference in signification and newsworthiness is obvious, but each headline refers to a different event which can be verified. Descriptions of observed practice, such as would be obtained in case studies, similarly involve a form of reporting which is open to verification.

Nevertheless, the position on this question that is usually described as post-structuralist[12] pursues the idea of the arbitrary nature of language to its radical conclusion. Derrida (eg 1968, 1976), its chief proponent, provides a critique of Saussure where the consequence of the idea that a word can only be defined in terms of other elements in the language system is explored. He concludes that any word only has meaning in terms of that which is absent, that is, the multitude of words from which it differs. (Derrida plays on two meanings of the word "differance"; a word is defined by that which from which it is different and that which it defers or displaces in time). Any attempt to define a word must refer to other words, so meaning cannot be seen as a unitary phenomenon but as shifting, slippery and ultimately ungraspable. This accords with the central role that metaphor plays in all language. Derrida rejects the possibility of reference to an essential and objective reality outwith an apprehension of it through language.

This does not mean that there is no possibility of reference (cf Culler 1983, Sarup, 1988). It does mean that there is no such thing as simple unalloyed reference; because it is only possible to make reference through language, every attempt at apprehending external reality contains traces of other attempts, so that it is impossible to escape the web of language.

8. Conclusion

It has been argued that the systematic nature of pedagogy and its unconscious use make a linguistic analogy plausible. Therefore, a structuralist approach is appropriate to the task of theoretical analysis. However, the questions that structuralist thought faces over agency and reference mean that the approach has to be a qualified one. At the most general level, both questions indicate the dangers of presenting any structural account of a social phenomenon as if it represented 'the truth'. A particular structural account can only be seen as an approach to the truth, as one of its dimensions.[13,14]

This move of presenting a structural account as necessarily partial and incomplete does not resolve the problem of agency but it allows it to be side-stepped. It means that the existence of the other processes involved in any social situation can be recognised. For example, the way in which the staff of a nursery respond to children with disabilities will reflect their pedagogies, but it will also reflect factors stemming from their psychological histories as individuals and group factors such as friendships, rivalries and alliances.

An account which only describes structural knowledge and not how it is created, modified and translated into action is incomplete but not valueless[15]. An account which is able to describe how structural knowledge is developed and used creatively, what Giddens calls an account of "structuration", would necessarily subsume structural information, but it would not discard it.

Piaget's structuralist theory of child development can be used to illustrate this point. Piaget provides two types of description, one indicating the structural knowledge a child has at any given "stage" and the other delineating the general processes by which this knowledge is acquired and modified: assimilation and accommodation. While both these elements compose the theory, they are separable and can be separately evaluated.

In this case the concept of pedagogy has been defined as the knowledge employed by educators in their practice. It is a structural concept and not one of structuration. To encompass structuration it would be necessary to examine how the pedagogies were developed and used by the individuals in the case studies. The processes involved are not necessarily mysterious: they include exposure to a variety of socialising influences like training, the media and patterns of family living. This would have been beyond the scope of the thesis and would have concentrated attention on general theoretical issues rather than its substantive concern of looking at aspects of pre-five provision.

Nonetheless, the fact that every pedagogy is developed and used by a specific individual or a group cannot be ignored. In the case studies, concepts are drawn from the "symbolic sciences" to capture something of the role that individuals play in constituting and re-constituting structural knowledge. This is equally not a theory of structuration; the problem of agency is not resolved by eclecticism.

Recognising structural knowledge as only one part of social behaviour lessens the risk of reducing the subject to a cipher. If multiple influences from different sources affect individuals, there is a clear implication that individuals are free to choose amongst these influences.

The linguistic analogy suggests that this freedom extends beyond deciding what to do in a given situation. Language is constantly changing and developing through the agency of individuals and groups who introduce new words, new expressions and new linguistic styles. Like language use, pedagogy is a creative activity of individuals and groups. The innovations and choices of individuals and groups shape the character of the pedagogies of others. For example, the approach that one person takes to creative activities may spread to colleagues in a nursery and then more widely as people move to work elsewhere.

The linguistic anlaogy also points to the limits of this freedom. Although language has an infinite potential for creative use, its potential is only available once a shared system, independent of its 'creative' use by any individual, has been learned. In the main, the freedom that exists is a freedom of choice; people generally choose the words they will use, they rarely make up new ones.

Similarly, very few educators include wholly original elements in their pedagogies. For the most part, they make *choices* about how they will approach their work. They make these choices from within a general understanding of the relationship between educators, learners and learning derived from the totality of their social experience. This suggests that the analysis of any given pedagogy will be primarily concerned with the nature of the choices made by educators from within the range of social and educational knowledge that is available to them.

The second problem that structuralist thought faces, that of reference, is more fully resolved by the proposal that any structural account is only partial. Such a proposal is broadly congruent with the post-structuralist rejection of definitive meaning[16]. It has already been argued that the descriptions of provision such as those which result from case studies have the character of texts. Seeing every structural account as partial is equivalent to a claim that there are a number of alternative readings of that text, no one of which is uniquely privileged.

This does not involve as Gibson (1984) suggests, taking the disjuncture between meaning and reality to a conclusion in which no set of meanings can be seen as more significant than another. If this position were to be adopted it would be necessary to abandon the idea that the descriptions of cases studied were more like the 'real' establishments than any other which may have been invented. The troublesome procedure of observation and cross-checking could then be avoided, as the mere trappings of empiricism.

A more reasonable position can be sustained; while in the final analysis, it is impossible to record 'real' events or to communicate them, it is still possible to approximate to an ideal of such communication. Everyday life is carried on on this basis: if I tell someone about an event that has happened, neither of us is under an illusion that my story corresponds perfectly to the event itself. Equally, we both recognise that there are limits of truthfulness within which we ordinarily assume ourselves to be operating. We act 'as if' our communication accurately reflects the events to which we refer[17].

This position is related to one put forward by Culler (1983) in discussing the parallel situation in relation to literary texts: here the question is whether it is possible to talk of a text with an 'objective' existence or only of the theoretically limitless interpretations that readers make of the text. He argues not for the essential, objective nature of the text but for the serviceability of an 'as if' approach whose limits are recognised:

> the notion of a given text with unchanging, discoverable properties provides an excellent background for arguments about interpretation and accounts of changing interpretations. Reader oriented critics have found that it makes a better story to talk of texts inviting or provoking responses than to describe readers creating texts, but the distinctions that structure these stories are open to question and accounts that rely on them prove vulnerable to criticism. Theories that make the text the reader's construct play a vital role in preventing a solidification of these variable, pragmatic distinctions..." (p78)

Culler also argues that it is, in any case, a mis-reading of the Deridda's method of deconstruction to see it as equivalent to free interpretation. While any text, such as the descriptions of a case study can be interpreted, the text itself and its interpretation both contain traces leading into the infinite matrix of language. Following these traces will mean that the interpretation is undercut and made uncertain, but the traces would not have existed if the text could not be interpreted.

Post-structuralism may be seen as a critique of structuralism but it is a critique which builds on structuralism's key ideas. A consequence of translating these ideas into areas such as literary criticism or social science is to emphasise the impossibility of escape from the limits and possibilities of language. Approaches admitted to the post-structuralist canon, for example, Foucault's historical genealogy and Lacan's linguistic psychoanalysis are characterised by their refusal to accept closure in theory or interpretation. They are not distinguished by an unwillingness to engage in interpretation.

This contrasts with more resolutely structuralist thought such as that of Levi-Strauss or Althusser where theories that are both closed and comprehensive are proposed. The most fully developed structuralist theory in education in the UK has been that of Bernstein (1973) (cf Atkinson 1985; Delamont, 1989). Bernstein adopts an approach in which powerful but fragmentary ideas are presented as having scientific rigour with spurious formulae and equations being adduced (cf Gibson, 1984, for a discussion).

In what follows, the data gathered in the case studies is analysed in such a way that structural accounts are given of the pedagogies at work in the various establishments. These are presented as partial and provisional in two respects. Firstly, pedagogical knowledge is abstracted from events and interviews without any theory being developed of how it is employed in real situations. Secondly, it is recognised that while each pedagogical account has reference points in descriptions which are as accurate as possible, each contains within it its own complicating and contradictory impulses. The analysis in chapter seven explores some of these complications. In a broad sense, the method followed is analogous to that of deconstruction. It is discussed in more detail in chapter six.

It is a paradox that this methodology with its tentative claim to reflect the 'real' world seems more likely to produce a picture which reflects lived experience with its contradictions and uncertainties than social science which deals in 'proof'. From a different starting point the method connects very readily with the aims of naturalistic methods as described at the beginning of this chapter.

9. The purpose of the research

The discussion so far has suggested that the research should draw on a number of traditions of social thought. The ethnographic approach provides a framework for the idea of case studies and a starting point for an analysis based on the concept of pedagogy. This concept is given a structuralist interpretation. The post-structuralist notion of deconstruction, influenced by philosophical and literary thinking, is relevant to the analysis of case studies. A symbolic science approach provides tools for investigation by referring to the (inter-)subjective understandings of the participants.

There is an obvious danger that this eclecticism may result in incoherence. The danger is avoided because concepts and procedures are employed from each tradition to serve a unifying purpose. This purpose is the investigation not of formal psychological or sociological concepts but of the substantive content of the social and educational processes at work in the establishments which were case studied.

Accepting that the purpose is one of enquiry into a substantive area, it has been assumed so far that this enquiry is taking place in the interests of illumination. Illumination may take two forms which are of differing relevance here. The first, 'commonsense' form of illumination is revelation. In carrying out case studies it was clear that this was what many people expected of the research: "what have you found out?", was a question that was asked more than once. In this context, revelation was probably seen as the 'discovery' of techniques which 'worked' with children with disabilities. It is clear from the preceding chapter that the question of what 'works' is a highly ambiguous one in this context.

The second form of illumination consists of making the taken-for-granted, routine actions and ideas of everyday life explicit. It is possible to see this form of illumination as surprising and perhaps trivial because it states the obvious. However, so long as the obvious remains unstated it is beyond criticism and discussion. There is a valid purpose in describing educational provision so that those concerned with it have an enriched vocabulary for discussion.

The degree of illumination that can be gained depends both on how the data are gathered and on the form of the analysis that is carried out. Adopting a naturalistic approach with open-ended observation at its core means that there can be no suggestion that analysis can be carried out from a neutral standpoint. The ideological starting points of the analysis have, therefore, to be made explicit.

The core of the substantive analysis is framed in post-structuralist terms. Structuralist thought can be seen as pessimistic about the influence of people as opposed to structures on the development of society. A case can then be made for suggesting a quietist attitude to political and social development as a logical conclusion[19].

It has also been argued that post-structuralism is a theory for advanced capitalism. That is to say, by emphasising plurality of meaning it denies the validity of rational thought and so is opposed to the "enlightenment project" of social progress through rationality (cf Sarup, 1988). Its rejection of a logical connection between understanding the world through language and reality is certainly antithetical to comprehensive social theory such as Marxism and has been taken as an encouragement to engage in 'micropolitics'.

Nevertheless, if a 'structuralist movement' can be distinguished, its origins lie in the attempts of the French Left (cf Kurtzweil, 1980) to provide a critique of existing social and cultural institutions. Its significance in the historical conjuncture in which it arose was the possibility it offered of a non-reductionist critique of contemporary society (cf Glucksman, 1974).

Structuralism and post-structuralism can provide, and have provided, vehicles for criticism of existing institutions and habits of thought, but they do not do so unequivocally. Culler (1983) says of deconstruction that:

> Working in this way, with a double movement, both inside and outside previous categories and distinctions, deconstruction is ambiguously or uncomfortably positioned and particularly open to attack and misunderstanding. Relying on distinctions that it puts in question, exploiting oppositions whose philosophical implications it seeks to evade it can always be attacked both as an anarchism determined to disrupt any order whatever and from the opposite perspective as an accessory to the hierarchies it denounces. Instead of claiming to offer firm ground for the construction of a new order or synthesis it remains implicated in or attached to the system it criticises and attempts to displace. (p150-1)

A Marxist reading of this tension is given by Sarup (ibid): quoting Eagleton, he sees post-structuralism as torn between ultra leftism and reformism, both positions inimical to revolutionary developments.

The 'charge' of reformism unquestionably applies here. For example, the aim in examining the idea of child centrism, one of the key themes to emerge in the case studies, is not to reject the concept through critical evaluation. The intention is to develop, however slightly, a less comfortable sense of its meaning. By virtue of the necessity that they are to some extent employed unconsciously, all pedagogies rely on a conceptual framework which assumes a unitary, unproblematic meaning of their central terms. The act of suspending this assumption allows a pedagogy to be re-evaluated creating possibilities for revision and reform[19].

Opening the enactment of a policy of integration to critical examination could be interpreted as an attempt to cast the policy itself into doubt. On the contrary, one starting point for the research was a commitment to a view that local pre-five services ought to make suitable provision for, at least, the overwhelming majority of local children, irrespective of their impairments or learning difficulties. A second starting point was the idea that satisfactory provision would not be achieved without critical thought about its development.

In a very general sense, research which seeks illumination in this way falls within the tradition of "critical science" (cf Popkiewitz, ibid). The critical science tradition recognises that any attempt to describe or analyse a social phenomenon constitutes an intervention in that phenomenon. In this case, the intervention has been a calculated one because the observations made were discussed with the immediate participants. The case studies have also been written up in an accessible form for dissemination amongst pre-five staff in Strathclyde. A copy of this thesis will be provided for the research section in Strathclyde Education Department and will, in theory at least, be accessible to any member of staff in the department.

This approach to dissemination assumes that individuals and groups within the education system are able consciously to change their thinking and so to influence what happens in that system. In broader terms, this entails accepting that people have the power to create change within a society which is industrialised, capitalist, hierarchical and patriarchal. A consequence of adopting this purpose and these strategies is to place the research within a liberal discourse within critical science rather than a 'radical' or revolutionary one. The critical examination of current provision is thus not based on an implied contrast with a hypothetical society, free of oppression and false consciousness. These points are taken up in the final chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Research which uses this rich information is distinct from other naturalistic methods used to study young children, such as ethology; its influence on thinking is discussed in Riley (1983).

2. For example, Hargreaves, D, (1967); Lacey, 1970; Sharp and Green, 1975; Willis, 1977; Hargreaves, A, (1986)

3. One example is an argument about the relationship of human investigators to social phenomena. The general principle that no investigator can stand outside whatever he or she is investigating applies with particular force in 'natural' social situations, like nurseries. Here the participants' understanding of the situation necessarily includes the researcher. The relationship between the researcher and those being researched is necessarily a reflexive one which should be reflected in an approach which does not assume neutrality (cf Hammersley and Atkinson, ibid, Giddens 1977).

4. This point is quite distinct from the false argument that descriptive methods are appropriate because the social sciences are at an early stage in their development, implying a contrast with the natural sciences. This argument is refuted by Giddens (1979 pp 235-245) Whatever stage of development sociology or educational science reach there will remain substantive areas for investigation where an open-ended approach is appropriate.

5. See references in 3 above; other examples of the developing tradition, looking at quite different sectors of education are; King, 1978; Burgess, 1983; Walford, 1986.

6. This point about language is a specific version of the more general argument of Lashley (1951) that even relatively simple serial behaviour demands an explanation referring to structural knowledge.

7. The links between 'functionalist' and 'structuralist' views is apparent in the labels which are attached to particular theorists. For example, Bernstein is identified as a thoroughgoing structuralist by Atkinson (1985) and Gibson (1984) while Karabel and Halsey (1977) talk of his use of "an essentially functionalist theory of society" (p70).

8. Tomlinson (1982) points out the potential and actual contributions of phenomenological, interactionist and structuralist analyses.

9. There are, of course, competing Marxist views on this point. Althusser's view of education as the crucial social structure, or "ideological state apparatus" through which capitalist society sustains itself may be seen as offering a different emphasis to that of Bowles and Gintis. One difference is that rather than being seen as creating false consciousness, education is seen as creating consciousness itself.

Proposals that education enjoys 'relative autonomy' from the economic base of society address themselves to this question (cf Reynolds, 1984). The difficulties in such a reconciliation can be seen in the equivocal status of Althusser, a major proponent of this view, who disputed the widespread identification of his position with structuralism claiming a determining role for economic reality "in the final analysis" but, confusingly, that "the final analysis never comes".

10. Amongst social theorists the linguistic analogy is most vigourously adhered to by Levi-Strauss (ibid). He proposes that basic social structures such as kinship systems or the giving and receiving of gifts can be described using the same concepts and relationships as are found in structural linguistics. The plausibility of the specific proposal and in particular Levi-Strauss's claim to have detected universal structures has been questioned, for instance by Chomsky (1972, pp74-5).

11. Lubeck (1985) notes the difficulty this presents in respect of early education. She argues that in their early educational and socialisation practices different social groups actively choose to develop in their children the knowledge that is functional for their group. She specifically argues that an oppressed group of people will tend to foster group solidarity while those who have benefitted from meritocratic opportunities tend to foster individualism.

12. It can be argued that post-structuralism is 'post-' in the sense that it builds on structuralist thinking rather than negating it (cf Sturrock, 1986, Ch. 5; Harland, 1987) or that it is not a distinct phenomenon (cf Caws, 1988).

13. The plausibility of the analogy, therefore, does not depend on a view that the structures which can be discerned in language are psychologically fundamental, following Levi-Strauss. This reading of Levi-Strauss to be found, eg, in Clarke, 1981, is questioned by Caws, 1988.

14. This conforms to a view of social causation which sees events and phenomena as 'overdetermined', a term drawn from Freud by Althusser to explain the multiplicity of causes, some of which may even be sufficient, which create specific historical circumstances (cf Callincos, 1976 p39-52).

15 It was noted in the discussion of symbolic interactionism that Delamont and Hargreaves argued that its characteristic pre-occupation with micro events does not preclude a macro focus. This is broadened by Hammersley (1984) into the general observation that it is fallacious to suggest that because structuralist approaches have neglected the role of the subject and phenomenological approaches have neglected factors outwith the subject that either approach is demolished on these grounds. Limitations in practice are not limitations in principle.

16. Although this insight is identified with post-structuralism Culler (1983) notes that it had been recognised earlier by Barthes, for example.

17. Eco (1984 p3) makes this point and talks of a continuum of positions from x where only one interpretation of a text is posible to y where an infinite number can be sustained. There are almost no circumstances in which y can be adhered to and the range of intermediate positions are appropriate in different contexts.

18. It should be said that Marxists also have to put up arguments against a similar reading of the historicist trend in Marx).

19. Although pedagogies are employed every day without reflection, they can be changed and developed through reflection. In this respect, the linguistic analogy suggests significant differences between language and pedagogy. Pedagogies are learned more consciously than language, so that conscious change is a stronger possibility. Nevertheless, change is, perhaps, more difficult than some educational theories suggest; any pedagogy is located in a matrix of other social assumptions which constrain the degree of movement available.

CHAPTER THREE CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

Both the preceding chapters have established that a case study approach offered a suitable approach to describing provision.

Case studies were carried out in six nurseries representing the the range of Strathclyde Regional Council's pre-five establishments providing for children with disabilities. These were two nursery schools, two day nurseries, one integrated children's centre and one centre for childen with 'special needs'. Each establishment had provided for children with disabilities over a number of years.

Establishments were studied over a two week period. Staff were interviewed, practice was observed using structured and unstructured methods and interactions were audio recorded. In each establishment the case study focused partly on the experience of one child.

It is worth noting at this point that the term 'case study' contains within it some potential for confusion, particularly in relation to children with disabilities who are routinely talked of as 'cases'. Here the 'cases' being studied were the establishments. In that context it was both most manageable and most meaningful to select one child as a focus for the research. Questions of sampling are fully discussed later in the chapter.

This chapter describes the precise character of the case studies and discusses the methodological issues which surround them. This is undertaken in three stages. Firstly, the methods by which the data were gathered are described. Secondly, the nature of the accounts given of the cases is discussed. Thirdly, the analytical methods used in arriving at these accounts are indicated. Because it is relevant throughout the chapter, there is preliminary consideration of the general question of reliability and validity. Finally, the selection of cases for study and the role of the researcher are discussed.

In any naturalistic investigation the processes of gathering, analysing and presenting data are not, in reality, distinct. The way in which information is gathered affects the analysis which must to some extent be grounded in the data. The sub-division is, therefore, only made for reasons of clarity of exposition.

2. Reliability and validity

Questions of reliability and validity are central to social research framed within a postivist mode. The question of validity has been addressed in the previous chapter by arguing that case studies are a source of appropriate information. The question of reliability asks how successfully 'objective' and replicable 'facts' have been identified by the research. The previous chapter discussed some of the limitations on the notion of objectivity. Case study research is anyway not based on an idea of replicability. The uniqueness of 'facts' and the role of the observer in gathering them are fully acknowledged.

Even where the limits of objectivity are recognised, by definition, an empirical enquiry cannot proceed unless it has subject matter which is not already determined by the theory which guides the investigation. If 'facts' are treated as wholly theory dependent there is no virtue in aiming for accuracy. Consequently, there need be, as Hindess (1977) argues, no restraint on theory building apart from the limits of the theorist's imagination. Recognising that objectivity cannot be absolute does not entail treating the concept as a wholly redundant one; as Hammersley (1984) says:

> Gouldner (1973) simply implies that since knowledge can never be unaffected by values, there is no point in trying to control for their effects. But this is to treat a matter of degree as if it were all or nothing ... As the Marxist historian Eugene Genovese (1968: 4) points out 'the inevitability of ideological bias does not free us from the responsibility to struggle for maximum objectivity'. (p246)

It has been argued in chapter two that, while facts are neither theory nor value free, enquiry can best proceed by treating the phenomena being investigated as existing independently of our enquiry into them. It then becomes possible not to ask whether we have captured the 'truth' but how full our investigation has been, how far we have recorded events and their frequency accurately and how open we have been to information which may run counter to our theoretical position. These questions can be seen as an alternative approach to the questions of reliability and validity.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) adopt this approach in reviewing the ways in which reliability and validity have been addressed in "ethnographic research". Reliability presents a particular challenge to a methodology whose nature is to attempt to capture unique events; by definition, these could never re-occur. LeCompte and Goetz thus argue that reliability is something which can only be "approached" by ethnographic methods.

House (1977) argues that the belief that any method of enquiry in education ever completely specifies and externalises its data gathering methods is mistaken and that attempts to do so run a constant risk of substituting reliability for validity. Nonetheless, if explicit reference is made to methods of data gathering, samples and settings then the research could, in principle, be repeated in another setting. Explicit reference also allows comparisons to be made with other research. The purpose of this chapter and the next is to provide such reference.

While one person can be as objective as several people the rich interpretative methodology of case study research does contain a risk, acknowledged by Bogdan and Taylor (1975, p13), of "potential bias and distortion" by selecting facts which fit a theory. Their counsel is one of awareness of the risks and an acceptance that this "is the price we must pay to gain understanding of complex social settings."

Part of such an awareness is the use of procedures which counter-balance the subjective element in data-gathering and analysis. The main counter-balance was the use of a variety of methods of data gathering. This allowed each method to act as a reference point for the other, or for "triangulation" (cf. Denzin, 1970, p301-313).

In Denzin's terms, this "methodological triangulation" was supplemented by "data triangulation", that is, not relying on one data source. Thus data on how the establishment provided for children with disabilities were obtained from several vantage points: the overall approach of each establishment; the experience of the whole group of children; the specific experience of one child; reports from the adult participants and observations of organisation and practice.

3. Data gathering methods

The research design adopted was a multi-site one with the limited time available divided amongst the six cases. This meant that the mode of each case study had to be pre-planned. In any case, it was desirable for comparative purposes that the same kind of data were gathered about each establishment. A standard format was, therefore, devised to be carried out over two weeks.

As Walker (1980) says, the time limited aspect of case studies does mean the loss of one of the sources of validity of ethnographic approaches; the inductive process where analysis emerges out of a large quantity of data. Characteristically, in the early phases of an investigation the methodology is as neutral as possible and, through observation, field notes and "trawling for facts", ideas emerge from the data. Since the focus for the case studies was known in advance a less neutral methodology was employed here.

The methods which composed the standard format will be discussed in outline under two headings, interview methods and observation (see also the chapter on piloting). A number of commentators point out that these two approaches represent the staple methods of most naturalistic research (cf Lofland, 1975; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Delamont, 1983).

Interview methods

The interview method employed was a structured schedule. The decision to adopt a structured method of this kind was based on grounds of efficiency and openness with staff about which of their views were being recorded. The areas of opinion, philopsophy and attitude to be investigated were relatively clear and limited. Although more information may have been gathered by a less structured method such as recording a wide-ranging discussion, it would be unlikely to be sufficiently more to justify the much greater amount of time involved.

In any case, direct questioning is a more open and comfortable experience for people than an unfocussed discussion in which they are uncertain about the information which is expected. To have gathered substantially more information using an unstructured method would have demanded time to develop sufficient confidence amongst the staff. In any case, it is particularly appropriate to use direct questions where the area of interest is within the interviewees' professional sphere where it is reasonable to expect them to have opinions which they are able to articulate.

For similar reasons, replies were written down as spoken and not tape-recorded. The writing down of replies may have been problematic if a less structured mode of interviewing (cf Lofland, op cit, pp77-86) had been employed but as direct questions were asked there was a much lesser onus on the researcher to monitor the content and to prompt. A clearly visible record, previous interviewing experience suggested, was a more open way of proceding and consequently a less anxiety-provoking one for the interviewees.

The interview schedule used was developed for this study although the researcher had devised a less detailed equivalent for use in a previous piece of work. (Appendix A provides the schedule and its piloting is discussed in the following chapter.)

The aim of the schedule was to obtain a comprehensive picture of the views of those individual members of staff in direct contact with the child being studied. It covered the following topics:

- the nature and function of the establishment;
- provision for children with disabilities in the establishment;
- provision for children with disabilties in general;
- staff feelings on children with disabilities;
- their training and experience, particularly in relation to children with disabilities;
- the nature and quality of their provision for one specific child.

In the interests of obtaining a comprehensive picture, the questions were designed to be open-ended and extended discussion was prompted by neutral questioning.

The schedule was divided in two. The first part was administered before any observations of the child were carried out. It was devoted to general issues and discussion of the detail of the particular child's experience was minimised. Carrying out the schedule at this stage also allowed direct contact to be made with staff, reassurances about the confidentiality of the research to be offered and any questions to be answered.

The second part of the schedule had a much more direct focus on the particular child. It was administered after the observational phase of the study was completed. It was important not to ask these questions before the observations took place or staff may have been in the position of justifying, through their approach to the child, the opinions they had expressed.

At this second interview it was also possible to give the staff feedback on the observations and any preliminary conclusions which had been reached. Comments were sought on how accurate and representative the observations were and the reasonableness of the interpretations. Where it was possible to arrange it, a plenary meeting was held with the whole staff group at which impressions and interpretations were further discussed. These interpretations could then be developed and modified in the light of the comments made. A non-participant can only have part of the understanding available to the actors in any social situation. This partial view may be erroneous. The function of seeking feedback on interpretations was to increase their accuracy, not to ascribe them to anyone other than the researcher.

Other forms of verbal data were also obtained. The request made to the head of each establishment was to interview all members of staff in direct daily contact with the child. In most cases, this ruled out the heads themselves. However, the subject matter of the interview was invariably covered with them in the initial interview to arrange the visit and any gaps were usually filled in during the case study. A summary of of the head's views was written either during, or at the end of, the study. A number of heads made written documentation available to me in the form of handbooks, information for parents, timetables or guidelines.

The information on the approach of each establishment could have been gathered simply by asking members of staff for their views and the research could have been based on these interviews. However, to have relied solely on the participants' accounts would have involved risks of the kind that are outlined by Schatzman and Strauss (1973):

> two major difficulties arise from reliance (on interviews and questionnaires) - exclusive of observation...First, any given person may be no more able to describe and explain his own actions than anyone else's...Second, interview or question procedures constitute situations in their own right; therefore what persons report in either case often better reflects those situations than the referential ones the techniques were designed to ascertain. Referential situations are too quickly and readily converted by any given respondent into relatively idealised models when he is talking with researchers outside the "real" situation. (p.6)

Observation

The methods which made up the complementary observational component of the case studies can be divided into two categories: open-ended and structured.

Two open-ended methods were used. The first was the basic ethnographic technique of making field notes. Part of my practice as a psychologist carrying out individual assessments had been the writing of narrative accounts of the behaviour of children with disabilities in nurseries. Although the purpose was different, the technique was applicable to the present study. It consisted of recording as much of the child and the adult's behaviour as was consonant with watching what was happening. The method used was as described in standard texts (e.g., Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, pp 60-69).

The record was narrative, long-hand and in plain language, noting events. Where possible, significant statements from any of the actors were written down and enclosed in slashes, either verbatim or in the form of a paraphrase. The left hand margin was used to record times when an activity phase changed. A right hand margin was used to record wider contextual events, for example, a child's conversation with an adult might be recorded in the main section with a note that all the children were having a snack being made in the margin. Wider impressions and ideas which occured during observation rather than being ignored or suppressed were recorded in square brackets. Diagrams of the settings and timetables of regular events were recorded. (A sample of the field notes is given in Appendix B)

As much unstructured observation as could be managed in two weeks was carried out. At least the equivalent of three full sessions of the child's attendance was sampled. Observations were carried out in spells of 1 hour or 30 minutes over several days, sampling each period of the child's attendance twice. Thus exceptional features of any particular day, for example, the child being off colour, did not have an undue influence on the observations.

As soon as possible after the observation the field notes were re-written, summarised and tentative conclusions noted.

The second open-ended technique used was that of audio-recording. The taped record covered both what the child said and what was said to him or her by anyone else. Because transcription of audio recordings is so time-consuming only an hour's recording was carried out per case study. Each recording was transcribed as soon as possible after it was made using a simultaneous note of the context. (A sample transcript is provided in Appendix C. Technical details of the recording method are given in the description of the pilot study in the following chapter.)

The assumption in making these recordings was that the language used was likely to provide a particularly rich source of information on underlying attitudes and assumption as well as being an important part in its own right of the patterning and management of the child's day.

The field notes method of observation is limited by its subjectivity but also by the nature of the information it yields. The information is unsystematic and so does not readily allow a quantified, schematised picture to be built up.

The alternative of gathering pre-determined information is a more efficient procedure than starting out with as few pre-conceptions as possible. The well-tried technique of the observation schedule allows a comprehensive, if narrow, picture to be built up in a short space of time. Clark et al. (1982) had devised and published an observation schedule which they had used in their study of children with "special needs" in nursery schools in the West Midlands. This was of obvious relevance. (A copy of the schedule is provided in Appendix D and some modifications to its use are described in the following chapter.)

The observation schedule was carried out for the equivalent of two full sessions of the child's attendance over several days, sampling each half hour of the child's attendance twice. This minimised the effect of exceptional features of any particular day. These observations yielded quantified accounts of the activities the child was engaged in, the social context in which they took place and the interactions in which the child participated.

The use of observation schedules in classroom research has been criticised, most notably by Hamilton and Delamont (1972 and 1984). Hamilton and Delamont have been responded to by McIntyre and Macleod (1978) and taken to task for overstatement' by Hammersley (1985).

The substance of Hamilton and Delamont's criticism of structured observation which focuses on the Flanders approach but includes others is as follows. Structuring observations according to a narrowly defined set of categories rejects any information which falls outwith these categories and so results in circularity. They also point out that structured observation does not enquire into the meaning of a situation.

The first point is readily conceded by McIntyre and Macleod but, as they say, it is not unique to structured observation. Indeed it is reasonable to argue that any observation is only as useful and interesting as the theory which guides it and enables it to be interpreted. It is unrealistic to claim that there are methods of observation which do not reject some information, the question of selection is one of degree not of kind.

In the case of this particular study, the observation schedule embodies a categorisation of activities and social groupings in nurseries which would not be found at all controversial and it simply made it possible to record a fairly gross kind of information economically.

The second point is accurate in that structured observation in itself is not a source of ongoing enquiry into a situation in the way that the taking of field notes can be. However, the results of structured observations are as susceptible to interpretation and post hoc enquiry into meaning as any others. As McIntyre and Macleod point out, quantitative statements are frequent in accounts of classroom life obtained by non-structured means. Structured approaches simply make this component of the search for meaning more reliable.

4. The nature of the account

The aim of naturalistic research is to give an *account* of a real life situation and the nature of the account cannot be a by-product of the data-gathering and analysis but is central to defining its character. Burgess (1982) summarises the three types of account of field research as follows:

> First, there are *descriptive accounts* where the emphasis is upon providing detailed description which is informed by theoretical schemes. Secondly, there are accounts which provide *analytic descriptions* whereby the conceptual scheme used is developed on the basis of the data that are obtained. Thirdly, there are *substantive theoretical accounts* where the researcher generates theoretical statements that will have applicability beyond the individual case that has been studied. (p. 182)

It is reasonable to see the second and third types of account as subsuming the preceding types. Thus an analytic account should be adequate at the level of description and a substantive theoretical account should be adequate at an analytic level. A consequence of the previous chapter's recognition that a structural level of description is required is that an analytic account has to be provided. Similarly, recognising that wider social processes have to be taken into consideration entails providing a substantive theoretical account.

These three types of account are provided in two stages: the form of the substantive theoretical account is discussed in chapter six and it is provided in chapter seven. The first two forms of account are discussed here and provided in chapter five, they are:

- a *descriptive* account of the case; that is, a narrative description of the central features of the mode of operation of the establishment in relation to children in general, children with disabilities and the particular child;

- an *analytical* account based on the notion of pedagogy as structural knowledge employed by educators; it consists of a conceptual analysis of themes in the descriptive material. This analysis aims to have internal coherence, that is, to describe only the case being studied.

The status of both forms of account is problematic. The relationship between a narrative account of events and those events themselves is not direct. The relationship between a set of numerical results and 'reality' is quite clearly oblique, the one between a description of events and those events is equally oblique, only less obviously so. Once a description has been written it becomes an entity in its own right independent of the events it describes or, as was said in the previous chapter, a 'text'.

Thus while the pedagogical account can appear to be an analysis of the 'real-life' events described it is more accurate to regard it as an analysis of the description of them. This point can be made with greater force about the substantive theoretical account which is based in turn on an analysis of the pedagogical accounts.

5. Analysis

The analysis of the data is discussed in terms of the above distinction between the descriptive and the pedagogical accounts. As was indicated in the previous chapter, concepts drawn from the symbolic science traditon provide a framework for describing events in real-life settings.

Descriptive analysis

A narrative description is provided of each case. Here, use is made of the phenomenological view that a primary test of the validity of such descriptions is whether their accuracy is recognisable by the participants and other people with related experiences. Although informal, these forms of recognition are not in any way trivial. Corroboration was sought by asking the participants to comment individually and in some cases at plenary meetings. This method of "peer examination" is noted by LeCompte and Goetz, (ibid., p42-3) as a means of increasing reliabilty. It also increases the validity of the description but not decisively, it simply confirms its accuracy as an account of the partcicpants' conscious understanding of the situation.

Each case is described separately rather than organising the information under topic headings to facilitate between case comparisons. This method conveys the uniqueness of each case. Nevertheless, comparison between cases is an important aim and each case description covers the same topics in the same order.

The basic analytical tool in providing descriptions was one of data selection. The basis for the selection was one of identifying features which were central to the operation of the establishment. As the contexts studied were not notably recherche, unlike many of the cases reported in sociological/anthropological/symbolic interactionist studies, this runs the risk of being criticised, as Hargreaves (1978) notes, for stating the obvious. However, so long as the obvious remains unstated it cannot be analysed.

A further reason for seeking to provide an account of the relatively obvious and not seeking to base each account on particularly revealing or 'key' incidents is a preference for "low inference descriptors" (LeCompte and Goetz ibid. p41). The lower the inference level, the higher is the level of external validity. It is, for example, unlikely that two observers would disagree wildly about relatively gross features such as overall patterns of timetabling or layout of the establishments studied, whereas accounts of the nuances of a passing remark may diverge considerably.

In a similar way, the injunction to make the familiar or obvious 'strange' which may be found in texts on naturalistic research (e.g. Delamont, 1983) is not well-adapted to the aim of attempting to describe typical or characteristic practice. In this context, the aim was rather to observe the commonplaces of everyday experience closely and to record and codify them so that analysis could take place. The aim was not the revelation of hidden aspects of practice or opinion.

A further aim of some naturalistic description, that of making the participants "come off the page" by vivid presentation of individuals was not adopted. In part, the reason was that short term and superficial acquaintance made caricature a danger. More importantly, the primary aim was not to establish how individuals but how the establishment as a whole, ie the staff group, operated. Nonetheless, the role of the individual was not ignored and differences between individuals are noted in some cases.

Because a number of cases were studied over a limited period of time, each is described in the manner of a snapshot, that is to say, ideas and practice were 'frozen' as they were observed over two weeks; Walker (1980 p33) describes a case study as "an examination of an instance in action." The only possible method for estimating the representativenes of the instances observed was to ask the participants to comment.

This relative brevity of observation also meant that there was not that intensity of scrutiny that Smith (1978, p343) identifies as a consequence of lengthy periods in the field and which he sees as a counter to people "faking it", consciously or unconsciously. However, the fact that in every instance a number of individuals were acting in a co-operative way in full view of one another constitued a different safeguard in this respect.

Lofland (1971) provides a list of categories of information required to describe a "social phenomenon". He explicitly counsels (p53-4) against using the list itself as a method for organising qualitative information but it can be used as an accounting device to check the roundedness of a descriptive account. Its use to check the data here is indicated in Appendix E. It suggest that the major categories of information needed to describe a social context are

present in the descriptions. It also reveals some of the assumptions that have to be made and limitations on reliability that result from adopting a snapshot approach.

Pedagogical analysis

The aim in carrying out a pedagogical analysis was similarly one of characterising the central elements in the structural knowledge which the staff of the establishment employed in practice. The concept of pedagogy was discussed in chapter two where it was seen as offering a form of analysis which is both abstract and relatively general. The key term of analysis at this level is that of the 'pedagogical perspectives' which were detected in the expressed views and the observed practice of those involved. Delamont (1983) points out the importance of the concept of perspective to research in the symbolic interactionist mode. She quotes the standard reference, Shibutani (1955 p564):

> A perspective is an ordered view of one's world - what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events and human nature. The fact that men have such ordered perspectives enables them to conceive of their changing world as relatively stable, orderly and predictable.

An important concept in considering perspectives is that of the reference group which Shibutani defines as "the group whose perspective constitutes the frame of reference of the actor" (ibid., p563). Shibutani points out that reference groups need not refer to an "objectively existing group" or "membership group". However the presence of a reference group with which the actors must share some perspectives is virtually entailed in a pre-five establishment where the task in hand is a collective one.

One aspect of the concept of a perspective is indicated by Charon (1985 p24) in distinguishing the concept from that of 'attitude':

Perspectives ... are conceptualised as dynamic and changing, guides to interpretation and then to action, undergoing change during interaction and not necessarily consistent in the same person.

The dynamic and inconsistent nature of perspectives is particularly significant here because it was apparent from the data that people used perspectives on children in general and children with disabilities at a general level which became modified when they responded to an individual child. Applying the concept of perspective to pedagogies is, therefore, congruent with the conclusion reached in chapter two that any structural account is necessarily fragmentary, inconclusive and inconsistent.

Recognising that perspectives are partial makes it clear that the perspectives detected in the research do not constitute the sum total of the pedagogies employed by the staff in any establishment. Nor should the perspectives inferred from the interview data be taken as summaries of their educational theories. Each perspective distinguished in observed practice or in interview is a response to a particular conjuncture of events.

The accounts given concentrate on the perspectives of the adults, for it is they who define the situation. In symbolic interactionist terms an unequal interaction is characterised by the fact that some participants have more power to define the situation than others. Clearly; power relationships are very uneven between very young children and the adults who care for them. It is also extremely difficult to obtain meaningful self-reports from young children, particularly those with very restricted language. However, where it is reasonable to do so, the perspectives of the children upon whom the case studies focused and of their peers are inferred from the evidence of their behaviour.

Becker and Geer (1960) define "perspective" as "a set of ideas and actions used by a group in solving collective problems" (p. 244). They therefore, treat both ideas and actions as illustrative of the same perspective. This creates a fundamental difficulty in this case. Here, it is contended, the ideas the staff express and their actions are in some instances in contradiction. For this reason, perspectives which were expressed in interview are treated separately from those which are seen to be part of observed practice.

Interview perspectives

Each perspective is described using a small number of general ideas derived from *themes* in the interviews. An idea was considered to have achieved the status of a theme if it was mentioned on more than one occasion by an interviewee or was mentioned by more than one interviewee. Impressionistic though such judgements must be, account was also taken of the vigour with which a point of view was expressed.

Becker and Geer (1960) consider that the following factors ought to be taken into account when describing participants' perspectives. Firstly, the *content* of the perspective has to be analysed and described. Secondly, the *frequency* with which examples of it occur should be counted. Thirdly, its *range* should be considered, that is the variety of situations in which it occurs should be noted. Fourthly, its *collective character* should be examined; is there a consensus about the perspective amongst the participants? Finally, *negative cases* should be sought out as test of its validity. (pp 246-9)

These factors can be treated as checklist against which the validity of perspectives is measured. The content of each perspective is presented in the main text immediately after the descriptive information from which it is drawn. The outcome of applying the other elements in the checklist to each inferred perspective is presented in Appendix F.

However, this checklist cannot be used without qualification[2]. The idea that frequency provides a measure of the validity of an item of content is open to question. Here the data gathered in interviews had content biases built in. Frequency was treated as significant but relying on a count of frequency would give each instance equal weight. It would also treat the views of all participants as of equal significance, this is unlikely to be true in any social context but was observably inapplicable here. Formal and informal hierarchies of influence could be discerned and some informants were treated as key informants with more emphasis given to their views.

In a similar way, the range of contexts in which a perspective appears is determined by the structure of the interviews. Nevertheless, the fact that the same idea is expressed in several contexts in an interview is evidence of the generality of its applicability.

Following Glaser and Strauss (1967 p23-4) the treatment of negative cases is not a falsificationist one. The fact that a view is expressed that contradicts a theme does not mean that that theme is not present and influencing practice. Individuals within a group may hold contradictory views and individuals themselves may hold self-contradictory or competing views on a topic. Competing themes provide information about the range of the perspective employed.

Perspectives observed in practice

The Becker and Geer checklist used to estimate the validity of the perspectives drawn from the interview data is not applicable to the data from the unstructured observations. Nor are the quantitative methods of analysis which are suggested for the analysis of field notes for instance in Bogdan and Taylor (op.cit.) or LeCompte and Goetz (1984). For either approach to have worked a relatively fine grained and restricted analysis of purposely limited data or an extensive data-base would have been needed. Neither was avaliable in this case.

The method used for analysing the data was a topic based one. That is to say, the case notes were read through and information bearing on a number of topics abstracted. These topics were deliberately broad covering the principal features of the establishments.

The key features of overall practice abstracted were those of grouping of the children, timetabling, physical layout of the space, the sorts of activities carried out and an estimate of those which seemed to be highly valued, the tone of interactions and methods of control. In relation to the specific child the features abstracted were the activities, the social context and the interactions in which the child was engaged. These mirrored the broad categories of the structured observation schedule and so allowed for traingulation of the data.

Specific topics emerged after the data had been read through. However, there is considerable circularity about the method; these topics emerged from the field notes because, albeit unconsciously, these were the kinds of features which were the focus of observation. The element of circularity in all observation has already been acknowledged. The main check on validity is supplied by cross-referencing the structured and unstructured forms of observation. The schematic account provided by the structured observations provides a point of reference for the impressionistic information yielded by unstructured observations.

6. Sampling procedures

Establishments

Cases were studied in the context of Strathclyde Region's policy commitment to integrated provision for children with disabilities in a range of pre-five establishments. To have looked only at one type of establishment would have narrowed the focus of the study to such an extent that it would not have addressed itself to the overall policy. Therefore, the establishments selected were heterogeneous.

The approach to sampling adopted was one of "theoretical sampling" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) which has been employed in educational research by, for example, Delamont (1984) or Stenhouse (1984). The theoretical basis of the sample was one of selecting establishments which were likely to be as different from one another as possible[3]. The most likely source of relevant differences lay in the differing aims and structure of the different categories of establishment. As Glaser and Strauss note (p 56), "maximising differences amongst comparsison groups increases the probability that the researcher will collect different and varied data bearing upon a category..."

The range of relevant pre-five establishments was nursery schools, day nurseries, children's/family centres and 'special needs' nurseries. Within each category, the reason for selecting a case was that the establishment to be studied had provided for children with disabilities over a number of years. The knowledge that this was the case was either personal or gained from colleagues involved in pre-five services in Strathclyde.

Other arbitrary factors were introduced into the selection so that the study should be recognisably constructive within the Education Department. Establishments about which department managers were concerned were avoided on the grounds that conflicts of purpose could too readily arise or, at least be seen to arise, for a researcher seconded to Regional Headquarters. A geographical spread was sought in order to avoid the study being identified with one area.

While acknowledging these sources of arbitrariness, alternative methods for identifying theoretical samples involved equal degrees of arbitrariness and were seriously flawed. They were:

- selecting establishments which were representative in the sense of embodying typical features of their category of establishment. Relevant criteria for representativeness would include geographical situation, social composition of catchment, numbers of priority admissions and staffing. It would have been quite artificial to have identified the typical Strathclyde nursery school on the basis that it was in a median position on each of these criteria;

- selecting establishments which embodied "good practice". The basis on which such an assessment could have been made is tenuous; no indicators currently exist by which practice could reliably be evaluated.

Children

Within each establishment the case study looked at the experience of one particular child. It was argued in chapter one that the construct 'the handicapped child' is not a useful research tool and that drawing group conclusions on this basis is very suspect. The defining rhetoric of integration has been the individualisation of services so that the natural point for an investigation into integration is the experience of individuals.

The selection of the child was carried out by the head of the establishment with the stipulation that the child must have a significant impairment and that his or her parents were prepared to allow observation to take place. (In every case the study was discussed with the parents by the researcher.) In mainstream establishments there was usually a limited choice to be made, given the small number of children with disabilities. Again, therefore, selection was arbitrary.

To have sought to study children with one particular impairment or condition in the interests of comparability would have reduced the generality of the study. In any case, to make comparison meaningful the children would have had to be very alike. To take an example from the literature (cf Casey et al 1989), suppose children with Down's Syndrome had been selected they would have to be matched for age, IQ, language skills, social background and temperament (however measured) to be even reasonably confident that the differences noted were due to the establishment and not the child. Even in a region as large as Strathclyde such a matching would have been impossible. More approximate methods of matching would have lent only a veneer of comparability.

Each case study then is a study of a unique situation and a substantial component involves the experiences of a unique individual in that situation.

7. Access and the role of the researcher

The general question of gaining access to a case to be studied is a considerable pre-occcupation of textbooks on ethnographic and case study methodology, for example, Hammersley and Atkinson (1985), Bogdan and Taylor (1975). The subject has been fully covered and little purpose would be served by a general dicussion but there are specific points to be made.

The personal biography of the researcher is of little interest, yet it is important to acknowledge its influence. It is not possible to adopt the persona of the neutral researcher producing wholly objective results. In any case to do so is, as Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue, to deny the "reflexivity" of this form of social research. An explicit account of the "researcher status position" is also a necessary aspect of reliability (LeCompte and Goetz, ibid, p37) and the impact of the researcher is discussed in the report of each case.

At the time that the research was carried out I had been seconded to the Pre-Five Unit, a small group of officials charged with responsibilty for developing Strathclyde Region's pre-five strategy. Previously I had been employed as an educational psychologist in Glasgow with particular responsibility for pre-fives.

Part of the significance of my professional position at the time of the research is that the problems of negotiating access were significantly different to those described in the literature (e.g., Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). As an insider, identified with the management of the service, access was very readily available[4].

However, as Hammersley and Atkinson indicate, the gaining of access is not merely a matter of obtaining permission to carry out research, it also involves establishing the nature of the information to which the participants will allow access. Much detailed information is entirely at the participants' disposal.

There was a particular problem in this respect in that I had difficulty in distancing myself from the management/inspectorial role and convincing the staff that my interests lay in finding out, not checking up. That this was not wholly successful was revealed on an unrelated visit to the head of one nursery some weeks after the case study - the staff were convinced that I was there to give a report on their performance. Clearly, the general observer effect was to encourage people to behave in ways of which they thought I would approve as an educational psychologist and someone from Headquarters. There was a bias towards what was seen as the 'official line'.

The 'gatekeepers' of access in each case were the heads of the establishments and their views reflected two roles for the researcher noted by Hammersley and Atkinson. They note that the researcher is frequently seen as the "'expert' ... a person who is extremely well informed as to problems and their solutions. The expectation may be that the ethnographer seeking access is claiming such expertise, and is expecting to 'sort out' the organisation or the community. This view therefore leads directly to the second image, that of the 'critic'. Gatekeepers may expect the ethnographer to to try to act as an evaluator" (1983 p75)

My job title and my position within the organisation clearly led people to believe that I would adopt this sort of role and my protestations otherwise were generally seen as a form of false modesty which would be disproved by events. Indeed, some Heads "sold" my involvement to the staff on exactly this basis. As Hammersley and Atkinson note, the effects of this may be fairly benign. The idea that I was there to help and could do so best with a "warts and all" picture probably helped make sense of my presence and detailed interest although it undoubtedly led to subsequent disappointment.

My familiarity with the field of enquiry made it possible to short-circuit the stages that Schatzman and Strauss (1973 Chs. 2 & 3) describe as "casing" and "mapping". In these stages, the researcher tries to obtain a broad preliminary outline of the case being studied before narrowing the focus. A second consequence of familiarity was the covert influence of my previous knowledge on the field notes. Particular events in the past rarely had an influence, but my general sense of the situation drawn from past experience inevitably did. This previous knowledge was a strengthening factor because of its sensitising effects but the fact that it was covert removed it from the sphere of criticism and evaluation.

The greatest source of concern in field research in a familiar setting is the blunting of perception. This demands a particular effort to treat events observed as if they were being seen for the first time, using prior knowledge only at a second stage. This second stage may, in fact, occur during the processs of observation but should be marked off, for instance, as in the field notes described above.

The nature of my previous work lent itself to achieving the necessary distance. As a psychologist I had been in the position of an outsider in the nurseries in which I had previously worked. I had not had the same socialisation experiences as the staff and did not experience their day-to- day tasks. Further, maintaining an independent stance was an important part of my professional role. For a considerable period I had, in fact, been a "Professional Stranger" (Agar, 1980).

This was particularly relevant to the taking of field notes, the subjectivity of which has to be acknowledged. For the preceding seven years I had worked extensively in nurseries of various kinds. Therefore, it was necessary to balance the attempt to take a fresh look from an outsider's perspective with making best use of previous knowledge. The position adopted is as described in Schatzman and Strauss (1973):

> The researcher...is substantially an outsider to the group, organisation or institutional system he wishes to study. Though he may be knowledgeable about, or even a working participant in, the activity or world he wants to study, he is not so committed to it in his time and loyalties as to prevent his achieving conceptual distance from its perspectives and vocabularies. (p ix)

Circumstances influenced the style of research which it was possible to carry out. I would have been a very conspicuous full participant observer for reasons of sex alone. Further, my job and my headquarters base meant that adopting the role of a nursery nurse would have been quite disconcerting for the nursery staff. The mode of observation was non-participant and open, no disguise was possible or desirable. However, in a subtle way my purpose was disguised by observing a particular child. This conformed to the expectation that an educational psychologist's province is the individual child and not the setting. There was a persistent misunderstanding of the nature of my interests which I did not specifically discourage.

In all the establishments studied, except the first, a low key form of arranging access was used. This resulted from the failure of the attempt in the first establishment to arrive at a formal "bargain" (Bogdan and Taylor, ibid) about access. Being very explicit about the research in preliminary discussions and providing a 'contract' in letter form had raised anxieties and created an exaggerated observer effect. Thereafter, I followed the "rule" propounded by Bogdan and Taylor (ibid p35) which is "to be honest, but vague or imprecise".

FOOTNOTES

1. As Hammersley points out they claim that differing research paradigms should be able to co-exist but offer what appears to be a devastating critique of this particular approach.

2. Becker and Geer illustrate its use in the context of an extensive study of medical students in which some aasumptions may be legitimately be made which may not be made about other forms of investigation in other social groups.

3. The sample meets none of the criteria for even the loosest of quasi-experimental designs (Campbell and Stanley (1963)). This indicates the cost of choosing a heterogeneous sample of this kind. In particular, it is impossible to apply the kinds of controls which would enable statistically valid comparisons to be made between cases. The absence of this sort of rigour is of limited importance because, as a result of their heterogeneity, the differences between cases are of such an order that their significance, in the sense that they represent real differences, does not require statistical justification. Equally, there is no attempt made to isolate one or two 'variables' which 'cause' the differences.

4. Strathclyde Region is sub-divided into "divisions" this did entail seeking some agreement and careful approaches had to be made to heads of establishments.

CHAPTER FOUR THE PILOT STUDY

1. Introduction

If the research were to be strictly based upon the Glaser and Strauss model for the discovery of grounded theory a pilot study would have no place in its structure. Using their procedures, each part of each case study would act as a continuing source of development for data-gathering. However, for the reasons described earlier a standard set of data-gathering techniques was sought.

The aim in carrying out the pilot study was to try a number of data-gathering techniques within a time span that would not impose an unreasonable demand upon the nursery involved. Both observational and interview techniques were needed. Two decisions had then to be made about each technique. Firstly, should it be included or rejected? Secondly, if it was to be included, were any modifications necessary?

Techniques were piloted because they offered the potential for insightful and accurate description. One was rejected because of its obtrusiveness and another because it was unweildy and uneconomic. Others were modified by making minor adjustments. Each technique piloted will be described and the decisions taken indicated.

The pilot study was carried out in Hillcrest Day Nursery and it concentrated on the experience of one child, Michelle. It is described in full in the following chapter as the first case study.

2. Interviewing

Directly asking the staff how they approached their work was an obvious method of investigation. A set of interview questions was used to ask the relevant questions in an open manner. To have attempted to use less direct methods, for instance repertory grid techniques, may have created quite justifiable suspicion amongst the staff. In any case it is reasonable to ask straight questions about areas of direct professional responsibility.

As discussed in chapter 3, it was judged best to divide this schedule with questions of a general kind forming Part 1 and those which related to the particular child forming Part 2. This division allowed the two parts to be administered respectively at the beginning and end of the case study.

The staff in Hillcrest were interviewed over the first four days of the case study as one member of staff had been on leave and another absent through ill health. They gave relevant and interesting responses and the content could, therefore, be judged to be appropriate. However, a number of the questions were framed in a way which was unclear and needed extended explanation, others had unrecogniseed ambiguities and there were areas of overlap between questions. Therefore, substantial modifications had to be introduced. Appendix A gives the initial schedule, the amendments indicated and the revised schedule.

Despite the reservations which were expressed in chapter one about the 'special needs' terminology it was used to identify the group of children to be discussed in the interviews. The reason for doing so was primarily that the term was in general use amongst the staff but also because it is a more general term than 'children with disabilities'. It was then possible to clarify that the aim of the research was to focus on a sub-group of children with physical or sensory impairments or learning difficulties while acknowledging other sources of 'need'.

The term was also used to ask about the nature of provision. Here its ambiguous nature proved an advantage because the interpretations put on what the particular child 'needed' reflected differing perceptions, some of these emphasised medical conditions or 'handicaps' while others reflected more global, 'normalising' aims for provision.

3. Observational techniques

Diary keeping

This was simply a matter of the researcher keeping a quarter hourly record of the main activities in which the child was engaged. A simple format was devised for this.

Although simple, this technique proved difficult to manage because it had to be carried out simultaneously with another technique. In the first place, it proved difficult to remember to stop in the middle of another form of observation and secondly, it was disruptive of the train of thought to do so. It was also quite apparent that the information gathered duplicated that gathered through other techniques. The diary method was therefore rejected.

Structured schedule

The schedule used and a manual are published in Clark et al (1982) (see Appendix D). This schedule had been devised specifically for a study of children with "special needs" and it covers (a) the activities in which a 'target' child is engaged, (b) the social context of these activities and (c) the interactions in which he or she is involved.

The schedule covers the three areas as follows:

(a) *activity* is categorised according to the following scheme:

1. Fine perceptual motor (creative)
2. Fine perceptual motor (structured)
3. Gross physical activity
4. Gross perceptual motor activity
5. Imaginative play
6. Book/story activity
7. Small Group Activity
8. Looking, listening, waiting
9. Music/dancing

10. Helping an adult
11. Toilet/washing activities
12. Snack
13. Conversing
14. Non-specific activity

(b) five *social contexts* are described using these categories;

1. Solitary play
2. Parallel play
3. Associative play
4. Group activity
5. Teacher/adult directed activities

(c) *interactions* are recorded according to the person who initiates them - an adult, the child being studied or a peer - and by noting the character of the first move in the interaction - whether it is positive or negative and whether it is verbal, non-verbal or mixed. The response to this first move is also recorded, noting who responded, or 0 if no-one did, and its character using the same categories;

The activities section required modification which involved dropping one category and adding others, the names of some categories were also found to be misleading.

The category which was dropped was *Small Group*. This category does not fit logically into the Activity section as it describes the social context in which a number of fairly heterogeneous activities can occur:

> 7 SG Small group activity : two or more children involved in association without the controlling presence of an adult. Includes rough and tumble, peek a boo, hide and seek, gross physical and perceptual motor play in association. (op. cit. p145)

It proved simpler and logically more coherent to make a decision about the nature of the activity that was being carried out and to record any form of co-operative play amongst children as *Associative* in the social context section. In fact, for the children to be studied in this research, the slight loss in distinction between types of associative play that this could be seen to involve is of little significance: in young children with serious learning difficulties associative play of any kind is a rarity.

In Clark et al's schedule, activities such as pouring water in and out of containers, emptying bricks out of boxes and putting them back in, shaking pram covers or tablecloths and putting them over objects and so on could only be categorised as *Fine perceptual motor (creative)* activities. To do so would be to miss an important distinction between exploring the possibilities of materials and using them in a planned way, however simply, to create something. Developmentally, one is at an earlier stage than the other and Michelle, in common with many 'developmentally delayed' children, spent considerable periods in activities of this kind which could by no stretch of the imagination be called "creative". A category *Exploratory* activities was added.

It was important in studies in integrated settings, where peer modelling is frequently seen as a central benefit, to note occasions when the child was watching either a child or an adult in a careful way. For many children observing may be a particularly significant way of learning. Thus a category *Observing* was added - defined as deliberate, relatively extended watching of the activities of others. Although another ostensible activity may be going on at the same time, the observing must override this. It is distinct from fleeting glances at others and "staring into space".

At a more mundane level, the schedule bears the marks of having been devised for use in nursery schools rather than day nurseries. The category *Snack* did not do justice to the meal provided in Michelle's nursery nor to the time that it took. The distinction was not important and the category was understood to refer to any group eating activity. Similarly, there is no category for dressing which was a regular activity with Michelle when she soaked herself at the water tray or soiled or wet herself. A category *Dressing* was added.

To cover such unforeseen types of activity a general facility was included, in the form of blank spaces on the record, for adding categories as case studies were carried out. A small number of extra categories were added during other case studies, such as Computer and Being Comforted to cover specfic activities which were observed and for which the schedule appeared to have no obvious category.

At times such as lunch-time the children in Hillcrest Day Nursery were formed into a large group and then moved to their places in an orderly fashion, or going from one room to another, children were gathered en masse and then moved. At other times an individual child was taken to the toilet or led to an activity either alone or with a small group. The schedule has no category for these activities which may take several seconds and are not accurately described as *Looking, listening or waiting* as there is active engagement in an adult directed task. A category *Transition* was added to provide for such situations.

The coding of social context (or Location) according to the schedule posed few problems but, probably again reflecting its nursery school origins, no distinction is made between group activities carried out by small groups and large or whole-group activities. These were a frequent feature of Michelle's experience. A category *Large (group)* was added to describe activities carried out by ten or more children.

The schedule successfully captured the pattern of interactions in which Michelle, the child studied in the pilot, was involved and no modifications were indicated.

At a more fundamental level, the schedule was unable to capture the quality of Michelle's behaviour without resorting to the sort of subjective judgements which would have eroded its whole mode of operation. The most notable illustration of this was the considerable amount of time Michelle spent in repetitively putting a doll to bed. There is no alternative but to code this as *Imaginative* play, which it is with no acknowledgement of its stereotypical character.

Similarly, Michelle's involvement in large group activities was one of compliance rather than active participation but only the gross fact of her physical presence was recorded.

These defects are inherent in an observation schedule trying to cover a broad sweep of behaviour. It is tempting to say that in principle observation schedules cannot capture such subtleties of meaning as critics of classroom observation schedules claim (cf Hamilton and Delamont, 1984). However, it would have been possible to develop 'objective' behavioural indications that, for example, Michelle's play was stereotyped, such as lack of variation in the sequence or of her aloneness, such the absence of eye contact. The level of analysis is simply too gross to pick these up. Overall, the schedule yielded a great deal of systematic information in a relatively short time and had proved practically manageable. It was therefore included.

Nevertheless, the fact that an informed observer can confidently make judgements of this kind does indicate that there is a level of meaning in the situation which is most economically accessible through methods other than structured observation.

The period for carrying out the observation schedule in the pilot study was five hours. This decision had been based on the premise that two-and-a-half hours was the minimum period of daily attendance likely to be encountered. If a standard period were used then comparison between cases would be more straightforward. However, it became quite apparent that spreading five hours out over Michelle's three-and-a-half hour days at Hillcrest resulted in a distorted picture as only some periods of time were sampled twice. Michelle's day at Hillcrest had a very definite order and pattern and different periods of the day could not be treated as equivalent.

Since the comparison between establishments in this phase of the research has no statistical basis a standard length was not needed. It therefore became apparent that the period of observation should be two full sessions of the child's attendance.

The observation schedule was carried out in half hour spells: these spells were spread out over four days and, to prevent fatigue and consequent innaccuracy, no more than two half hours were carried out together. During piloting, recording was carried out for twenty four minutes in each half hour, allowing time for organising papers and

stopwatch and reorientation between contiguous observations. Although the demands of the technique on concentration are high, this allowance of time was too generous and was wasteful. A twenty eight minutes observation per half hour pattern was attempted and found workable.

Unstructured observation

This technique for direct observation is central to studies which adopt an ethological approach to studying the behaviour of young children (cf Blurton-Jones, 1974). It is also central to ethnographic, symbolic interactionist and participant observer approaches to the study of classroom life. I had used it extensively in my professional practice as an educational psychologist.

After an initial session using only a blank notepad, the simple three category format for recording observations outlined in chapter three was devised. This consisted of a left hand margin for noting the time, a large central column for noting the child's immediate experiences and a narrower right hand column for recording features of the context; usually the activities of the other children.

This unstructured form of observation was the most economical, and the most powerful, tool in pursuit of the objective of gaining an insightful account of the experience of the child and the practice of the nursery. Its inclusion was essential to the research.

Audio Taping

Previous studies carried out in nursery schools (cf Tizard and Hughes 1984; Clark et al 1982) had used radio microphones and transmitters attached to target children to record verbal interactions. The technique was also used by Wells (1985) and his associates in family homes. These studies have found the technology successful. The radio microphone is small, requires only a lightweight transmitter with a small trailing aerial. The child, therefore, has complete freedom of movement while all talk within a 10 to 15 foot radius is recorded.

As a result of discussions with the Mr Stevenson, Head of Audio-Visual Services in Glasgow Division, Strathclyde Education Department, it was suggested that the same task could be accomplished using a recording version of the Sony Walkman. This has three advantages; it is a great deal cheaper, there is no trailing aerial and it is not necessary to be licensed by the Post Office to operate it. Two recorders were bought by Audio-Visual Services and placed on extended loan to myself.

The model used was a Sony Stereo Cassette Corder WM - R202: its dimensions are 2 x 4 x 3/4 inches/ 69.8 x 110.5 x 19.8 mm and its weight (including battery 7.2 oz/ 210 gm, a stereo microphone is supplied. This compares favourably with the radio microphones described in Clark et al and by Wells which weighed 8½ oz and acceptably with that described by Tizard and Hughes which weighed 150 gms.

The sole disadvantage to the Walkman is that it cannot be remote-controlled. This made it impossible to employ the technique used by Tizard and Hughes to control observer effects - randomising the times at which the recording was being made so that the adults did not know at any time whether or not they were being recorded. The added control that this would have introduced where one child was the focus for observation is open to serious question. It did not outweigh the practical advantages of the Walkman.

The technique was tried out towards the end of the pilot study the recorder was attached to a child's belt and strapped onto Michelle by a member of the staff of the nursery, the microphone was attached to her collar. There was a period of familiarisation before recording began during which Michelle occasionally patted the recorder proprietorially but qickly lost interest. One other child asked a question about the microphone but did not pursue the matter after minimal explanation. A continuous narrative record was kept by an observer including rough notes of some utterances for cross reference with the tapes.

One technical difficulty occurred during the initial period of recording; the direction switch was set wrongly so that only one side of the tape recorded. The microphone picked up all the language addressed to Michelle very clearly, assisted by the fact that Jackie, the member of staff who was Michelle's principal interlocutor, has a clear, strong voice. Michelle did not talk and none of her peers spoke to her. Transcription was very straightforward.

The second period of recording proved more problematic. Michelle took a greater interest in the recorder which had been less securely strapped to her. She gripped it firmly when she had nothing else in her hands and in so doing managed to switch it off and so only a few minutes were recorded.

In a third trial the belt was securely attached again and no such problems occurred. However, it was necessary to consider whether one of two options should be followed.

The first option was to sew the machine into a garment as had Tizard and Hughes. One disadvantage was that, as the children being studied were not average three to four year olds and it was likely that some would be particularly small or have mobility difficulties, a new garment might be necessary for each study. Further, the children being studied were more likely to react to an unfamiliar piece of clothing than the average child because, as a result of their learning difficulties, they may find the world confusing and novelty difficult to cope with.

A second option was to attach the microphone to the observer's clipboard and to follow the child. A brief trial of this method proved successful in Michelle's case in that information was not lost and it proved possible to stay sufficiently close without being too obtrusive. There were clear advantages to this option in terms of reducing observer effects; everyone had become used to the presence of a live observer moving around the room and the microphone was completely unobvious.

The most reasonable approach was to retain the flexibilty to use the microphone in the way which seemed most likely to be successful in the particular case being studied.

The length of recording carried out was determined by purely pragmatic considerations. Transcribing audio tapes is extremely time-consuming, at least nine hours for each hour recorded. To avoid the situation where there would be a large backlog of unanalysed tapes it was necessary to restrict the period of recording in each case studied to approximately one hour.

Video Taping

Video tape has been used in laboratory studies of young children and in classroom analysis. It provides a permanent record of non-verbal behaviour and could be used in combination with audio-taping to give a record of verbal behaviour.

Video taping was the last technique to be piloted because it is the most obtrusive and the most costly of time and effort. If it were to be used then its use ought to be planned so that it could be employed as sparingly as possible. By the end of the case study a picture of the child's day is available to allow video-taping to be carried out strategically. A National Panasonic Camcorder mounted on a tripod was used. The researcher had reasonable familiarity with the technical aspects of video-taping.

As things turned out, the particular day chosen for video taping followed an untypical pattern because a party had been arranged to celebrate another child's transfer to school. Nevertheless, three twenty minute periods were taped reflecting the three-phase pattern of a normal day.

The primary difficulty was the obtrusivenes of the technology. It warranted only a few questions from the children and only one child showed a great awareness of the camera. However, at a number of points adults were observably self-conscious and reported this afterwards. An even greater disadvantage was the degree of reaction that the video-tape created afterwards; the staff were very keen to see the result and the parents not only wanted to see the tape they wanted a copy and showed concern about how it might be used.

Although a video record would capture the texture of the child's experience in an incomparable way and provide an invaluable *aide-memoire* it was such an event for the staff and the aura which surrounded it were such serious disadvantages that it was rejected. To have been used in a way which created sufficiently few ripples of observer effect it would have been necessary to spend a length of time which was not available in preparation and developing staff confidence.

PART THREE

CHAPTER FIVE CASE STUDIES

1. Introduction

This introduction serves two purposes. Firstly, it acts as a summary of the standard format for data-gathering and analysis. This consisted of a range of techniques which were cross-referenced with one another. Secondly, it clarifies the way in which the case studies are presented.

One aim in carrying out case studies was to establish a picture of provision. Rather than approach this globally, each case study focused on the experience of one child identified by the head of the nursery as having a disability.

Data-gathering methods

There are qualitative aspects of the experiences children have in their nurseries that can only be described using methods which allow for impression and judgement. The method used for this purpose was one of making field notes. The method consisted of recording as much of the child and the adults' behaviour as was consonant with watching what was happening. The record was narrative and in plain language, noting events. Impressions and ideas which occurred during observation were also recorded. As much unstructured observation of this kind as could be managed in two weeks was carried out. At least the equivalent of two full sessions of the child's attendance was sampled over several days .

The second open-ended technique used was that of audio-recording. An hour-long taped record of what was said to the child by both adults and peers and what the child her or himself said was kept.

The field notes method provides unsystematic data which does not readily allow a schematised picture to be built up. An observation schedule was carried out for the equivalent of two full sessions of the child's attendance at the nursery over several days, sampling each half

hour of the child's attendance twice. It covered the activities, the social contexts and the interactions in which the child participated.

The second structured form of data gathering used was an interview schedule which asked members of staff about their work generally and in relation to children with disabilities. In order to obtain a comprehensive picture the questions were designed to be open-ended and discussion prompted by neutral questioning was encouraged.

The schedule was divided in two. The first part was administered before any observations of the child were carried out. The second part of the schedule had a direct focus on the particular child. At this second interview feedback was given and comments sought on the observations which had been made and any preliminary conclusions which had been reached. In some cases a plenary meeting was held with the whole staff group involved.

Timetable

Each of the case studies was carried out over a two week period and took the following form.

Day 1 - initial discussion with the Head of the establishment, selection of the child to be studied and general orientation.

Day 2 - first part of interview schedule administered to staff in direct, daily contact with child.

Dys 3-8 - direct observation of events: field notes, observation schedule, audio-taping.

Day 9 - second part of interview schedule and feedback discussions with individual members of staff.

Day 10 - if arranged) plenary discussion with staff, discussion with Head

The precise allocations of time in terms of days are approximate. In particular, the observations did not always take as long but time was allocated to allow for events such as hospital appointments or outings which did interrupt the schedule in some cases. Where a child attended for only part of a day it was sometimes possible to abbreviate the schedule by carrying out interviews in a morning and observations in the afternoon.

In every case there was one meeting with the child's parent during the fortnight and in most cases a follow up meeting was arranged either for the end of the period or a few days later.

Description of cases

The presentation of each case is organised by topic rather than in terms of the method by the data were gathered. However, within these topics the interview material is presented separately from that obtained by the various methods of observation. The account given of each case covers the following topics:

- the setting;

All the other information has to be placed in context. This consists of a brief description of the location and characteristics of the nursery; names have been fictionalised and locations left vague in the interests of confidentiality.

- access;

The methods by which access was gained to the establishment are briefly described and an estimate given of their influence on the case study information

- informants;

The informants are detailed pseudonymously. Some accurate biographical details about their professional experience are provided because this is an important context for understanding their experience.

- the general approach of the establishment;

Firstly, perceptions of the work expressed in interview are presented. Then a description is given of the general approach of the nursery drawn from the field notes and supplemented by information from the audio recordings and structured observations.

- the establishment and children with disabilities;

The views expressed in interview on work with children with disabilities in general are presented.

- the child;

In each case the study focused on the experience of one particular child who is briefly described. Names and irrelevant details have been changed as the preservation of condfidentiality is of the highest importance in this context.

- provision for this child;

An account of observed practice in relation to this child is provided based upon the field notes, audio recording and the structured observations. It is organised according to the areas covered by the observation schedule - the activities the child engaged in, the social context and the interactions he or she was involved in.

-. observer effects

Observer effects are part of the data. An estimate of their nature and direction is therefore given in each case study.

Analysis

The description of the cases in itself constitutes a form of analysis - it is impossible to present raw experience; selection and ordering giving priority to some information has to take place. The guiding principle in this respect was representativeness. That is to say information which represented views or practice as they ordinarily occurred was given priority over that which an observer might see as particularly revealing.

The descriptive information is then summarised in terms of the pedagogical 'perspectives' which it embodies. Any pedagogy contains as three central components a perspective on the learners, that is the children, a perspective on learning and a perspective on the role of adults in encouraging learning.

Style of presentation

The jargon of the professional enterprises which I shared with the staff in the nurseries presented a difficulty. The common jargon of education has as its virtue that it acts as a form of shorthand, its defect is that it contains unexamined assumptions. This presents a particular problem for a study where such unexamined assumptions cannot be accepted at face value. As far as possible, plain language free of jargon or technical terms is used in the description of the cases.

However, there are situations in which no suitable alternative exists and in which a discussion of the assumptions contained in the jargon term would hold up the presentation. Single inverted commas have been used to indicate that the term used is a shorthand one, all of whose implications are not necessarily being accepted. All direct quotations, whether from written material or verbal material gathered in interview or tape-recording, are, by way of contrast, placed in double inverted commas.

In the discussion of access the first person is used for the researcher, as it is infrequently at other points. This is clearly appropriate to a form of research in which the active role of the researcher in reflexively shaping both events and their recording is fully acknowledged. The contrived use of impersonal forms would have been at odds with the nature of the study.

The children are all referred to by their, pseudonymous, first names because this was how they were known to the staff and how they were always referred to in discussion. The staff are referred to by the form of name which was used during the case studies. In the vast majority of cases people were known to me and to one another by their first names. The alternative of using numbers or letters would have failed to capture the flavour of the cases.

CASE ONE HILLCREST

1. The establishment

Hillcrest Day Nursery is situated in an area of Glasgow which has, as a result of a central government, local government and private sector intiative, undergone 'urban renewal'. This involved the demolition of much of the tenement housing and its replacement with smaller scale brick houses. Social, cultural and educational projects have been supported and there is a feeling that the community has gained in confidence. However, common consent and official reports concur in the view that substantial long-term employment has not been generated.

The immediately surrounding housing is, apart from minor up-grading, un-'renewed', being structurally sound post-war council housing. It is itself drab and featureless but has the advantage of being close to one of the focal points of the area where there are many shops.

Hillcrest is a nondescript one storey public building. Its most striking feature, one it shares with other public buildings in the area, is its extensive security precautions; a large metal fence and windows with external grilles and internal bars. In the recent past, as a result of a visit by the Divisional Education Officer, the Officer in Charge had managed to have some of the frosted glass replaced so that it was possible to see out.

The nursery catered for fifty children from the age of six months to five years. In common with other Day Nurseries it was oversubscribed and had for many years operated a priority admission system. The majority of children lived in lone parent families. A significant number of children were referred by the Social Work Department because of concern about parenting or family need.

Over the previous five years Hillcrest had catered for a significant number of children with disabilities: at the time of the case study there were two children with learning difficulties as a

result of Down's Syndrome, one with severe visual impairment and Michelle, the child in the study.

Beneath its grim exterior life bustled along informally, first names were used universally amongst parents, staff and children. The feeling of busy-ness was that of the workplace; despite obvious signs of affection and interest in individual children there was a sense of tasks to be completed, business to be transacted before the day was done. The process appeared even paced and efficient.

To go into the Officer in Charge's room was to enter a different time scale. Here the impression was one of lulls and storms - a period of calm and conversation would be interrupted by an emergency phone call. It was also to step out of a world of childcare as a job into one of childcare as a vocation. Sheila McPherson, the Officer in Charge, worried about the children and whether Hillcrest could fully meet their needs. She carried the burden of the impossibility of this task personally as well as professionally. Sheila gave the impression of being on a rather despairing mission to find Answers to these persistent worries including what to do for children with disabilities.

2. Access

Hillcrest was chosen for the first and 'pilot' case study because I had a suitable level of prior knowledge. I knew the Officer in Charge slightly from contact at meetings and had an indirect contact with her through the educational psychologist who served the Nursery. I knew the geographical area well and could understand references to networks in the community. Equally, I had never worked directly with the nursery so that open minds were possible on both sides.

Initial telephone contacts and a meeting were positive but Sheila said that she would have to consult with her staff. I sent her a letter outlining the kind of "contract" I saw myself entering into with the Nursery.

After Sheila had met with her staff she telephoned to express some of their anxieties. The most pressing of these was that they felt unequal to the task of integration, seeing themselves as having no specific training and as lacking in expertise yet they could foresee research in Hillcrest being used to justify an integrationist policy.

Sheila had 'sold' the staff the idea that I was not looking for examples of outstanding practice, using as a bargaining counter her perception that I would be able to help them improve their practice. Two common and related images of the researcher identified by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p75-76) were at work here, those of the "critic" and the "expert". My professional position clearly re-inforced these perceptions. I disclaimed the role of expert but did not press the point: the implied role made my presence legitimate without further, confusing explanation.

At a further meeting between Sheila and myself it was agreed that these anxieties could best be handled during the initial individual interviews. It had also become clear that a lengthy, careful and relatively formal negotiation over access seemed to have had the reverse effect to that intended. (Subsequent approaches allowed less time, were much lower key and more informal with no letters. There were fewer problems and essentially the outcome was the same, in that any anxieties were addressed in the initial interviews.)

If negotiating access is seen in terms of a series of doors I had now made my way into the playroom alongside the children. In selecting Michelle, Sheila had also selected a point of access to information, certainly not accidentally. Each child in Hillcrest was allocated to a member of staff as a "keyworker". In Michelle's case this was Jackie, one of two experienced members of staff in that room. There were also three less experienced members of staff and, at times, students.

There were two reasons for seeing the selection of Jackie as particularly significant in controlling access to information. Firstly, by reason of age, experience and strength of personality she was the dominant figure in the informal hierarchy in the playroom. Secondly, as Michelle was "her" child, it was natural that immediate negotiation was almost invariably conducted through her which protected the less confident people.

Access was not offered to the staff room; I lunched and had coffee in Sheila's room which allowed informal discussion with Sheila and Margery, her Depute. My gender, my status and the lingering suspicion about my motives made it unlikely that to have sought access to the staff room would have been seen favourably and to have obtained it would fairly certainly have been counter-productive. The Hillcrest staff needed to be free of observation at lunch.

3. Informants

The five members of staff, all trained nursery nurses, who were in daily contact with Michelle were interviewed, the students were not.

Jackie had trained after school in 1975 and had worked as a school secretary, a nanny abroad, as a nursery nurse in a special school and in another day Nursery. She then transferred to work as a community work assistant before returning to pre-five work five years previously in Hillcrest.

Susan had trained from 1975-77 and had worked in Hillcrest since qualifying. She pointed out that this had been under three very different regimes and that her experience was, therefore, wider than it might appear.

Alison had finished her training 1985 and, after jobs in an old people's home, factory, pubs and in clerical work, she had found temporary work as a nursery nurse. She had obtained a permanent post in Hillcrest in March 1987.

Jenny had completed her training three years previously and worked for two years as a nanny in London, the second year having been with a "handicapped" child. Her work with this little girl began in hospital and she was given "Bobath" training to carry out remedial exercises. She also took the child to a group for nannies of children with disabilities. Jenny left when the little girl started in a special school. Coming home, she was unemployed before obtaining a temporary nursery nurse post which had become permanent two months previously.

Carol had qualified in 1987 and had temporary jobs in other day Nurseries before starting a permanent job at Hillcrest one week previously.

In the room in which Michelle was provided for there was a clear hierarchy amongst the staff with the two experienced members of staff who had been there for some years, Jackie and Susan, in a more influential position than anyone else. The tone of work was very much set by them and other members of staff referred to them for decisions and advice.

4. Hillcrest's general approach

Interview accounts

In reporting the interviews, emphasis is given to Jackie and Susan's views to reflect their status.

Jackie's overall perspective on her working aims was that she was trying to create an emotionally secure environment, "a home from home"; tellingly, she added "perhaps wrongly" to this phrase. Her reservations about her work were forcefully expressed:

> To be honest, basically I think it is a dumping ground; children seem to be here too long - for too much of the day. Not when the parents are working but when the parents are at home. Sometimes it's single parents who are at home all day - the children are here from 9 to 4. For some children this <u>is</u> their home. Some children are here the day before they start school they don't even get a break. ...Some children may have unhappy homes but it is their home they are entitled to be there.

Jackie's view of childcare then, was based on the nuclear family to which daycare was seen as second best. Jackie's point of reference is her own childhood experience. Asked about the person who had influenced her work most she replied:

> My mother, I suppose. My own experience of being brought up. I think that 'discipline' will be obsolete in the dictionary in two years time. Manners - no-one has them now. I think back to how my mother brought us up, what she would have done."

These views found a strong echo in Susan's view of her job:

> Caring, time, love, you are everything really to the chidren who are here full-time really. What is it they say ? 'The extension of a good mother'. Stimulation, security and stability in kids' lives. Affection, it is very important in some of their lives since they don't get much affection. In some cases I feel we are not giving enough - they would be better with their mums.

The theme that the children in Hillcrest were damaged was another important thread in Jackie's account of her work:

> All the children in here have special needs. These different needs come from the reasons the children being admitted. They are usually to do with family difficulties. Most important is that the children do not have trust in adults or security. Educational develoment depends on developing this trust - you cannot start educational work until it has been established. You learn this from experience not college.

Jackie did acknowledge benefits to children but she saw them in terms of compensation for children whose opportunities were restricted; those who were alone at home or lived in flats.

The other interviewees expressed themselves much less forcefully and less negatively about daycare. Alison identified her overall aim as giving children independence. Jenny took a straightforward line about Hillcrest "caring for all sorts of children." Carol adopted an essentially neutral outlook, seeing the opportunity of encountering new playthings and friends as positive.

Significantly, however, Carol and Alison cited informal work contacts as the most important influences on their working practices and attitudes. Speculatively it might be suggested that they were likely to be socialised into a different outlook if they remained in contact with Jackie and Susan over a long period.

Pedagogical perspectives

A key perspective is a view of daycare as substitute, and therefore inferior, parenting. Despite the view of many theorists that this viewpoint is no longer tenable, it retains considerable potency in the world of daycare.

The consequence of this view is that all the children who attend the nursery are seen as damaged. Even where there are no other factors such as child abuse suggesting damage, the need to attend daycare itself constitues a damaging experience. This damage is social and emotional and so the important content of work with the children is not cognitive but affective. The central component of the adults' work in this area is remedial or compensatory provision of what the children lack - security and affection.

(Note: Appendix E provides an evaluation of this perspective and all the others derived from the interview data.)

The children in Hillcrest were split into groups by age: the babies, the "tweenies" (the one and a half and two year olds) and the three to fives. The last of these, Michelle's group, was thirty strong and occupied one large room. Another smaller room was used at times, there was an outside play area and trips were made outwith the nursery but overall the children's experience was concentrated on their own room.

Michelle only attended Hillcrest for part of each day; she spent the morning in a centre for children with special needs. It was, therefore, pointed out that my observations in Hillcrest did not adequately reflect the experience of the children who were there all day. In particular, it was reported that in the mornings there was a period of small group activities like art work or a structured game.

The part of each day which was observed followed a standard pattern, apart from on the final day when, by chance, the video-taping was carried out. This was different because a party was being held for a child who was leaving. The general pattern was as follows.

11.25 Michelle arrived at the end of the morning session Room tidied up and tables and chairs set out for lunch

11.30 Lunch

12.15 Clearing up by staff with occasional help from children Story telling or singing as small groups taken to the toilet (1st shift staff lunches)

13.00 Free play (2nd shift staff lunches)

13.45 Free play + small group activities or large group activities (All staff present)

14.40 Tea served

15.00 Michelle (and some other children) collected by parents

There was a strong sense of a change in the mode of operation as the morning phase ended. This coincided with Michelle's arrival. Preparation began for lunch which was served just before 11.30. About three-quarters of an hour was spent in the efficient delivery of food to the thirty children. All the staff were involved in this and took time to sit with their group of children while they ate.

Immediately after lunch there was a flurry of activity as the meal was cleared up. As this was happening, the children were gathered into one large group by two members of staff and taken to the toilet in small groups as the others were read a story. This coincided with the beginning of staff lunches. Story telling was used as a means of keeping reasonable order for a time in this short-staffed situation.

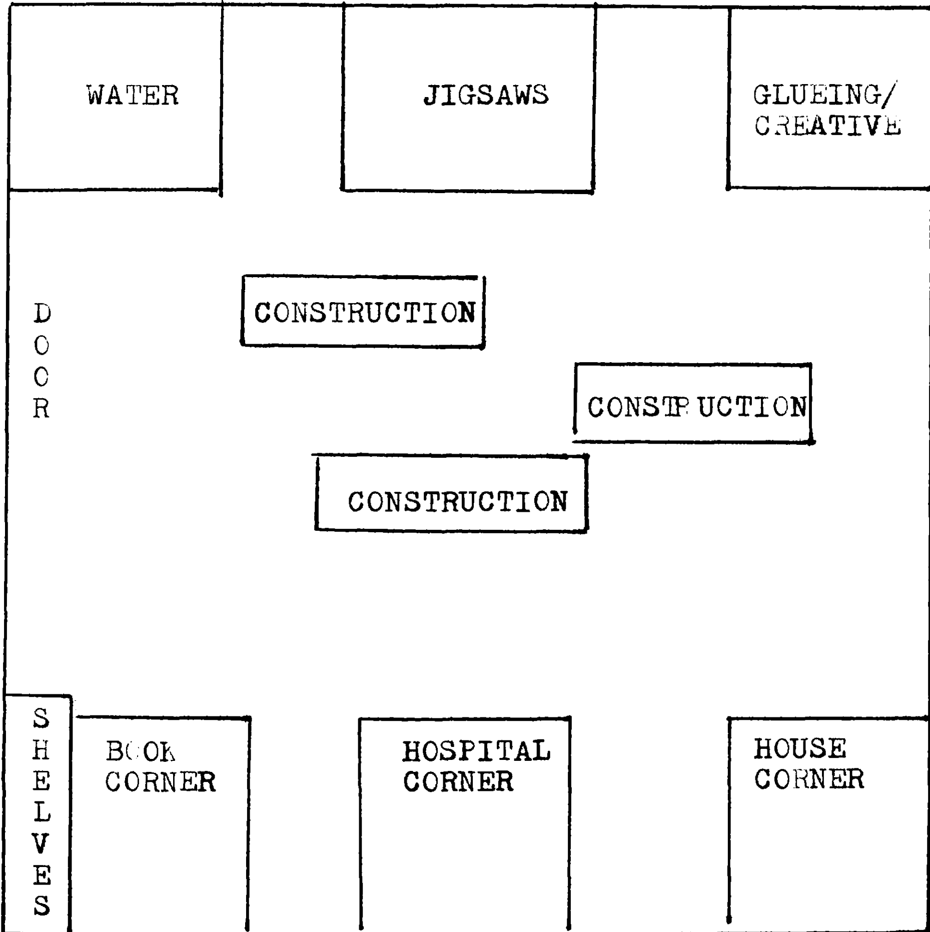
What this meant was that for a considerable period, usually rather more than an hour and a half, all the children were expected to engage in the same activity. The virtues of conformity, for example, good table manners and quiet, attentive listening to the story were strongly emphasised.

The group activity continued for the period of the first staff lunch and then the children were released to play. They played with a minimum of supervision while the staff were occupied with practical tasks, such as clearing up or re-arranging the wall decorations. The safety of the children was ensured but there were few interventions.

At this time the staff appeared to have adopted a strategy of opting out of an impossible situation rather than regarding the consequent level of noise and activity as acceptable. This staff lunch period was seen as a very difficult one by both the staff and the officer in charge but one for which no real solution had been found. However, it is also important to be aware of the context. These children were in Hillcrest all day and expected for much of the time to conform or act "constructively". This period was, in fact, one of the few that was free of adult demands on the children.

A typical layout of the playroom at times when lunches were not being served was:

Fig. 1



Once all the staff were back at work small groups of children were encouraged to play more 'constructively'. Sometimes, a large group activity was undertaken or the children were taken outdoors to play. However, adults frequently undertook practical activities such as clearing up an area at this time. During this period, children were allowed a free choice of activity and interventions to re-direct their attention were invariably a result of undesirable or potentially undesirable behaviour, such as rowdy or noisy play.

Preparations for tea began at about 2.35 and the children were again gathered into a group. Tea was a more informal occasion with the children often sitting on the flooor in a large group. Nevertheless, the sense of routinisation was strong.

At 3.00 a number of children, including Michelle, were collected. This collection of children was carried out quite informally and parents would often spend a few minutes in casual conversation with the staff.

Pedagogical perspectives

It is worth emphasising here that the perspectives that are distinguished are not presented as criticisms. Some of those in Hillcrest do not conform to received 'educational' wisdom, so that those who have been exposed to this wisdom have to make a conscious effort to suspend it (cf Lubeck, 1985).

The first perspective is a child management one. The staff are faced with some practical tasks to be undertaken with a relatively large number of children; eating, toileting and supervision of a period of play. While positive interaction with the children was interspersed naturally with this, it was quite clearly practical "work" for the staff and they often appeared most comfortable when there was an identifiable practical task to be done. With no implied criticism, its aims were not 'educational' in the sense of seeking particular outcomes or individual enrichment for the children. In truth, the ideal to which some of the staff aspired, childrearing at home, often takes a similar form.

The second perspective is a collectivist one. The children were treated as individuals to a very limited degree during the observations. Everyone was given the same food and, by and large, everyone behaved in the same way. Virtuous behaviour was getting on with the task in hand and conforming, although the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly and conversation was encouraged. In general, choice was not exercised by the children during eating or story telling.

The approach to the children then was one which did not emphasise their individuality, even although the adults spent long periods of time in contact with children whom they knew well as individuals. The content of their learning experiences was not highly differentiated. The adults' role can again be seen as one which primary carers face in other situations: ensuring children's safety and being responsive to them in the context of a practical set of tasks. It was distinguished here by being carried out by a group of adults for a group of children.

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview accounts in general terms

All the staff favoured integration in principle but expressed reservations about the practice as they had experienced it. There was a general perception that all the children benefitted from the inclusion of children with "handicaps". However, the lack of staff numbers to carry out "one to one" work, their lack of specialised training and the absence of adapted equipment were mentioned by everyone as limiting factors on what they could achieve. Staffing was also seen as crucial because some children identified as disabled were seen to absorb extra staff time.

A distinction was made between children with "special needs" which could arise for a variety of reasons and a sub-group who were seen as "handicapped". Amongst the latter group there was a significant gradation in the extent of the "handicap". Jackie commented:

> It is particularly good for a child who is only mildly handicapped, who can join in with the others. ... It depends on the degree of handicap.

This was echoed by Susan, who said, "It depends on the severity of the handicap", and Jenny who felt that "profoundly handicapped" children could not be provided for.

There was a constant concern not only that it was not possible to provide enough for the children but that what was provided might be wrong or inadequate. As Susan said,

> At times I feel inadequate ... I feel as though I've not been ... doing enough. You've so much to offer them and not enough time.

Jenny's view of this was reinforced by her experience as a nanny. She saw the physiotherapy-type exercises she had used as very valuable.

Pedagogical perspectives

The distinction between those children with "handicaps" and the wider population of needy children was significant. The staff views of the kind of work that should be most highly valued with children with handicaps can be summarised as work carried out on an individual basis, by people with specialised training using specialised equipment. Other forms of work taken on at Hillcrest and relevant to needy children, were seen as desirable but limited.

Michelle

It appeared that Sheila had chosen Michelle as the child for the study, because she illustrated some of her concerns about Hillcrest's capacity to provide adequately for children with disabilities.

In fact, Michelle was the kind of child who causes general concern. She showed no physical signs of impairment but had been very slow to learn in every way. Aged four, she did not speak and appeared to understand little. She made little emotional response to adults or children; on the rare occasions when she did make eye contact with someone it was never more than fleeting.

Michelle was the youngest of three children, her older brother and sister attended a local primary school and had no apparent difficulties. Her mother was, understandably, perplexed by the pattern of her behaviour. The nursery only had much contact with Michelle's mother, her father had rarely been seen. Mrs McAlpine's personal style was one in which she gave little away; in a conversation she would not volunteer information that had not specifically been asked for. The staff perceived this as being unhelpful and felt frustrated by the lack of information they received from her.

Interview accounts of provision for Michelle

As with the interviews on Hillcrest's general work, the account gives particular prominence to the views expressed by Jackie who took the major role in defining the approach that was taken to Michelle. Everyone else qualified their comments by deferential remarks about Michelle being "Jackie's child".

The most striking feature of these interviews was that, despite their general, qualified approval of integration in principle, everyone questioned its value for Michelle. Nagging at the back of everyone's opinion was the feeling that there was really somewhere more specialised where Michelle's needs would be better met.

Jackie expressed grave reservations about whether Hillcrest could meet Michelle's needs, making a distinction between what she saw as the area of her expertise and another, more specialised kind of knowledge:

> When Michelle started she was, it had been assessed that she was at a nine to twelve months stage, she wasn't walking. The walking wasn't a problem - you do the things you would do with a baby. It is the educational part that was difficult. You ask yourself if you are doing harm rather than good. Because you don't know, you are afraid you may do harm, that's the biggest worry.

Jackie saw enhanced staffing as a crucial need, above all because it made "one to one" work possible.

In fact there was specialist provision made for Michelle. Jackie knew that a number of professionals were involved with Michelle and she had been part of some liaison work. Her overwhelming feeling was that other people, including Michelle's mother, had let her down. She gave an example from Michelle's first days in the nursery which illustrated this:

> It was horrendous then she would have a sleep and then waken up screaming. We phoned for the Health Visitor. She wasn't very much help; when Michelle was placed she never came in, we always had to phone her.... It was quite frightening, high pitched. I thought thewre was something banging on her brain and she was going to explode. The Health Visitor seemed to think it was all right, maybe she was used to things like that.

Jackie's assumption was clearly that the Health Visitor should at least know what to do about the screaming, yet there is no reason to suppose that a nursing background would confer any expertise in dealing with this frightening distress. The barely concealed irritation with other professionals may have had its origins in their disappointment of Jackie's expectations.

Similarly, both Jackie and Susan were critical of the specialist centre which Michelle attended. Infrequent liaison had not yielded any great insights for Jackie and indeed she regarded their success in practical areas such as toileting and feeding as rather less than that achieved at Hillcrest. Susan found on a visit that there was little to distinguish the "special" work from their own.

Another instance of disappointment with specialists was cited. This involved another child whose educational home visitor had been to Hillcrest and left "some cards which just sat in the office."

Jackie expressed one theoretical reservation about specialist provision; perhaps predictably, that there was risk of "taking responsibility away from her mum."

Pedagogical perspectives

The general reservations that the staff had about integration were magnified when they considered Michelle specifically. There was a distinction between those of her needs which were 'normal', which they could meet, and those which were 'special', which they could not. Their view of the 'special' needs was that appropriate provision would be remedial and that another, more remedial setting might exist.

The idea of remediation was seen to apply to some children but not to all. The idea of eligibility for integration was expressed several times: it is likely to be successful for some children but there are those whose impairments are so severe that they cannot be expected to benefit.

The whole notion of the specialists who know what to do, who have the special techniques, might appear to have been brought into question by the experience of direct contact with specialists, yet apparently it was not. That it survived these disappointments indicated the strength of the assumptions about the existence of expertise on which the perspective was founded.

The relationship between Jackie and Michelle was widely identified as central to Michelle's experience in Hillcrest, the words used were "She's Jackie's child." It is possible to read implications of substitute parenthood into this.

Observed practice with Michelle

ACTIVITIES

As indicated in the description of the overall practice, Michelle's day fell into four phases: (a) arrival and lunch, (b) whole group activities, usually story telling, (c) free play and (d) tea and departure.

Eating is the sort of activity where a teaching 'programme' would be implemented for Michelle if she attended a special school or nursery. In Hillcrest there was no such programme yet Michelle was expected to eat acceptably and she did so. That Michelle's eating was surprisingly acceptable was confirmed by her mother's amazement at her skills with a knife and fork when she saw the section of video-tape which had been made at lunchtime.

After lunch, all the children were usually read a story. The stories that the children were told were incomprehensible to Michelle but she was expected to sit and listen. The only other activity

observed at this time was singing, for which Michelle was equally expected to be part of the group.

During free play Michelle spent much of her time in very simple imaginative play with a doll covering it up and occasionally puting it to bed. It was difficult to estimate how far this imaginative play was more than a comforting ritual. Other children did not become involved in the game but frequently Michelle would look for an adult to help her straighten out the cover. Such requests were usually complied with and a passing comment perhaps offered, but no more.

At other times Michelle covered other objects up or put them inside a container. Similarly, she spent time at the water tray pouring water in and out of containers. She also spent significant amounts of time wandering around with no visible purpose. Neither adults nor children interfered with her private purposes at these times.

Michelle did not generally become involved in any form of role play with other children apart from on the occasions described in the section on interactions which follows.

Structured observations

During the period of structured observation the two major activities of lunch/tea and story telling took up substantial periods of time (15% and 14% of the observed time, respectively). During the free activity which followed, Michelle either played imaginatively (15% of the time), explored the properties of objects (13%) or engaged in a non-specific activity (14%). The only structured form of small group activity in which she spent a significant proportion of the time was gross motor activity, mainly accounted for by an occasion on which a rocking boat was introduced to the playroom.

By and large this confirms the pattern and balance of activity noted in the unstructured observations.

(Note: Appendix E provides the overall results of the structured observations for each case in tabular form.)

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective in the activities available to Michelle was that of normality as it was defined for the other children. Any differences the staff saw between Michelle and the other children were not reflected in what was expected of her. The implication was that she would learn from these activities in her own way and that their normality would be beneficial. The adults' role was one of encouraging Michelle to act as much like the other children as possible.

However, the interviews suggest that in the staff's eyes this approach was adopted by default. They felt that more suitable activities were possible but that they did not know what these were. Further, even if they had known what activities were suitable they were not staffed or equipped to carry them out.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Michelle's overall experience in Hillcrest could be described as one of inclusion. Whatever differences there were between Michelle and the other children, she was part of the same set of activities as all the other children and subject to the same norms and expectations for most of her time in Hillcrest. Unstructured observation indicated that there were two dominant patterns to this inclusion.

The first pattern could be seen during the time when the whole group carried out the same activity - when the children were eating and when they were being read a story. Michelle was fully included in these large group activities in which conformity was a central feature.

Particularly where a story was being read, inclusion often involved restraining Michelle. Sometimes this would be carried out by someone holding Michelle on her knee.

At other times, Michelle would be given very firm verbal and gestural direction to be part of the group. For example, at story telling there was a clear expectation that her external behaviour would be the same as that of other children. As she sat Michelle would attempt to make contact with other children by patting or touching them. As the story progressed she would become emboldened to do this slightly more firmly but still not hard enough to provoke a reaction. Eventually she was noticed and reprimanded in these terms:

> No, you've not to do that. How would <u>you</u> like to get smacked on the back?"

The second pattern of inclusion was a contrasting one. It occurred at the time when the children were allowed a free choice of activity. What this meant for Michelle was complete solitude amongst the crowd of children. She pursued her own interests relentlessly, usually either a very stereotyped game of putting the doll to bed or playing with the water.

Both represent patterns of inclusion but in the second case the form of inclusion was a passive one which entailed much less conformity than the other, more active inclusion in large group activities. Therefore it did not involve restraining Michelle.

Structured observations

Michelle spent the bulk of the observed time in group activities, both small and large (50%) and in solitary activities (30%). This confirms the basic two types of her inclusion. She spent negligible periods in parallel or associative play (3% and 2%, respectively) confirming that her social contact with other children was of a limited kind. The evidence, however, is of rather more direct adult contact (16%) than the unstructured observations suggested.

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective on involving Michelle was that she was treated in a broad sense as if she were the same as the other children. However, it is clear from the interviews that indeed she was being treated 'as if'. Although there is a significant contrast between the types of inclusion, there is also a sense in which both embody the same perspective. Both contain a presumption that Michelle would learn through her awareness of other children. Similarly, by having the same expectations of her as the other children it was supposed that she would become more like them, more 'normal'.

The role that this implied for the staff was one of minimising differences between other children and Michelle.

INTERACTIONS

The central feature of Michelle's interactions with both adults and children was how limited they were. A typical form of interaction in which Michelle made the first move would consist of her reaching out and patting, often in a somewhat abstracted manner, another child.

In general, adults made few concessions to Michelle's apparently limited understanding. Apart from Jackie they tended to speak to her as if she understood as much as the other children. The lack of adjustment to her capacity for interaction also extended to the non-verbal sphere. For example, during story telling Michelle was taken onto someone's knee on several occasions but she was always held facing outwards, in the same direction as the person holding her. This minimised any interaction other than the verbal, whereas to engage Michelle in interaction it would have been necessary to hold her in a facing position as with a very young child.

However, when Michelle was separated from the other children, notably when she was being changed after she had become wet, a different, playful style of interaction, of a type characteristic of communication with babies was in evidence.

Neither the other children nor Michelle made many attempts to engage in mutual interaction. However, as the freedom for the children to play was considerable, an inevitable consequence was that the amount of variation in interactions from day to day was substantial. One day in particular, Michelle was involved with her peers several times in several different contexts in more complex interactions than were generally observed. These are outlined here.

Michelle played at the water tray in parallel with with several other children (this was unexceptional). All the children began to put objects into a large bucket which she held. She was involved but largely passively.

In the house corner, Sarah, a child with a visual impairment joined in with Michelle's habitual game of getting in and out the bed. Again Michelle was mostly the passive partner being covered and uncovered and not talking. Another child moved into the area, joined in the game and then transformed it into one of jumping on the bed. First Sarah imitated her and then Michelle in the only real instance of direct imitation observed. They were stopped by an adult because the activity was judged to be dangerous.

Waiting for tea to be served Michelle and Sarah smiled and pulled faces at one another and gently patted one another. There was a similar episode of turn-taking in head-nodding with a little boy as both were ostensibly listening to a story.

There was a brief episode in the house corner with another child who had not the patience to put up with Michelle's lack of responsiveness. She turned her back on Michelle and shut her out of the game. This was followed by a negative episode for Michelle in which Julie a child with learning difficulties treated Michelle as a doll in a role play putting Michelle to bed.

There is a serious difficulty in reaching any conclusions about which factors led to this one day of relatively extensive interaction. Some were clearly chance, such which child Michelle found herself with in the house corner and whether or not other children interrupted.

Structured observations

The majority of interactions observed were initiated by an adult - 127 or (59%) of those observed. The structured observations suggest that there was a characteristic pattern of the interactions with adults: 80 (63%) of those initiated by an adult were followed by a positive response from Michelle; that is, Michelle did as she was told. This confirms the suggestion that their nature was rather limited.

In general, the interactions between Michelle and her peers were fewer than those with adults but they were a significant proportion (29%) of those observed. This suggests that such interactions were a more prominent feature of Michelle's experience than the unstructured observations indicated. However, most (58%) of those Michelle initiated with a peer had no outcome. Similarly, Michelle failed to respond to a first move from a peer in 67% of cases. Thus such interactions may have been relatively frequent but, as noted, fleeting in character.

Michelle herself initiated 47 (22%) of the observed interactions, indicating again that she was less passive than she appeared. Again, however, they showed a high failure rate, even when directed towards adults (46%)

Pedagogical perspectives

Again, the perspective is one of normalisation. Michelle was treated as if she might become more 'normal' if she was treated as 'normal'. The role of the adults was, therfore, to react to her in as normal a fahion as possible. The presence of the other children allowed normalisation to take place with her peers.

An additional note - Jackie's relationship with Michelle

It is important to consider Jackie's particular position in relation to Michelle. She was the key worker for Michelle which meant that she had more responsibility for Michelle than anyone else. It appeared that other members of staff tended to leave dealing with Michelle to Jackie in a way that they would not have with any other child. In a sense, this exclusive responsibility was equivalent to that of a parent and the same sort of embarassment about responding to a parent's child in her/his presence seemed to prevail.

One key incident illustrates the closeness of this relationship. There were a number of instances in free play when Michelle lost the toy she was playing with because another child took it from her and she was unable to resist. On one occasion, Carol colluded with this by giving a doll's cover to another child who had begun to play with it in an obviously imaginative way.

In another incident, however, Michelle indicated to Jackie by eye pointing alone that she wanted a doll back from a child who had taken it. Jackie was sufficiently attuned to Michelle's communication and the context to understand the message. She took the doll from the other child and returned it to Michelle. Observation strongly suggested that no other staff member would have been able to interpret Michelle's meaning in this way.

Conversely, at times Jackie adopted a very strong and directive tone towards Michelle, in fact, she warned me in advance that she spoke harshly to her in order to "get through to her". It was successful but was rather outwith the norms for adult language towards children in a nursery and more like the tone adopted by parents in some sub-cultures.

It is possible to make a strong interpretation and see Jackie as adopting the role of substitute mother for Michelle, accepting personal responsibility for her. This may have allowed Jackie, in terms of her own perspective, to provide an acceptable normality for Michelle which cut across what she saw as the unacceptable normality of daycare.

6. Observer Effects

The method for assessing observer efffects was to ask people in the second interviews and in a feedback session what effects they had felt on their own behaviour.

The lengthy preparation, the implied expert role and the fact that the staff knew that at some stage they would be video-taped all contributed to the strength of observer effects. One person reported that she had had a headache for a fortnight and had had to go to bed at eight o'clock each night. Allowing for hyperbole, she was quite clearly describing a powerful effect.

Two effects were reported. First, there was a general self-consciousness which led to a less relaxed atmosphere than usual, although the activities that were carried out were reported to be representative. Secondly, and more significantly, there was reported to be an increased staff awareness of what Michelle was doing at any time and a consequent tendency to include her with the other children more than usual.

The information gathered represents an improved and idealised version of what happens day-to-day. The approximation to the ideal that the staff were able to implement was one of inclusion and normalisation for Michelle.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue, rather than being treated simply as contamination of the evidence observer effects themselves provide useful data. In this case they confirm that the practice of normalisation is not present only by default but that it is part of the practice of integration in Hillcrest. By contrast, although the theoretical perspective of specialism was strong there were no instances of individualised work with Michelle, even for the observer's benefit.

1. The establishment

Carsefoot is the only local authority nursery school in a small town. The nursery school itself is situated on a somewhat run down council estate. However, children attended from all over the town and represented a wide social mix.

Carsefoot had been purpose-built during the expansion in nursery education of the early 1970s. In common with many buildings of its vintage, it looks bright and well-adapted to its purpose and is in practice full of pitfalls. The staff were very conscious of these and talked frequently of "a building like this" as one of the limitations on the sort of work that could be carried out. The principal limitation was one of space, it was insufficient and not particularly well laid out for its purpose. In spite of this, considerable attention was paid to the internal appearance of the nursery school; the white painted walls had an extensive and carefully arranged display of the children's work and other materials appropriate to the topics of the moment were on display.

Children with disabilities had been given priority for admission over a number of years. They were transported within the town and from the surrounding area by taxi. The Head Teacher, Mrs Cameron was particularly proud of Carsefoot's reputation in this respect.

A feature of Carsefoot was that boundaries were well defined and clearly marked. An obvious illustration was the situation at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions when a queue of parents and children stood outside waiting to be admitted at the appropriate time. These clear boundaries were an organisational feature and were not indicative of an unwelcoming attitude towards parents; there were schemes for parental involvement and an under threes group used the already stretched building.

2. Access

Carsefoot had been mentioned to me as an establishment where the head teacher had given considerable thought to making provision for children with a range of needs. I arranged a visit to talk to Mrs Cameron at which I proposed a case study. Viewing research as part of professional practice, she agreed to the proposition.

Clear boundaries were also a feature of the relationships within the building. A significant set of boundaries at Carsefoot was within the staff. The head teacher gave me a sheet which she had prepared setting out in considerable detail the roles of the different members of staff. These roles were very distinct and clearly hierarchical. In discussion with Mrs Cameron it was apparent that she adopted a managerial rather than a teaching role. She explicitly directed the staff in implementing her philosophy of nursery education which was a matter of personal conviction.. Her responsibilities as outlined in the document consisted of managerial and liaison tasks and policy, curriculum and staff development.

In interviewing the nursery nurses it emerged that this hierarchical perception of the situation was a shared one. They talked of Mrs Cameron as "the Boss" and her style was described by one as "democratic dictatorship". Although they accepted her direction, they did not necessarily subscribe to the philosophy.

In this situation, gaining access depended on following the hierarchy and observing status rules. Nevertheless, I was given freedom to talk to the staff in private and observe as I wished. Despite engaging in, from a 'professional' point of view rather dubious activities, such as standing about watching, occasional scribbling and interviewing nursery nurses at some length, my status was plainly that of an official visitor to whom it was incumbent on the Head Teacher to offer appropriate hospitality. For instance, I had morning coffee with her every day which gave time to develop an understanding of her perspectives.

In general I was not included in the informality of the staff room but I did spend one lunch hour there at the end of the case study.

3. Informants

The staff of the nursery school consisted of a Head Teacher, an Assistant Teacher and 6 Nursery Nurses. All of the staff, apart from the Assistant Teacher, were experienced and had worked in the nursery school for several years. Mrs Cameron had been involved in pioneering work in nursery education in Carsefoot and a previous appointment.

In keeping with the clear boundaries and social distances, personal contacts in Carsefoot were kept formal, in public; adults were addressed by their surnames, both by the children and by the staff in the children's hearing. The rule was only relaxed in the staffroom.

In a hierarchical sense Mrs Cameron can be seen as a key informant with control over formal and structural aspects of the children's experience - the timetabling and content of activities. However, the rest of the staff had discretion in how these structural aspects were translated into action and so exercised considerable control.

While there were almost certainly alliances and members of the staff who had more influence than others, these were not obvious enough to be reliably detected in a short period. There was no real evidence, either in practice or in interview, of significant differences between the members of staff in their perspectives. It is, therefore, possible to treat them as a largely homogeneous group and to report their views interchangeably with a minimum of identification of individuals.

The only exception to this homogeneity was Elizabeth, the assistant teacher. As 'neither flesh nor fowl' she was, like many assistant teachers in nursery schools, in a marginal position, caught between two loyalties. It was significant that she alone emphasised the importance of teamwork in the nursery setting. She was the only person referred to generally (*mais pas devant les enfants*) by her first name.

A group system operated in Carsefoot with all children assigned to one member of staff. Peter was part of Mrs Robin's group and because a relatively long time was spent in group activities she assumed a significant role in the description of practice. Her views in interview were not notably different from those of anyone else and she is not treated as a key informant.

4. Carsefoot's general approach

Interview accounts

Mrs Cameron's philosophy was one which emphasised that it was a school which was being run. The implication of this was that 'school' forms of learning, that is, specific cognitive achievements, were seen as highly valued outcomes. The methodology was that of 'centres of interest' in which displays, materials and activities were focused on a topic. This was designed to avoid artificial boundaries in the curriculum while retaining cognitive outcomes as its basis. Mrs Cameron's view hinged upon the proposition that if children did not engage in such cognitive learning then the potential of the early years was being wasted. Concepts such as early science and early maths were of great importance.

Other aims such as socialisation and those related to care were acknowledged by Mrs Cameron but seen as incidental. They were objectives to be achieved so that the main business of learning could be undertaken. Similarly, "free play" was regarded as an unacceptable description of those phases when adult control was less overt and the term "self-selected activity" was preferred by Mrs Cameron.

The philosophy was implemented in a number of ways. Each day followed a clear timetable with a relatively long time, around half an hour, devoted to a group activity carried out under direct adult control. The activities were nursery activities, selected on the grounds of cognitive content, such as opportunities for learning colour or number, for language use or for developing perceptual skills.

These activities were related to a termly set of guidelines issued to all staff by the Head Teacher. These guidelines indicated the content of the work to be carried out and the kinds of activities which might be used to implement it.

The other staff had different emphases from these 'educational' ones. Their primary emphasis was on social types of learning: "mixing, sharing, socialising with different adults"; "furthering relationships with adults and children, helping them to form these relationships".

This tended to be linked to making the break from home: "We give them a stable relationship with another adult outside the family circle."

This sort of relationship was identified as particularly important for some types of children and families;

> There is high unemployment on this estate and it's good for the parents to get the children out and good for the children to get out of a stressful situation. ... They need someone to talk to. Their parents are often too busy or the TV is on. Just to be there, they can ask or say things to us - we're not shocked.

This was seen to reflect two factors: firstly, the perceived general decline in society - "a loving relationship, giving security, a lot need this nowadays"; secondly, family stress - "lots of children don't come from a calm and reasonable environment." Elizabeth summarised these views by saying, "for some children we are an oasis in the desert, warm and comfortable."

In addition to emphasising social development there was also an emphasis on emotional development, "they leave happy". The role of the nursery school was described in far reaching terms in this respect "(nursery school) is important for both (parents and children) to develop as human beings."

The nursery nurses placed a subsidiary emphasis on the overtly educational component: "It doesn't hurt to learn basic things like colour, shape number." "The structured day is good, it's not aimless." For some of the staff at least, this lesser emphasis extended to a sense of unease about the role of overt 'education' in Carsefoot:

> The official view is that we should be warm and welcoming for three to fives and not put too much pressure on them. In my opinion there is too much pressure. I feel the children should get more freedom to experiment and learn to play first. Colour, number, science all these things do not have to be dinned into a child they are getting them through any form of play. I feel there is too much formality for three to fives; if they learn to rub shoulders, play nicely and begin to share the rest comes naturally

The last sentence is almost the complete converse of the head teacher's view which was that these social aspects were incidental and would arise naturally as a by-product of the planned educational work.

Pedagogical perspectives

The staff and Mrs Cameron did share a perspective which was centred on the needs of children, the increased opportunities that part-time daycare might offer to parents for example, were scarcely mentioned. Within a consensus about services being child based, and often compensatory for family inadequacy, there were two competing perspectives about nursery schooling. The head teacher emphasised the schooling aspect while the other staff emphasised social development.

The nursery school did encompass both perspectives but it did not do so without friction and there was a real tension between the competing emphases. Mrs Cameron saw in the nursery nurses a lack of intellectual understanding of her emphasis and the nursery nurses saw in her a lack of human and experiential understanding.

The view of children in the schooling perspective was one which saw them as potential learners. In contrast, the social outlook emphasised their present experience and its quality. Thus the schooling perspective laid great store by the structured coherence of a curriculum relevant to later learning. The social outlook emphasised the enjoyment of childhood and a natural accumulation of wider social experience. The logic of the schooling perspective was that the teacher had a special competence in designing appropriate learning experiences. From the alternative point of view competent and responsive trained adults could provide a worthwhile experience.

Each child in Carsefoot was assigned to one member of staff as part of a group of ten children. Children with "special needs" were distributed amongst the groups so that no one person had more than one or two such children.

All the activities took place in the open plan area of the nursery school or in one of two "bays" off this area. Each member of staff was allocated to an area of the nursery school and supervised the activities there. This was not adhered to rigidly and there was frequent movement of the staff for a variety of reasons. At the more formal times in the day, each member of staff would sit with her group in one area of the building.

The nursery school was generally bright with a good supply of materials. There was a strong preponderance of both structured and unstructured concrete play materials, constructional toys, art materials, puzzles and games. The house area which is often seen as the most likely to provoke imaginative play was rather cramped in a small corner and equipped in a very simple fashion.

A very clear pattern was established for each day at Carsefoot. Mrs Cameron had written out a timetable for the staff and she gave me a copy. Observed events deviated from the timetable in the details of their timing and in the more ad hoc nature of some of the activities but it was followed in essence. It is included in full because it provides much of the flavour of the approach.

Fig. 2

The school is organised as a whole, i.e., a variety of activities are presented using the three main areas plus a number of small side rooms. The activities are presented in a variety of ways, a) Free Play/Self Selection, b) Group Work, c) Individual Work

Peripatetic teaching staff withdraw 'Special Needs' pupils to 'one to one' situations as required.

TIME		ACTIVITY/ORGANISATION	NOTES
am 8.45 to 9.15	pm 12.30 to 12.45	Preparation time - Monitoring of pupils' and students' progress - Staff Meetings - Preparation, sorting and mending of materials Forward Planning - Discussing 'centres of interest' - attending to walls and table displays Preparing the working/learning environment.	All staff plus students are involved.
9.15 to 9.45	12.45 to 1.15	Gradual entry of full-time & morning/afternoon Free Play/Self selected activities - Joining an adult offered activity - with the teacher for a specialised 'centre of interest' (Teacher observing and monitoring progress of individual pupils)	Two adults in in each main area (This can be combination of staff and students Tue & Thur - parents in play areas.
9.45 to 10.15 (Group time is flexible - longer or shorter depending on age, ability & aptitude of pupils	1.15 to 1.45	Group Time - i.e. adult offered activities. The school is organised as a whole. Throughout the building at each session the various gps. are watching television, listening to radio looking at filmstrips or slides, cooking or baking following their own selected centre of interest. Flexible organisation of group time (using students) can free staff to pursue a a specialised centre of interest or to work with special needs pupils	There are 5 NNs and an asst. teacher in the building. There are six groups - these can be organised in different ways e.g. half to student, 2 gps for a film etc.
10.15 to 10.30	1.15 to 2.15	Children's Snack Time - Wash hands and join your own group of children. Children sit at table and help to distribute and share out food, milk etc - encouraged to converse (Ritual of birthdays, special days etc Content of snack to be varied as much as possible	A member of staff at each table plus student or parent if poss. In good weather can be outing & picnic snack

10.30 to 10.45	2.00 to 2.15	First Staff Interval Half staff & students Second Staff Interval go to each break	First staff interval each day - Teacher takes music with different groups
		First Break - Teacher plus a nursery nurse and student take children for different aspect	
10.45 to 11.00	2.15 to 2.30	can be a few children, a group, or the whole school depending on activity. Second Break music can continue or return to free play/ self selected activities.	
11.00 to 11.30 (2.45 Full Time Ch/n Leave)	2.30 to 3.00	Movement in Pre-Five Education - in Home Bay - a different group each day. (Swimming - Mon 10 - 11.15 am; Fri 1.00 - 2.15) Other Areas - Self Selected Activities/Adult Offered Activities - follow up to centres of interest - outings - outside play when weather permits With teacher for individual work or specialised centre of interest	An interested NN has overall responsibility for Movement Teacher working with individual special needs pupils or any group requiring extra attention eg rising fives
11.30 to 11.45 (am ch/n home)	3.00 to 3.15 (pm ch/n home)	Children gather together in one area for a a story. Tidy time - diffferent children each day help staff to clear away apparatus etc	A different member of staff each week tells story. Others prepare for lunch, next session etc.
11.45 to 12.30	3.15 to 3.30	11.45 - 12.30 (Home Bay) - Lunch 3.15 - 3.30 - Arranging children's work, walls, table display etc	All staff + students involved

Wednesday 9.30, 1.00 (Home Bay Area) 'Mothers and Under Threes' Meetings' (Nursery Nurse on duty plus, on occasion, a visiting Health Visitor.)

Throughout school year - six parents' evenings plus other meeetings of the 'Parents' Club'

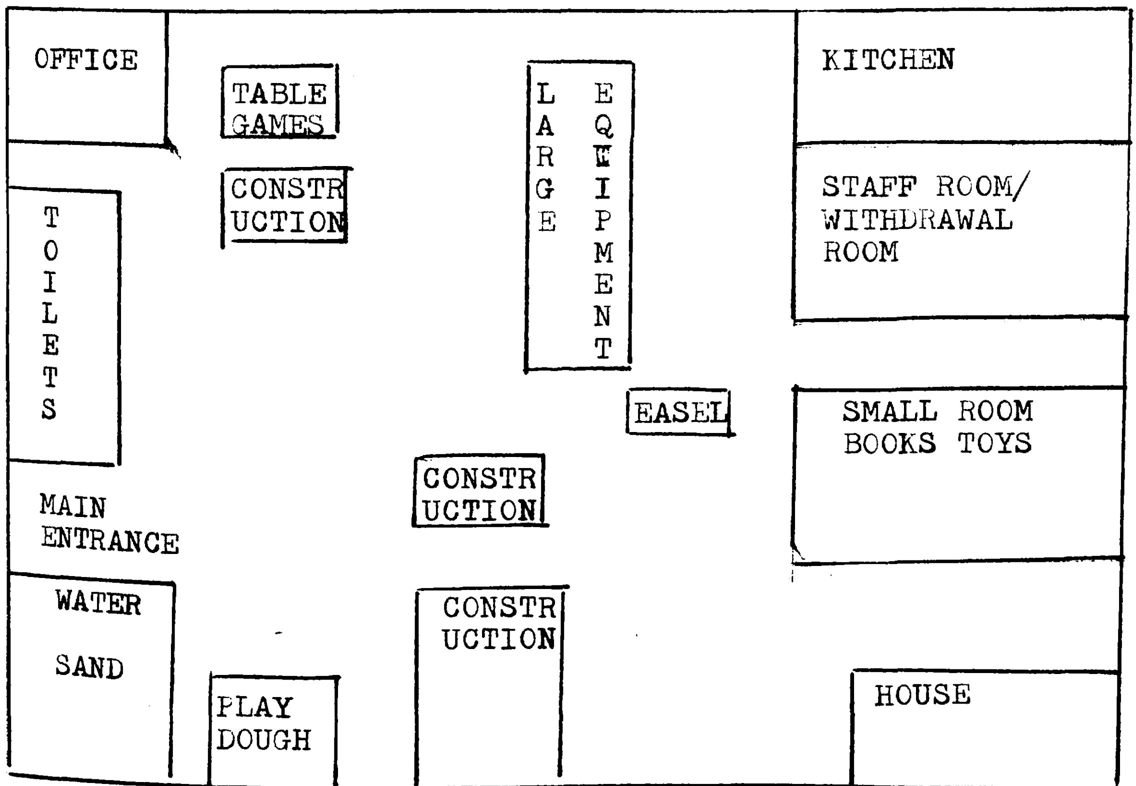
(For reasons of space minor abbreviations have been made and a number of inverted commas removed, otherwise this is verbatim.)

While the structures were given to the staff the tone of the children's experience was set in daily contact and reflected a consensus of judgement amongst the staff and their personal styles. It was characterised by warmth but also by a no-nonsense firmness about acceptable forms of behaviour and the observance of rules, for example, those limiting the number of children at a particular activity. The confidence that comes from extensive personal experience, including child-rearing, was obvious.

The day started with children arriving over approximately a fifteen minute period. There was a booking in system but the atmosphere was relaxed and informal, the smallness and awkward position of the cloakroom area made some chaotic informality unavoidable.

On arrival, and for a further fifteen minutes, there was an opportunity for the children to choose their own activities with minimal direction. This plan indicates a typical layout of activities :

Fig 3



Approximately half an hour after the first children arrived, groups were formed for an activity directed by an adult. These activities were carried out in regular groups, although there was some doubling up on occasion, for instance, when a member of staff took part of her group out to swimming. This activity was planned to last for half an hour and in practice on many occasions it did last this length of time or longer, although more than one activity might be carried out during the period.

Mrs Cameron issued termly to each member of staff a folder detailing the themes that should be covered and the appropriate 'centres of interest' and related concepts. This was intended to guide the whole experience that the children had in an "integrated" way throughout the whole curriculum. However, the interviews suggested that the staff saw its relevance in terms of the "work" they were expected to get through with the children at these group times. The activities which went on tended, therefore, to have a well defined cognitive content.

One example of these activities was a listening skills game in which children had to identify sounds from a tape cassette, listen to a story and make the appropriate actions at specified points. This was followed up by a question and answer session introduced with these words:

> Now I want to find out who was listening. Peter, what was the story about?

Another example was a matching and sorting game in which different exemplars of the same animal had to be sorted into sections on a tray. A central feature of both these activities was that they were closed, in the sense that there were right and wrong answers and the children's performance, therefore, needed to be checked by an adult. This meant that they were at least partly organised on a turn-taking basis with the children spending time waiting for their opportunity to take a turn.

Less formal activities such as baking were also carried out at this time but the opportunities these offered for introducing cognitive content were taken, as is indicated in these extracts from the audio recording:

ADULT: Right, which spoon do you think you're going to use to put your mixture in ?

BRIAN: The big one ...

ADULT: Right the big one.

PETER: And I'll use the big one.

ADULT: You think you're going to use the big one. You can decide when you're ready. And I'll use the small one.

COLIN: I'll use the small one.

......

ADULT: Right Peter, which spoon are you going to use to put the mixture in?

PETER: The big one I think. (points to a spoon)

ADULT: No that's not the big one. What size is that one ?

PETER: The medium size

ADULT: The medium size, that's right, that's the medium sized one. Can I just have this one a minute and we'll get this all..(scrapes bowl)

PETER: Can I have a look at this spoon? (picks up spoon)

ADULT: Yes you can have a look at it. What size is that one?

PETER: The medium.

ADULT: No that one there, the one in that hand, (points) the one in your left hand. What size is that one?

PETER: Em, a little spoon.

ADULT: A little spoon. What about this one?

PETER: A medium sized.

ADULT: No, look.

PETER: A big.

ADULT: This one is the biggest, this one is the smallest and this one is the medium sized spoon.

The group time was followed by the children's snack time which was again carried out in groups with an emphasis on good order, turn-taking and basic social graces such as saying "please" and "thank you". This time was also, however, a time for talk. The conversation might arise naturally out of the activities which had been going on but twice it centred around something that a child had brought in to the nursery school, some feathers he had collected and some photographs.

Over the next half hour the staff alternated in two groups to have a tea break. At this time some children might have a music activity but in general there was a period of free choice, supervised by the reduced number of staff. On one occasion the librarian from the local library took half the children into one of the smaller areas with help from a member of staff and read them a story.

The following half hour was also a period in which some of the children had freedom of choice although others would be directed to be involved in specific activities, particularly music and movement. In fact, even those allowed to choose were usually quite strongly encouraged to make a constructive choice and in some areas quite directed activities such as board games or a specific piece of craft work would be available. Children who were becoming boisterous tended to be directed towards activities which were quite strongly rule bound. These clear boundaries resulted on two occasions in Peter being turned away from activities he tried to join once they had started. Mrs Kent's response to Peter on one of these occasions during the audio recording encapsulates some of the key features:

(Peter sat down on one of the chairs at the table where a group were getting organised for playing a board game.)

ADULT: You'll need to come out because it's Tony's turn to sit there. You come out. You can watch if you want to but it's Tony's, was sitting there. Those boys were going wild ...

The session would finish with the whole group being gathered together, settled down and either read a story or led in singing before the majority who attended part-time were collected by their parents.

Pedagogical perspectives

There were clearly discernible elements in the practice which could be described as schooling: primarily, the presence of a set of cognitive objectives towards which the methods, however informal they may have been, were directed. Both the objectives and the methods of achieving them involved, in comparison to other pre-five settings, a high degree of adult direction. On average, children spent about 1 hour 15 minutes or more of a two hour 15-30 minute session in activities under adult direction.

The perspectives which this emdodied emphasised that children had important learning tasks to undertake which the adults, teachers in particular, had a responsibility to identify and for which they had to provide appropriate teaching.

The organisation of the nursery was based upon the schooling ideal and it formed the most striking aspect of its practice but the tone was a compromise between this outlook and a more socially based one. The two perspectives could be seen as being in conflict or the schooling aspect could be interpreted as a framework within which other types of learning could occur. An alternative reading is to see the schooling perspective as dominating at some times while a more informal one was prominent at others.

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview accounts in general terms

The two-sided general ethos in Carsefoot was reflected in the views expressed about children with disabilities and their inclusion in the nursery school.

On the one hand, the positive and secure social experience it offered and the opportunity to mix with peers was seen as beneficial, "It is excellent from both sides of the fence, they don't grow up with a fear of people who look different." The idea of its being positive for both sets of children was mentioned several times, "I feel it is a very good thing to get them mixing. It is good for the normal children to see other children who are not perfect like themselves. It brings out the best in both of them."

However, there was also an awareness of the difficulty that some children might face in a setting like Carsefoot and the difficulties the staff may experience in catering for them. Three themes were central here.

Firstly, if 'educational' work was to be carried out then support was needed for the staff. They felt they were undertaking work for which they were inadequately prepared and did not in practice have the time; "When Robert (a child with severe learning difficulties) is in my group and he can't join in it's frustrating not to be able to do your job properly".

Secondly, there was a view that only some children have the potential to benefit from mainstream provision. For those who do not have such potential, specialist facilities were viewed as a better option. The basis for such a judgement was generally seen to be the severity of impairment: "Children who are quite severely brain damaged. I don't feel they benefit from coming into a building like this...the ideal for a few is one to one which is not possible here."

This theme was developed by some people into the idea that children with severe impairments needed preparation to benefit from

integration. Within the local area the staff saw a period in a local special school as a desirable preliminary: "For the severely mentally handicapped I feel Strathglas School could be used to prepare them for integrated placements."

The third theme was that there was a need to protect "normal" children from the loss of time and energy that including a high proportion of children with disabilities entails. "I am not in favour at the expense of the normal child. There was a period when the needs of the run of the mill child were sacrificed to those of children with special needs".

Central to everyone's view on these matters, including the Head Teacher, was a demand for more staffing. There was a constant repetition of the theme. This cohesion was not accidental: the discussion continued to be a live one for the Carsefoot staff but in the past it had come to a head with trade union representation being made. There was no doubt that this had led to ill-feeling evidenced by the Head Teacher describing her staff, somewhat implausibly, as "very militant".

Pedagogical perspectives

One perspective values the advantages for all children of treating children with disabilities as 'normally' as possible. However, this view conflicts with a strong concern that these advantages may be outweighed by those which it is supposed can be provided in specialist settings. One way in which this contradiction is resolved is by setting conditions of eligibility for mainstreaming - it ought only to be available to those who can benefit.

Underlying this dichotomy is a perspective on learners which sees two separate components, a social/affective one and a cognitive one. There were seen to be some children for whom mainstream nursery was appropriate in the former but not the latter respect. Clearly, this was particularly significant in Carsefoot, where cognitive achievements were very highly valued.

Peter

The child selected for study in Carsefoot was Peter. Peter had hydrocephalus. His walking had been delayed and his balance remained uncertain. He had additional difficulties with vision. He had experienced extensive hospitalisation and had been seriously ill. Peter was an active child who had difficulty with concentration. He was also highly verbal and vocal, although he had been slow to talk.

Peter was capable of meeting the intellectual demands of the tasks he was expected to complete but it was often unclear whether he could actually see what he was expected to do. After a shorter time than many of the other children Peter began to lose interest in the activities with which he was presented and became talkative, often rather irrelevantly. The result of this was that there was a constant procedure of returning his attention to the task in hand. Peter received much more verbal prompting than the other children.

Peter was the younger of two children from a professional home. His older brother attended a local primary school successfully. Peter's parents had, in common with other parents whose child has a number of difficulties, been through a medical and educational mill, having contact with a range of professional advisers. They had found this trying and currently faced the uncertainty of the decision about Peter's schooling with great concern.

Interview accounts of provision for Peter

Peter's needs were described mainly in terms of his impairments, above all his sight. Elizabeth went on to conclude that there was a need, "to be able to place him in a setting where he was able to do the tasks."

The answers to questions about the progress Peter had made and was likely to make in the future covered the whole range of his development with some people stressing the improvement in his language and others his learning that- he was only one amongst many children. This reflected the range of objectives that were held.

Mrs Cameron was much occupied with the question of the school that Peter would attend the following session. Such a pre-occupation might be seen to reflect her 'educational' priorities but it was a major concern for Peter's parents and it was not at all surprising that such a long-term decision assumed such prominence.

The aims that were held for work with Peter were generally a matter of social integration: "just generally learning to slot in with other people. The same as with any other child only to more of an extent I would imagine." "to integrate him in the hope that he can grow up in the community being accepted by other people."

The staff felt a need for more medical information about Peter. "It's just another child apart from the medical problems which we would have liked a bit more information about." "Peter has multiple difficulties which are all interrelated ... the medical profession are reluctant to give information."

This desire for medical information was in part a feeling that to have such information would be a 'good thing'. Mrs Cameron dissented in this respect, her view was that a knowledge of normal child development should be the basis for work with children whose development is different in any way. However, the desire was also much more specific in relation to Peter. Four people mentioned an incident in which the valve which drained fluid from Peter's brain had blocked and he had been taken to hospital. The feelings of lack of the appropriate knowledge from that time remained strong.

The following other themes were the most significant in defining the content of the perspective on Peter's experience.

Rather than being seen positively as the best possible option for Peter, nursery school was seen as the most appropriate of the available options. "Who knows if there was another place; who knows he might have benefitted from that." "It is the only place at this stage. I dont know of any other place - Strathglas, he is past that stage." "He's not Strathglas or Westhill material."

There was confidence in meeting Peter's social needs, "Generally learning to slot in with other people, the same as for any child." However, there was considerable concern that Peter's perceived need for specialist and therapeutic teaching could not be met. "The main

drawback is that there is not somebody specialised able to cope with him." "A child like Peter, at his stage of development, his responses are not normal; a structured programme of work would be ideal." "Some days I am racking my brain, I don't know about children like him." Almost everyone mentioned more "one to one" work as needed.

It was seen to be difficult to arrange some other activities for which Peter was seen to have a special need: " because of his sight ... and co-ordination his outdoors walking is bad - he could do with a lot more of that. If you are out with four or six children it is not easy to manage." Thus quite ordinary activities were seen in terms of impairment and therapy.

Finally, often prefaced with a comment about how "good" Peter's parents were, there was an assumption that the nursery school could get results that could not be achieved at home. "I think we're firmer than at home because we are not emotionally involved. We get him to do things he wouldn't have done at home - socialising him, getting him to go to the toilet and wash his hands, mixing with other children ... he does more for us than his parents."

The need to justify pre-five provision remained strong. No matter how 'good' the home, it was seen to be necessary to assert not just that nursery provided a different experience for Peter but that it provided a better one in some respects. This perception was sometimes covert, as in the example cited earlier, where it was assumed to be necessary for Peter to get his experience of walking outdoors through the nursery school where numbers made it difficult, when it was likely that this would be part of his everyday home experience.

Pedagogical perspectives

For some people the perspective which recognised the, in principle, advantages of integration became even more equivocal when the focus was on a specific child. It is worth noting that Peter, by common consent, did not fall into the category of those children for whom doubts were expressed about the value of integration and that well-defined positive outcomes of his attendance at nursery were described.

A central part of the perspective thereby revealed was a specialist view which emphasised the 'special' nature of the child and what he needed to learn. The corollary of this view was that there must therefore be special techniques for working with a child like Peter.

Observed practice with Peter

ACTIVITIES

By and large, Peter carried out the same set of activities as the other children. He had a free choice of activity at the same times as they did and was fully part of a group for the small group activities. The cognitive demands of these activities were not beyond Peter. This was not true of all the children. Robert, a child with very marked learning difficulties was equally included in the same activities.

Some days, at the times when he had a choice of activities, Peter did not spend a long time at any one area; he tended to 'flit' from area to area. On one of these days Peter had a generally 'off' day in which he fell frequently and gave other signs of finding it difficult to concentrate (a link between his general physical well-being and his concentration was not implausible). There were also days when Peter spent relatively long periods at his chosen activities.

Peter generally tended to gravitate towards the end of the playroom in which the sand and water were located and the house area. In these areas he would engage in simple imaginative play often conversing and co-operating with other children, although the co-operation was rarely extended and frequently ended in acrimony. He did not attempt to use the climbing equipment.

By virtue of his gait and his tendency to be fairly vocal Peter was an easily identified figure in the nursery school. Perhaps for this reason he was called to by a member of staff on several occasions to become involved in a constructive activity, such as a game or making a picture.

In common with the other children, Peter was involved at group time in activities in which well-defined outcomes were sought by an

adult. This conversation took place when Peter's group were baking:

ADULT: Come on Peter, yours isn't smooth yet. It's still lumpy.

PETER: But mine's smooth.

ADULT: It is not. I can see lots of lumps in it. It's coming on nicely though.

JAMES: So's mine, so's mine. Look.

PETER: Mine's finished.

ADULT: No it's not, I can still see some lumps, look. Can you see lumps in it Peter ?

PETER: No

ADULT: Well, look carefully. Can you see lumps in it ?

PETER: No

ADULT: Oh, you can so !

JAMES: I can see my lumps ! I've got lumps.

ADULT: .....Come on Peter, you're going to be last if you don't hurry up.

PETER: Here you are.

ADULT: Not yet. Nearly. Give it a good mix round.

...

PETER: Here you are I've f...

ADULT: No you're not Peter. I can still see some wee lumps, come on get mixing. ... Come on, Peter. ...

PETER I've finished.

ADULT: No, you've not. I can still see some lumps. Look. Wait a minute till we see it , Peter. Look Peter can you see how smooth James's is. Look, you see it's lovely and smooth. And look at yours now, you've still got some lumps in yours haven't you. You beat it hard and get them all out.

The role of the adult here was to set the task, define its boundaries and ensure its completion to a satisfactory standard. A product was expected, even in a relatively informal task where the process was clearly the object of the exercise. This was made quite explicit from the outset. Mrs Robin distributed the materials and introduced the activity with these words, spoken lightheartedly:

ADULT: I'm going to give you a little of this and we're going to start mixing, all right. This is the hard work now. Right, Peter, are you ready to start mixing. Now I don't want it all over the table, please. Try and keep it in the bowl...
You'll have to hurry, Peter, because you'll have no cakes to take home, because I'm not going to mix it for you.

Clearly, there are dangers that small incidents or words reported out of context can be over-interpreted, exaggerating the degree to which activities were presented in this way. Apart from group times, the majority of activities did not have this sort of strong product orientation. However, there were examples from free play of open-ended activities being made closed. For example, Peter and two other children were playing with unifix cubes at a table and the teacher transformed the task into a race to see who could build the longest row.

Peter was involved with small groups of children in singing games and in listening to stories.

In addition to his inclusion in the general activities of the nursery school Peter was given some small group and individual teaching. On one occasion he was part of a specially selected group chosen to go to the staffroom to play a matching game with Elizabeth, the teacher. On another occasion she withdrew him for individual work on 'fine motor' activities, small jigsaws and bead threading, presumably intended to help with his motor and visual difficulties. Peter's expectations of this situation were revealed when he anticipated an unspoken question with, "I don't know that colour."

Peter also revealed his own socialisation into the appointment system which surrounds therapy and remediation when, at the end of his session with Elizabeth, he asked, "When will I see you again?"

Once each week Peter was visited in the nursery school by a specialist teacher for children with visual impairments. She carried out a number of activities intended to improve his visual attention skills in a small room which doubled as a medical room and the cleaner's room. The observed session consisted of direct presentation of the activities over half an hour. Peter's interest quickly waned and he began to be quite resistant to the teaching.

Structured observations

The picture of a high proportion of activities involving concrete materials which was noted as a general feature of Carsefoot is borne out in the observations of Peter who spent 25% of the time recorded in Fine Creative activities and 12% in Fine Structured activities.

In contradiction of the low priority that appeared to be given generally to imaginative activities, Peter was observed to spend 11% of the time in Imaginative Play, although this was rarely of a very developed kind. Two other activities which were recorded as taking up substantial periods of time were Music (10%) and Snack (12%) - as has been noted, this was a period for conversation as much as eating. Peter was recorded as spending 12% of the time in direct cognitive/teaching activities, mainly as part of the work done in his group, but also on one occasion in an individual session.

Overall, this confirms the picture of Peter's experience as reflecting the general pattern of the nursery school with an emphasis on concrete materials and direct teaching. One difference from the experience of most of the other children was that, through his own choice, he spent none of the structured observation time in large movement activities.

Pedagogical perspectives

Peter was fully included in all the activities. The expectations for Peter were that he would complete the same activities as the other children, in spite of the fact that he had greater difficulty in doing so. Peter was involved in a number of rule-bound activities and he was expected to adhere to the rules with the minimum of allowances.

These activities were valued for themselves so that Peter was being treated 'normally' but he was also assumed to be benefitting from the presence of 'normal models'. The fact that individual sessions were arranged both with the specialist teacher and with the nursery teacher indicated that 'special' activities were important. The selection of the nursery teacher to carry out these special activities confirmed that they were viewed from a cognitive perspective.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Overwhelmingly, Peter spent his time in small groups. At times, this was through his own choice, at other times he had been encouraged to be part of a group and at others it was a result of the timetabling of a group activity. A substantial part of the time was spent with his own group and so with the same set of children. He did, however, know many of the other children and play with them.

Structured observations

During the structured observations Peter spent 60% of his time in small group activities directed by an adult, confirming the main impression of the unstructured observations. He spent 6% of his time in individual contact with an adult, confirming both that this did occur and that it was a limited part of his overall experience. He spent a similar proportion of time playing associatively with other children (7%). The rest of the time was fairly evenly split between solitary and parallel activities.

Pedagogical perspectives

The constant involvement with other children was to some extent a by-product of the specific approach in Carsefoot. However, it was clear from the interviews that the degree of social contact and its structured nature, "waiting his turn", was seen to be beneficial for Peter, as it was for all the children. The social context was seen to make all children better able to deal with one another but additionally for Peter it may help him to become more like the other children.

Contrastingly, there was an implicit desire to treat him differently as an individual with a particular need for individual 'treatment' on, as was frequently mentioned in the interviews, a "one to one basis".

INTERACTIONS

The pattern of conversations between Peter and adults depended upon who initiated the interaction.

Peter sought out opportunities for adult interactions. In one period of twenty minutes he spent the bulk of the time so occupied; initially, talking to the cook and then in the toilet making a gesture in the direction of washing his hands but mainly conversing with the supervising adult.

Peter often sought adult approval in an open and boisterous way shouting out, on one occasion, "Mrs MacLeod, come and see", and waving his painting in the air.

If Peter initiated the interaction he would often adopt a questioning mode, and a role which assumed a degree of equality, at least, between himself and his interviewee:

PETER: Hallo, Mrs Robin. Where's the snack ?

Adults generally responded tolerantly to this, up to a point, but would cut Peter short eventually (quite understandably in terms of the other demands on their time).

If an adult initiated the interaction Peter's role as a child would be much clearer. A frequent type of adult initiation would be an attempt to get Peter's attention. An example occurred during the listening skills tape:

ADULT: Do you know that one Peter ? (no response)
Listen, it's listening time. (no response)
Peter, Pe-eter (in a sing-song voice - looks at adult)

Another frequent type of adult initiated interaction was the giving of clear and detailed instruction:

ADULT: Is it clean Peter?

PETER: Yeh

ADULT: Have you looked?

PETER: Yeh

ADULT: Had a good look? Look inside just to make sure. (Peter wipes the inside of his bowl) What about your spoon?

PETER: It's clean

ADULT: Are you sure? have a good look at it. No it's not, take the cloth and give it a wipe with the cloth, now give it a good rub at the back with the cloth, Peter.

Perhaps surprisingly, in view of the strong boundaries that existed in other respects in Carsefoot, the content of adult conversations with Peter often referred to events at home and in his family life. He was asked questions or he volunteered comments about swimming, feeding the birds, his attitude to his mother starting work, what his mother baked at home and his father's car.

In his second year at nursery school Peter was a determined and rather uninhibited little boy. One area in which he lacked inhibition was in pursuing his own interests whether or not these conflicted with those of others. This did not always endear him to the other children, minor scuffles were not infrequent although they did not erupt into a serious confrontation. Other children could become exasperated with Peter's persistence aptly summarised in one boy's comment to Peter, "I've had enough of you." They also appealed to adults to intervene and bring Peter to order.

Peter tended to initiate his contacts with his peers rather than being sought out. He would suggest ideas to them, "Let's make a pickle cake, Fergus." He would define his own role in a game, "Can I be SuperTed." However, he was also involved in a substantial number of harmonious interchanges with other children and in conversations in which he played an even handed part.

Structured observations

An overwhelming picture of the nature of Peter's interactions emerged - of 260 observed 201 (77%) had a positive verbal initiation and a further 32 (12%) had a negative verbal initiation. 149 (55%) of first moves were met with a verbal response, while 64 (24%) met with no response. This confirms that Peter's relations with other people in Carsefoot were largely conducted verbally, reflecting his age and his verbal capabilities, and were generally positive. The pattern also reflects the style of the nursery school which was not one of cuddling or sitting with children on an adults knee.

Peter initiated 106 (41%) of interactions, which were evenly split between those directed at adults and those directed at his peers. Adults initiated 122 (47%) of the interactions recorded, 90 (74%) of which consisted of positive verbal first moves. Thus most of Peter's interactions were with adults.

However, a substantial number, 82 (32%), of all interactions involved a peer and 46 (56%) had a positive outcome, while 25 (31%) had no outcome. Thus while there were negative interactions between Peter and his peers these figures suggest that they were a relatively small part of his experience.

Pedagogical perspectives

The staff had a clear explanation of the reasons for Peter's difficulties, such as they were, with his peers. they felt that Peter had, quite understandably in their estimation, been over-indulged at home because of his health problems. They based this conclusion largely upon supposition and inference from Peter's behaviour but visiting specialists who had seen Peter at home may have contributed to the perception.

To some degree, this point of view guided the tone of the staff response to Peter which was one of an expectation of conformity. However, it was in the area of his interactions that most allowances were made for Peter's individuality. While Peter was expected to conform to the broad structure of the nursery school in terms of his behaviour, latitude was allowed in some of his conversation. This confirms the existence of an overall perspective in which there were very clear structures and boundaries within which the staff exercised tolerance and flexibility.

6. Observer effects

The times that Peter was withdrawn for individual or small group work were acknowledged to be rarer in unobserved practice than during the observations. They represented what the staff felt ought to be happening and what did happen when time allowed. This confirms the tension the staff identified between the specialist aspirations they had for the children with 'special needs' and the desire to provide them with a normal and normalising experience.

It was also acknowledged, particularly by Mrs Robin, that there had been a greater focus on Peter, for example, in the group activities, because of my presence. It seems likely that the degree of tolerance shown to Peter's search for adult interactions was exaggerated. Nevertheless, it was clear that Peter did have high expectations of the degree of attention he would be given by adults and so differences would be of degree rather than kind.

1. The establishment

Glenbrae is situated on the edge of a large town with a range of pre-five provision which is thinly spread amongst the population. The nursery school is located near a housing estate but just off a main road and its traditional catchment area was relatively socially mixed. The shortage of provision locally meant that only children who were in their immediate pre-school year had usually been admitted.

The building was a small school which had proved too small for an expanding population of primary school children. It was built in a traditional style of sandstone. While it was roomy and light, the windows were at a height to prevent schoolchildren being distracted by looking out of them.

Since the appointment of the Head Teacher several years ago the nursery school had made a local reputation for providing for children with disabilities. Children deemed to have 'special needs' were generally admitted for two years before school.

The atmosphere at Glenbrae was notably warm and informal. The tone was set by Sandra, the Head Teacher, as much by her personality as by her position. She was an unashamed enthusiast and communicated her enthusiaisms readily and naturally. The other staff provided a counterpoint to this, adopting a warm but down to earth style, laconic rather than effusive.

Sandra had been an infant teacher and assistant head for many years before transferring to nursery work at Glenbrae. She, therefore, brought extensive experience and consequent confidence to her leadership role.

2. Access

Glenbrae had become known to me through a member of the Divisional management who had responded to Sandra's enthusiasm for the work that she and her staff undertook with childen with disabilities. A meeting had been arranged for me to talk to the whole staff at Glenbrae to find out about their work. Sandra reacted to my subsequent suggestion of a case study in typical fashion, welcoming the interest.

The role in which Sandra wanted to cast me was that of critic/expert able to assist her and the staff in the development of their practice. After discussion, the idea that my visit to Glenbrae would serve my research purposes rather than those of the direct improvement of practice became accepted.

Glenbrae was staffed by a Head Teacher and five Nursery Nurses, one of whom was additional to the complement because of the high proportion of children with 'special needs'. The staff were mixed in age and outlook and brought a variety of experience from work and outside experience to the job.

Organisationally, Glenbrae operated 'democratically' but with very clear leadership. In interview, the staff all commented on the advantages of teamwork and its importance in pre-five work. They all also mentioned the central role that Sandra had played in establishing an effective team in Glenbrae. Part of the 'democratic' ethos was that the boundaries between teacher and nursery nurse were blurred and Sandra was unstinting in her praise for her staff.

In Glenbrae there was no question of either the Head or myself having coffee breaks amd lunch anywhere other than in the staffroom with everyone else. The 'office' doubled as a teaching room and was used by all the staff; it was only the Head's place of work for paperwork, phone calls and interviews. Her available time was spent working with the children for which she had obvious enthusiasm.

This allowed access to more informal, less work-related information and made interviewing more relaxed. It also allowed more observation of the staff group. This observation confirmed that there was considerable social cohesion with a high proportion of shared references evident in their conversation. In turn, this probably created a pressure to accept the prevailing norms and attitudes.

In Glenbrae, then, considerable effort had been expended on achieving consensus amongst the staff and its maintenance was given importance. The admission of Anna, the child on whom the study focused, was a case in point. There had been some reservations expressed by outside professionals about whether Anna could cope with nursery school but her mother had been determined that she should attend. When the question of her attending Glenbrae arose, Sandra discussed the situation with the whole staff and a collective decision was reached to admit her.

3. Informants

In the interviews, the staff made clear it that part of their interpretation of teamwork was sharing responsibility for all the children. A keyworker system did, however, operate with each member of staff having a group of eight or nine children in each session, of whom one or two would be identified as having special needs. The group system was rather looser for the children not so identified and contact at times other than 'group times' might be no greater with the keyworker than with anyone else. By contrast, part of the keyworker's responsibility for the children with special needs was seen to be to monitor their progress in open situations.

Anna's keyworker was Joyce who had trained as a mature student fourteen years previously and then worked in one other nursery school for ten years.

Mary had trained five years previously and had then been unable to get a job. She worked temporarily in a mothers and toddlers group in Glenbrae before she transferred to a temporary post in Glenbrae as an additional member of staff for children with special needs. She had been given a permanent post one year previously.

Alice, who had qualified in 1962, had worked in hospitals, her own private nursery, playgroups, as a school auxiliary and nursery schools as well as having time off to care for her family. She had worked in Glenbrae for four years.

Caroline who had completed her training two years previously, had worked on a temporary basis in several nurseries before being appointed on a short-term contract to Glenbrae.

Marianne who qualified in 1979 held temporary appointments in nursery schools and classes before being appointed to Glenbrae five years previously. Marianne held the position of Principal Nursery Nurse.

Despite their considerable diversity of age and experience a broad consensus was maintained throughout the interviews carried out. In the observed practice, all members of staff interchanged roles as the situation demanded. There is, therefore, no reason to treat anyone as a key informant. This extends to Sandra who may have had more influence than anyone else but whose views and attitudes had been fully incorporated into the general perspective.

The only slight exception was Caroline who, as a recent recruit, had been least exposed to the socialisation process. Caroline's interviews were noticeably briefer than anyone else's and showed less consideration of the implications of the questions asked.

4. Glenbrae's general approach

Interview accounts

Although Sandra was not interviewed directly about her views, the themes which were central to the perspective on pre-five provision of many of the other staff and their attitudes had been heavily influenced by her approach. All the staff but one made reference to the influence she had had on their work in interview. Sandra's perspective on early years education was a traditional 'progressive' one, based on self-directed learning provided in a child-centred way.

When the staff were asked about their aims for the children they all gave priority to their learning two contrary things, to be independent and to be part of a group. The contradiction was only apparent: the independence was largely from adults and was seen as a pre-condition of sucessful coping with a group. "I reckon it gets children away from their mothers. They learn to cope with a variety of youngsters in a variety of situations."

Everyone emphasised the social and emotional sides of learning: "feeling happy and secure, looking forward to coming." The achievement of this sort of pleasure and security was seen as a pre-condition of learning. Learning was viewed as something accomplished by the children, not something that the adults produced.

The staff, consequently, described their role as creating a comfortable and secure atmosphere in which the children could learn and being available to assist the children in their learning. The role of listener was seen as especially important. The adults created a situation in which children could learn, they did not act as directors of their learning. One of the key staff skills was seen to be knowing when to step back and allow the children to get on with playing and learning for themselves. This was thrown into relief by a student who had not become aware of the need not to interfere and was viewed by the staff as disrupting the children's experience.

Perhaps in contrast with this 'progressive' outlook the staff valued practical experience more highly than theoretical knowledge. "I didn't start learning until I was qualified and working in the nursery." "The things you learned in College did not integrate with work in nurseries until a lot later."

Their view of their role with parents was one of helping them indirectly with their parenting: "some parents say their children are disruptive - the variety and routine of nursery helps." Only Alice mentioned the child care function as important but not as a means of increasing women's opportunities: "It gives parents a break. You can get to screaming point."

The pervasive theme noted in other establishments of seeing pre-five provision as an antidote to parental inadequacy was only mentioned in the context of some children's need for greater independence. "It's good for the kid whose mother won't let go."

Pedagogical perspectives

The fundamental perspective was a classic, child-centred, nursery education one. Children were seen as individuals, learning in a self-directed way, in control of their own learning. Specific cognitive targets were scarcely mentioned and, by implication, were seen as flowing incidentally from the self-development of the whole child. The role of the adult was not a negligible or passive one; the creation of an atmosphere which is responsive and contains the necessary materials for learning entails sensitivity and imagination. One aspect of this is the management of good order and maintenance of calm.

The perspective was reflected in the answers of all the staff. The development of such a consensus was central to the style of management and it had been accomplished (at least so far as can be judged from interviews with an outsider) successfully.

As indicated, each nursery nurse had a group of eight or nine children, a more favourable ratio than generally obtained in Strathclyde's nursery schools because of the relatively high proportion of children with 'special needs'.

All the children at Glenbrae spent most of their time in one large area. Each day of the week one group spent its time in a smaller room. This contained larger play equipment; a climbing frame, a slide and so on. It also had a small cooker. Despite this allocation of the smaller room to one group, there was some movement between the two rooms, both of children and staff.

The large area was two classrooms with a dividing wall removed while the small room was a single classroom. This large room was generously supplied with a wide range of equipment which was arranged into 'areas'. There were fixed areas such as the imaginative domestic area and water and sand although the precise location or content of these could be changed in the longer term. There were also a range of constructional and creative activities which were varied regularly. There was a daily snack table. One nursery nurse was responsible for each area but this was not a rigid physical location. She might move away to pursue a topic or an idea with a child or to gather some materials or to help out another member of staff with a practical task. Figure 4 shows a typical layout.

The smaller room, deliberately, offered fewer choices and relied on the member of staff to work with her own group, offering more contact. Figure 5 shows how this room was laid out.

Fig. 4

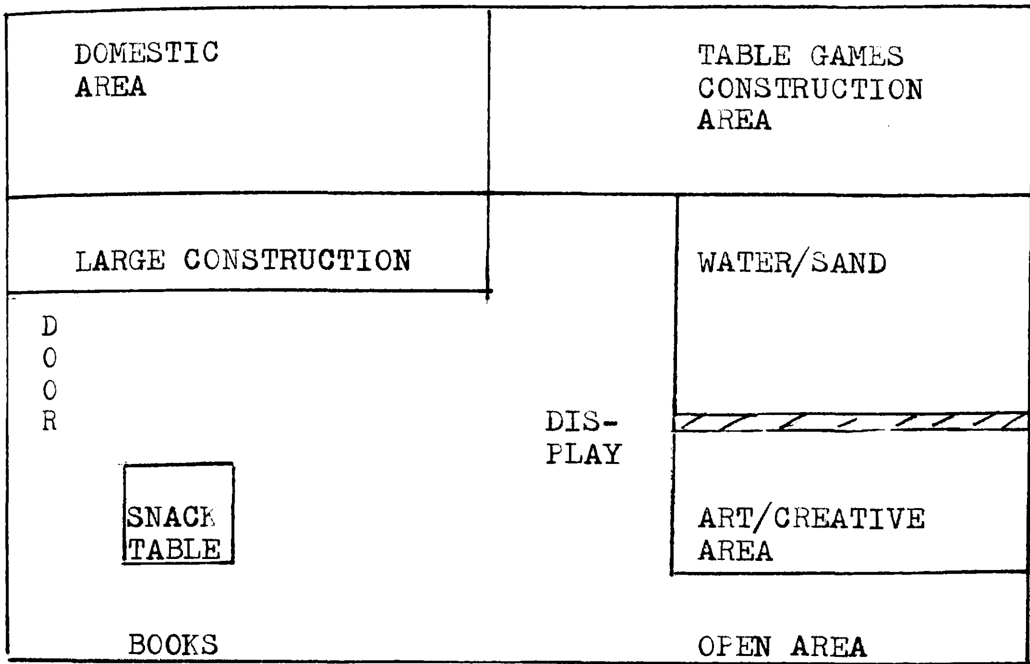
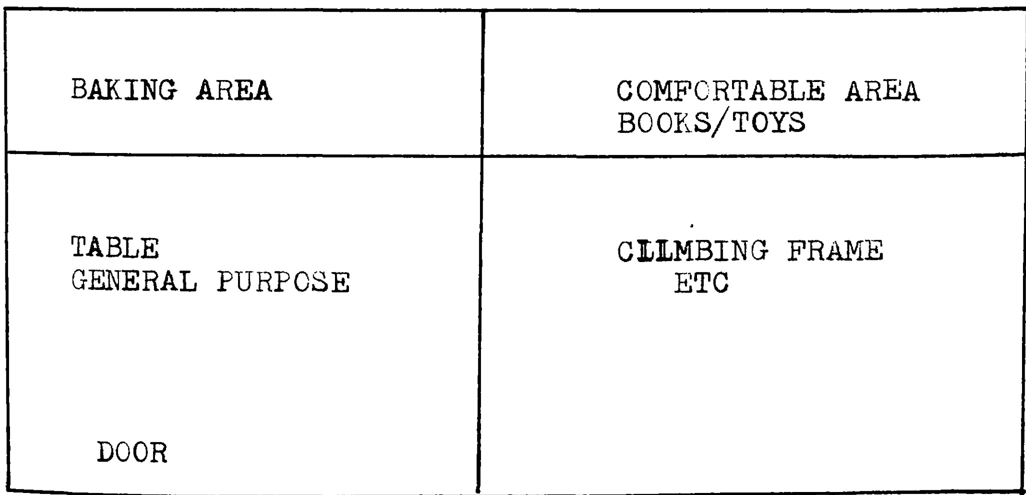


Fig. 5



The rooms were known as "the big room" and "the end room". In the "big room" the day followed the following pattern:

9.15 - 9.30 Arrivals - most children with parents, some in taxis

9.30 - 11.00 Free choice of activities

10.00 - 10.45 Snack table available

11.00 - 11.30 Small and large group structured activities

11.30 - 11.45 Children gathered together in a large group, singing or listening to a story, while parents collect them

Because of the smaller number of children in the end room it was possible to be more flexible. However, it appeared that more time was devoted to the structured activity which was started earlier in the session. The snack was taken as a whole group.

The salient features of the observed practice were as follows.

There would be a leisurely arrival period with children and parents moving around freely, making their farewells or talking to a member of staff.

For the first part of the session the children were encouraged to choose freely from the range of activities. Children would choose when and whether they would make a picture, play in the sand, engage in a role play form of game, carry out a construction activity and so on. There was a very strong emphasis on the children managing their own learning with the adults adopting a supporting role and following their lead. Nevertheless, there was a constant monitoring with quiet encouragement to become involved offered to children on the fringes of activities

The importance of choice and children managing their own behaviour was evident from the snack table. Here, children chose when to have their snack. If they chose an inopportune time this might involve a lengthy wait but no adult-directed shift system was enforced.

In terms of producing an orderly atmosphere in which children were able follow their own learning interests, the strategy was visibly successful. The most striking features of Glenbrae were the calm purposefulness of the children and the quietness of the adults. The children were expected to act constructively and to behave in a controlled manner. The rare and minor misdemeanours were dealt with not by scolding but by a mixture of surprise that they should have happened and disappointment in the miscreant. Even a child quietly drumming her heels was reacted to with surprise and (apparent) disappointment. A classic 'progressive' form of social control was used where children were reasoned with rather than appeals being made to authority. The atmosphere was one of "good behaviour" and positive activity but not of inhibition. The children had the confidence to make their views known and control was not exclusively in adult hands. This can be illustrated by this interchange which occurred during preparation for baking:

ADULT: Now do you know what we need for shortbread. We need butter.

CHILD: I don't like butter

ADULT: You don't like butter, well we'll use marge instead. You like marge don't you.

After about an hour and a half there was a general "tidy-up" in which the children participated. They were then separated into small groups for adult led activities. These might be a creative activity or a language activity or a matching or sorting task. These groups always consisted of the same children with "their" nursery nurse. Each group normally followed a different activity.

Finally, the whole group came together for the register and for a large group activity such as singing a song or listening to a story, on one occasion accompanied by a slide presentation. On some occasions they were joined by the group from the end room for this activity. The precise balance between the small and large group activities was a matter of flexibility with more time devoted to the large group activity if it was 'special' in some way.

The pattern in the 'end room' was parallel. The children had a period of free choice followed by an adult directed activity. However, the adult directed activity assumed a greater prominence and the snack was eaten as a group. The effect, and part of the intention of separating a small group of eight or nine children off, was to allow more sustained conversation than would often be possible in the hive of activity of the big room.

Pedagogical perspectives

Learning to learn independently and co-operatively is central to the traditions of nursery education. It implies that children are interested in learning and should be encouraged to choose what they will learn. The process of choosing is treated as more important than the product which is achieved.

However, the approach in Glenbrae clearly did involve covert planning and structuring. The areas were selected to achieve a balance of opportunities. There was a hierarchy amongst the types of activitiy, for example, opportunities to develop imaginative play, which was highly valued, were deliberately sought out: on one occasion about half the children became involved in a 'wedding' and its procession and ceremony.

Quite overtly, children were monitored as individuals and as groups to ensure that they were behaving 'constructively'. Other forms of overt structure were present in terms of the large and small group times and the balance between the "big" and "end" rooms.

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview accounts in general terms

The central question for the staff was one of integration which was viewed very positively on the basis of experience:

> the younger we start the more tolerance future generations will have towards the handicapped. It is amazing the progress they make when they are integrated; they want to copy the other children. It's a two way process though, the other children learn as well.

The strength of this conviction led most of the staff to recommend integration for other pre-five establishments. "The problem for nurseries is the fear of the unknown - can you cope ?" However, Marianne expressed some reservations: "You have to look at every establishment, what it has to offer ... some staff may have had experiences which might mean they couldn't give to the children."

In Glenbrae the aims of increasing independence and capacity to be part of a group were seen to apply to children with disabilities as much as to any other child. All children were seen to vary in their need for help in becoming independent and confident. Sandra summed this up:

> ... all the children get what they need. One child might come in and need a cuddle and to sit on your knee and he'll get it, another child might come in full of confidence; that's only an example. When children start you assess them and you know what they need. As far as we are able, we give them what they need.

Where a need was seen to be exceptional it presented a challenge rather than a problem.

The general tendency to value experience and practicality over theoretical knowledge meant that the staff favoured a problem-solving, down-to-earth approach in which the specialness of any child's needs was minimised:

> There is a danger of making them too special. I totally disagree with people who say it's more work. Changing nappies is not a hassle. Some people will say that you need a one to one but it's not true because you don't. Sometimes, like we are doing now with Lucy, we are discouraging a one to one, she wants it and she has been used to it but she needs to become independent.

A key experience for Marianne and Mary in forming their opinions had been that of running a group in the summer holidays for those children from the nursery who had 'special needs'. They had been astonished how much harder it had been without the 'normalising' influence of the other children and how much less 'maturely' the children had behaved.

The consensus amongst the staff was, however, that for integration to be successful, staff additional to the normal complement were needed. The primary reasons were seen as practical. The current level in Glenbrae, that is, one extra member of staff, was felt to be adequate. Indeed, additions beyond this point were seen to entail disadvantages in having too many adults around.

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective on how children learn contained elements of normalisation; there were some references to children learning by copying and imitating other children. However, these were not central. The repeated theme was that the aim was one of individual development in the child's own terms for all the children whether their needs were 'special' or not. The perspective on children with special needs then was a child centred, individualistic one, in accord with the overall perspective.

Children with disabilities were, therefore, seen as individuals and the content of their learning as individual. The appropriate way of providing this learning was one which responded to this individuality.

There was a high degree of cohesion amongst the staff. With the exception of the recently appointed person, everyone was able to talk at some length on the topic, reflecting discussions which had taken place.

Anna

The child on whom the case study focused in Glenbrae was Anna who was in the first of two years planned for her in the nursery school. Most of her peers were in their immediate pre-school year and she was therefore one of the youngest children. Anna had microcephaply which affected the development of her brain. She only used one or two words and she could not walk unaided. She was a quiet, determined little girl who spent a good deal of time watching what was going on. She rarely showed her emotions and was described as a "real wee sobersides". By contrast, she loved physical and even rough and tumble play and at these times her delight was apparent.

Anna was the middle child of three. Her mother had well-defined opinions which she was unlikely to modify in the face of contrary 'expert' advice, as she had shown in pressing ahead to obtain a nursery school place for Anna when advised otherwise. She was resentful of the lack of openness she had detected in her dealings with those who had identified and advised her about Anna's condition and its implications. Nevertheless, she remained optimistic and positive about the future.

Anna was chosen by Sandra for the case study because she saw her as an 'interesting' child. It also it seems likely that she was chosen, not unnaturally, because she illustrated a positive side of a policy which Sandra herself favoured. She was a child with marked impairments who was being successfully included with the other children.

Interview accounts of provision for Anna

Anna's 'special needs' were described in almost identical terms by everyone interviewed: "just to be treated as normal and encouraged to be as independent as possible." "Just being helped along and cared for, helping to fit her in with the other youngsters, she's doing that not bad." In effect, everyone denied that Anna's needs were very special, no-one mentioned her impairments in this context.

The kind of progress Anna was seen to have made was explicitly individual and personal. "Confidence in her own ability to play with other children ... Independence ... stretching her own abilities." "sure of herself.." The progress she was seen to have made could be measured developmentally but also emotionally. "She's happier than she was ... not so fearful."

Similarly, the dynamic of Anna's progress was attributed to her individual qualities: "She is so determined." "With her nature she will progress, she is really strong-willed."

What should be provided for her in Glenbrae was made quite explicit in Marianne's answer to the question of the aims she and the nursery school had for their work with Anna, "Socialising and help with her speech obviously, but in nursery I think socialising is the most important thing."

No significant difference was perceived between the aims with Anna and those with the other children. "Just to basically do what we do with the other children, to aid her all round development."

There was general satisfaction with the level of available information and specialised, particularly medical, knowledge was not seen as especially important.

> A lot of people would say they would like to know about her medical condition but what use would it be to you? It would be interesting but I don't think, as far as Anna is concerned, I don't think it would make any difference to what you do.

The presence of Anna, with her obvious impairments caused few worries to the staff. "You feel as if you've always had her. She fits in so well you wouldn't know she was there sometimes." This idea of Anna merging into the background was balanced by a perceived need for a heightened awareness of what Anna was doing. Joyce made this clear: "I keep an eye on her, I know where she is most of the time."

No-one had any doubts that Glenbrae was the best possible placement for Anna. It was seen to be meeting her needs as an individual.

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective on Anna was in accord with the perspective on Glenbrae's provision for all its children and for children with disabilities as a generality. Her needs were seen as those of an individual, although many were shared with other children. Similarly, the approach it suggested was both inclusive, in encouraging her to be part of the group, and individualistic.

There was again a striking unanimity which had been produced by discussion and working towards a consensus. There was no sense in relation to Anna, or indeed from informal discussions, any other child, that the positive perspective on integration broke down when the staff were faced with the reality of an individual child.

Observed practice with Anna

ACTIVITIES

Anna was engaged in a wide range of nursery activities. She drew with crayons, made a collage, put together Octons, played with jigsaws, pulled apart some construction straws, played with sand and water, rocked in a rocking boat, climbed on a climbing frame, was involved in imaginary play and tangentially in role play in the domestic area, baked shortbread, listened to stories and looked at picture books, amongst other things. She took part in three ways.

Firstly, she carried out the ostensible activity after her own fashion. For example, in the sand she would dig holes and pour sand off her spade rather than, say, making sand pies.

Secondly, she used the materials for purposes of her own, other than the ostensible ones. She had a great interest in putting objects in and out of containers and so put a jigsaw in and out of its box repeatedly. Similarly, she made piles of the construction straws rather than using them to build an object.

Thirdly, she was helped to carry out the ostensible activity by an adult. The amount of help she was given varied with the activity and the other demands on adult time. This ranged from constant physical support in climbing up the climbing frame and sliding down the slide, through the holding of her hand to allow her to place a piece on her collage, to the additional encouragement she was given when she made a mark on her paper with a crayon. The principle was generally to offer her help to exploit the potential of the material more fully, from the adult's perspective. For instance, in playing with the construction straws, while Anna put straws on to the plastic joints and took them off, Joyce 'helped' her to make an umbrella.

Anna spent significant periods of time observing the other children. On one occasion she was sitting at the sand with two other children who started to have a minor conflict. Anna sat impassively watching. At other times she would watch what was happening from behind a piece of equipment or her milk bottle, her face never moving.

There was also variation in the extent to which Anna chose her own activities. Although all the children were guided at times, she was more guided in her choice than most of the others. On some occasions she would crawl or cruise round the furniture to an activity entirely of her own volition: once she crawled from one room to the other.

At other times she would indicate her desire to be moved and an adult would take her hands and walk her to an activity; at such times the adult had a strong influence on where she ended up. Another frequent situation was when an adult would sense that Anna was bored and ready for a change or felt that a change would be in her interest. At such times she was led from wherever she was to another activity.

On a few occasions for periods of a few minutes Anna was given direct instruction by Joyce in 'Makaton' a manual signing system. On one occasion the whole of Anna's group practised some of the signs. The introduction of this communication system was relatively recent venture with Anna and she showed no signs of using it spontaneously.

Structured observations

The activities in which Anna was recorded as spending most time were Fine Structured Activities (20%), Imaginative Play (14%) and Listening and Waiting (14%). There were entries under all other activity types apart from Non-Specific Activities, (although she did spend a significant period Observing), Toileting and Gross Activity. Only a small time was recorded under Gross Motor (0.5%) so that, although Anna enjoyed physical activity, her opportunities for this were limited, mainly occcurring in her time in the "end room".

This confirms the wide range of nursery activities and activity types noted in the unstructured observations.

Pedagogical perspectives

The same set of assumptions are implicated in the experiences which were arranged for Anna as for the other children. One of the principal tasks which faced the children was that of, as individuals, organising their own learning and social experiences. The adults were present to provide a context for this to occur and to support children in carrying out the task. It is part of this outlook to see children as varying in their need for support. The extent to which Anna was more directed in her choices than the other children does not contradict this perspective.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

The social contexts in which Anna was involved were not observed to differ markedly from those in which the other children were involved. Small group activities predominated in which Anna substantially acted in a parallel fashion to the children who were alongside her. There were occasions in which she and another child would adopt roles or would co-operate but these were infrequent.

Apart from the overt group times when all the children were grouped there were no attempts made to manage the grouping of the children. Nevertheless, there were some children who were more likely to be involved with Anna, usually older-looking girls. Anna was helped to put away toys such as jigsaws by other girls who saw her struggling with the task. On one occasion, a girl showed her a bangle, very carefully and very deliberately turning it around so that Anna could se it in detail. The demonstration was unaccompanied by any talk. This 'big sister' approach was unsurprising; Anna was a small three year old while the girls who interacted with her were mature and competent four year olds.

At a more detailed level, there were indications that children either treated Anna as an unequal member of the group or were unsure about how to respond to her. When two boys were playing in the sand at the same time as Anna there were a few occasions of conflict over implements. Uncharacteristically, they surrendered to her. The clearest example of uncertainty was when a boy pushed past Anna and then looked to a nearby adult in a questioning way, obviously uncertain whether this had been a scoldable offence.

Structured observation

During the period of structured observation Anna spent her time in the following social contexts:

Solitary	Parallel	Associative	Group	Adult
5%	3%	2%	71%	18%

The very high proportion of group activities indicates that while choice was central, adult supervision was a background feature of these choices, probably more so for Anna than for some of the other children. The degree of adult supervision indicated is higher than the unstructured observations would suggest. However, adults were often present but deliberately avoided intervening or becoming the focus of an activity.

The amount of individual attention was high, in part reflecting the presence of an observer but also the focus on Anna as a child with 'special needs'.

Pedagogical perspectives

The approach to the social context was, to a very significant degree, a laissez-faire one where individual choice dominated. This was partly because the skill of social negotiation with their peers was seen to be an important one for the children to develop. It was also entailed in the child-directed curricular approach which could not operate without freedom of movement and thus social grouping. Both these considerations applied to Anna but they were counterbalanced by a heightened awareness of Anna's individuality.

INTERACTIONS

Adults were observed to initiate more verbal interactions with Anna than with the other children. These were louder, clearer and shorter, reflecting Anna's presumed developmental stage in understanding language. The communications could be grouped into three categories.

Firstly, there were conversational gambits, such as comments about Anna's younger sister, proferred by Joyce on more than one occasion, asking where she was and what Anna thought she would be doing. These are equivalent to such comments made to any pre-verbal child. That is to say, they have the structural characteristics of questions to which a reply is expected but, because the child is unable to reply, do not

have the intention of seeking information. They may be seen as part of the general process of teaching about the nature of interaction that goes on between adults and children. Thus time was left for Anna to respond and she was encouraged to gesture or make a facial response by the adult smiling or looking at her.

Secondly, there were statements of positive praise or encouragement. These were often offered in respect of even quite small achievements and constituted a kind of bathing in a positive atmosphere. Thus Joyce when she saw how much milk Anna had drunk commented, "Good girl, good girl, see what you can do when you try."

It was inconceivable that she would comment in the same way to any of the other children. This point is reinforced by the observation that while Anna was one of a group of seven children drawing with crayons her production alone was singled out for praise.

Thirdly, in a similar vein, the simple physical assistance that was offered to Anna was often accompanied by a commentary in a positive tone. Moving her from the snack table was accompanied by, "You want out? Right, come on then," said in an affectionate tone.

A similar phenomenon was observed when Anna sat on an adult's knee to listen to a story and when she was waiting for her milk and she was supported in standing and was rocked to and fro playfully. She was offered positive non-verbal interactions to complement physical support.

Fourthly, there were 'here and now' statements of the kind quite extensively used in nurseries but probably much less frequently elsewhere. Playing at Octons, Sandra asked, "Do you like the purple ones ?" Here the non-question was a variant on an ostensive statement like, 'look that's a purple one'. Cognitive content was typically handled in this way. Early counting, for example, was introduced by such comments on the visible, concrete situation, for instance, in this exchange when a group were playing on a rocking boat:

Joyce: That's two people with glasses on that side.
Child: And two people with not.
Joyce: That's right.

As Anna was younger and apparently at an earlier developmental stage than the other children she was probably more exposed to such statements than most.

Anna was given direct physical contact when she was helped to move and, very occasionally, at other times. In general the physical contact was deliberately kept to the minimum necessary to enable her to move around and indeed she frequently made her own way by crawling. Infrequently, however, she would be carried, for practical reasons or for reasons of the expression of affection.

Anna initiated interactions quite infrequently. It was indicated in the interviews that it was characteristic of her personal style to be somewhat po-faced. However, she did use gesture as a method of getting what she wanted, most often by asking to be moved and indicating where she wanted to go. On rarer occasions she initiated what might be described as conversations but which were on her side wordless. For instance, she and Alice were left at a table where a number of children had been playing with some construction materials and held what had clearly the characteristics of a conversation because there was alternate turn-taking, on Anna's part nods, smiles and gestures.

When other children did talk directly to Anna they tended to so using a rather exaggerated baby-talk, looking very directly at Anna, often from a stooped position, emphasising the height difference. Often their talk would be accompanied by gesture. One of the longest interactions observed was the previously noted one when a child showed Anna a bangle which she considered worthy of note. This was wordless on both sides.

There were also a few instances of children talking about Anna in her presence. During a board game one child commented, "It's hard for Anna."

Non-verbally, Anna's peers reflected the adult's positive approach to her: several of the children watched intently and smiled approvingly as Anna was cuddled by one of the staff as she waited for her milk. On a number of occasions children patted or touched Anna in an affectionately proprietorial manner. On one occasion she was picked up and cuddled by another child.

Overall, Anna seemed to be surrounded by a positive aura which made other people respond to her in a strikingly warm manner.

Structured observations

The total number of interactions observed was 254. 32 (12%) of these were initiated by Anna, 38 (15%) by a peer and the remaining 184 (73%) by an adult.

Of the interactions Anna initiated, 27 (84%) were directed towards an adult these were mainly positive non-verbal initiations. Most significantly, there was only one occasion on which the adult did not respond, all the responses were positive, confirming the positive aura noted in the unstructured observation.

The interactions initiated by her peers were also confirmed as being overwhelmingly positive - 37 out of 38. The structured observations also reveal an important fact to be borne in mind when considering the interactions Anna had with her peers. Only a handful of children interacted with her at all during the two sessions equivalent of observation. Over a longer period it seemed likely that she would continue to interact, in her necessarily limited way, mainly with the same small group of children.

The interactions initiated by adults were also overwhelmingly positive - only 6 (3%) were negative. Anna did not respond to 38 (19%) and made a negative response to 3 (1.6%). She responded positively to the remaining 143 (79%), non-verbally in every case, apart from 2 where she made a sound along with her non-verbal response. This provides a picture of a rather more responsive child than was suggested by the unstructured observations. However, a high proportion of the positive responses from Anna consist of her doing what was asked of her, often in a situation, for example when being walked from one activity to another, where she had little practical alternative.

There was a tension amongst three strands in interacting with Anna. In the first place there was a strong desire amongst the adults to treat her exactly the same as all the other children, as far as was consonant with responding to her individual characteristics. There was also a conflicting emotional response in which there was a reaction to her size and her vulnerability: this perhaps produced the positive aura that surrounded her. Finally, interacting with these there was a sense of how her impairments marked her off from other children and gave her a separate status including a perceived need for protection and assistance. Both the adults and her peers responded to this perception.

6. Observer effects

All the staff agreed that there had been an effect from having an observer present and that it had been to increase their awareness of Anna and what she was doing. They felt that this probably did increase the amount of attention she was paid and the number of interactions but Joyce commented that Anna was paid more attention than most of the other children in the normal course of events.

CASE FOUR BURNHEAD

1. The establishment

Burnhead is offcially described as a children's centre but it caters specifically for children identified as having 'special needs'. It is to be found in a town on Glasgow's periphery. The catchment area includes the town itself but also a wide surrounding area. All the children were transported by local authority mini-buses; for some children this meant a journey of an hour or more in each direction.

The children's centre is a large house, a philanthropic donation to the local authority for the care of "handicapped children". It was run by the Social Work Department as a day care centre and had retained that status until Strathclyde Region transferred its Social Work pre-five services to the Education Department in 1987. Its position remained anomalous as daycare centres for children with special needs had been abandonned in favour of schools following 1974 legislation. In other parts of Strathclyde special schools, particularly those for children with profound learning difficulties, admitted some of the equivalent pre-fives.

The building had recently been upgraded to a moderate standard. Following this, it was completely re-decorated by the staff working at weekends. The room in which the case study was conducted had a high ceiling and a large bay window, it looked out over a tarmacadammed play area and some trees and was comfortable and light.

Burnhead was shaking itself free from the legacy of philanthropy and care and adopting the educational ethos which has dominated the development of services for children with disabilities since 1974. In common with other special educational establishments it faced a dilemma in this respect: 'handicapped children' attracted charitable money which was used to improve the facilities. In Burnhead a soft play room and a small pool bore witness to the continuing role of charity.

The outlook at Burnhead was being moulded by Margaret Jackson, the Officer in Charge, appointed less than two years previously from a post in a special school. Margaret had quite clearly adopted the management style of "the new broom" and was interested in introducing new ideas and new approaches into Burnhead. The ideas and approaches which most interested her came from the field of special education where she continued to have contacts. Nevertheless, as a result of re-organisation, Burnhead was part of pre-five services and Margaret was also part of the network of heads of pre-five establishments.

The management of Burnhead was based on Margaret Jackson's office. She and her deputy spent a substantial part of the day there, making extensive use of an intercom system for communication. There were times when one or both visited group rooms and times when they worked with the children. Nevertheless, a clear physical distance and role differentiation was maintained. It is plausible to suggest that because Margaret's personal style in her contacts with the staff was relatively informal the protection of some physical distance allowed her to pursue the managerial role she had adopted.

2. Access

I had visited Burnhead and talked to Margaret Jackson previously as part of a series of visits to special schools and units catering for pre-fives. At that time I had indicated that some follow-up might be sought. Margaret had been in agreement and saw no difficulties when I telephoned. She alerted her staff and contacted Scott's parents.

To some degree, the presence of outsiders with 'expert' status is a familiar feature in specialist establishments and psychologists are a part of the landscape. The fact that all the children are identified as having 'special needs' provides some 'face' legitimacy for investigation. My presence was probably, for these reasons, less of an event in Burnhead than it was in mainstream pre-five establishments.

Part of the relatively distant form of management was the working out of 'official' timetables of activities for the staff in each of the rooms, with consultation. This naturally left considerable room for interpretation of the timetable and the activities themselves by those who carried out the day to day work. Margaret Jackson was a key informant in terms of the 'official' approach but an alternative view of its actual operation was available from the other staff.

This divide between practice and 'official' policy was maintained throughout the case study, with my periods in the office being much occupied with general discussion at a theoretical level, offering a contrast to the detail of daily work seen and discussed in the playroom and interviews.

3. Informants

Scott, who was the focus of the case study, was part of a group of eleven children in room 2 in Burnhead. This room was staffed by three members of staff one of whom, Nicola, was Scott's key worker. Although Nicola did have a very significant role to play in Scott's experience her views were broadly similar to those of the other informants and there is little reason to differentiate her views from those of others.

Nicola had completed her training just over a year previously and had had temporary jobs in a nursery school and Burnhead had then been given a permanent post in another special neeeds nursery before transferring back to Burnhead.

Pat, who had trained twenty years previously, had worked in maternity hospitals and then had a break to care for her family. She had worked in Burnhead for a year and a half.

Pamela, who had completed her training four years previously, had worked briefly as a nanny before starting work in Burnhead. She was then seconded for a year to a special needs course at a further education college, following which she returned to her post in Burnhead.

4. Burnhead's general approach

Interview accounts

The specialist nature of the setting was obviously central to the perceptions the participants had of the overall service they provided. These perspectives could not, therefore, be disentangled from those on provision for children with disabilities in the way that was possible for the mainstream nurseries.

All three interviewees first mentioned support for parents as a major benefit of their provision. This was in spite of the fact that actual contact with parents was of necessity limited by distance (strategies such as a home diary and meetings were used to counteract this). The major way in which parents were seen to be supported was through the provision of daycare. There was also psychological support, which was viewed at a very down to earth level: Pat talked of the importance of her contact with parents when she took children home in terms of "listening to their moans and groans".

In accord with this, no reservations were expressed about the daycare aspect of the provision. It seems fair to conclude that disability was seen as legitimating daycare. "It gives the parents a break. It lets them see there is a place for their children. They are not on their own."

The accounts the three members of staff gave of the general aims of Burnhead did not strongly emphasise the "special" character of the provison. However, two key points were made. One was that it aimed to help children achieve their potential: "encouraging them to bring out their abilities to the most they can." The other was the opportunity that was offered for specialist input: "speech therapy and so on can be carried out here - the children get the extra help they need."

Margaret Jackson appeared to place a lesser emphasis on the daycare element than did the rest of the staff. Her views on the service that Burnhead provided were set out in an information leaflet which was available for parents and visitors. The document identified the following "Aims and Principles":

The unit aims to assess each child's potential and ensure they reach that potential by using all supporting agencies such as Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist, Psychologist and an excellent staff who work with the 'whole' child helping him become as self-sufficient and socially acceptable as their ability allows.

Our main priority is to help the child achieve goals in all areas of development; ensure a better quality of life and be treated as an equal in society.

In order to achieve this priority a balanced teaching programme which includes learning situations and teaching methods must be drawn up to create the necessary learning experiences....

The environment must be stimulating and structured while being caring and secure.

The same document made the following statement:

The role of the Educator

1) To create a stimulating environment suitable to the needs of the child.
2) To play an important part in the ongoing development process.
3) To be responsible for the needs of the child in all areas of development
4) To be a major contributor at assessment meetings
5) Children's individual work programmes which will involve -

Recording
Evaluating
Observation
Up-dating of folders

Pedagogical perspectives

The general outlook of the staff focused on daycare and parent support which may reflect the philanthropic origins of the nursery. Here philanthropy is extended to families seen to need additional help when a child with a disabiltiy is born.

A quite different 'offcial' theme was that priority belonged to specialised work with children. The two priorities were not necessarily seen to be in conflict by the participants but they do reflect quite different perceptions of the major aims.

Organisation and observed practice

There were twenty-eight children on the roll at Burnhead. They were didvided into three groups, each with its own room and its own programme. Apart from on the vans and at lunch time no joint activities between groups were observed. In fact, over the period of the case study two joint activities were timetabled but one did not coincide with my visits and the other was displaced by a birthday party.

The groups were variously described as 'class' or 'room' 1, 2 or 3. The first of these consisted of the youngest children and those with what are generally termed 'complex' or 'profound' learning difficulties. In an upstairs room there was a group of older children, mostly in their immediate pre-school year and some of the most capable younger children. Scott's group was intermediate between these two, having a preponderance of three year olds, all of whom were mobile and most of whom were beginning to use some language.

There were eleven children, all boys, in the group but not all the children attended every day, partly through absence but also because three attended a Down's Syndrome group or a local play group. The boys were sub-divided to form three groups, each of which had one member of staff as its 'keyworker'. The role of the keyworker was to carry out some small group activities with 'her' children, to work with them individually, to keep records on their progress, to write a 'home diary' and to act as one point of contact for the parents.

This group's room had been one of the public rooms of the former house and was fairly large. The play equipment was, in comparison with nursery schools, at a moderate level. It was largely composed of standard pre-five equipment; in the absence of the children there would have been no means of identifying the playroom as catering for children with special needs.

However, there were three ancillary rooms which did have a clear specialist appearance, although in principle two of them would have been equally acceptable in a mainstream setting. Through fund-raising, a soft play area with a ball pool had been provided in one of the smaller rooms and, in the former kitchens, a small 'splash pool' had been built. In the dining room there was a cubicle which was available as a 'distraction free environment' for individual teaching/therapy. A distinguishing feature of the dining room was that the tables which were in use were slatted 'plinths' of the type used in 'conductive education', bought, it would appear, in anticipation of introducing the method.

A timetable was pinned to the wall indicating the activities to be followed on each day of the week. This timetable provided an outline of the expected pattern of activities, the headings were sufficiently general and the time allocations broad enough to allow for considerable flexibilty. The key fixed points were arrival, toileting, lunch and departure. The timetable is reproduced here:

Fig. 6

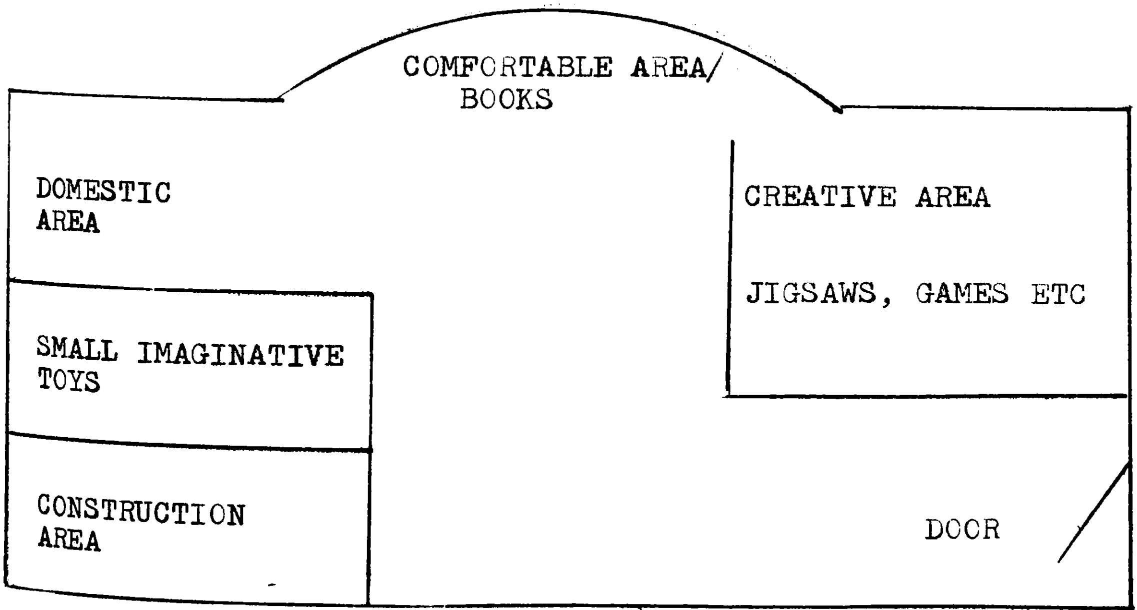
Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8-9	Teabreaks, prepare rooms and materials (some staff on van)				
9-11	Welcome children and toilet programmes. Withdrawal teaching				
	Movement programmes		Pool rota 1 staff 1 child	Music Programme with Class 3	Community Outing Rota
11-11.45	Children's lunches, toileting				
11.45	Staff lunches				
12.45	Guided choice of activity	Free choice of activity	Guided choice or TV	Free play	Guided choice or TV
1-2	Gp activity simple cooking	Gp Activity painting, licking, sticking	Gp activity soft play room	Gp activity auditory and vis. stimuli eg pictures, matching, discrimination skills	Cafe with Room 3
2-3.30	Toileting, prepare children for home, write daily diaries, recording, tidy room, teabreaks				

The children arrived on vans at 9.30 a.m.. The staff started work at 8.00 a.m., some people acted as escorts for the children on the buses while others prepared the rooms. The first children were picked up from home just after 8.00 a.m., so that by the time they arrived they had been on the bus for more than an hour. The first quarter of an hour was taken up with the demands of arrival, greeting the children, removing their outdoor clothes and ensuring that they went to the appropriate room.

The bus escorts reported to the office giving the names of absentees and passing on messages from parents, for instance, if a child had been unwell or a hospital appointment was due to take place. They then went to the staff room for a cup of tea. Meanwhile, the children were allowed to play freely, supervised by the member of staff who did not act as an escort.

The layout of the activities from which the children made their choice was unchanged over the period of observation. It was:

Fig. 7



Once all the adults were present the children were taken to the toilet. This was described on the timetable as 'toilet programmes', most of the children in room 2 were not fully toilet trained. It involved the three members of staff working at fairly full stretch in supervising one child on a potty while changing another's nappy and directing another to use the WC. On one memorable occasion much hilarity was provoked by one little boy inadvertantly peeing down a member of staff's leg as she attended to someone else.

Most mornings the children were then gathered for a formal welcome ceremony in which a song was sung identifying each child by name. On two occasions this was omitted, more it appeared by dint of general harassment than deliberate choice. There was then generally some group singing and a discussion of that day's weather.

The children were then usually divided into groups to carry out a specific activity such as a construction game or a colour matching game. This was the time at which individual work was carried out, although the speech therapist took children for individual sessions outwith this period. In fact, during the period of the case study only three children, apart from Scott, were observed being withdrawn for individual teaching and each of these on one occasion. The adult-directed group activity might last for perhaps fifteen to twenty minutes and then a freer choice would be permitted until lunchtime.

There was an 'official' structured curriculum for individual teaching consisting of a graded series of games and activities, mostly intended to teach language, contained in cloth bags. The intention was that the children would work their way through these bags in order. However, Nicola confided to me that the staff found these artificial and restrictive and made limited use of them.

Lunches were cooked on the premises and were provided at 11 a.m. because all the nursery nurses were needed for supervision and the children's and staff lunches could, therefore, not co-incide. A secondary justification was offered by Margaret Jackson in terms of the early start made by some children.

The process of feeding the children was a well-established routine and managed with considerable efficiency. The adults generally stood and hovered over the children supervising and averting problems. There was a conspicuous switch in the personae adopted by the staff at this time: adults who had been very responsive to the children in the playroom appeared at lunchtime to develop 'Woolworths Syndrome' - the children were served without anyone looking at them. At one point Scott was reminded sharply that, "This is lunch time not play time". Almost the only words addressed to the children were encouragement to eat or praise for having eaten.

Many of the children had great difficulty with their utensils and with concentrating on the matter in hand and much effort was needed to ensure that they did so without a great deal of mess. There were clear similarities to the situation in the toilets where the concentration of children who found the practical task difficult created considerable pressures.

After lunch the children were taken to the toilet and washed, sometimes in small groups and sometimes as a whole group.

During staff lunches the children were supervised by two people for half the time and by one for the rest of the time. Sometimes a story would be read to the whole group but this proved very difficult because most of the children could not follow connected sequence of language without the sort of support that a younger child would be given, for example, in being allowed to hold the book and look closely at the pictures.

The selection of stories also influenced the response of the children. For example one story which was read was entitled *Topsy and Tim's Wednesday* which was sufficiently wordy that it would have been difficult to hold the attention of a group of 'average' three year olds. Another was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* which was much simpler, but its counting aspect was emphasised with the result that the children again became restive.

The sequel to this unequal struggle to involve the children as a whole group was that they would eventually be allowed to play freely. Particularly when it was supervised by only one adult, this period of free choice was a difficult one in which quarrels would break out, play materials would be scattered and children would move rapidly from one area to another or seek refuge in a quiet corner.

A prepared activity was usually undertaken in the afternoons. This might be carried out by the whole group, for example, when everyone went outside to paint a large butterfly for a wall display. One fine day the children went out as a group to play in the yard. In other cases the children were sub-didvided, not necessarily into keyworker groups.

Most of these activities were not notably different from those of other pre-five establishments. However, one activity which was strikingly an exception was one which had a strong 'sensory training' element. Here, a number of items of food, all, for no very apparent reason, coloured yellow, were put into the children's mouths while a hand was held over their eyes. No explanation that they could have understood could have been given to them and indeed none was offered. All the children were, if not distressed, at least bewildered and, particularly given that one of the foods was a lemon, unwilling to continue but they were firmly encouraged to carry on with the ativity. This form of training is not uncommon in special education on the basis that the most basic 'incidental' learning has not occurred in children with learning difficulties.

There might then be a period of free choice of activity, a story or some singing. Then the children would be taken to the toilet and dressed and prepared for the van. When they were ready they waited in a group. On occasions the staff took this opportunity to write in the home diaries.

Pedagogical perspectives

More than one distinct perspective can be seen in this practice. Firstly, there was an element of institutionalism in the necessary provision of practical physical care which was always carried out with the children in groups. The rationale of group provision is always that of mass production; there are gains in efficiency if the process is routinised and economies of scale are sought.

By contrast, many of the activities in which the children were engaged were indistinguishable from practice in mainstream pre-five provision. The materials, the pattern of free choice and small group activities were exactly parallel. Entailed in this was a view of the children as active individual learners facing the common learning tasks of early childhood encouraged by sympathetic, responsive adults.

Finally, other aspects of the practice have their roots in special education. The official structures such as the timetable, the bag system and the structured forms for recording individual progress reflected such a perspective. It is based on the idea that some children cannot adequately organise their own learning so that all 'input' must be highly structured and organised. This perspective often became obscured in the translation of the 'official' conception of Burnhead into practice.

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview accounts in general terms

The Burnhead staff responded to questioning about children's special needs in terms of handicaps: "the physically handicapped are the most obvious; the mentally handicapped are the most difficult." However, a view that some children have additional needs for help, "physically, socially to encourage them to mix", was also mentioned. Above all, they identified the inability of some children to carry out some activities or tasks, implying a negative comparison with the 'average' child:

> They don't naturally play well, they need to be guided in nearly everything; they have to be shown and helped to do things ordinary children can manage on their own.

Perhaps surprisingly, there was little opposition expressed to the idea of integration. To some degree, this relects the variety of interpretations which can be put on the concept; Pat felt that Burnhead provided an integrated experience of a sort:

> We have quite a good balance (of kinds of children) and we do take them out and about they're not shut away. Really, they're not treated differently from any other children.

However, while the idea of integration was not opposed there were quite specific reservations about the practice, some of them based upon personal experiences. There was a consensus that "the profoundly handicapped" could not be meaningfully integrated.

In general, there was a feeling that the support available in mainstream settings was quite limited: Nicola described an integrated nursery school in these terms:

> There are too many children there. Children with disabilities can get pushed to one side. It's only when they cause a problem and somebody notices them that they get paid any attention.

A strong contrast was drawn between this sort of experience and Burnhead's provision, a major advantage of which was seen to be its small size which allowed very close relationships to be built up with the children.

This emphasis on intimacy, relationships and the social context contrasted with the official perspective as outlined in the information sheet for parents. It claimed that:

> The unit aims to assess each child's potential and ensure they reach that potential by using all supporting agencies ... Our main priority is to help the child achieve goals in all areas of development.

The language of assessment, potential and goals was that of special education and suggests an approach which aspires to rigour rather than sensitivity.

Pedagogical perspectives

Because Burnhead is a centre for children with special needs the overall perspectives and the perspectives on children with disabilities naturally co-incided. There was a similar contrast between the perspective of the staff and that of the officer in charge. The staff emphasised those virtues which are often associated with home care - intimacy and security while the officer in charge valued specialised work.

The staff viewed the children in terms of their developmental stage which implied a high degree of dependency. The official view was firmly directed towards the notion of potential which would not be realised without appropriate intervention. For the staff, nurture and warmth were central to their role rather than educational objectives.

Scott

The child on whom the case study focused was Scott. Scott had communication difficulties; despite some average achievements in his non-verbal development Scott found it difficult to use and understand language meaningfully. He had been slow to talk but by the time of the case study he was able to talk although his phonological system was distorted. It was difficult at times to identify what Scott was referring to and he was much inclined to the repetition of certain phrases.

In common with many children with communication difficulties, Scott found it hard to cope with change and was very much attached to routine. He frequently sought reassurance about the sequence of events in the centre and was very easily distressed. He was also liable to become upset for no apparent external reason.

Scott was the younger of two children. The unusual nature of his behaviour was puzzling and distressing for his parents and his mother found it difficult not to blame Scott.

It is possible that Scott was selected for the case study because the nature of his difficulties meant that it would be likely that he would find it difficult, and probably distressing, to have to cope with a mainstream setting. Margaret Jackson was clearly aware that the research was taking place in the context of a policy of integration whose difficulties she would, naturally, have an interest in exposing.

Interview accounts of provision for Scott

Scott's needs were seen by all the interviewees in terms of his emotional needs: "trying to get him to feel secure with someone". The aims that were held for Scott were expressed in these terms rather than in terms of seeking changes say in his behaviour or his language development. No mention was made of a 'handicapping' condition.

In a similar vein, the view that was taken of the progress that Scott had made in Burnhead was expressed in terms of his emotional development. Everyone mentioned the positive effect of his relationship with his keyworker: "his great rapport with Nicola, that makes everything right"; "He is certainly a lot more secure and with him having Nicola he has come on in that he relates to somebody." Nicola herself indicated the importance of her having, as she said, "clicked" with Scott.

Scott's future progress was seen to depend upon where he would be placed, specifically, whether the setting would be sufficiently responsive:

> it depends a great deal where he goes. When he comes in and something is bothering him he will not do anything or relate to anyone...It depends who he is with.

Pat saw staying with Nicola in the near future as critical: "I can't see him going back the way, I think if he stays with his keyworker."

The information that the staff had about Scott, unsurprisingly in view of the perplexing, imprecise nature of his difficulties, was rather sketchy. The information they did have was related to Scott's home circumstances and his parents. They were not dissatisfied with this state of affairs and had no pressing desire to have a precise 'diagnosis'.

This personalised view of Scott's difficulties and his needs was consensual. This would be expected of a small group who, from observation and their own reports, got on well together. There were instances of negative cases in that specialised services and individualised teaching were mentioned approvingly but they were quite clearly seen as secondary to Scott's needs for security and a close relationship.

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective that the staff held on Scott reflected their general perceptions about their work. It emphasised the need for security and responsiveness. The fact that Scott was exceptional in these areas probably caused this emphasis to be exaggerated; it was apparent that Scott did need a secure and intimate setting more than the 'average' child with learning difficulties .

There is a contrast between the general account which emphasised handicaps and the very individualised perception of Scott. The nature of the response to Scott was seen to be determined by his unique characteristics not his 'handicap' so that sharing references and tuning into the characteristics of Scott's talk were more highly valued than specific language work. The perspective is shared amongst all the staff and there was no-one who placed specific pieces of learning in a higher order of priority.

Observed practice with Scott

ACTIVITIES

For the main part Scott was involved in the same range of activities as the other children. It should be noted that the difficulties he experienced in dealing with many of the activities he was offered, particularly those involving choice, were not necessarily reflective of the particular situation in Burnhead. In many ways the choices were fewer, distractions more limited and adults more available than would have been the case in, say, a mainstream setting. Scott simply found such situations difficult.

Scott frequently spent the periods of free choice rather anxiously moving from activity to activity. He used various methods to try to establish interactions (discussed later). At times he would bite his fingers. The staff responded by encouraging him to settle to a constructive activity but he tended to resist their overtures. This was a typical attempt to get him to make a positive choice;

NICOLA: (threading beads with another child) Scott, what are you going to do?

SCOTT: Scott no. No jigsaw. No jigsaw.

Scott was toilet trained and so spent a significant period of the time when all the children were at the toilet waiting for the others to be dealt with. All the children spent a considerable period waiting at meal times because of the logistics of feeding twenty children at once. Such waiting was stressful for Scott and at both these times he showed signs of anxiety similar to those he showed when he faced a free choice of activity. There were two reactions from the staff to this behaviour, one was to ignore it, particularly in its minor manifestations, and the other was to discourage it firmly but quite unemotionally.

Scott had a session in the splash pool with Nicola and another little boy. At first, this was a fairly tense experience as the other child was quite unhappy, but once he was allowed to get out Scott had a very pleasurable twenty minutes during which he talked quite freely.

Scott had a speech therapy session which took place in the dining room with no other children present. The main business consisted of the modelling of sentences in response to line drawings of actions. He attempted only one sentence and that rather half heartedly, echoing "(the girl is) walking with a pram" as /o a pa/. After this the speech therapist started to finish the sentences herself, as Scott would not respond. Scott was then asked to identify the pictures as they were described he did not comply and started to drum his heels. Initially he was scolded:

Adult: Scott, that's enough nonsense. If you're not going to work we're going back through. (Scott stamps his feet) Right, no more.

Then the time out technique of withdrawing attention and stimulation was tried:

Adult: That's very silly - you just sit there. (adult averts face)

As this did not have a noticeable effect the session was abandonned:

Adult: Scott, when you stop stamping your feet... (waits for a response)
No more toys because you are being a bad boy.
Come on back through, no more just now.

This speech therapy session was followed up by Nicola to much the same effect. It took place in the 'distraction free' booth in the dining room with Scott wedged behind a table which extended to each of the walls so that he could not escape. Scott responded enthusiastically to familiar pictures of his brother's birthday party. Otherwise, he produced a response to only two of the speech therapy pictures before he started to drum his heels and finally to attack Nicola physically.

Structured observation

Overall, the single activity in which Scott spent the highest percentage of time 18% was Snack - having lunch. The next most frequently recorded activity was Looking, Listening, Waiting (14%), he also spent 8% of the time in Non-Specific Activities. Toileting was recorded as taking less time (6%) than was the impression gained from informal observation. However, some of the time recorded as waiting was during periods when the group as a whole was engaged in this activity. The rest of the time, the majority, was spent in a range of activities: Music, Fine Structured activities, Gross Motor, Books and Imaginative Play (mostly with cars in a garage) were the most significant types of activity apart from one session spent watching television which represented 9% of the recorded activity.

This confirms the picture of a range of nursery type activities as typifying Scott's experience. It also confirms the significant element of practical care and suggests that such group care did involve considerable periods where he was minimally involved.

The period of structured observation was relatively short but it is still significant that it did not include any time spent in direct 'remedial' work.

Pedagogical perspectives

Apart from the practical care element, two perspectives were apparent in the work carried out with Scott. On one hand, he was being provided with a fairly standard set of pre-five experiences, albeit in a small and controlled setting. Underlying this was the idea that the same set of experiences judged to be relevant to most pre-fives was relevant to Scott. His perceived need was for more security to learn from these experiences.

On the other hand, on a small number of occasions he was exposed to 'special' work aimed at remediating his perceived difficulties. Both in character and content these activities were marked off from what might be seen as 'normal' pre-five experiences. The remedial work carried out on his language was based on tasks which were very clearly marked off from normal discourse: they were described to Scott as "work". They also lacked meaning, in the sense that they were so abstracted from the real life events they represented that the connection was difficult to make.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Because of the size and structure of Burnhead the groups with which Scott was involved were always small. The only time at which there was a larger group was at lunch time where, although rooms 2 and 3 were in the same dining room, they sat at separate tables and were dealt with only by their own staff.

For similar reasons, most activities were supervised by an adult to a greater or lesser degree. For whole group activities this ranged from the basic management supervision of the group for practical purposes, particularly eating, through a class teaching approach, for instance, during story telling, to minimal supervision of their play. With sub-groups it ranged from direct teaching of concepts such as colours or items of vocabulary such as body parts, to encouragement to continue with something constructive. Individually, there was specific teaching but there was also casual contact on a fairly frequent basis.

Neither Scott nor the other boys showed any real interest in playing with one another as opposed to alongside one another, although with considerable adult support Scott and another boy did role play a simple shopping episode.

Structured observation

Scott spent 74% of the time that he was observed in the context of a group with adult direction. Even when he was waiting he did so in this context. He spent 14% of the time in solitary activities and 3% of the time playing in parallel with other children. 8% of his time was spent in individual contact with an adult.

This confirms that the experience Scott had was essentially a group one. He did spend a significant amount of time with an adult but much of it was made up of short periods of attention in the course of events. During five and a half hours of observation there were two periods of five minutes and one of ten minutes when he received extended attention from an adult. The periods of solitary activity corresponded to times when he had a free choice of activity.

Pedagogical perspectives

The nature of Scott's social experiences were determined rather by the facts of his situation than by deliberate choices on the part of the staff. The gathering together of a group of children who were at a stage where (a) they needed considerable adult supervision and (b) they were not able to act co-operatively had its own logical outcome.

Most mainstream settings would have found it extremely difficult to have provided for Scott adequately. He would, for example, almost certainly have found the activity level and freedom of choice of nursery school very difficult. Equally, it is clear that one of the effects of this setting was that neither Scott nor any of the other children had around them peers who were communicating effectively, managing to develop their own play or playing co-operatively.

INTERACTIONS

Adults initiated three kinds of interactions with Scott. Firstly, there were teaching sequences usually of a question and answer form:

in the splash pool -

ADULT: What colour's the ball?
SCOTT: Red.
ADULT: No, it's orange.

and similarly at hand painting. -

ADULT: What colour's your hands?
SCOTT: Yellow
ADULT: That's lovely, Scott (pointing to picture).

Secondly, there were encouragements to become involved in or carry on with an activity, for example, when singing a song, Scott showed some reluctance to become involved:

ADULT: Come on Scott, The bumble bee song, Scott. Catch him. (an imaginary bumble bee) Come on Scott where is it? (prompted to make the appropriate actions.

Thirdly, there were management and controlling statements ranging from those offering illusory choices:

ADULT: Could you tidy up it's lunch time?
Scott, could you stand at the door?

to unequivocally firm instructions to "stop that Scott."

Of greater significance were the adult responses to Scott's own utterances. Scott's articulation was often unclear and the relevance of what he was saying difficult to identify. Yet on frequent occasions the adults, particularly Nicola, would patiently try to grasp what he was saying, usually with apparent success.

Scott used a number of utterances in stereotyped ways either as a variant on his anxiety responses or to attract attention. For instance, he constantly repeated, "high flats", in apparent reference to a block of flats which could be seen from the window. The staff were very familiar with these and adopted a policy of ignoring them or playing them down. A side-effect of this was, however, that some of Scott's more inventive utterances were also ignored. He had, for example, an attachment to the word "doughnut" and so in the splash pool Nicola ignored his comparison of a rubber ring to a doughnut, similarly he made a repeated alliteration of "doughnut" and "doorbell" which was equally ignored.

Even more 'inappropriately' Scott attempted to initiate interactions with adults by grabbing at their clothing, nipping them or seizing their necks in a very rough cuddle. A similar approach was used with this behaviour, it was firmly discouraged with a minimum of emotion.

Scott initiated few interactions of any kind with his peers and the few which he did rarely resulted in a response.

Structured observations

There were 241 interactions recorded during the period of the structured observation.

66 (27%) of these were initiated by Scott seeking a response from an adult 38 (58%) of that number were initiated by positive verbal statements and were responded to with a positive verbal statement. This confirms the picture of a responsive verbal environment.

144 (60% of the total) were initiated by an adult and although a majority were positive 24 (17%) were negative. Scott responded to 79 (54%) of these positively and 68 (46%) negatively or by ignoring them.

This gives a more positive picture of Scott's response to what was said to him than the unstructured observations suggested. However, the postive responses were often limited to straightforward non-verbal compliance, ie doing what he was told, there were 61 instances of this - 77% of his positive responses.

21 interactions (9%) were initiated by Scott seeking a response from a peer, in 16 instances no response was forthcoming. 5 (2%) were initiated by a peer and Scott responded to 2 of these. This suggests that there were perhaps more attempts at interaction on both sides than the unstructured observation indicated, but it does confirm that there were very few successful interactions between Scott and his peers.

Pedagogical perspectives

Two contrasting perspectives can be seen to be operating in this area.

The direct teaching interactions in which the staff engaged with Scott reflect substantially a direct instruction model. Such a model supposes the child to be an empty vessel to be filled with appropriate content provided in a direct fashion by an adult.

The approach to spontaneous language was significantly different. Here Scott was seen as an active participant towards whom the adults acted in a responsive fashion. The small size of the group and the high staff-child ratio were clearly critical: first, in allowing time to be taken to decipher Scott's utterances and second in allowing the staff to develop a sufficient familiarity to enable them to 'tune in' to his speech patterns and his references. The staff had referred in their interviews to the importance of this aspect of their work, Scott's need to be understood.

A further component of the interaction with Scott was when control was exercised by an adult. Two modes of control were used. There were the implicit controls of nursery education - the encouragements and the requests to comply. As a contrast there were the behavioural techniques of denying feedback to what is seen to be inappropriate behaviour, these are frequently advocated as a method for working with children like Scott.

6. Observer effects

The staff felt that the presence of an observer had had little impact, reflecting the situation noted earlier where educational psychologists and observers are a familiar part of the scene. Nicola did confess that she had felt some pressure to follow the official curriculum of the bag system which was largely disregarded in practice. However, even under this pressure little use was, in fact, made of it.

The splash pool experience was one which had been stage-managed at Margaret's request; Scott would have been given the same experience but at a different time if I had not been present.

CASE FIVE KIRKBANK

1. The establishment

Kirkbank is a large stone-built house in a fashionable part of Glasgow. Many such houses are used by Strathclyde Region as children's homes, old people's homes and day nurseries. The elegance of their rooms is lost amidst inexpensive, functional furnishings and adaptations but they are well proportioned with high ceilings and wide bay windows.

The rather limited resources which were historically typical of Strathclyde Region's day nurseries were thrown into relief by the spacious surroundings. Kirkbank derives one major advantage from its situation, it is surrounded by a large garden with both paved and grassed areas in which the children can play.

It was difficult to gauge the overall atmosphere of Kirkbank because much activity took place in widely separated rooms with doors closed or half shut. The style of management was, to an outside eye, unobtrusive; there was a sense of a successful operation functioning in a low-key way.

However, there was an opportunity to get some sense of the overall style because the case study took place during a spell of fine weather. This meant that the children were able to spend longish periods outside in the afternoons when Malcolm, the child upon whom the case study focused, attended. At such times all the children would be outside playing freely in the sun just as they would have been in the 'average' home of the cornflake adverts. The staff were supervising, giving drinks of juice and pieces of fruit to the children and casually talking to them but not consciously 'educating' them. The overall impression was business-like but relaxed.

This style echoed the personal style of Beth, the Officer in Charge, who appeared quietly competent, having the breadth of experience to take most things in her stride.

2. Access

I approached Beth about carrying out a case study as a result of a passing remark she had made to me at a social event which we were both attending. The remark had been to the effect that I ought to visit Kirkbank because they had some children with very marked impairments. I took up the offer to visit by telephone some weeks later and proposed a case study as a development of my visit. As Beth foresaw no difficulties, the case study began the following week.

The invitation had been a passing one and it would be mistaken to place too much interpretation on it. Nevertheless, there were faint hints in subsequent conversations with Beth to suggest that if the invitation was passing, it was not chance. Beth had reservations about the appropriateness of Kirkbank's non-specialist provision for some children with disabilities and the invitation was, at least in part, an attempt to have an informed outsider look at the questions which troubled her. Her choice of Malcolm with his extensive impairments also revealed her anxieties.

If this interpretation is justified, Beth's concerns remained rather obliquely expressed; her personal style is reserved and she maintained a position almost of neutrality, of weighing what I had to say, in our few discussions. In fact, my contact with Beth was limited mainly to preliminary discussion, an intermediate report and a final reporting session. Her position was that of gatekeeper to other forms of information rather than that of an informant.

Other informal contacts in Kirkbank were limited and the picture that was obtained was based very much on the extended contact with Malcolm's group's room. Therefore, it may be quite unrepresentative of Kirkbank's approach in general. There were two staff in regular contact with Malcolm in his room.

3. Informants

As indicated, there were limited informal contacts with Beth and Sarah, her deputy, in the nursery office. The two members of staff who were in daily contact with Malcolm were directly interviewed and one other person. The two students who spent a short time with Malcolm's group on a few occasions were not interviewed.

Lesley had qualified in 1986 and then worked in the USA as a nanny and in a nursery school. She had returned to work in this country and had worked in Kirkbank for five months but was looking for another job in the USA.

Karen had qualified in 1987 and worked in temporary jobs in nursery schools and classes. She had been at Kirkbank on a temporary contract for the past month.

Both Lesley and Karen could claim some other experience of children with disabilities but neither would have described it as extensive. Both felt that their training in this area had been fairly cursory.

It was also arranged by Beth that I interview Laura, the member of staff who had previously had responsibility for Malcolm, she had qualified in 1979 and, after a three month spell in another day nursery, had worked in Kirkbank ever since. She had a personal interest in disability; her sister had attended a school for children with profound learning difficulties and she had undertaken voluntary work there. Laura had considered a career in special education herself but had been persuaded that it would not be good idea by a college tutor.

Lesley was Malcolm's keyworker and took a very dominant role in providing for him, she it was who largely decided what he would do and gave him help to do it. She was his main source of interaction and he was very much her responsibility. Lesley must therefore be regarded as the key informant.

4. Kirkbank's general approach

Interview accounts

The generally expressed view of daycare was a positive one. The social advantages it offered children were emphasised: "the social aspect, mixing with other children of their own age". The other advantages to children were expressed in global terms, "the children are getting the benefit to their all round development." Karen mentioned the provision of "a stimulating environment". None the less, it was perhaps indicative of a prevailing uncertainty that Lesley felt that it was not possible to give a definitive answer to the question of what Kirkbank provided:

> It's difficult to say because it's different for every child.... To try to bring out what they are capable of at their stage, every child has a different stage, we bring out what we can.

The relationship between nursery and home was described by Laura as a complementary one, "giving him opportunities, giving them experiences they don't get at home." Lesley made one, slight, reference to increasing parental opportunities: "it gives Mum a break."

A further indication of a lack of conviction about these positive views came from Laura who described Kirkbank as:

> *Just* a safe environment away from their parents, giving them as many opportunities as we can. Definitely not to replace Mum but somewhere where the kiddies are quite happy. (emphasis added)

Overall, the impression was of a low key outlook on the work of the nursery. It was certainly significant that this impression applied to Lesley, to whose outgoing personality enthusiasm might have come more naturally.

Pedagogical perspectives

The main perspective in this was that limited significance was attached to the children's experiences in Kirkbank. Children in daycare were seen in the context of their families which were seen as providing more significant experiences. The principal learning task which was not available to children in the family context was that of becoming part of a wider social group, nursery provided that opportunity. Nursery was seen to have a role in assisting in the global development of children but not a crucial one.

Organisation and observed practice

Kirkbank was organised into groups by age with each group having its own room. Malcolm was part of a group of six children under two and a half. These children were, therefore, all at the very early stages of developing language and making contact with their peers. Effectively, Malcolm shared a place with another child who attended for the earlier part of the day. Lesley and Karen had regular responsibility for the group and on three days they were joined by a student nursery nurse for part of the session.

This group's room was large in floor area for the number of children. It had a high ceiling and there were expansive windows on two walls. There were a small number of books available to the children and an equally small number of toys. There were no evident constructional or imaginative play materials but consumable materials such as paint and paper were stored in a cupboard and used under adult direction. In the garden there was a sandpit and some large play equipment.

Malcolm attended Kirkbank in the afternoons only and so it was only that part of the day which was observed. This means that only a partial picture of practice with the group of children whom Malcolm joined has been obtained. It was the view of the staff that this partial picture was not markedly unrepresentative of other times in Kirkbank, apart perhaps from the lunchtime period, which involved a considerable practical undertaking.

The pattern of the afternoon was similar each day when observation took place. However, on four afternoons of bright sunshine the whole nursery went out into the garden for the larger part of Malcolm's two hours.

The daily schedule in Malcolm's room was as follows:

14.00 Specific activity, e.g., painting

14.45 Afternoon tea

15.00 One child collected, tidy up after tea

15.10 Free activities - staff tea breaks

16.00 Malcolm collected

The salient features of practice that were observed are described below.

At the time when Malcolm was arriving a group form of play was generally organised. This was timed to take place when both the regular members of staff had finished their lunch break. Reflecting the age of the children, this activity was fairly simple and open-ended; painting, playing with playdough. While all the children participated quite willingly, they were allowed considerable latitude to wander off to pursue another interest.

The group, therefore, began to break up quite naturally and no definite end to the activity was usually discernible. After about thirty minutes one of the staff went to collect a drink with some fruit or bread and butter for the children. When she returned into the room the children were organised into a group at the table and afternoon tea distributed.

After this, any necessary toileting or changing of nappies was carried out. It was not carried out with all the children as a routine.

After afternoon tea, the children were allowed freedom to play or to wander around. At this time the two members of staff would alternate their tea breaks so that on one occasion only one person remained with the group, at other times a student was present or the whole group was outside where several members of staff were present. A small group of children might be read a story or sing a song and on one occasion a painting activity begun earlier was carried on.

At this time, one of the children was collected by his mother who came into the room and normally spoke briefly with one of the staff. Other children were also collected during this period on a less regular basis.

Overall, there was an impression of a pattern of caring for children carried on at a leisurely speed. Life had been slowed down to a toddler's pace. Children were never hurried to complete a task.

The interactions with the children were overwhelmingly positive. One reason for this was that adults tended to respond to children's demands quite quickly. There were few, if any, instances of conflict observed and the children were 'well behaved'. Firstly, the environment was designed for them and so there were none of the conflicts which can arise over the safety of children and/or objects in other settings. Secondly, there were none of the conflicts which arise over asking children to fit in with adult plans. The experience the children were having was a secure, low-key and quiet one.

The extent to which the staff were responsive was considerable but it did have limits. Grouping together children who were all at an early stage socially and verbally meant that constant responsiveness would have been unbearable for the adults and constant stimulation intolerable for the children. Consequently, much of the time was spent in low-intensity activity which, for the adults at least, had some of the characteristics of time-passing. An illustration of this was the frequency of adult-adult conversations both on general topics and on the children. There was seen to be the time to carry on such conversations. In other types of pre-five establishment conversations like this are often seen as unacceptable, reflecting the rather different groups of children and the length of the child contact.

The main perspective was that of professionalised child care where the only activity that was going on apart from minor clearing and cleaning tasks was looking after children. This model of childcare deliberately limits the institutional aspect. There was a high level of individual responsiveness rather than group approaches and the emphasis was not on routine and regulation but on freedom and child paced activity. This style of interaction embodies much that can be seen to be drawn from an idealised model of a 'responsive mother'. Children are seen as in need of the same basic elements of care, both practical and emotional, but beyond these they are responded to as individuals.

An interesting sidelight is thrown upon the extent to which the model of mothering is an idealised one by the contrast between this situation in which the focus is solely on child care and almost every other child care context, including that of most families, where a number of other, competing demands are made on the carer's time.

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview acounts in general terms

All three members of staff expressed considerable support for the idea of the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream nurseries but Laura, calling upon her personal experiences, was very concerned that resources and support should be available. She cited staffing, equipment and "back up" from specialists such as physiotherapists as key factors.

Lesley's central tenet in providing for children who might be seen as exceptional was expressed in the following terms:

> We just try and go on with the normal routine as far as possible. It is the same with any child, you help them to integrate, you help them out, like with the other children.

In a similar vein Laura indicated some concern about a medicalised approach. When she was asked whether she felt a need for more information about children with disabilities she replied:

> I suppose more information can be dangerous - I think you just need to know a little and then see the person. I have a thing about labels; people sometimes hear them and they get frightened. They think, what's that? You just need to see the child.

Pedagogical perspectives

The interviewees shared a perspective of normalisation. Central to this perspective was the idea that children with disabilities should not be made any more different than is avoidable. Processes such as attaching labels to children or carrying out activities which differ from the norm have this effect and so were seen as undesirable. Implicitly, they were challenging the definition of some children's needs as 'special'.

Malcolm

Malcolm was almost two years old, blond and fair complexioned. Because of cerebral palsy he was unable to talk and his only voluntary movements were moving his head or rolling over. He therefore had to be carried from place to place and needed help with feeeding and drinking. Although in many respects Malcolm was physically like a baby, facially he was quite clearly a two year old.

How much Malcolm understood was a conundrum for his parents and for the staff at Kirkbank to which no professional adviser could supply the answer. His parents felt frustrated by this and wanted unequivocal expert advice for themselves and help for Malcolm.

Interview accounts of provision for Malcolm

Malcolm's needs were seen quite differently by the three interviewees. Lesley saw his most important 'special' need as "equipment". Karen said that "there are so many". While Laura saw her task as, "just to get him integrated more, to get him mixing, he was used to a one to one." She saw his impairments as something to be "overcome .. to make him part of the group."

There was more consensus about the progress that Malcolm had made. This was seen in global, emotional terms rather than any specific attainments:

> He is better tempered than he was - I don't know if it was that he was cross but to me when he was first here he was quite unhappy. His head control has improved. He is happier all round - he smiles now, for the first few months I don't think he smiled at all.

Laura saw quite specific forms of physical progress: "he is gaining in his head control, he's not as floppy as he was. There are not as many spasms now - maybe, though, that's just us learning to handle him." All three interviewees referred to the development of head control as an important aspect of the progress Malcolm might make in the future.

Lesley's aims with Malcolm were clearly and simply stated:

> basically just to make Malcolm happy and try to stimulate him as much as I can and try to involve the other children in talking to him - that's really it.

She saw the benefits of Malcolm's attendance in social terms:

> He enjoys being with the other children - he will watch them for long enough. He is gaining relationships with other adults away from his mother.

Lesley and Karen were happy with the level of information they had for working with Malcolm specifically, although Lesley felt she needed more information at a general level. Laura felt that too much information was dangerous.

The central theme of the replies about Malcolm was that his inclusion was an aspect of a 'normal' way of proceding. For example, Lesley commented:

> I think it's good for a child to come in like Malcolm. We just try and go on with the everyday routine as far as possible. It is the same with any child. You help them to integrate. You help them out like with the other children.

Similarly, in considering the question of whether Malcolm's inclusion took place at the expense of the other children she commented:

We give him a lot of attention and perhaps we are depriving the other children of our attention but I don't think they're suffering. Most of the afternoon children are in in the morning and they get our attention then.

Laura made the point that Malcolm was getting the level of attention that was reasonable for a child of his age:

He's getting treated his own age, I tended to think Mum treated him as a baby - you've got to remember he's growing up. He's learning he's an individual getting a wee bit of space for himself.

Lesley even wondered whether the degree of attention that Malcolm did get was excessive in the sense of being abnormal: "it's hard because I don't know whether he should get attention constantly."

The desire to treat Malcolm normally was a consistent theme in all that was said. Indeed, some of the counter examples which appeared to value specialist provision, particularly equipment, were different aspects of the same desire. Thus, Laura specifically felt that useful equipment would be "a brace - so that he can be one of the crowd - something that brings him into the table." Special equipment was valued because it might allow his experience to be the same as that of the other children rather than making him special.

Lesley's reaction to the exercises that the physiotherapist had shown her for Malcolm was indicative of the same outlook. She admitted that she did not do them regularly with him and, after probing, said that she could not see their relevance. She saw Malcolm's time at Kirkbank as serving social and normalising functions for him rather than offering him therapy.

An important point was that Lesley saw the experience of attending Kirkbank as a pleasurable one for Malcolm, "He enjoys being with the other children."

Pedagogical perspectives

The perspective in relation to the specific example of one child, therefore, remained one of normalisation. The view of Malcolm and his learning was partly that Malcolm would learn from the other children but much more that his development as a child would be helped by his being treated as 'normally' as possible.

An interesting omission but one which was consistent with the interviewees slightly ambivalent view of daycare was the lack of mention of the help that the service must be to Malcom's mother who had recently had another child.

There were negative cases in relation to the normalisation perspective, in the sense that specialised services were mentioned as desirable but their relevance to the work in Kirkbank with Malcolm was never seen as strong. The view of therapeutic services was that they were parallel and could be available elsewhwere rather than in Kirkbank.

Observed practice with Malcolm

ACTIVITIES

The activities that Malcolm was engaged in for the first part of each session were exactly the same activities as all the other children. When they painted, he painted; when they played with playdough, he played with playdough; when they ate, he ate. He did none of these things in the same way as the other children but he did them at exactly the same time.

One of the painting sessions provided an example of how Malcolm was included in activities. His hand was opened up and the brush placed in it. His hand was then guided into the paint tray and from there to the paper. The brush fell from his grip several times and was restored to his hand. Because an adult helped him to maintain his grip, his movements, which appeared to be involuntary, ensured that he made marks on the paper. (The other children made similar marks.)

It was certainly possible to interpret Malcolm's response to the process initially as pleasure and latterly as boredom but the amount of interpretation required makes it impossible to say whether these responses are projected from the observer. Similarly, it is possible that his dropping of the brush was to a degree a voluntary indication that he was finished but it was not interpreted in this way by Lesley and there was little other evidence of this degree of voluntary control over his grip.

Similarly, in playing with playdough Malcolm's hands were pressed into the material by Karen. This meant that he made an impression which otherwise he clearly would not have done.

A similar pattern of physical support could be seen when Malcolm was eating. He was either propped up between two cushions, supported by cushions in a chair with a tray attached or seated on someone's knee to make him upright. The food would be cut up to be made as manageable as possible and then placed in his mouth. If it appeared necessary, his head would be supported as he ate. He was be watched carefully for any difficulties in chewing or swallowing but otherwise he was left to eat for himself. Apart from moving him around and making him comfortable, eating was the only physical 'care' task on which substantial time was spent. Malcolm only had his nappy changed once.

There was one fairly extended sequence of basic care on a day when Malcolm was particularly out of sorts and crying a good deal. He was changed from a jumper into a t-shirt because Lesley felt that his upset might be a result of being too hot. This was a tricky operation which could have upset Malcolm even more but Lesley carried it out very gently with constant talk to Malcolm. Generally, physical care and moving Malcolm around were dealt with sensitively and with good humour.

When the other children were free to choose their activities four patterns were observed.

In the first, Malcolm was left on his wedge to observe what was going on. A wind-up musical toy was sometimes left playing as a form of entertainment. There were passing interactions and if he showed signs of distress or discomfort he would be moved or talked to. However, he was essentially treated as the other children at such times and left free to follow his own interests. These periods were rarely extended.

In the second pattern, Malcolm was encouraged to join in with the other children's activities, however implausible such participation might seem. Thus on one afternoon when there were a group of children climbing on the climbing frame in the garden Lesley took him across and helped him to 'climb' by putting his feet and hands in the appropriate places. Lesley also slid Malcolm down the slide holding him under his arms and swung him in the tyre swing.

Thirdly, Malcolm was given attention and talked to by a member of staff who would sometimes involve other children. For example on occasion, Lisa, a two year old, was encouraged to "come and talk to Malcolm".

Finally, Malcolm was involved in adult led activities that small groups were undertaking, such as listening to stories or singing songs. His participation was to outward appearances fairly passive, although he did show some apparent pleasure at familiar songs.

On one occasion a quite different approach was taken to Malcolm. This occurred when Sarah, the Depute Officer in Charge, spent some time in the room, partly it appeared to collect something but also to act as 'cover' along with a student because both Lesley and Karen were elsewhere. Only three children were present and, while the student played with the other two, Sarah spent her time with Malcolm.

Sarah first took a soft 'pom-pom' ball and put Malcolm's hand on it to allow him to feel the shape and the texture. He showed an immediate interest but soon turned his head away. Then from somewhere Sarah produced a piece of fur and rubbed it against Malcolm's face and hand. This produced an immediate response of quietening which could be interpreted as interest from Malcolm but it soon gave way to continued mild, bored irritability.

Sarah continued by putting a ball just within Malcolm's reach which he hit with his hand. It was impossible to tell whether deliberate intent was involved but he showed no sign of repeating the experience. Sarah then played a xylophone in which Malcolm showed little interest, turning, it appeared, to watch the other children. She then regained his attention by circling the pom-pom before his eyes.

This sequence was far more materials-based than any other sequence observed. It involved direct sensory 'stimulation' of a kind which might well be seen as corresponding to Malcolm's apparent developmental stage. It was significant that it was not carried out by the staff in regular daily contact with Malcolm who were never observed adopting a similar approach.

Structured observations

Malcolm spent 51% of the time that he was observed in either non-specific activities or observing other children. He spent a further 17% in snack activities. This confirms the picture of a fairly low key experience. It should be noted that during these non-specific activities the record of the interactions shows that he was talked to and communicated with generally a great deal. It should also be remembered that Malcolm was not yet two years old and that he had a severely restricted capacity for independent action.

In the context of these non-specific activities Malcolm spent significant periods of time in fine creative activities, music and book activities and shorter periods in gross motor activities and 'conversing' with an adult. This confirms the picture of his inclusion in the activities of the other children and suggests that specialised sensory or physical activities did not feature in his experience.

Pedagogical perspectives

In all these activities the perspective was one of inclusion or normalisation. Malcolm was assumed to be benefitting from his contact with the other children and being helped to carry out age-appropriate activities. The learning processes which were going on could only be assumed to be occurring since Malcolm gave no overt signs of increasing competence in any of the activities.

These activities contrast with what might be seen as "good practice" with a similar child from a special education point of view, although it must be remembered that very few children of Malcolm's age actually attend any special educational establishment. The activities differed most significantly in that they were not directed at Malcolm's apparent 'developmental level' or his 'functional level'. Thus there were no activities, for instance, which were designed to increase his muscle control. The guiding principles were not those of planned work which had specific developmental goals in mind.

The one negative instance in relation to the inferred perspective, the occasion where an activity much more in tune with a specialist perspective was carried out by someone not normally working with Malcolm. The contrast served to throw the main perspective into relief.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

By virtue of his situation Malcolm was, for most of the time, part of a small group. By virtue of the age of the children, their contacts with one another were rarely extended.

There were two overall situations, within which four social contexts could be distinguished. The more usual situation was the one where Malcolm's group of children remained in their own room and his possibilities for social contact were limited to the members of his own group and the adults responsible for them. Less frequently, Malcolm's group of children were part of the whole group of children from the nursery when the children were outside. This context offered the opportunity for a wider range of social contacts to be made.

The following four social contexts were observed:

- when the whole of Malcolm's group was involved in the same activity - painting, playdough, eating. This would be supervised by both staff members with Lesley paying particular attention to Malcolm and his participation. This happened daily indoors but the only example outside was when the group took their snack out one afternoon.

- when two or three children would gather with an adult to carry out an activity - reading a story or singing a song. This happened in both situations.

- when a child would pay Malcolm particular attention without direct adult supervision. This was more likely to occur and to be extended outdoors because older children would take the initiative. This happened with one or two older girls who were encouraged to take on a 'caring' role, as illustrated in this sequence from the audio-recording:

TRACEY: I want to see Malcolm (friends call to Tracey to join their game) To see wee Malcolm, to see wee Malcolm (in reply)

(Tracey winds up a musical toy and holds it for Malcolm to hear)

ADULT: He likes that, Tracey. Don't you, Malcolm, you like that.

- when an adult would attend to Malcolm alone. This included incidents of pure 'conversation', where the adult simply talked to Malcolm, specific activities for example when Lesley carried Malcolm to the slide and the tyre swing, and practical care tasks such as helping him to eat or moving him around.

Structured observations

There was a difficulty in using the observation schedule in this case study because the small group size was not comparable to the larger situation in which it was devised. The group size and the number of adults meant that the children were almost always under adult supervision, even where no particular task was in hand. There was constant interaction between the adults and the children. Activities which were clearly adult supervised were coded as Group activities even though no common activity was going on.

Using this definition, Malcolm spent 80% of the time when he was observed in small group activities, 6% in solitary activities, that is with no direct adult supervision and 14% of his time in individual contact with an adult. This confirms quite clearly that Malcolm was included with the other children. It also confirms that he was given a fairly large amount of individual attention.

Pedagogical perspectives

The provision of this range of social contexts is more accurately viewed as inherent in the situation than as a perspective chosen by the staff. However, the relatively relaxed approach to childcare clearly affected the nature and rhythm of these contexts. Above all, because there was little sense that there were specific achievements to be expected of the children there was time for the adults to respond to Malcolm's slow paced communication and for the children to make their, generally fleeting, contact.

INTERACTIONS

There is a particular difficulty in describing the interactions in which Malcolm engaged because his role in these was so difficult to determine. Malcolm's apparent lack of voluntary control over his responses meant that on any occasion he would appear not to respond but there were times when it was possible to interpret a slight movement or a grimace as having meaning. There were times when it was very plausible to do so (this was particularly so when he appeared to show pleasure). Similarly, there were a number of occasions where it was not impossible that he had initiated a communicative event.

The vast majority of Malcolm's interactions were with Lesley. These took two forms - those initiated by Lesley and those initiated by Malcolm.

Lesley directly initiated a great deal of interaction with Malcolm. This consisted of talking to him as if he understood the language that she used. On most occasions her language was not notably simpler than the language she used to the other children in the group and assumed a degree of understanding that there were few indications that Malcolm possessed. An example is the following conversation which occurred during painting:

LESLEY: Right Malcolm, will we get some more paint for you ?
Here you are.
What do you want ? Do you want to swop colours ?
Alexander, do you want the green one ? Do you want the green one?
... (puts brush into Malcolm's hand) You need to hold onto it, Malcolm, or its going to fall. Hold on. Hold on tight.
...
Oh you think that's funny. Look he's laughing at Alexander's picture. (to Karen) Hm, a big soggy mess.
...

SUSAN: At's Malcolm's

KAREN: Mhm, Malcolm's doing a picture too.

LESLEY: (Moves Malcolm) That's better for you. Can Malcolm swop paints with somebody ?
Do you want some blue paint now Susan ? Can Malcolm have your red. That's awful nice of you, thank you.
Do you want some red paint, Malcolm ? Look.

However, Lesley certainly did, on occasion, use higher pitched language to Malcolm than was habitual to the other children. She also made high pitched calls for Malcolm's attention in a manner which might be used to a baby. An example of this occurred just after Malcolm had finished painting and he started to cry and make unhappy noises:

LESLEY: Oh, Malcolm, what is it ? Eh ?
Do you want to sit up and watch the boys and girls ? Do you ?
....
That better ? Look at everybody painting.
Malcolm, look at everybody painting.

MALCOLM: vocalises

LESLEY What ? What is it ?

MALCOLM vocalises

LESLEY What you unhappy about ?

Lesley also tended to provide a running commentary for Malcolm which was often cast in a form, typically used to babies, of questions to which either no response is expected or the reply is supplied by the adult:

LESLEY: You going to paint a picture, Malcolm ?
You're nice and cool to-day in your shorts. (moves Malcolm)
That's better for you, isn't it ?
Oh, your sock's come off. Look what's this ? Your sock fell off.
My goodness, look, what's this ? That Malcolm's sock ?
Better put it back on. We'll need to put your sock back on.
There you go, that's it back on. That better ?

Because he depended on others for getting around Malcolm received much more physical contact than any other child although this was always carried out efficiently and with a minimum of fuss. It provided opportunities for this sort of interaction. He also received a great deal of physical affection, kissing and cuddling, as he was being moved or supported.

Lesley responded to anything that resembled a communicative initiative from Malcolm, although naturally not on every occasion. Examples of initiatives to which she responded were sneezes, lip-smacking, lifting his head, making a face which resembled a laugh and quiet, indeterminate vocalisations. Her response was either to echo Malcolm's production or to comment on it and expand its significance.

An example of the former was an occasion on which Malcolm grunted and Lesley responded by grunting, Malcolm then took his turn to 'reply' with another grunt. The latter is illustrated by an occasion on which Malcolm sneezed:

Lesley: Oh, Malcolm's just sneezed. You're all right Malcolm. Did you get a fright ?

On a few occasions other adults asked Lesley or Karen a question or commented about Malcolm in his presence. Lesley had commented in interview on her dislike of people talking as if Malcolm were invisible and this perhaps explained Karen's curt reply, "A squint" to, an enquiry about what was "wrong with Malcolm's eye".

Older children also did this. On one occasion Malcolm's eye patch provoked considerable comment and questioning. On another, a girl asked simply, "Who's this ?" Even the young children in his own group would comment about Malcolm :

SUSAN: Malcolm got some juice.
LESLEY: Malcolm's got juice. Malcolm doesn't like milk ;

or even claim, as William did, that they were "looking after Malcolm".

There were further indications that other children wanted to interact with Malcolm. At one point when he was lying on his wedge he was joined by both Susan and William. Susan also joined Malcolm on his wedge while the group were all painting. Once a group of older children gathered round Malcolm; their interest was benign but puzzled.

There were also indications that Malcolm wanted to interact with his peers. On several occasions Malcolm appeared to take a strong interest in what his peers were doing and to follow their activities with his eyes. There was also at least one occasion when he did not want to share an adult with one of the other children and expressed his displeasure. At one point when he was turned to look at the baby, Matthew, he started to wheel his arms as if he wanted to touch him.

The most striking incident of contact between Malcolm and another child happened in the garden. For nine minutes an older boy, Daniel, one of the few black children, lay beside Malcolm as he was lying on his 'wedge' while much activity went on around him. No words were spoken but for all the time they looked deep into one another's eyes. No observer could have said what its nature was, but there was certainly real communication between the two children. Daniel did not look away or lessen the intensity of his gaze and Malcolm showed none of the signs of boredom that he normally did when left in one position for this length of time.

None of the staff was obviously aware of this exchange but the length and intensity of the communication depended upon the freedom and relaxation of the situation.

There were three respects, however, in which Malcolm was not treated as 'normal'. Firstly, he was responded to to a greater degree than might be seen as 'normal'. Although the staff who worked with Malcolm did not adopt a 'remedial' approach they did give priority to creating a responsive environment for him. He was part of an interactive, communicative environment to a greater extent than any other child.

Secondly, Malcolm was something of a celebrity amongst the other staff who, when all the children were outside, would make a point of coming over to talk to him. On one occasion a member of staff noticed Malcolm from at least thirty yards away and strode over purposefully to greet him. This was probably a fairly exceptional experience.

Thirdly, there was an area in which Lesley and Karen treated Malcolm differently to the other children - in the extent to which they physically helped him to get around. He was perforce handled more and very naturally this gave rise to more direct attention.

Structured observations

Because they are so overwhelming the results here give an accurate picture but interpretation of their precise meaning is very difficult. Malcolm moved his hands, his body and his face a great deal, he also made a large number of sounds. Much of this was involuntary but some of it almost certainly had a degree of volition and the two were probably mixed. It was, therefore, extremely difficult to decide whether he initiated or responded to anything, since both imply intention. Reliable conclusions would have demanded several researchers working over a period of weeks. In this case a rule of thumb was used - Malcolm was always given the benefit of the doubt, if it looked possible that he was initiating or responding it was coded as if he had.

Of 211 interactions 11 (5%) were initiated by Malcolm, 20 (10%) by one of his peers and 180 (85%) by an adult. This confirms the picture both of the unstructured observation and of the audio recording of adults talking and interacting with Malcolm a great deal. Of the adult initiated interactions 145 (81%) met with no discernible response from Malcolm.

Although they are fairly few and more than half are accounted for by one sequence of events in the garden with a particular child, the results confirm that the picture of Malcolm's peers as attempting to interact with him is accurate, despite the fact that out of the 20 interactions recorded as initiated by a peer Malcolm made no discernible response in 18.

Pedagogical perspectives

As with the activities in which Malcolm was involved, the perspective here was one of normalisation. For most of the time Malcolm was treated as if he were just the same as the other children and spoken to using the same words, structure and tone of language as they were, despite the fact that he did not respond in the way that they did.

Two assumptions may have been involved. Firstly, Lesley, like everyone else, was unsure about how much Malcolm understood: one response to this may have been to make the most optimistic assumption. Secondly, when adults talk to small, unresponding children, particularly babies, they often adopt this sort of strategy because they assume that the baby enjoys and benefits from hearing the flow of language although he may not understand it - unconscious exposure to more developed models of behaviour is seen to be a mechanism of learning.

Several counter examples to a normalisation perspective have been noted, some of which arose from the realities of Malcolm's impairments. However, the generally heightened responsiveness may constitute an exagerated form of the approach to all the children rather than a contrary perspective.

6. Observer effects

In the second interview Lesley and Karen reported that the presence of the observer had increased their awareness of Malcolm and so probably meant that he got rather more attention than usual. They felt that in the normal course of events Malcolm probably spent rather more time alone on his wedge, observing or mildly distressed, than had been observed. This suggests that the picture of the degree of interaction is somewhat exaggerated.

Neither felt that the content of the activities or interactions was significantly different. There is no suggestion that the overall picture of a normalising experience is anything other than accurate.

CASE SIX LOCHSIDE

1. The establishment

Lochside is situated on the periphery of one of Strathclyde Region's 'areas of priority treatment' in a former shipbuilding town. The immediate area and the town have strong local identities. Both have experienced in full measure the decline of heavy industry and consequent male unemployment.

Lochside is a two storey, externally undistinguished building which began life as a proposed Health Centre but was taken over by the Social Work Department to become a children's centre. The interior was purpose designed with some imagination; a light, open atmosphere is created by the use of glass and spaces are varied enough to be used flexibly. It is brightly decorated with primary colours featuring strongly.

The children's centre was established by the Social Work Department by amalgamating two of their previous pre-five services. The first was a 'playgroup' for which the Department provided premises and staff. This form of local authority support is one way in which playgroups may be sustained in 'areas of deprivation' where the more usual type of playgroup, a voluntary organisation run by a committee of parents, tends not to flourish.

The second was a nursery providing daycare for children with special needs transported in from the surrounding area. The amalgamation had been prompted by the advanced state of disrepair of the nursery building which meant that a new location had to be found.

The amalagamation was not effected smoothly. Although parents were consulted there were considerable suspicions aroused and a feeling that decisions had been taken before the consultation was carried out. The greatest fears were aroused amongst the parents of the children who were attending, or who would attend, the playgroup. In a discussion with a group of parents it was suggested to me that the grounds of

their reservation were not so much the presence of 'handicapped children' but the establishment of a clear set of priorities for admission which they had seen as excluding the 'normal' child from an intact two parent family.

Similarly, although the staff of both establishments had been kept informed of the impending changes, each had considerable suspicion of the other. This was reinforced during the early months of the amalgamated centre by the fact that they worked as separate units under one roof, managed by different people, using different rooms and organising their breaks so that they did not coincide. The parents reported that at this period they had no contact with parents from the other group and that only one "special needs parent" had turned up at a social event intended to break down these barriers.

After several months of this less than happy state of affairs a head of the whole establishment was appointed. Eileen McDonald, a teacher, had worked in both nursery schools and special education, she also had experience of community education and youth work. She was an outsider appointed in preference to internal candidates.

Eileen had treated these difficulties as a challenge to be faced with missionary zeal. She set about converting the whole staff to the idea of integrated provision by a mixture of direct action, such as allocating people to jobs in a way which deliberately mixed the two staff groups, and persuasion, using staff development sessions. The children were regrouped to create maximum integration while retaining a separate base for the youngest children and those with the most marked impairments.

Great emphasis was placed on parent involvement and a special effort was made to include parents from both groups in the activities. Eileen made use of her extensive network of local contacts and community education staff to provide a wide range of activities and courses.

In interviewing both parents and staff there could be little doubt that Eileen had accomplished the conversion she sought. Universally it was acknowledged that integration as practised in Lochside was both possible and desirable. This was not to say that there were no reservations but the principle was fully accepted.

It was also acknowledged in interview that the shared sense of parents and staff that Lochside was successful was to a significant degree a personal triumph for Eileen who had made the best of unpropitious initial circumstances. There had been some casualties on the way, some staff had moved on and others had felt the strain. However, there was an almost tangible sense of common purpose allied to warmth and informality remarked upon by many vistors to the centre.

Eileen's enthusiasm had remained undimmed by the experience. In conversation her perception was of the work that remained to be done rather than what had been achieved, despite praise from several quarters. She had a clear sense that to stop pressing on with development would lead to stagnation rather than consolidation. The time and energy she devoted to her own work were recognised by the staff. Her management style was active and intense even in relatively day to day matters but it was leavened by a thoroughgoing informality by means of which she avoided a sense of 'bossiness'.

2. Access

Lochside had been identified by the management of pre-five services in Strathclyde as a successful innovation. Further, it conformed to the policy direction which the Region was attempting to follow in developing its pre-five provision. Because the innovation involved children with disabilities I had made a number of visits to the centre. I had also been in contact with Eileen McDonald as a member of a working group which I had chaired.

This case was, therefore, significantly different in its starting point from the others in two respects. Firstly, the degree of prior knowledge was significantly greater. Secondly, although the staff might have disclaimed any such pretensions themselves, it had been clearly and publicly identified as a model of good practice by others.

The context into which this put matters was that it gave greater prominence to my position within the management of pre-five services. The assessment that Lochside was a model of good practice had been made, as is the way of these things, on the basis of brief and necessarily superficial visits by those in a managerial position. By seeking to observe things 'as they really were' over a period of time there was a possibility that this assessment might not withstand scrutiny - that the inevitable ordinariness of practice would be seen to fall short of the claims that others had made for it.

The extent to which I had been cast in this role of assessor or inspector became clear on a later visit concerning another matter. The interpretation which was put on this visit by the staff was that I had returned to give my "report" to Eileen McDonald and they were concerned to know whether it had been "good" or not.

The person with the most acute interest in the outcome of an "inspection" was Eileen McDonald herself because the innovation had been very closely identified with her personally. It was possible to offer the most convincing disclaimers about my role to her because a degree of mutual trust had developed. Nevertheless, she continued to view the logic of the situation as one in which there would be a critical and informed outsider evaluating practice in the centre. Although threatening, such an inspection was not an unwelcome idea for Eileen, she viewed it as a useful yardstick against which to measure the centre's provision.

It was significant that Eileen accepted the dates that were proposed for the case study because they largely coincided with a time when she was on leave. Her acceptance was seen as a token of faith principally in the staff and their practice but also in myself that my presence would not create any difficulties.

3. Informants

Lochside had a keyworker system and John, the child on whom the study focused, was allocated to Jean, one of the staff in Room 2. Eileen's selection of John was considerably influenced by this fact. Jean is mature, down to earth and very competent in her work and Eileen had great confidence in her.

Jean also held the position of 'room manager' for Room 2. This gave her responsibility for some day to day organisational matters and meant that she acted as representative of the staff in that room at regular meetings. In the normal course of events she was consulted on a regular basis by the other people in the room if an organisational question arose. To a degree she has, therefore, to be seen as a key informant.

Three members of staff from Room 2 were interviewed. Marianne who had started that day as a temporary member of staff was not: partly on the grounds of the limited value of her information but mainly because it would have put unreasonable pressure on her.

Jean had worked in a clerical job before leaving to raise her family. When her children were older she had worked on a part-time voluntary basis in the special needs nursery and then become full-time. From there she had been seconded to complete a social care course in a further education college and then six years previously nursery nurse training.

Dorothy had worked for fourteen years in the special needs nursery, having been seconded to the same social care course. Like Jean she had taken up the work after a break to look after her children.

Catherine had worked in the social work sponsored playgroup for eight years and had been seconded to in-service training but had no formal qualifications.

4. Lochside's general approach

Interview accounts

There was a clear difference here between Jean and Dorothy whose background was the special needs nursery and Catherine who had worked in the playgroup.

Jean and Dorothy adopted a more 'educational' outlook, seeing Lochside as having a role in assisting in the "development" of all the children who attended. The concept of "stimulation" was mentioned by both. Assessment and teaching were seen to have a role for all the children.

By contrast, Catherine saw "play" as central and as an end in itself. Creating the space and the conditions in which it could occur was Catherine's aim. A view of early childhood as a precious time free of demands was a justification for this outlook.

All three shared a view which emphasised the importance of resources, the presence of suitable toys and materials. Dorothy and Catherine both linked this to material deprivation that the children experienced. However, Jean made an interesting distinction:

> Nowadays most children have plenty of toys as such - but the kinds of things they have, sometimes its hundreds of pounds, like dolls prams - it's not things they can do, like beads. We have boxes of these things and when thre children come in that's what they go for - they'll take out a peg board or something. Lots of chgildren don't have these kinds of things at home, paint boxes and crayons, because their parents don't want the mess. I know why, I'm the same myself with my grandchildren. Parents don't want noisy things because they want to hear the TV.

Thus Jean indicated that her view of parenthood involved realities that she recognised in herself and, rather than being a result of poverty or inadequacy, limitations arose from cultural change and incompatibility between the objectives of adults and children.

Similarly, all three emphasised the value of the outings which the centre's own transport made a relatively simple matter. This was seen as a valuable broadening of the horizons of children who would not normally get such opportunities, "Lots of children in this area wouldn't get these" (outings to the airport, the seaside, a children's farm).

Pedagogical perspectives

In the interviews it appeared that the two strands of the centre's history were still in evidence, that of the playgroup and that of the special needs nursery. The former was based on the deliberate eschewing of anything other than play, a defining characteristic of which is its opposition to work with its deliberate, pressing nature. The philosophy of special education usually refers directly to 'work' and generally relies on deliberately structured learning to compensate for the supposed spontaneous learning deficits of some children.

There were, therefore, two views of learners; one where independence and self-direction were essential, the other where the quality of the external stimulation was critical. Inherent in this division was the possibility that there would be seen to be two groups of children in the centre; those capable of self direction and those who were not.

A further perspective on the content of learning centred on the idea of compensation. Its implication was that there is a common fund of desirable experiences, for example, drawing or going on outings, which constitutes 'normal' early childhood learning. The most significant role for the adults was seen as one of providing the resources for this learning whether physically or in terms of stimulating experiences.

Despite the fact that Lochside worked as an integrated centre there remained, from an organisational point of view, two distinct groups of children.

The local children who in the past would have attended the playgroup maintained a pattern of half-day attendance. This meant that there were two groups of such children, one attending from 9 am to 12 noon, the other from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm. These children were divided into two groups and were based in either room 2 or room 3.

Children who were referred to the centre as having 'special needs' came from a wider catchment area and they attended for a full day. In practice, they arrived between 9.30 and 10.00 am and left at around 3 pm. These children were supplied with lunches and were separate from 11.30 am when lunch started, to allow all staff to be available, till 1.00 pm.

As well as being admitted from a wider geographical area children so identified were admitted from an earlier age in accord with the daycare origins of the service. There was no theoretical lower age limit but at the time of the case study no child was younger than eighteen months old. The youngest children and the children with the most extensive impairments formed a separate group in room 1, generally referred to as "the baby room". Most of these children were unable to move independently or to use speech. The other children with 'special needs' were integrated into the groups of local children in rooms 2 and 3. In room 2 there were 4 children with 'special needs', including John, and 15 other children.

The majority of the observations within the centre were carried out in room 2 where John spent the majority of his time, although there were two periods in room 1 and an outing to Glasgow Airport.

In room 2 the general pattern of the day, with considerable flexibilty over timings, was:

9.15 - 9.45	Arrival of various children
9.45 - 10.45	Free choice of activity including some structured adult-directed activities; snack was supplied during this period
10.45 - 11.15	Group time small or large group activity, adult directed
11.15 - 11.30	Tidying up
11.30 - 12.15	Lunches and toileting for special needs children/ departure for morning group children.
12.15 - 13.00	Free play or structured activity for special needs children
13.00 - 13.15	Arrival afternoon children
13.15 - 14.30	Free choice of activity
15.30 - 15.00	Group time for other children/preparation for and departure children with special needs
15.00 - 15.45	Free choice for other children, tidying up and departure

Arrivals were relatively informal and extended as would be expected in a centre where there was a premium placed on work with parents. A proportion of parents stayed on after leaving their children and, if they were not pursuing another activity elsewhere, sat in the parents room which had a view of room 2 through a one way mirror. This mirror was part of the specifications for a specialist centre so that parents of children with disabilities and professionals could observe them unobtrusively. This purpose had been subverted by the decision to

make use of the room behind the mirror as a general parents' room to which the children's activity formed a backcloth.

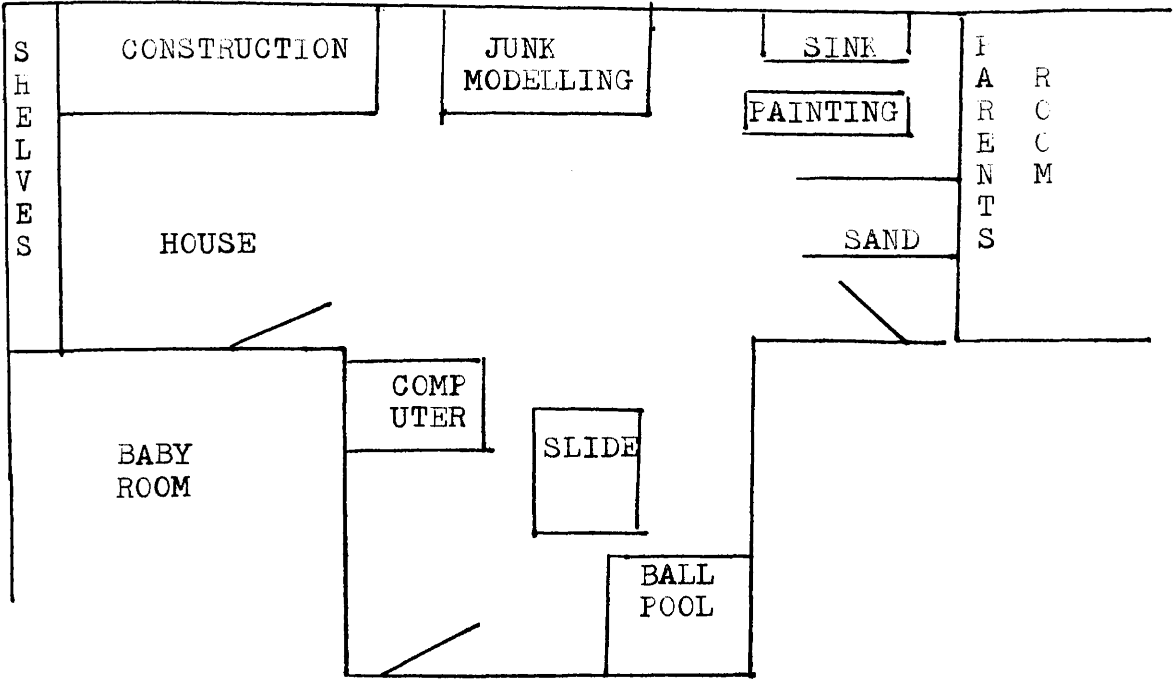
Initially, the idea of constant observation by parents had been one which had made the staff uncomfortable and furniture of a sufficient height to obscure the view had been placed in front of the mirror. However, Eileen had persuaded them that there was nothing to be concealed from parents and now it appeared that no-one gave it a second thought.

Parents addressed staff by their first names, including Eileen. A compromise for the children was to address the staff as Auntie Jean, Auntie Dorothy and Auntie Catherine.

The periods of free play were characterised by and large by the absence of direction to particular children to follow particular activities. In general, the adults supervised an area rather than monitoring the children and intervention was likely to arise where there was interference with another child's play rather than as an encouragement to act more 'constructively'.

Activities were set out in areas according to a principle of allowing for a range of choices (see the plan which follows). The smaller part of the room was mainly devoted to large equipment and movement activities, although it doubled as an eating area at lunch times. Other areas had a preponderance of constructional or creative activities available. Books were not much in evidence and no occasion on which an individual child was read a story was observed.

Fig. 8



There were activities in which there was a higher proportion of adult direction, although children were generally free to choose whether to participate in them or not. These were generally creative activities such as making a particular type of picture or junk model, often for display purposes or a domestic activity such as baking.

The snack was provided with the children gathered together usually into a large group with one smaller group. It was treated as a a short break for a biscuit and milk and was carried out efficiently without particular social rituals.

Each day there was a variable amount of time devoted to a structured group activity. This was based on a commercially produced package *Lets Play Language*. This consists of a series of structured exercises in the form of games designed to promote specific aspects of language and concept development. At the time of observation the words/concepts of "big" and "little" were the target using a variety of matching, collecting and naming games. The teaching methods used were direct, with the children seated at a table, following instructions and taking turns to answer or carry out the required action.

This time was clearly marked off for the children as work as opposed to play:

> We're going to do our group work. You're going to sit round the wee table and do your work.

There were hints that although the programme was adhered to, the staff had reservations about its usefulness in practice. Dorothy asked Jean, "Did you have a look to see what it was today?" When Jean outlined what the activity was Dorothy's comment was, "Is that all?"

None the less, Jean was aware that this posed a considerable demand on the children and after a session which had lasted approximately twenty-five minutes she commented:

> I think you've had enough now. You've all done very well.

All the children were divided into groups attached to a member of staff and the children identified as having special needs were spread amongst these groups so that John carried out these activities with a group of four peers none of whom was seen as having special needs.

By contrast, at lunchtime, the children with disabilities were treated as a separate group because they stayed for lunch. However, this separateness was reduced by the fact that on several days one or other of the local children stayed for lunch, supplying his or her own food, to allow a parent time to carry out an errand of some sort.

The most significant feature of this time was that the children became noticeably more 'difficult'. A number of explanations are possible for this observation. Firstly, it may have ben that lunch was an activity that provided more opportunity for awkwardness. Secondly, it may have been harder to ignore unacceptable behaviour in such a small group. Thirdly, it may have been that the children found the situation away from their more able peers one in which they were able to express themselves more fully.

A key incident revealed something of the character of this time and the nature of the observer effects on the situation. The first observation I made of lunch the seating was arranged as in figure 9, as was perhaps habitual, but unobtrusively Jean indicated to the other member of staff that it should be re-arranged into a circle as in figure 10. The initial arrangement was likely to allow for less disruption and was probably more efficient in terms of achieving the practical objective of getting the children to eat. Its disadvantage was that it excluded the opportunity for interplay between the children. Jean had clearly recognised these competing demands and assumed that I would, as Eileen undoubtedly would, have seen the latter as taking priority.

Fig. 9

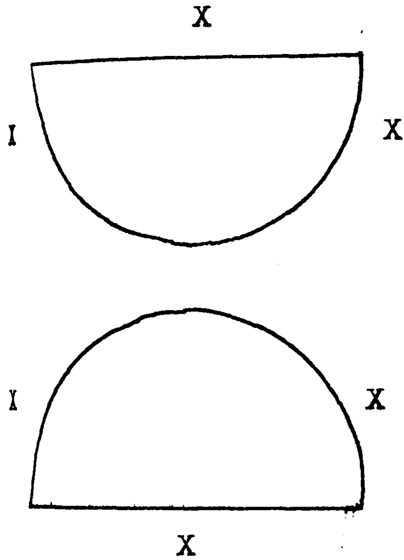
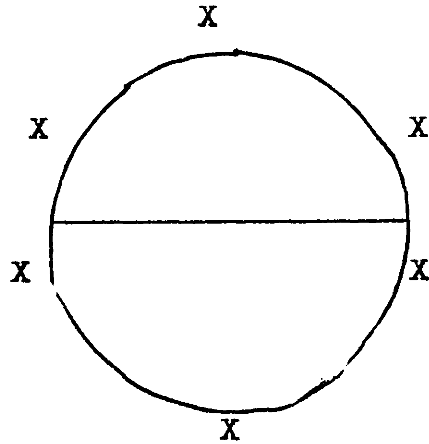


Fig. 10



The extent to which lunchtime was a practical task was not, however, thereby obscured. Adults usually stood behind the children supervising and relaying food. Interventions were concerned with encouraging eating and minimising mess, while talk was not wholly frowned upon, it was clearly not the object of the exercise as was revealed in Dorothy's imprecation to "eat up, this is not talking time."

Pedagogical perspectives

The dichotomy between the two approaches revealed in the interviews was replicated in practice where a largely laissez-faire approach to free play contrasted with a directive approach with explicit cognitive content.

The possibility that the children would be viewed as two distinct groups, those capable of self-directed learning and those who were not, suggested by the interviews was not realised in practice. There were organisational features which served to identify the children with disabilities as forming a group and at lunch time and the immediately following period this was the case. However, at other times this distinction was fully obscured and in neither free play nor group activities were they ever treated as a group. In practice, therefore, the perspective on the children was that all were capable of spontaneous learning through play and that all benefitted from direct teaching in a small group.

Similarly, the perspective on the content of learning was that all the children could benefit from the same range of opportunities. In the observed practice with the integrated group there was little evidence of features that might be associated with the daycare element in the origins of the centre. Lunch was something of an exception.

In practice, the adults adopted both the roles of direct teaching and supervision of play with a number of gradations between. The shift in role was marked for them as well as for the children by the emphasis on particular times as "work".

5. Provision for children with disabilities

Interview accounts in general terms

The dominant view of children's 'special needs' that was expressed in interview was an identification of what was 'wrong' with individuals. The sources of this defect were seen as various: medical conditions; slow development for no discernible reason and poor home circumstances were all mentioned.

Significantly, although all three interviewees expressed a positive opinion about integration as it was currently practised in Lochside, none saw it as universally applicable in a simple way. Firstly. a distinction was made between children who could benefit from integrated provision and those who could not. This led to a distinction between different forms of integration:

> There are children that are so badly handicapped that while they are here it is just a physical thing - they come through the same dooor. There are the very severely handicapped ones where the toys and what goes on would be of no use to them. The integration is really lip-service. It's the parents that do benefit because they get lots of support here and the parents of the other children do lots of fund-raising.

The difficulty in integrating some children was felt very acutely by one interviewee who had had to have time off work the previous year as a result of the stress of having to deal with one extremely difficult child with marked impairments and very difficult behaviour.

There was a general consensus that children with less extensive impairments stood to benefit most, "Where they are only slightly behind it's good for them to see the other children doing things and they try to keep up with it." However, these social advantages are not not seen as unqualified. Jean commented:

> ... there are drawbacks, some of these children could do with more one to one and small groups. It's swings and roundabouts really.

The second distinction that was made was between establisments where the staff would be sufficiently adaptable and those where they would not.

Jean and Dorothy had both attended a course which gave information on handicapped children and how to provide for them. This was highly valued, as was a local course which had been mounted while they worked in the special nursery. Again information was given about types of children and their "conditions - what to expect, how to handle them, everything, their personality". This had been organised by medical personnel; a health visitor and a doctor. At Lochside the physiotherapist had also given a talk on conditions which had had been considered very useful.

Pedagogical perspectives

The dominant perspective on children with disabilities was essentially a traditional special education one, that is, many of the children were seen in terms of medical conditions which differed in their severity. The remaining types of children with 'special needs' were seen as the product of deficient circumstances. The nature of the learning which was seen to be appropriate was in turn determined by the nature of the child's condition or circumstances.

In this integrated setting integration was still viewed as a conditional state which depended on severity of handicap as an eligibility criterion.

The most desirable role for the adults to adopt was seen to be to work in an individualised and, preferably, remedial style.

John

At an early stage, John had been identified by a paediatrician as 'handicapped' and unlikely to make significant developmental progress. In fact, by the age of four he had successfully achieved the major developmental tasks of learning to walk and talk and he was toilet trained. In comparison with his peers he had been late in these accomplishments.

Although he now used sentences, these were limited in scope and content. Similarly, he did not appear to understand even relatively simple language which was addressed to him. John also appeared not to understand the basic concepts of size, number or colour. While his age mates or younger children were willing and able to sit at a table and play a structured game or carry out an activity John found this too demanding if it took place over an extended period.

It was reported that John had been very difficult to deal with. He would resist any demands made on him often being verbally abusive in the process. This was no longer the case and he was much more amenable.

Two explanations were given of this difficult behaviour. Firstly the limitations on his understanding were seen as a factor; that he was developmentally at a stage where he was not able to comply with some of the demands made of him. This was felt to be tied up with his undefined medical condition.

Secondly, a family based explanation was offered. John was the youngest of a family of four. His family was spoken of with a knowing smile. His propensity to colourful language was attributed to a family manner of speech. His position in the family was also seen as significant, the feeling being that few demands were probably put on him at home.

The two factors were felt to be difficult to disentangle, "I don't know how much is mental handicap and how much spoiledness," was one comment.

John was an example of the sort of child who is described at a pre-school stage as developmentally delayed and at the school stage as having moderate learning difficulties.

Interview accounts

Jean's information about John presented an interesting contrast to the value and trust she placed on the courses which had indicated "what to expect" from certain children. She was well aware that the medical prognosis for John had been notably inaccurate:

> It was decided that he was handicapped and his mother was told that he would never walk and so on.

Nevertheless, this had not apparently been translated into any general questioning of the possibility of making accurate prognoses. Dorothy too, interpreted this medical information as a mistake rather than an inherent limitation on its general reliability saying, "I heard he had something then he didn't".

All three interviewees saw the progress John had made principally in social terms; in becoming more able to mix and becoming more amenable, "less stubborn". Only Dorothy mentioned cognitive improvement, in his language, which was no longer "parrot fashion and echoing".

Despite seeing benefit to John from his integrated pre-school experience, all the interviewees felt that his educational future lay in special education. In fact, in some ways it had reinforced their view of what they perceived as his limitations:

> ... if he goes to (special school) - he's better to be a big fish in a wee pond - he would be lost in a primary school. In a way he is lost in our room at the moment.

Pedagogical perspectives

There were three themes in the perspective on John which were to some extent contradictory and were certainly unresolved. Firstly, there was the medical perspective which saw John as 'handicapped' and in need of treatment which was in some way special. Secondly, the possibility was acknowledged that children may deviate from the norm in their development for reasons which have little to do with anything medical. Thirdly, there was a perception that John had made progress but that this was unrelated to his medical condition, if any.

Insofar as the staff felt that the content of John's learning should be remedial, they described it in social terms. It was a matter of remediating his social disadvantages rather than his developmental difficulties. Teaching developmentally appropriate skills was not mentioned and it appeared that, in relation to the specific child, the straightforward special educational outlook had been clouded.

Observed practice with John

ACTIVITIES

At the times when he was allowed a free choice of activity John adopted three patterns. The first was one of 'flitting' (cf Wilkinson and Murphy, 1983) from area to area. Spending only short periods in each area he was relatively uninvolved in the activity which was going on. He would, for example, thread one bead or scoop up sand twice before moving off. The staff did become aware of this from time to time and would attempt with varying degrees of success to involve John in more 'constructive' activities.

The second pattern was one in which John spent a considerable period of time in an activity which explored the properties of an object or objects. On one occasion he spent more than ten minutes putting small bricks in and out of a pot.

His favourite exploratory activity was unquestionably washing his hands. During messy activities a bowl of soapy water was available for the children to wash their hands. John would spend considerable period washing until told to finish by an adult. A favourite method for prolonging matters was to carry out the messy activity very briefly and then to return to hand washing. This extended interest in the water was frowned upon by the adults and John was told firmly, "Once you dry them, that's it." The grounds of this disapproval were made explicit in a comment made by Catherine and later echoed by Jean, "That's a waste of time." There was seen to be a significant borderline between playing with water which is a waste of time and 'water play' in an officially sanctioned water trough.

The third pattern observed was one in which John was fully involved in an activity, generally as a result of an adult initiative. Frequently, and most readily, this involved a structured creative activity such as making a picture from materials that the staff had assembled. On a few occasions it involved imaginative play with an adult participating, for example, playing at garages with toy cars. On such occasions the adult would attempt to involve other children who were nearby. The outcome of this, if successful, tended to be that the other child took over the activity once the adult left and John drifted off. On one occasion John did become involved quite spontaneously in an imaginary cooking game with another child.

In common with all the other children, John was involved in a period of structured work on 'language activities' each day. Unlike most of the other children, he found the cognitive tasks which were presented demanding. So that the activity could be carried out on a group basis John was given considerable physical and verbal support to enable him to complete the tasks involved. There was also a contrast with other structured but open activities, for example art, where John's performance was accepted on its own terms and not expected to reach a certain standard.

Two forms of individual structured activity were observed. On two occasions John was given some time with the computer playing a game from a commercially produced programme. On one other occasion he was withdrawn by Jean specifically to play a game with a garage and cars

with the object of directly teaching the words/concepts "up" and "down". His interest was not fully engaged on either occasion.

Each day after lunch, John and the other children with 'special needs' were allowed considerable freedom to explore. At this time John, like the other children, could become quite excited and a calming activity such as a very simple story or some music was used on occasion to restore order.

John was observed on one weekly outing, in this case to Glasgow Airport. In many ways he remained on the fringes of events much as he did in the nursery: he did not join in the singing on the bus nor did he participate in the sporadic episodes of conversation. The event was used by Jean to re-inforce some of her earlier teaching of "up" and "down", here in relation to planes taking off and landing.

Structured observations

It is indicative of John's involvement in a wide range of activities that there are entries under every category in the observation schedule. Nursery-type activities predominate, with Fine Creative and Fine structured activities accounting for 23% of the observed time. John also spent a substantial period in Exploratory play - 8% and in Music 9%. These activities considerably outweigh the time spent on direct cognitive activities, such as the language programme, on which 3% of the observed time was spent or the computer 1%.

However, John spent very considerable periods in Non-Specific Activities 9.5%, Listening or Waiting 10.1% or in Transition between one activity and another 4%. In total this sort of non-activity took up about 23% of his time. Snack (or lunch) time took up a considerable period of the observed time 17.6%.

Pedagogical perspectives

Practice embodied two perspectives on John; on one hand he was seen as capable of learning from a wide range of experiences and on the other hand he was seen to need structure and specific content built into his learning. This is the dichotomy which pervaded the work of the centre operating in microcosm.

A similar distinction could be seen in the learning which was offered to him and the roles that the adults adopted towards him. A laissez-faire element was present in that he was offered considerable freedom of choice including the freedom to do little that would have been considered constructive. A contrary impulse was present at those times when adult direction was stronger. Most obviously there was a part of the day which was structured, directed and cognitively orientated. There were also at other, less structured times specific objectives for work with John, evidenced by the teaching of the words "up" and "down" in several contexts. Finally there was a clear demarcation from the adults' point of view between those of his activities which were constructive and those which were wasteful. This demarcation was communicated to John.

The structured observation suggests that the high status which was given in principle to special education activities of which the language programme and the computer were the clearest examples, was not reflected in the allocation of time. This conforms to the picture which emerged when the staff were questioned about John's special needs in which vaguer, more social forms of learning were stressed.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

At all times, apart from lunchtime and his sessions on the computer John was part of the whole group of children in his room. In this sense he was completely integrated. When the whole group was split up for an activity, for work on the language programme or to have their snack John was a member of a mixed sub-group.

There were occasions when John was the sole focus of an adult's attention within the whole group. Occasionally, this was a result of an adult decision to 'work' with him, to converse with him or to enlist his help in, for example, clearing up. At other times it was a result of John initiating a conversation with an adult.

His situation with his peers in this integrated setting was a peripheral one. There was no sub-group of friends with whom he identified particularly. Often, he was beside a group of other children but invariably on the fringes, never at the heart. On one or two occasions, when an activity had built up around him, he was edged out. An example occurred during a game of shops which Jean had started with John and another child. Once Jean had left and a further child joined, John was frozen out by the materials for the shop being taken from him. He showed little resistance to this situation, whereas at other times he was able to resist having toys removed from him. On no occasion was John observed attempting to make his way into the centre of an established peer activity.

Structured observation

Despite the extent to which he was judged to be on the fringes of group activities, small group activities with an adult involved or supervising occupied the highest proportion of John's day - 48% of the observed time. In interpreting this it must be borne in mind that for an hour at lunchtime this was the *de facto* situation.

Parallel activities were less frequent than the unstructured observations suggested occupying 2% of the time. However, the rarity of associative play is confirmed by a figure of 0.7%. The structured observations also confirm that John spent substantial periods in direct contact with an adult (16%) and in solitary activities (16%).

Pedagogical perspectives

While adults appeared to have more conversations with John than with other children, it was a matter of degree rather than kind. Apart from this, the perspective that was adopted in practice towards John was one which did not differentiate him socially from any of the other children. The practical aim was a normalising one.

It is tempting to see the nature of John's contacts with his peers as an illustration of the superficiality or even the inadequacy of his integration. However, such a view depends upon a notion of an ideal for all children which consists of considerable peer interaction and a well established group of friends. The origins of this ideal lie in a notion of mental health in which the outsider is seen as deficient.

If such assumptions are cast aside John was clearly exceptional in being an outsider but this role was one which, by and large, the adults and the children alike accepted and which there were few indications of John himself trying to change.

INTERACTIONS

John talked to adults a great deal and they talked to him frequently. The two types of event will be considered separately.

The conversations that John initiated were generally about here and now topics. He would tell adults what he had done, drawing their attention to his achievements; "a car" (of a model),"I finished" (a painting). He would comment or question adults about immediate events and could make a good deal out of a little;

JOHN: (of his lunch) Is it hot ?
JEAN: No it's not hot.
JOHN: Is it cold ?
JEAN: No it's not cold. It's just nice.

At other times he would ask for an object or offer it to an adult, for example, food at lunchtime. On occasion he would comment on what another child was doing, saying, "that's too much", of a child pouring herself some milk. A pattern which the staff felt to be in decline was one where he latched onto a remark made by an adult or a child and repeated it.

There was a selective response from the adults to what John said. Comments which were felt to be meaningful and appropriate were responded to positively. Those which were seen as 'just John', verbalisms or echoes, were either ignored or responded to vaguely or jocularly. For example, when another child who was unwell was told that she could go home to her granny's, John echoed "Me go home" to be told by Jean, laughingly, "You're not going home there's nothing wrong with you."

On occasions John would become loud and sound aggressive, mainly when refusing to do something, when he would shout "Naw, naw". It was reported that in the past this had been more frequent and often accompanied by colourful language. These outbursts were handled firmly, with instructions not to be "cheeky".

Adults spoke to John, as they did to all the children, in a variety of ways on a variety of topics, pointing out things of interest, questioning and giving information. However, two patterns were more characteristic of what was said to John than to the other children.

John was given very firm directions to carry out straightforward practical tasks. These were spoken in a louder and clearer voice than was generally used to any of the other children, for example, "Put the soap in the soap dish - do as you are told."

John was given more praise than the other children and for the completion of tasks that they were not, or would not have been, praised for. For example, in a picture matching game all the children matched pairs of pictures but John was alone in being praised for doing so.

John looked less to his peers than to adults for interactions but he did make some contact in the context of both unstructured physical activities such as playing in the ball pool and of structured physical activities such as action games.

There were a number of negative interactions in which John became involved in conflict over toys. An initial impression had been that John was the victim in such situations with other children removing toys from him at will . However further observation indicated that the picture was less simple; he was capable of resisting in such situations and could retain toys that he wanted, although he was not observed taking toys from another child.

John very rarely engaged in imaginative play with other children but on two occasions he was observed doing so and in fact at some points directing another child, for example, to clean a blackboard.

Structured observations

There were 700 interactions recorded during the period of the structured observation.

395 (56%) were intiated by an adult; 288 (41%) by John; and 17 (3%) by one of John's peers. 189 (66%) of John's opening moves in interactions were positive and verbal, occasionally accompanied by gestures. 285 (72%) of adults' opening moves were positive and verbal, frequently accompanied by gesture or physical prompting. This confirms the picture of a high proportion of adult-child talk which could be initiated by either party. The overwhelmingly positive character of the adult opening moves, suggests that the directiveness noted in the unstructured observations had a generally positive character. However, 84 (21%) of the adult first moves were negative, having, in the main, a verbal character.

The impression that John did not seek to become more integrated with his peers is to some extent disconfirmed by the fact that he initiated more interactions (36) with them than they did with him (17). Nevertheless, he was as unlikely to fail to respond to their first moves, in 41% of such events, as they were to fail to respond to his first move, in 39% of such events.

The selective response of the adults to John's language was confirmed by the observation that in response to 167 positive verbal opening moves by John on 23 (13%) occasions adults made a negative verbal response and on 39 (23%) occasions they failed to respond, in some cases perhaps because they did not hear but frequently because they were ignoring him.

Pedagogical perspectives

John's differences from the other children were accepted by both the adults and the children and recognised in their styles of interaction. However, there was a clear implication in the adults' approach that their aim was one of making John's own style of interaction more 'normal'. One way of describing this deliberate process is to say that by selective re-inforcement they were shaping his verbal behaviour in the desired direction. Further, there was a clear attempt to inhibit 'inappropriate verbal behaviour', swearing and cheekiness, by negative re-inforcement.

As with the social contexts in which he was to be found, there is a temptation to view John's limited interactions with his peers as indicative of a failure in his integration. But again this rests on an assumption about mental health which is not necessarily justified. Similarly, although he was at times the recipient of negative communication there were clear indications that it would have been quite unjustified to see him simply as a victim.

6. Observer effects

The staff reported some minor unease over being observed but felt that it had not inhibited them. They were, as elsewhere, more aware of John than they would have been unobserved but felt that this had not affected their approach in any significant way.

CHAPTER SIX THE BASIS FOR STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter a descriptive account was given of each case. A series of analytical accounts referring to pedagogical perspectives was intertwined with each case description. These were the first two types of account proposed in chapter three. The following chapter provides the third type of account, that is, a substantive[1] theoretical account which goes beyond the information directly obtained. The basis for this substantive analysis is discussed in this chapter.

The analysis carried out at the pedagogical level does not meet one of the criteria proposed in chapter one for a satisfactory approach - that it should encompass the wider social and political aspects of the research question. In other words, it does not relate the micro-social descriptions and analyses to macro-social factors. The second section of this chapter considers some of the implications of attempting to make this connection.

The approach to analysing the case study descriptions is based on the notion that they are equivalent to texts which can be read in various ways. The third section discusses the basis on which these readings were developed, while the fourth section discusses the comparative method used to generate them.

The pedagogical perspectives which were identified in chapter six are abstract and impersonal. This level of analysis may, therefore, be described as 'structuralist' in that it "systematically ... examines the relationships between observed classroom practices and 'absent' structures"[2]. However, it does not meet a further criterion proposed in chapter one - that the analysis should explore the traces of absent structural information. The method used to do so is explored in the fifth section.

2. The micro and macro levels of analysis

As was argued in chapter two, a single institution like a nursery is part of progressively larger forms of social organisation which form the society in which it is located. Nursery provision can, therefore, only be understood with reference to these forms of organisation. An analysis which aims to make these connections has to include a conceptual framework for referring to forms of organisation wider than the particular institutions which were studied. For reasons of space, this conceptual framework cannot be fully argued, but a working terminology can be indicated.

The most general term used is 'industrialised society', despite its imprecise and unsatisfactory character. The term is used here to describe a society where labour is specialised and mechanised, where production of goods and materials is carried on in defined areas, where wages are paid for labour and where workers are hierarchically organised and not in direct control of the activities they carry out.

At a slightly lesser level of generality, the fact that the nurseries were part of a Western, plural, capitalist form of industrialised society is of critical relevance to the analysis. For present purposes, essential features of such a society are that it is organised around a principle of competition for social goods but that the opportunities that exist for the accumulation of wealth and power mean that the competition is unfair.

The traditional pre-occupation of research into macro social factors in education has been the effects of social class. Where socialisation is regularised in a class society this regularisation must embody class features. The central place that social class occupies in the matrix of social processes is reflected in the analysis which follows. Other social phenomena are also reflected, these are understood to interact with, but not to be determined by, social class. Examples are, the family in its contact with other institutions, gender differentiation and the social construction of childhood, child development, learning, parenthood and disability.

Reference has already been made in the case studies to their west of Scotland setting. This society has its own specific history. It also has a number of features which are not peculiar to industrial or capitalist societies but which are usually present in such societies. Of particular relevance here are the differentiation of role and work by sex and the marginalisation of minority groups, such as black people and people with disabilities.

The research tasks identified in chapter one of describing and theorising provision for children with disabilities involve a consideration of general arrangements for the care and education of children. The fact that some children are perceived as needing exceptional provision cannot be treated as an abstract and neutral 'fact' about those children. It necessarily involves considering the nature of provision in general.

Nurseries fall within a specific category of institution in industrialised society. The are part of a public network of services directed at sectors of the population like the old, the sick, those in need and children. Where labour has become differentiated, child care and education have become, in part, specialised activities, carried out in specialised settings. Nurseries of all kinds are like schools in being specialised institutions, responsible for the regulation and regularisation of the socialisation of children.

One feature of specialisation has been that child care and education have been accorded the status of work and, like most other forms of work, are undertaken by waged labour. By contrast, in non-industrialised societies, early childcare and education are invariably carried out for no material reward by those with a communal or family bond to the children involved[3].

An equally significant feature of childcare and education in industrial societies is its physical separation from other aspects of community life into institutions with clear boundaries. Thus it is unusual in an office to find babies strapped to their mothers' backs, as they might be in an agrarian society, nor do young children fit in with the rhythms of adult work as they would have, say, in the home of a hand-loom weaver in the west of Scotland 150 years ago[4].

The separation of children from adult life is thrown into sharp relief at the pre-school stage. In schools, the ostensibly specialised learning which is on offer legitimates the specialisation of the institutions. The learning which takes place in nurseries - language learning, simple cognitive skills, social learning and so on - is general in nature. The majority of children in the UK quite clearly carry out the bulk of this learning outwith nurseries.

The following chapter considers some of the ways in which the case studied nurseries are instances of the macro social fact that early socialisation is institutionalised (in a non-pejorative sense). The fact of institutionalisation is a central part of the overall pedagogy of each nursery and the first part of the analysis considers this aspect of their pedagogies.

Analysis of the connections that exist between macro- and micro-social factors is not exhausted by considering institutional arrangements in society. Every element in the day to day operation of any social institution like a nursery is embedded in a complex of social practices, all of which refer to other social practices. Each aspect of the pedagogies of the nurseries which were studied was located in a matrix of social processes. The task for an analytical method is to connect the details of the pedagogical perpectives to features and processes of the society in which they are located. The way in which this task was approached is discussed in the following sections.

3. Case studies as texts

Each case study attempts to capture an instance of the specialisation of childcare and education in action. This action takes place in a designated building which contains specific arrangements of materials. The people in the building carry out definite activities and use particular language. However, this action only has meaning because it constitutes messages which say, 'this is what a nursery is' and 'this is what a nursery does'. The case studies can be seen as written transcriptions of these messages.

These transcriptions were carried out by a specific researcher at a particular time and they are not reflections of the nursery as it is seen by its everyday participants. The messages of any public institution are never self-contained, they are not only available to the participants but also to other interested parties. In this case, the activity of the nurseries was made public to a researcher but other audiences exist: parents, administrators, inspectors, colleagues and so on. The messages of any nursery are always a text which can be read.

The most developed project which has looked at education in the UK in a way which reads the messages it embodies at both micro and macro levels has been that of Bernstein (1977, 1990). Banks (1978) argues that, whatever the merits of its detailed proposals, his general approach offers a potentially fruitful way of relating micro information, such as that in the case studies, to macro-social processes. These comments are echoed by Atkinson (1985)[5] who points out that Bernstein's theory of codes is designed to achieve this purpose.

While the concept of code offers a method for bridging the gap between the levels of analysis it is not employed here. Bernstein conceives of a code as a "regulator", a highly abstract and general set of principles governing the "orientations to meaning" of individuals and of educational practices. These principles originate in the division of labour and so in class. Despite Bernstein's (1990) defence against the charge, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that ascribing such power to this elaborate but restricted set of principles is radically reductionist.

There are two other readings of the the term 'code', both of which are problematic. The first, as in 'morse code', implies that the surface of communication serves to obfuscate the 'true' meaning which has to be disentangled. The second follows the biological analogy of the genetic code which is 'expressed' in an organism. Both entail essentialist assumptions in which priority of determination belongs to that which is deeper than the surface.

Rather than deciphering codes, the analysis will look primarily at the 'discourses' embodied in the case studied nurseries, a term also used by Bernstein (1990). In contrast to code, the term discourse does not imply priority for underlying or 'true' content. In the familiar use of the term to describe a verbal account of something, a discourse is susceptible to analysis at many levels - its phonetic content, the syntactic structures employed, the situational context, the events or ideas it reports. Each level is part of its information content, none has any meaning on its own and none takes priority.

Similarly with nurseries and their pedagogies, there is no essential content; there are elements of their operation which are structural, absent and below the surface, but these do not have an existence which is separate from their actualisation in the processes of education and care. These discourses are not codes to be unravelled, they are what the establishment is; a nursery does not transmit a set of messages it *is* a set of messages.

The term 'discourse' can be juxtaposed with the terms 'practices' and 'apparatus'. Macdonell (1986) discusses the conflicting use of these terms by different theorists such as Althusser, Foucault and Hirst. Even at the simplest level, the boundaries between the concepts are not absolutely clear. For example, a written timetable quite clearly constitutes a discourse but it equally clearly encapsulates a set of practices. Rather than seeking intrinsic meanings of the terms or offering definitions, it is more helpful to look at how useful each is for the purposes of analysing the information contained in the case studies.

The term 'apparatus' is most useful for defining those elements in pre-five services which were not directly investigated. All the establishments were part of the same apparatuses: all were publicly

funded, run by a local authority education department and staffed by unionised labour. There were also differences; some nurseries had been part of the social work department, while others had always been part of the education department.

Within the local authority there were practices which, as part of a wider apparatus of child surveillance, were specific to the perceived 'problem' of children with disabilities[6]. Examples of these were its psychological service and peripatetic teachers, community assessment teams and screening panels.

The case studies looked at what happened within the nurseries. They did not investigate any of these apparatuses or practices. However, the analysis is concerned with the quite specific context that they provided for the work of the nurseries.

The terms 'discourse' and 'practices' are more relevant to the data in the case studies. The interview data clearly constitute *discourses*. The descriptions of observed events are more difficult to categorise: they describe micro-social practices, but these practices were discursive in that they formed a connected and meaning-bearing series of messages. Not only is a strong distinction between practices and discourses difficult to sustain, it also runs the risk of suggesting that theory (discourse) is separate from its enactment in practice(s).

This pervasive difficulty in distinguishing between discourses and such micro-social practices can be resolved by using the term 'discourse' in a generic way to cover both. The generic use of the term also makes for less unweildy discussion. Therefore, the substantive theoretical analysis mainly consists of the identification of a number of discourses. The following section discusses how these discourses were identified by means of comparisons amongst the "pedagogical perspectives" in the case studies.

Any form of education and care embodies a vast number of discourses; some subtle, some obvious, some temporary and some enduring. Even in case studies which looked only at central features of the working of each nursery, a limited number of discourses had to be selected for analysis. The clusters selected were:

- discourses on nursery provision;

  In effect, these are the answer provided by different people and establishments to the question, What is a nursery?

- discourses on the curriculum;

  Individuals and establishments constituted the message 'this is what a nursery does' by specifying what which they considered worth learning. This message is not only constituted through discourses about those things which educators consciously intend learners to learn but also by less conscious arrangements.

- discourses on disability.

  Provision for children with disabilities has to be seen in the context of discourses about nursery provision and the curriculum. Each discourse that is identified under these headings has implications for children with disabilities. Nevertheless, the research had a specific focus on children with disabilities and discourses could be distinguished which were specific to this topic.

There are, however, two areas in which the generic use of the term discourse is not useful. In both areas there were great similarities between nurseries and those differences which could be detected were matters of emphsis which would not have been readily captured in terms of distinct discourses. These differences of emphasis were better captured by identifying how practices differed. These two areas were:

- organisational practices;

  Any formally constituted institution makes some of its practices stable by codifying them, using devices such as job titles, timetables, arrangements of furniture and so on.

- interactional practices.

  The verbal and non-verbal interaction that occurs is, both intentionally and unintentionally, a continuing source of the definition of roles, relationships and pedagogic assumptions.

These discourses and practices constitute some of the messages of the nurseries where case studies were carried out. Because the nurseries are part of society, these messages necessarily referred to external political and social factors. However, this information was generally absent or implied; the final section discusses a form of analysis which makes some of the absent content of the discourses explicit.

4. The comparative method

Comparison is a fundamental tool of all enquiry. The method for comparison that was employed involved both between-case comparison and within-case comparison[7]. Each pedagogical perspective was compared with every other perspective to delineate the above clusters of discourses.

The idea of constitution through difference is central to the structuralist approach. At a very simple level, every pedagogy refers to every other pedagogy and can be defined oppositionally; a child-centred approach is defined by the fact that it is not curriculum centred and vice versa.

By examining the similarities between cases and the differences between them it is possible to arrive at general discourses which either unify the approaches of more than one nursery or which serve to differentiate the approach of one from that of the others. These general discourses may be described as 'ideal-typical' discourses.

The search for ideal-typical formulations is a well-established one which involves subtracting from the analysis that which is individual and local leaving an abstract core of greater generality. Weber (1936) makes clear the fundamental process by which ideal types are identified:

> An ideal type is formed by one sided *accentuation* of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent, *concrete individual* phenomena, which are arranged according to these one-sidedly emphasised viewpoints into a unified *analytical* construct (Gedankenbild). In its conceptual purity this mental construct ... cannot be found anywhere empirically in reality. (ibid., p90)

The outcome of the comparative process is a set of statements of some generality which summarise key elements abstracted from the pedagogies. These statements or discourses were never expressed in these precise terms in any interview and they are not presented as summaries of the views of particular people.

Weber also makes the limitations and dangers of all ideal types clear, there is a risk of a "confusion", that:

> the 'true' content and the essence of historical reality is portrayed in such theoretical constructs or, secondly in the use of these constructs as a procrustean bed into which history is to be forced." (ibid. p 94)

Arriving at abstract and general theoretical constructs is essential to analysis if it is to serve its purpose of rendering experience open to discussion. However, if only such constructs are presented analysis is rendered one dimensional. It is, therefore, necessary to look beyond the discourses into their implications. The deconstructive approach outlined in the following section lessens the likelihood of falling into the "confusion" that Weber warns against.

5. Absence and implication in the texts

The 'lesson' of post-structuralism is that no discourse can be seen as uniquely different from, or opposed to, all other discourses. Every discourse or text is composed of traces of other discourses. Derrida (1968) describes this relationship as one of "differance"; any statement contains traces of others from which it differs and which it defers (in the sense of postponement).

Derrida (ibid) emphasises the insubstantial nature of such traces:

> The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place because effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace ... otherwise it would not a trace but an indestructible and monumental substance. (p156)

The second stage of the substantive theoretical analysis in the following chapter looks at some of the traces which can be seen in the ideal-typical discourses. The process of detecting these traces is not one of discovering hidden structural forces which dictate the form and content of the pedagogies in the case studied nurseries. Any individual trace has a character which is closer to that of metonymy than causation; it is a part of the picture of the world that the pedagogy embodies, not an explanation of that picture.

These traces are absent from the pedagogies in a very direct sense. The ideal-typical discourses are interpretations of what was observed and are firmly based in evidence. By contrast, the traces that are detected are the result of 'pure' interpretation. This raises the spectre of free interpretation, anarchism and the abandonment of reason (cf Gibson, 1984). The significance of this spectre can be exaggerated; the reasonableness of any detected trace cannot be 'proved', but the extent to which it makes sense in the light of observation and wider theories does allow its reasonableness to be judged. As was argued in chapter two, recognising their provisional nature helps prevent the "solidification" of interpretations.

In any case, a form of analysis which contains a degree of uncertainty better reflects the way in which educators actually work than one which seeks to discover simple, direct or wholly rational causation. Pedagogies are never produced by a linear process of acquiring precise and relevant knowledge and applying it. Neither are pedagogues the dupes of an all-powerful social reality which dictates their behaviour.

Equally, although pedagogies are not ultimately based on pure reason or inescapable social reality, the elements which compose them are rarely arbitrary or wholly irrational. Thus the pedagogies in the case studies all make sense but none makes perfect sense. Each contains within it contradictions, uncertainties and spaces in which the traces of other discourses can be found. Exploring these traces can be seen as a way of exploring some of the limits of the rational element in each discourse.

As a result of its interest in the spaces in rational discourse post-structuralist writing often ignores the usual rules of argument: puns such as that on "differance" are given the status of argument, paradox is employed for its own sake, obscurity and sententiousness abound. All this is consistent with a sceptical view of the connection between language and rationality.

This approach has not been followed here; the notion that pedagogies are contradictory and contain a strong element of irrationality underpins the presentation, but it does not dictate its form[8]. The aim here is to present some of the traces which can be detected in each discourse in a restrained and, as far as possible, lucid manner.

Three types of different/deferred traces are detected in each discourse in the following chapter:

- traces of psychological theories;
- traces of uncomfortable political and social discourse which are deferred by 'repression';
- and traces of the history of the discourse.

Psychological traces

Every pedagogy contains traces of psychological theory from one or both of the following sources. One is the working psychological theory derived from experience which allows people to have insight into their own behaviour and that of other people. All educators continually utilise this kind of psychological theory.

The second source is the written theory found in psychology texts. Written psychological theory has been intentionally inserted into the production of learning and knowledge in early education in a pervasive way through 'applied' text books, the training of teachers and the popular media. Perspectives drawn from written theories have become part and parcel of the commonsense understanding of learning and development in young children (cf Walkerdine, 1984). This view of the relationship between 'theory and practice' is quite different from the supposition that educators take research results or theoretical perspectives and apply them in their work. Research and theory forms part of the background of discourses from which educators make their pedagogical choices.

Both forms of psychological theory constitute political and social discourses. Every political/social action can be seen as expressing a conception of what people are like and the proper way for them to conduct themselves; in effect, a psychological perspective. Conversely, all psychological theories arise within specific political and social contexts which are reflected in their content.

For present purposes, it is particularly important to recognise the role that written psychological theory has played in defining the 'educational' response to children perceived as different to the majority. This role is one with a history which goes at least as far back as Itard and the Wild Boy of Aveyron.

Political traces

Few institutions in a 'democratic' society, particularly those which provide for children, are overtly constituted in economic or political terms, but they are all inescapably implicated in the economic and political order. It is quite apparent that such implications are rarely acknowledged in human services because they are uncomfortable. This lack of acknowledgement may be seen as analogous to the psychological process of repression.

The idea of repression is most familiar in its psycho-analytical form which offers a metaphor for its use in other contexts. The idea can also be related to the concept of ideology in Marxist theory. An ideology obscures the economic and political real function that a discourse serves. Early education has been analysed in this way by Sharp and Green (1975). King (1978) also analyses early pedagogies as "ideologies". However, the concept of ideology contains the essentialist assumption that the realities of economics and class politics are the 'true' realities. Here, economics and class politics are not afforded this privileged position.

Repression may also occur as a result of a contradiction between incompatible discourses: for example, the idea that schools are both instruments of social control and sources of individual liberation contradict one another, so that the former is repressed in most commonsense conceptions of schools.

Historical traces

All pedagogical discourses contain traces of the history of the ideas of which they are composed. Detecting these traces is in apparent contrast with the synchronic emphasis in structuralist thought, following Saussure. However, the synchronic approach is actually a methodological device, as Giddens (1979 p18) notes. Saussure did not suppose that history of a language was irrelevant to its current state. Instead, he argued that an attempt to describe its current functioning should not start from a historical perspective.

Here the descriptions and the pedagogies derived from them are synchronic, that is, the case studies have captured a specific set of events that took place at a specific time. Nevertheless, each pedagogy and each establishment was in a state of flux and development in which elements of its history could be discerned. The sediment of this flux forms part of the current ways of knowing used by educators.

To re-iterate, none of these traces is presented as an explanation of the discourse in which it is detected. For example, it is suggested that traces of Piagetian psychology can be discerned in child centred pedagogies such as those used in Glenbrae. This does not imply that the Glenbrae staff work in a child-centred way because they subscribe to Piagetian psychology. The psychology is presented here as one of the ways of knowing which compose the pedagogy which they embody in their practice.

In its attempt to investigate that which discourses leave unsaid the method of analysis owes much to the method of deconstruction. Its use here is analogous to the method as it is used to analyse philosophical texts, but its outcome is different. Deconstruction reveals the figurative character of philosophical texts and so undercuts their claim to rigour (cf, for example, de Man, 1978). Other socially constructed discourses, especially those which are used in everyday life, do not aspire to the rigour of philosophical texts. Consequently, the detection of unrevealed layers of meaning is less dislocating; its advantage lies in offering a method of analysing everyday pedagogical knowledge which is neither determinist nor reductionist.

FOOTNOTES

1. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.31) make a useful distinction between two types of general theoretical proposition: they distinguish between "formal" and "substantive" concepts.

A formal concept is one which has on overarching sociological applicability irrespective of any specific content. In this case, for instance, it would be possible to study interplay between written policy and practice, the specific policy simply acting as an exemplar. It is not the intention in this research to generate such formal concepts.

Substantive concepts by contrast have a content which is related to the specific field being studied. The generality of their application, therefore, depends upon the extent to which another situation is similar to the one in which the research has been carried out. It is this form of generality that is being sought in this instance and so the concepts that are sought are those which would apply as fully as possible to other pre-five provision for children with disabilities. The concepts would have decreasing applicability in other settings; they may be clearly relevant to a primary school following a policy of integration, for instance, but hardly at all to a police-station adopting a policy of community policing.

2. As Gibson (1984 p83) says of King's (1978) ethnographic study.

3. The waged employment of wet nurses and nannies in pre-industrial societies or at historically pre-industrial stages was confined to the bourgeoisie and can be seen as a pre-cursor of paid childcare and education but it did not involve separate institutions.

4. It is easy to read into this the implication that non-industrialised societies are more 'natural' than industrialised ones in this respect. In one sense this is, almost by definition, true; industrialisation is the effort to transcend nature's limitations by artifice. However, the word "natural" carries positive connotations

which are not self-evidently valid in this context. It is possible to look at the effects of the specialisation of childcare without implying that it is 'unnatural' in comparison say with home care.

5. Atkinson (1985) indicates that such a project is central to Bernstein's *oeuvre*, in all its forms:

> While radically different from the humanist, individualistic bent of much so-called micro-sociology, therefore, Bernstein's general anthropology or meta-theory cuts across simplistic distinctions between small-scale and societal scope of analysis. Indeed it is central to Bernstein's entire programme that the analysis should provide conceptual links between apparently diverse institutional levels and contexts. Such theoretical constructs as 'code'... are significant precisely because they accomplish such analytic work. (p32)

6. Children with disabilities are ambiguously located in relation to some of the local authority apparatuses. As pre-fives they have a qualified entitlement to daycare and educational services. They also fall within a social welfare apparatus where disability identifies them as needy and increases their entitlement to pre-five srvices relative to other children.

7. Glaser and Strauss (1967) base their methodology for naturalistic study upon what they call "constant comparison". In essence, this means that each piece of data is compared with what has gone before and out of these comparisons theory emerges which guides the search for further data. One implication of this method is that data-gathering cannot be planned in advance and the point at which a case would no longer be studied is the point at which comparisons fail to generate any new information, this they term "theoretical saturation".

Glaser and Strauss's underlying rationale of not imposing premature structure on the data is of unquestionable importance to naturalistic enquiry. However, the constant comparison method was unrealistic for the purposes of this research within the time constraints it faced. A different form of comparison was therefore needed, accepting that what Glaser (1978) terms the "theoretical sensitivity" of the case studies is limited by the need for economy in the methodology.

8. In any case, while some of the flavour may be lost in paraphrase, the ideas of, for instance, Derrida or Foucault *are* themselves susceptible to lucid exposition (cf respectively, Culler, 1983 and Gutting, 1989 or O'Farrell, 1989).

CHAPTER SEVEN A SUBSTANTIVE THEORETICAL ACCOUNT

1. Introduction

The pedagogical perspectives which were identified in chapter five provided one level of analysis of the case study data. So that an analysis of greater generality could be carried out, these pedagogies themselves were compared with one another. The substantive theoretical account provided in this chapter is based, not on direct analysis of the data gathered in the case studies, but on this second level of analysis.

The main form of analysis is that of developing ideal-typical discourses from the pedagogical perspectives. The method for doing so was a comparative one which was carried out after the case studies had been written up and the pedagogical perspectives identified. It consisted of re-reading each case study and noting the key perspectives. Each perspective noted was cross-referenced with all other perspectives both in its 'own' case and in others.

The first set of discourses identified concerns the nature of nurseries as institutions in society. The second set is concerned with the nature of their overall curricula. The third with disability.

Each of these ideal typical discourses is summarised through a core statement which captures its essential elements. The content of the discourse is then discussed more fully and the comparative evidence on which it was based is outlined.

The traces which were detected in the ideal typical discourses are then discussed; first, those of psychological theory, then those with political content and, lastly, those which are historical. In the first two groups of discourses the implications of each discourse for provision for children with disabilities is considered.

Finally, two sets of practices are identified: one concerning the nature of the interactions observed and the other the organisation of the nurseries.

2. Discourses on nursery provision

The first set of discourses to be considered concerns nurseries as institutions in society. Those who work in an established institution like a nursery always have a working conception of how it operates. One part of their conception is always an idea of how the institution articulates with the world outside. Presumably through training and experience, all the staff who were interviewed had formed quite definite conceptions about the role that nurseries played in society.

The main source in the pedagogical analysis for these discourses was those perspectives which referred to the overall operation of each nursery, especially those drawn from the interview data.

The alternative to which nurseries were always counterposed, and the aspect of society with which they were seen to articulate most closely, was care within the family. All the ideal-typical discourses which emerged from the comparison of pedagogical perspectives consist of three terms: one concerning the role of the nursery, one concerning the role of the home and one concerning the relationship between the two.

DISCOURSE 1: The care and education of nursery are substitutes for the ideal of care in the home.

Content and comparisons

One of the main ideas contained in this discourse is that public forms of child care and education are needed for those who are unable to fulfil their obligation to provide them privately. For example, provision for the main client group in day nurseries, single parents, is viewed as an effect of their inability to fulfil their 'proper' parental role.

When they are seen in this way, nurseries are regarded as an extension of the institutional provision made for the care of needy children such as orphans. The perception is undoubtedly reinforced by the fact that day nurseries had been part of the social work department where they were an explicit element in a child care strategy. This strategy had a strong emphasis on the prevention of child abuse and reception into care. As a result, day nurseries have been perceived as playing a role in dealing with a particular group of parents: those whose private care has been judged to be potentially damaging or even, in the case of child abuse, dangerous.

This discourse was forcefully expressed in Hillcrest, reflecting the fact that, as a day nursery, it provided all day care for parents who had to meet criteria of need for the service. As a day nursery, it was not historically associated with education and the justification that that implies. Echoes of the discourse were present in the other day nursery, Kirkbank, although the staff there identified acting as a substitute for parents as a risk rather than a present reality.

The discourse is directly contradictory of discourses 2, 4 and 5 below which all treat nursery provision as complementary to, or superior to, home care.

Traces

The written psychological theory which is most readily associated with the view of care by the mother within the family as an ideal from which all others deviate is attachment theory. In the UK the most influential theory in this category has been that of Bowlby. The notion that anything which threatened the instinctive attachment between mother and child was potentially damaging was a force in developing negative views of all forms of institutional childcare which informed policy in the field (cf discussions in, Rutter, 1981; Tizard, 1986; Schaffer, 1990). The degree of direct influence of the theory on policy has been questioned by Riley (1984), but theories based on the uniqueness of the mother-child bond articulate a perspective which has considerable, continuing popular currency.

In a less direct way, it is possible to see psychodynamic theory as a whole inserted into this discourse. A Freudian mother figure is seen to be at the centre of any child's development. The influence of the psycho-dynamic model on thinking in social work, and so day nurseries, through theorists such as Winnicot is widely recognised while Kleinian thinking influenced the development of nursery education through Susan Isaacs (1933).

This psychological aspect of the discourse contains a contradiction about motherhood. On one hand public care is needed because mothers are inadequate. On the other hand the definition of a mother is someone who provides sufficient care for her child. The term 'an inadequate mother' is virtually self-contradictory.

Although few discourses about young children refer to the role of a father, its ommission in this case is revealing (whereas in other cases it may just be indicative of the limited role that many fathers play in their children's lives). A generally unstated assumption of the discourse is that for mothers to fulfil the role that is delineated for them they need economic support; the hidden image is that of the father who supplies this. If no father is available to fulfil this role then the State takes on the paternal role through the benefit system.

This repressed image has further ramifications because a traditional conception of the father's role in childrearing is as the patriarch. The patriarch's role is to set the rules and to oversee the proper exercise of parenting by the mother and to act as the final arbiter. In welfare provision like day nurseries, the State can be seen as having supplanted the father's regulative function. It adopts a, literally, paternalistic role through the monitoring and regulating agencies like social work departments.

A wider role of social control is an unacknowledged element in this discourse. There is a strong association between perceived parental inadequacy and the "social problem classes". Children who attend day nurseries because of social workers' concern do not come from affluent backgrounds (despite the contention that child abuse is prevalent in all social strata). The regulation of groups of parents with specific class origins is, in fact, a fairly overt and

institutionalised element in pre-five services. Thus in Strathclyde children on the "At Risk" register are given priority for admission to all forms of pre-five provision, as are, to a lesser degree, parents from "Areas of Priority Treatment".

At the widest level, it is possible to see the image of the factory lurking in the background of this discourse. In the UK public day care has invariably catered for the factory labouring class. Day nurseries have rarely been used by people in higher income groups who have, until very recently, used in-home care.

The view of daycaring as second best parenting represses reference to the economic function it may serve, that is, freeing labour. Local authority day nurseries were developed, to a large degree, to meet the need of the economy, particularly in wartime, for additional labour. This function is only seen in local authority daycare where it allows lone parents to become self-supporting units, rather than requiring economic support.

The historical origins of this discourse have been the subjected to considerable analysis (cf Riley, ibid); for example, Scarr and Dunn (1987) identify nineteenth century romantic images of childhood and motherhood as central to the post-war conception of the full time mother. Scarr and Dunn argue that these images were preceded by that of domesticity as the natural employment for women and that the two continue to be linked.

These historical origins reveal the obverse side of the class origins of the discourse; the ideal of parenting at home is an ideal which could only apply to those with unearned income or able to live on a single income.

Implications for children with disabilities

The relevance of this discourse to children with disabilities and their parents is that disability is often seen by services as a form of parental inadequacy (in a perverted sense). The experience of many parents of children with disabilities is that the professional services ostensibly designed to help them communicate this message very effectively.

Guilt is often a central emotion for parents whose child has a disability. It is plausible to suggest that Western, 'rational' thought translates the idea that the birth of a child with a disability is a punishment or a disgrace for a family into the idea of failure of successful mothering. The form that this takes may be something like this: children are the outcome of giving birth and mothering which have a healthy, 'normally developing' child as their natural outcome, so that a failure to produce such a child is seen as a failure of motherhood. As a consequence, the public attitude towards parents after the birth of a child with a disability is one of sympathy, not celebration as with any other child.

In the light of this it is significant that a broad concept of 'special needs' was a commonplace of the interviews which were carried out. One consequence of this broad view is a collapsing of the categories which make up disability with those of abuse, neglect and emotional damage.

DISCOURSE 2: Care and education in nurseries is an extension of home care which re-creates a loving and responsive environment.

Content and comparisons

Two comments from Hillcrest effectively express the essence of this discourse: nursery was described as "a home from home" and the staff as acting as "the extension of the good mother". Home and nursery are seen as having shared aims so that they can provide a harmonious partnership in children's interest.

This discourse was discernible in all the establishments which offered daycare - Hillcrest, Kirkbank and Burnhead. It contrasts with the first discourse in that, instead of nursery and home being seen as contrary to one another, they are seen as different aspects of the same phenomenon. It also contrasts with other 'educational' discourses in which nursery provision is viewed as beneficial because it is, in some respects at least, discontinuous with home.

The idea that pre-five staff adopt a maternal role is an important subsidiary element in this discourse. The role was mentioned explicitly in interviews in both Hillcrest and Kirkbank and was implicit in the emphasis on intimate, warm interactions in Burnhead.

Traces

The psychological theory which is part of this discourse consists of some general principles of commonsense developmental theory. These principles see childhood as characterised by vulnerability and a consequent need for nurture. Such a theory offers a conception of suitable child-rearing situations; they are charactersised by keeping stresses to a minimum.

In a written mode, the "ecolgical" theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979) encapsulates the insight that people live in multiple settings which have their continuities and discontinuities. The theory suggests that there may be an optimal degree of discontinuity beyond which

difficulties may arise. It is widely perceived that children are less able to deal with discontinuity than adults. This general perception is part of the conventional wisdom in education where 'continuity' is universally approved, particularly for young children (cf Curtis, 1986; Clark, 1988; David, 1990).

The primary contradiction which this discourse represses is a cultural one: the extension of the home is an extension of its emotional content, its intimacy and care, but this extension is carried out by paid employees. These employees are, therefore, paid for an emotional response. As the qualities of caring and loving are culturally defined as freely given, the notion of being paid to offer them is deeply contradictory. The idea of payment is inimical to the idea of emotional authenticity. It is worth stressing that this contradiction is by no means unique to nurseries; it runs through all the 'caring' professions and creates pervasive conflicts of role.

The contradiction involves not only payment but also time. Where people are paid to be resposive and loving they are only expected to act in this way within contractual hours. There are mechanisms which protect these hours, nursery labour is unionised and subject to contractual negotiation. There are peer pressures against working more than the contracted hours and social pressures against 'taking your work home with you'. These contradictions are further exaggerated in day nurseries where there is a regular turnover of young staff so that care and love are often temporary.

There is a further contradiction involved in the ideal to which the discourse makes apparent reference. It appears to aim to *re*create a situation which has no original counterpart. Few mothers who care for children at home are able to respond constantly to their child's needs, they have competing demands on their attention and childcare fits around other domestic demands. Rather than the ideal mother, the proposition is based on an idealised mother: a constantly responsive adult always ready to follow a child's lead.

Historically, this discourse has origins within early childcare and education themselves. Part of its current influence derives from the fact that it offers a response to criticisms of institutional child care based on comparison with home. This discourse presents care outwith the home not as inferior to care at home, but as really the same as home care. The discourse may find acceptance currently because it is congruent with a pluralist and relativist rejection of orthodoxy in spheres like child rearing which is a shared perspective between the libertarian left and elements of the 'new', free market right.

Implications for children with disabilities

The discourse is one which is quite widely seen to apply with particular force to children with disabilities. The continuity between nursery and home which is seen positively for all children assumes greater importance for children who are seen to have a special need for nurture. For example, the Burnhead staff saw it as critical that Scott was given an emotionally intimate environment because of his communication difficulties.

DISCOURSE 3: Nurseries play an intrinsically insignificant role in children's lives, particularly in comparison with home.

Content and comparisons

It is easy to see this discourse as negative about nursery provision and nursery educationists view it as heresy. Those who argue for nursery provision tend to base their argument on a directly opposed proposition. Nevertheless, this discourse is situated somewhere between strongly held positions for or against nurseries in suggesting that nursery probably does not do great good or harm.

This discourse was primarily identified in Kirkbank, it might be seen as a minimalist version of discourse 2 which was also mainly identified there. It contradicts the first discourse where daycare was presented as damaging precisely because it plays an undesirably large role in children's lives (one expression of that discourse was "you are everything to them really").

Traces

The discourse draws on a commonsense psychological view of young children which sees their learning as natural and adequately served by informal means. This commonsense view does not connect later learning or achievement with early experiences. There are written theories relevant to this commonsense one - those which deny the proposition that early experience is crucial, and support notions of the robustness of young children and their learning (cf Clarke and Clarke, 1977; Rutter, 1981).

It can be argued that this psychological perspective sustains current public policy towards young children. Pre-school provision is accorded lower status than provision for older children. For instance, it remains optional for local authorities and a mixed economy of provision, including the voluntary sector, is widely accepted. Similarly, in the main, people who are responsible for the education of young children are less well educated and less well paid than the teachers employed to work with older children.

This discourse is directly implicated in the political rhetoric of 'the family'; for example, disparaging references have been made to "creche children". It is especially significant that some day nursery staff subscribe to an image of the nuclear family as the conerstone of society and as self-sufficient. The contradiction with what is 'officially' known of families is clear, but for day nursery staff it must also be at variance with their daily knowledge.

Implications for children with disabilities

This discourse is also one which has played a significant part in the debate about provision for children with disabilities. The argument to secure the right to education of all children was one which sought to end a system of 'care' for some and 'education' for others. The separation of provision was based on the idea that education was what went on in schools which was only relevant to children who had reached a suitable stage. The importance given to the question of whether "early intervention works" in introductory texts (eg, Robson, 1989) and in research, attests to the continuing relevance of this idea.

These ideas act as a partial explanation of the numbers of children who are in mainstream provision before school but go on to segregated special education. (A survey indicated that this situation obtains in Strathclyde; Jefferies, 1988.) It is felt that because pre-school is relatively insignificant children can be included in mainstream services for social contact. When the serious business of education begins at five, other considerations take over.

DISCOURSE 4: Nurseries free children from the dependence on their mothers which is a natural consequence of home care, so allowing them to become autonomous individuals.

Content and comparisons

This contrasts with the first two discourses in that home is not viewed as the ideal to which other child-rearing environments aspire. Equally, the discourse does not entail a critical view of home. Nursery can provide an opportunity for children to develop as individuals away from their family and amongst a peer group.

One key development of the basic discourse is the view which sees nursery as a compensation for inadequate homes. A development of the idea that children can be assisted to become individuals apart from their families is the notion that this may involve transcending the limitations of their families. In the 1970s this was the essence of efforts to 'break the cycle of disadvantage'; poverty was seen as transmitted through the family so that family deficiencies had to be made good. As with the core discourse, this is an individualistic discourse in which rights attach to individual children rather than families or communities.

The core discourse was evident in all of the establishments but was given the most central role in Glenbrae. There was virtually universal mention of the role of making children independent and the importance of learning to 'mix'.

The idea of nursery as compensation was most evident in Carsefoot and Lochside where interviews suggested that the staff gave some children time and attention which were not available at home.

The idea that nursery offers access to a wider social group than is available at home is another component of the discourse. This aspect was given importance in Glenbrae and in Kirkbank.

Traces

The psychological view which is implicit in this discourse is one which sees development in terms of tasks or challenges which the individual has to face. Its commonsense version can be seen in injunctions to children to 'grow up' or 'act your age'. Its written version is to be seen in some forms of ego-psychology, for example the writings of Erikson. Both forms of theory identify one of the key tasks in childhood as the development of personal autonomy. In the early years this task is addressed by loosening the primary bond between mother and child.

The idea that autonomy has to be developed in this way involves some contradictions. The process is seen as a natural one, yet it is clearly one in which some children do not spontaneously engage and which is in fact very distressing for a minority (cf Blatchford et al, 1982). There is an underlying 'ought', a 'moral' view contained within this apparently descriptive perspective: children ought to become independent as quickly as possible because it is a step towards responsible adulthood .

There is widespread reference to this discourse in early education which, more or less without exception, represses any reference to the economic and political significance of the autonomous individual. Some of the 'moral' imperative for children to become independent clearly derives from this source. The prevailing competitive economy requires autonomous individuals who are prepared to follow the dictates of self interest (as well as to co-operate). Individual autonomy is also a pre-condition of economic self-sufficiency which is equally fundamental to the operation of a market economy based on a right to own property.

Historically, the ideal of the autonomous individual is, as its economic centrality would suggest, a central strand in the Western tradition. The impulse of individualism and self-realisation has been basic to economic development in industrial societies since the Renaissance/ Reformation (cf Weber, 1930). It is worth noting that the dominant religious tradition in Scotland is a Calvinist one.

The Western capitalist tradition views the development of individualism as a natural part of the development of consciousness. Economic liberalism, from Adam Smith onwards, has the same intellectual roots as social liberalism. This can be connected to the observation that the majority of those responsible for the development of nursery provision, particularly of nursery schools in the 1970s, personally shared in the ideals and values of the prevailing liberal consensus in education and the social services.

Implications for children with disabilities

Individualistic social arrangements cannot readily deal with disability, except as a 'problem'. In a competitive situation, the fact that some people are apparently handicapped by physiological accident threatens the competition by making its unfairnesses manifest.

The fact that people with disabilities make the need for interrelatedness obvious is usually integrated into individualism through charity. The basis of charity is that successful individuals freely choose to assist those 'less fortunate than themselves'. This creates a tension with other elements in liberalism which refer to the rights of the individual. It is difficult to recocile a rights-based approach to children with disabilities with a charitable one.

Charitable discourses were part of the provision observed in more than one context. For example when it came to admission to nursery, children with disabilities were treated as special cases - as "priority category one". A further example was that one thing that able-bodied children were held to learn from children with disabilities was to adopt a "caring attitude".

DISCOURSE 5: Nursery offers specialised learning which is not available at home.

Content and comparisons

This discourse is related to the previous one in suggesting that nursery offers something which home cannot. The difference lies in the nature of what is offered. The previous discourse presents nursery as enhancing a global process in children's development. In this discourse nursery is identified with school education and the learning which is ascribed to it. The discourse is the key legitimation for the distinction that is manintained between nursery schooling and other forms of pre-school provision.

The schooling theme proposes that there is much overtly educational knowledge developed before school, such as that of shape, size and colour and, most importantly, pre-reading and pre-number skills. It is suggested that, rather than this important knowledge being left to haphazard home influences, it is important that it should be developed thoroughly and early by trained people.

This discourse does not present nursery provision as an alternative to private care but as a desirable supplement to it. Private care in the home is seen as limiting the contact that children have with certain public forms of knowledge and skills. So there is a need for balancing forms of provision - nursery schools, kindergartens, playgroups - which will supply the valued knowledge and skills.

The specialised learning was most clearly defined in Carsefoot. Here it was overtly identified with school types of learning.

A key subsidiary idea to this discourse is that of potential. Like schooling, pre-school provision is not seen as an end in itself but as a preparation for 'real life'. The discourse is based on the idea that children of pre-school age have the potential to absorb information of recognised intellectual worth, such as science and mathematics. This leads on to the idea that the foundations of school learning are established in the pre-school years. The idea of potential was overtly emphasised in both Carsefoot and Burnhead.

At least one interviewee in each establishment mentioned the idea of nursery as providing "stimulation". This key term in pre-five services is intended to refer to the specific, ordered form of stimulation which is provided in nurseries, especially in nursery schools, and not to the global phenomenon. The language of stimulation is one which pre-five services share with special education and it was most prominent in the two 'special needs' nurseries, Lochside and Burnhead.

As with the preceding discourse, this discourse can be extended into the idea of nursery as providing compensation for the social, emotional or cognitive inadequacies of some children's homes. This was expressed in the interviews carried out in Hillcrest, Carsefoot and, most fully, in Lochside.

Traces

This discourse uses a set of psychological ideas which contrast with other more laissez-faire perspectives on cognitive learning in the pre-school years. Rather than emphasising the contribution of the child to his or her own learning, this discourse stresses the significance of external "stimulation", provided in a structured way. While few early educators are behaviourists, the concept of stimulation, drawn from S-R theories of learning is an influence which can be seen in the widespread use of behavioural language. It can be seen more directly in some compensatory pre-school programmes originating in the USA.

This discourse shares in the characteristic ideas of schooling in industrialised society. A central repressed image in the whole process of schooling is that of the factory. Cognitively orientated pre-school provision groups children in age categories and asks them to learn the same things at a similar rate; this week you can choose any colour for your painting as long as its red. As with schooling there is assessment of learning (quality control) and a product at the end.

The history of this discourse lies partly in the middle classes who provided clients for formal, school-ish nurseries and kindergartens before there was substantial public provision. Interestingly, as the 'new' middle class influence pervades pre-schooling there is evidence that it is now working class parents (cf Tizard and Hughes, 1984) who have these expectations, creating conflict between liberal pedagogies and liberal views of working class people's right to choose.

Another, distinct source for this discourse can be seen in the world of compensatory education where early schooling was seen as an innoculation against later school failure.

Implications for children with disabilities

A discourse which emphasises the specific character of the learning which is to be valued at any stage necessarily creates a difficulty in providing for children who find it difficult to attain the desired targets. This applies whether the targets are identified in terms of academic content or developmental sequences.

Two modes of resolution are available for this problem:

- an extraction method can be used to provide different content at relevant times in the day;
- an establishment can alter its overall approach to cater for a wider range of learning.

In practice, these methods are usually combined, with greater or lesser success. If success is very limited a third resolution may be that the child is deemed unsuitable for the provision on grounds of lack of ability.

The notion of potential is one which is frequently referred to in relation to children with disabilities. Children are seen as having, or not having, the potential to benefit from mainstream provision. A key aim that is often expressed is that of enabling children to fulfil their potential. This notion can be used to legitimate making very high demands on children with disabilities, demands which may exceed those made on other children of the same age.

3. Curricular discourses

The term 'curriculum' is used here in a broad sense to refer to the content of the manifold experiences from which children learn in pre-five establishments. Such experiences fall into three categories, all of which are taken into account:

- those which are planned to achieve 'educational' aims;
- those which are planned or deliberate but which are not intentionally 'educational';
- those which arise in an unplanned way as a by-product of how the establishment is organised.

The discourses which were identified in this category were mainly drawn from two sets of pedagogical perspectives; those which related to the overall approach of the establishment and those which related to work with the particular child. In the latter group, the activities and interactions in which he or she was involved were especially relevant.

A strong linguistic analogy can be employed in relation to curricular discourses. If curricula consist of learning experiences then curricular discourses necessarily contain a term which refers to the nature of that learning. This term may be seen as analogous to a verb, a necessary component of any sentence. Associated with the action of learning there must be someone who takes on the role of learner. In a sentence there must be one additional component to the verb. If other people or physical materials are involved in the learning then other roles have to be taken into account.

One straightforward way of encapsulating this insight is to analyse curricular discourses on an analogy with a case grammar (cf Fillmore, 1968), following Eco's (1984) suggestion that the concept of case can be extended to other sign systems. A comparable approach is that of Halliday (1970) who proposes a number of "functions" associated with a verb, such as "actor ... goal ... beneficiary ... instrument". Curricular discourses assign people to similar roles which can be used to make systematic comparisons between discourses.

DISCOURSE 1: Adults direct children to conform with the group so that the practical operation of the establishment can proceed effectively and efficiently.

Content and comparisons

It is typical of practice which embodies this discourse that children are expected to behave 'well'; they are expected to do what is asked of them. As a result, they learn to conform to rules, expectations and norms. The nature of the learning that takes place is externally determined and, as a consequence, the role assigned to learners is a passive one. The adults are the actors in this discourse; they manage the children both by expecting and by rewarding conformity.

This discourse was, perhaps unsurprisingly, most apparent in those establishments making full day provision. The most obvious examples of routinisation were observed in the three nurseries where the provision of more than a snack was observed. Compliant behaviour from the children was essential to the success of the routines which had been developed. The most extended example of routinisation that was observed was in Hillcrest where lunch was served according to a well-established procedure to be followed by a routine of story telling.

This discourse is directly contradicted by discourse 3 in this section. The contradiction was most visible at snack time in Glenbrae where an obviously inefficient procedure where children chose when to eat was preferred to encourage self-direction.

The discourse is congruent with discourse 1 in the previous section. Routinisation is the most obvious symptomatic feature of institutional care which leads to negative comparisons with home care. In some respects, the discourse is also congruent with discourse 4 in that section.

Traces

The psychological theory which is most evident in this discourse is a commonsense one. This theory links psychology, necessity and social morality; the view that children should be seen and not heard is its extreme manifestation. Such a view of childhood emphasises subordination, often with a long term aim of producing disciplined adults who will, in turn, be socially useful.

In an industrialised society, ideas of efficiency and routinisation are inescapably linked to the world of industry and the image of the factory. All forms of institutional care of children have to take regard to the efficient operation of the institution. However, where efficiency is given priority, children are inevitably cast in the role of raw material which has to be processed. (It should be noted that encouraging compliance in the interests of the efficient operation of the institution is by no means a peculiar feature of day nurseries. Primary and secondary schools place a high value on such conformity - 'no running in the corridors'.)

The image of the factory is an uncomfortable one for educators. Nevertheless, nurseries and schools do share central features with industrial work - a fixed, specialised location, the alienation of a waged labour force, fixed hours and conditions of service and so on. There are features of day nurseries such as shift systems which bring them even more clearly into this paradigm.

An already mentioned dimension of this industrialism is the class location of day nurseries which have catered almost exclusively for a working class population. Routinisation and compliance in nursery can be seen as a relevant introduction to life outwith the family for lower working class children since low personal autonomy tends to be typical of manual labour in an industrialised society.

Implications for children with disabilities

The implications that this discourse has for nursery children illustrate in microcosm how disability comes to be perceived as a social 'problem'. It is easy to see how children who are physically unable to conform to the routines which allow an institution to run smoothly constitute a problem for that institution. A similar problem arises in relation to those who find it difficult to understand what is expected of them or to manage their behaviour in the desired way.

This is clearly analogous to the construction of disability as an employment 'problem'. The employment of people with disabilities is widely perceived as a problem because of a mechanical conception of efficiency. This conception presumes that tasks can best be carried out in a standard way by people conforming to a standard specification.

The example of Michelle's inability to conform in Hillcrest suggests that there are two possible resolutions in such circumstances. Michelle was either helped to conform as best she could or an exception was made. The latter course is in itself a problem for any institution which values conformity highly.

DISCOURSE 2: Children learn social solidarity through group experiences.

Content and comparisons

There is a contrast between this discourse and discourse 1 because rather than learning to conform passively it sees children as having to learn to submerge their desires, wishes and inclinations actively. This active learning is seen to take place in the wider interests of the group. This discourse sees learners as taking the role of an agent while the educator is cast in an instrumental role.

The most straightforward expression of this discourse was when interviewees in all six nurseries talked of helping children learn to 'mix'. The observed practice equally indicated that all the children were intentionally exposed to opportunities to mix in groups of various sizes; from whole groups, through self-chosen groups of any size, to specially formed small groups.

The key element in practices which embody the discourse is that individuals are not treated differently within such groups; they are expected to join in with a shared activity or task. They are treated as a homogeneous entity.

Traces

Written psychological theory, in the West at least, has paid much less attention to young children in groups than it has to individual development and mother-child interaction. Consequently, for nursery staff group behaviour is relatively uncolonised by written theory and open to commonsense knowledge.

An orientation towards the group rather than the individual is anathema to many early childhood educators. Modern, progressive nursery and primary education puts the needs of the individual at its core, as discussed below. The alternative of looking towards the group embodies a different set of social presumptions.

An example of this difference can be seen in the ethnographic study in American pre-school services carried out by Lubeck (1985). The group oriented approach which she identified in a nursery run by and for poor black people was one which she saw was likely to serve the children better than an individualistic one. She argues that the experience of poor black people in America has been one where strength lay in group cohesion rather than indivdualism.

Repressed in this discourse, therefore, may be a vision of a hostile wider society, against which solidarity offers a defence. In a similar way, learning to be a group member is central to the counter-curriculum in schools because seeking the strength of the group is a realistic response to the world for many youngsters (cf Willis, 1977).

Once again, the discourse represses the image of the factory but this time the image is seen from a different angle, that of the worker. Industrial work is a paradigm situation in which solidarity offers a means of strength through organising, both to carry out the required activities and to offer the group a method of defence. If children are treated in nursery as a group rather than as a collection of individuals they are encouraged to see themselves as having shared needs with everyone else.

The origins of current notions of solidarity lie in the industrial sphere where workers have traditionally seen a need to defend themselves against the forces of profit or capital. However, discourses of solidarity clearly pre-date industrialisation. It may be significant that the development of nursery provision in Britain had strong links with utopian or socialist visions of society, through figures like Robert Owen and Margaret and Rachel McMillan (cf Bradburn, 1989).

Without proposing a mechanistic correspondence between the mode of production and education and childcare, it is worth noting that the regime in day nurseries was until recently based on a factory model. Children played, ate, slept and sang according to a strict and unvarying regime. There is a tempting parallel between the decline in this approach in nurseries and wider social changes related to a declining need for unskilled labour.

Implications for children with disabilities

For any community and its children solidarity amongst all its members, including those with disabilities, is an ideal which provides the principle behind the comprehensive approach in education and so integration. The ideal was mentioned in every mainstream establishment in some way, and the inclusion of children with disabilities within their own (very loosely identified) geographical communities was almost universally expressed as a desirable outcome. It would be wrong to say that this was a major theme of the interviews. Nor was the observed practice overtly directed towards making all children aware of people with disabilities. Solidarity was generally seen as following from contact and the mainstream and integrated nurseries all provided as close to the same programme for all their children as possible.

In any case, the notion of community is a slippery one and solidarity poses a dilemma for people with disabilities as it does for other minority groups. In an urban situation, solidarity rarely applies to those who form a geographical community. There are competing groups with whom any individual may seek solidarity, and people with disabilities can form their own community. There is an inevitable conflict between seeking solidarity within the disabled community and the view of many people with disabilities that a major problem is their lack of opportunity to be a part of wider society.

This issue is most obvious in education in relation to the deaf. While educators may argue for integrated provision, many deaf people argue for segregated education on the grounds of the need to provide deaf children with a community which has a shared language and experience.

DISCOURSE 3: Certain types of learning are developmentally appropriate and natural for young children who will learn so long as the right circumstances and materials are provided.

Content and comparisons

This discourse presents the activity of learning as a natural and active one in which children are seen as the agents of their own learning. Adults (and materials) are cast in the instrumental but positive role of creating the necessary circumstances for learning.

This discourse was part of the curricular practices of every establishment. Periods of free play or self-selection of activity were universally available. Similar materials were also universally available, with the intention of allowing children opportunities for sensory, constructional and imaginative exploration, following their own choice of materials and making their own use of them.

This discourse was given the most central position in Glenbrae where some of the classic themes of child centred education (cf Curtis, 1986; David, 1990) found expression. Examples are the propositions that:

- learning is accomplished by children not produced by adults;
- children are individuals and learn in an individual way;
- learning to manage their own learning is more important for young children than specific pieces of knowledge.

A subsidiary theme of the discourse is the idea that cognitive development is secondary to the emotional and social development which enables children to manage their own natural learning. The creation of an emotionally secure environment is thus a precondition for learning. This sub-discourse had currency in Glenbrae, Hillcrest and Carsefoot.

A defining point for such 'child centred' discourses is their opposition to institutional and group oriented discourses such as the preceding ones. This discourse is congruent with an aim for nursery provision of developing personal autonomy, as expressed in discourse 2

in the preceding section and with the following discourse here. All these discourses are both psychologistic and individualistic.

Traces

This discourse is the one in which written psychological theory has been most clearly inserted; particularly the cognitive approach of Piaget. The insertion is deliberate and direct; psychologists have promoted the relevance of such theories to education through the media of teacher training and the educational literature. Educators and cognitively oriented child development theorists share a vision of early childhood as a peculiarly rich and fertile period in which learning follows its own pre-determined course.

Sylva (1986) argues that actual pre-school curricula are more closely allied to the educational principles of Dewey and the psychological models of Bruner and Vygotsky than those of Piaget. However, her curricular examples are those of the well articulated curricula of Susan Isaacs (1954) and High Scope (cf Weikart et al, 1971), not the everyday practice of nurseries. In the everyday practice of free play observed in the case studies, the role of the child as investigator and inventor of his or her own knowledge was central, sometimes by default and at other times through a strong laissez-faire commitment.

The most critical repressed theme in this discourse is that of competitive individualism. Individualism, by definition, allows individuals to make social progress and indeed the social mobility of individuals is quite widely used as a criterion for judging the social effects of education. The notion of social mobility contains an uncomfortable aspect because it entails the possibility of downwards mobility, there must be losers as well as winners.

Individualistic discourses conceal a strong conservatism which arises because mobility of the talented (or the illusion of it) appears to render social change unnecessary. In fact, social mobility is always much less than would be the case under conditions of perfect competition and initial disadvantages are rarely overcome.

These general effects of individualism can be quite directly translated into the specific nursery setting. A verbally confident child who is used to nursery activities, like painting or role play, at home will be in a better position to make use of what nursery offers than one who is not. Nursery may then exaggerate the difference between the two children. Bernstein (1977) makes a similar point, although he qualifies it by saying that child-centred approaches are potentially inclusive of all children, they do not exclude some children as other approaches do.

The history of child-centredness in nursery schools, kindergartens and playgroups is not, as it may appear, that of a unique phenomenon, emerging spontaneously in response to the challenge of child care and education. It developed in the context of the flowering of a tradition of child centrism in education which was in turn part of a wider tradition of individualism. Important related developments were those of psycho-analysis, the Child Guidance movement, and more widely modernism and expressionism in art. In turn these developments can be seen as expressions of a Rousseauesque view of childhood and of the Romantic tradition.

Implications for children with disabilities

There are clear consequences of a view of learning as natural. When a child's learning is slower than others, or when he or she finds exploratory activity difficult as a result of physical or sensory impairments, the natural process can be seen to have gone wrong and two implications cancan be considered. The first is one of pessimism, seeing intervention as ineffective in the face of developmental reality. However, a quite different implication can be drawn, that is one of individualistic neutrality, seeing development as following its own unique course for every child. Neither conclusion suggests that particular kinds of intervention are likely to increase children's rate of learning.

Thus, individualistic and choice based approaches to learning are unlikely to result in individuals who have difficulty with learning 'catching up'. However, it is worth referring back to the evidence summarised by Danby and Cullen (1988), which is that children with learning difficulties appear to fall further behind their peers as time goes on, in both mainstream and special settings. Thus the widespread suspicion of child-centred or free play approaches amongst special educationists may be less justified than it might appear.

DISCOURSE 4: The natural learning of very young children is social and emotional in nature and occurs through the provision of a playful, free environment.

Content and comparisons

This discourse, like the previous one, presents learning as a natural activity and it views children as actors, creating their own learning. However, the role that is assigned to adults is, contrastingly, a negative one which consists of the avoidance of interference with the natural processes of play.

A further, critical difference between this discourse and the preceding one is that it portrays the social and emotional experiences that occur in play as their own justification. This discourse does not present play as a pre-condition for education but as a worthwhile activity appropriate to the current needs of young children.

The children in all the establishments had periods of freedom to play and these were differentiated from what was referred to quite explicitly as "work". Such a dichotomy was made most obvious in the competing views of the Head in Carsefoot who supported carefully judged educational pressure on the children and the staff who favoured protection from such pressure.

The staff at Glenbrae incorporated the notion of the self-sufficiency of the children's present developmental stage into their perspective on child-centred education. The children at Kirkbank were younger than any of the others and at a stage where the demands that could be made were limited, so play was a natural description of their activities. The idea of play was also important in Lochside where a playgroup had been part of its origins.

A subsidiary theme in this discourse, expressed in the interviews in Kirkbank and Lochside, is the idea that childhood is a precious time, free from the demands of adulthood. By extension, it is natural to see the earliest years as those which should be the most protected so that the demands of schooling are unacceptable. A playful nursery curriculum protects children from these demands.

Traces

The psychological theory implicit in the concept of play is a biological one, where play is seen as a natural learning medium for the young of developed species. This implicit theory is readily mediated in early education through Piagetian theory with its biological emphasis. Ethological theory is also a medium for the insertion of biological perspectives on play into thinking on early education (cf Hutt, 1979). This is complemented by a commonsense operationalist view of play, as what young children do. The proponents of the philosophy of play generally point to the extraordinary amount of learning which young children accomplish without specific teaching.

The idea that children learn through play means that discourses of play have to reconcile two antithetical states - those of work and play. The reonciliation can be effected in two ways:

- work and play can be seen as the same thing "play is the child's work" or,

- work can be physically and/or temporally kept apart from play.

The first of these is how the child centred curriculum and play come together - children choose to play so that they will learn. The second resolution is one that was widely observed in practice in the case studies.

The antithesis between work and play draws attention to the repressed class element in the discourse. Blurring of the boundaries between work and play is fairly general amongst professional and sub-professional workers. People in these class groups expect that their jobs will be intrinsically satisfying, they often work or carry out work related activities in their free, or 'play', time and so on. Industrial workers very rarely have the same view.

The identification of work and play in this discourse suggests that it has origins in utopian social perspectives. An alternative reading is to see the antithesis between work and play as one that results from the alienation of labour in a capitalist society. However, the idea of play as a distinct activity and as one relevant to childhood considerably pre-dates capitalism; for example, there are accounts of games played by Roman children. The biblical text, "when I became a man I put away childish things" (Corinthians, 13, 11) reflects a similar distinction.

Implications for children with disabilities

Like the preceding one, this discourse contains a biological view within which impairments are inevitably seen as damage to the organism. One interpetation which can be put on this is that children with disabilities may be exempted from the protection from pressure that attaches to young children. This appeared to occur in Burnhead where a lack of the ability to play like 'normal' children was offered as a defining feature of children with 'special needs'. Such a view legitimated the structured curriculum and the (few) very direct teaching/therapy sessions. Both parents and professionals express doubts about integrated provision on the grounds of is the perceived ineffectiveness of play.

As with the previous discourse, an alternative interpretation may be placed on the naturalness of play. It can also be seen as an inclusive concept; whatever a young child does can be seen as play, so that all children are able to play, irrespective of their stage of development.

DISCOURSE 5 Young children learn best from those with the strongest emotional investment in them, principally their mothers, and the most desirable form of learning outwith the home is that which approximates to the ideal of responsive mothering.

Content and comparisons

This discourse represents a difference of emphasis over other curricular approaches because the nature of learning is seen as involving two equally important agents. It stresses the idea that in order to learn children have to to engage actively in a two way process with another active participant.

The practices observed in Kirkbank largely embodied this discourse; the age of the children was clearly influential in this situation. The slow pace of life allowed time for a highly responsive style to be employed. This discourse is in accord with the idea of creating a "home from home" but it was also in evidence where that idea was not mentioned in the interviews. For example, the responsive style which the staff at Burnhead saw as central to Scott's progress was closely linked to this discourse. In Glenbrae and Carsefoot a strong educational role was ascribed to the interested listener. The maternal role was also a thread in the understanding that the Hillcrest staff had of their work.

Traces

Over recent decades psychological theorising has moved away from studying children as isolated entities and looked more closeely at their learning in interaction with other people, primarily mothers (cf Schaffer, 1977). It can be argued that such an emphasis has always been present in psychoanalytic theory. This interactive psychology and its endorsement by practitioners in childcare is perhaps an example of mutual influence between written theory and theory in practice. One way in which the limitations of individualistic written theories may become evident is through their limitations in describing practical childcare.

In contrast to, for example, Piagetian psychology such psychologies see the engine of development in children's learning as being other people rather than interaction with the physical environment. This contains an implication that learning always takes place in an emotional context. The learning of formal rules is de-emphasised in favour of conditional contextually determined rules. Ecological theories, Brunerian theories and the revisions of Piaget (cf Donaldson, 1978) are examples of written theories which can be seen to have followed this direction of development.

At the core of this discourse is the image of a woman whose pre-occupation is interaction with the child in her care. It is a discourse which is only meaningful in affluent societies where an adult is able to stay at home with a child or where nurseries can be provided. In a peasant society for example, children have to get what attention they can from adults with other pre-occupations of an eat/don't eat kind.

It is significant that this discourse is given almost universal assent as part of the desire not to throw the baby out with the bathwater by advocates of nursery provision. The emphasis on 'quality of provision' is frequently couched in interactive terms (cf for example, Scarr and Dunn, 1987). Consequently, one argument and mode of research which has been used to promote nursery care is to use home care as the reference point. This leads researchers to ask how well children who have had nursery experience learn by comparison with other children (cf Bruner, 1980; Osborn and Millbank, 1987).

The genealogy of this discourse contains an image of childhood as a stage requiring nurturance. This image can be linked to a view of motherhood as sacrifice and a situation where children become the centre of the family.

The social origins of the discourse of responsive childrearing lie within the 'new' middle class (cf Bernstein, 1990). Freed of economic hardship and of multiple childrearing by contraception, one ideal for the nuclear family has become the child centred family. In contrast to the outlook of the traditional Scots middle class, this outlook values informality, nurturance and responsiveness so that feelings and their expression are viewed very positively.

The ideas of psychoanalysis, particularly a popular reading which adopts a negative view of repression, are a part of the educational orientation of the class in which the discourse originates. The notion of spontaneity is highly valued, an essential component of the Romantic strain in Western thought. Concepts of authenticity as understood in existentialist thinking also play a major role in this new middle class thinking.

Implications for children with disabilities

Children with disabilities can be seen as a special case in respect of this discourse. It is quite widely perceived that children with learning difficulties, for instance, need more interaction, and more positive interaction, than other children. Hence, the widespread notion that 'you have to be a special kind of person to work with children like that'. However, this involves a degree of contradiction because additional allowances of salary are often made for work with this group of children.

Consequently, work with children with disabilities is frequently seen as a vocation because of its greater emotional demands. The question of 'attitude' was one which was widely referred to in the interviews. The idea that other people may lack the necessary positive attitude was widely seen as a limitation on policies of integration.

DISCOURSE 6: Definite cognitive content can be identified which adults have a responsibility to ensure that children learn.

The discourse treats some types of learning as more valuable than others. Valuable learning is that which is codified and separate from that learning about the world which arises incidentally in young children. Adults take the agent role in identifying the appropriate learning and in producing the right outcomes. Children are seen as participants in learning but not as its definers or initiators.

This discourse is central to the idea of schooling. It was most apparent in Carsefoot where the idea of a nursery <u>school</u> was at the heart of a curricular approach which stressed aesthetic learning but where early science and maths also had high status. It was also important to the special educational element in the discourses in Burnhead. There, the content that adults had to ensure that children learned was derived from the sequence of normal development rather than from academic disciplines.

The schooling discourse necessarily involves establishing boundaries around what counts as school knowledge. It also involves establishing internal boundaries within this knowledge whereby knowledge can be sub-divided and organised. In pre-fives work, this sort of sub-division and organisation is generally described as constituting a 'structured approach'. A structured approach was most evident in the practices of Carsefoot where the pre-planning of learning experiences with a clear cognitive content was given high priority. Nevertheless, all six nurseries timetabled periods of structured work aiming for specific ends.

This discourse shares the image of the factory with other discourses. The role of adults is to act as overseers of the children's work. In Carsefoot the staff set tasks, defined criteria for their satisfactory completion and assessed products. What might be described as the 'worksheet movement' in education casts adults in this role - not as teachers but as overseers.

This discourse is effectively anti-psychologistic; worthwhile knowledge is defined on general social grounds, not on the observation of what children learn or how they go about learning it. Psychological theory and knowledge is, at most, incorporated in a secondary way; it helps define the limits of the learning which can be undertaken by young children.

A central component of this discourse is the idea of potential; the potential of the early years is wasted if education does not begin at this stage. The idea of potential gives a clue to a suppressed element in this schooling discourse; nursery is seen as a preparation for the world of school and subsequently work. It can be seen as a preparation both in beginning the process of differentiating amongst individuals of greater or lesser potential and of inculcating desirable habits of attention to the business in hand (cf Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

The social class content of the discourse is a paradoxical one. Very school-like private nurseries have been a preserve of the middle class. These private nurseries reflect the emphases of the traditonal middle class on achievement, preparation for school, good behaviour and good manners. The new middle class is more in tune with the expressed philosophy of most local authority pre-five provision which emphasises personal fulfilment at the expense of 'correctness'.

Significantly, the absence of evidence of formal learning in nursery may be a matter of greater concern to working class than to middle class parents. Similarly, more emphasis appears to be placed on teaching academic skills before school in working class homes than in middle class ones (cf Tizard and Hughes, 1984).

Implications for children with disabilities

The idea of potential has considerable history in education generally but it has been widely applied to the education of children with disabilities. A key legitimation of specialised services is that of helping individuals to ' achieve their potential'.

'Early intervention' is a term which is used to encapsulate the importance of beginning 'structured' education with young children to help them achieve their potential. Generally, this means coming as near to the population norm for various achievements as possible. Where there is a strong emphasis on this discourse with its clarity about the specific nature of the learning which is expected of children, there is likely to be a pressure to segregate those who are unable to reach the particular targets. This does not necessarily mean segregation into a spearate institution, of course.

4. Discourses on disability

The preceding analysis suggests that the provision that nurseries make for children with disabilities depends heavily upon their overall approach. However, specific discourses could be discerned reflecting the fact that some children were seen as having disabilities. An essential element in each of these discourses was a notion of what it means to describe a child as having a disability. One implication of these different notions is that some activities are particularly valued for children with disabilities while others are less valued.

These discourses were primarily identified in the pedagogical perspectives which related to work with the particular child.

DISCOURSE 1: children with disabilities are special and so need special treatment, special techniques, special knowledge and special equipment

Content and comparisons

A primary element in this discourse is a view of the child as damaged and in need of repair. As a result the language which surrounds it contains terms, such as 'therapy', 'remediation' and 'programmes', which imply restoration and cure. A key idea is that of helping children to overcome their disabilities. In a parallel way, the discourse places high value on individual work with a 'therapeutic' content, obvious examples are speech therapy and physiotherapy. However, other, more straightforwardly educational, or even mundane, activities can be made special by the use of language with scientific or technical connotations.

This discourse was prominent in the interviews in Hillcrest and in Carsefoot, although it formed no part of the practices observed in Hillcrest and a minor part of those in Carsefoot.

The marking of some activities as special was most apparent in Burnhead which had a 'special needs' designation and for which special education acted as a reference point. It was also observed in Carsefoot where 'remedial' activities were carried out, both by the assistant teacher and by a peripatetic teacher.

An important sub-discourse is that 'handicaps' can be medically identified so that the special knowledge needed to provide for special children is medical in character. Consequently, a premium exists on activities whch can be seen as medical. This medical idea was part of the interviews in both Hillcrest and Lochside, despite the fact that for both the children involved, medical opinion had been mistaken and/or unhelpful. The importance of medical information was stressed in interviews at Carsefoot while an inability to use medically sanctioned techniques was a source of frustration for the Hillcrest staff.

This idea of the 'specialness' of some children was explicitly contradicted by some of the staff in Glenbrae, Kirkbank and Burnhead who ientified risks in medical discourses about children with disabilities, such as the effects of labelling.

Traces

Psychological theories play a particularly important role in relation to this discourse; their insertion is the principal means of marking certain activities as special. The most widely employed psychological discourse in making activities special is a behavioural one.

Behavioural approaches are generally unconcerned about the content of what is learned. Where young or 'developmentally young' children are concerned, they are frequently based on the teaching of relatively mundane skills (cf Bailey and Wolery, 1984). The direct teaching of this everyday content is made special by the attachment of the behavioural terminology of 'baselines', 'reinforcement', 'prompting' and so on. That which is clearly not remedial thus acquires a scientific gloss and, by association, the status of therapeutic intervention.

Even where the language is only loosely behavioural, a skills-based view of children's learning is implicit in the discourses which surround specialised services. Not only is much special or remedial education based on skills analysis so are many therapies. The terminology of applied psychologists in this context is that of putting children 'on programmes'. Such programmes are generally directed towards discrete skill areas, for instance, language, motor skills or self-help. Typically individual records of progress are kept. As with therapeutic activities these are valued both because they are individual and because they are special.

An alternative psychological theory which assists in both the identification of some children as special and in prescribing special activities for them is maturational child development theory. 'Special' children are identified by their failure to follow a normal course of development. This failure suggests a strategy of providing developmental remediation (cf, Bailey and Wolery, ibid; Harris, 1986). In essence, this consists of assessing a child by comparing him or her to a developmental chart and teaching the 'next' stage of development.

The relatively strong influence of psychological theories in relation to children with disabilities reflects the scientific status which is ascribed to psychological theory, a status which psychologists have assiduously sought. The arenas in which psychology made its earliest 'breakthroughs' towards the status of an applied science were those of education and medicine and the conjuncture between the two. Psychological theories achieved a foothold in that complex of powerful discourses related to the idea of cure in industrialised societies. The influence of these discourses is clearly reflected in the pre-eminent position that medicine and medical practitioners hold in such societies.

At the core of this complex of discourses is the extension of a faith in the power of science to transform reality in the area of illness, impairment and ultimately death. This faith is not irrational, but it is over extended. Medical science does cure some diseases and improve the lives of some people, but this can become translated into an expectation that illness and impairment are always amenable to cure rather than being part of life.

Some of the staff in mainstream establishments had a proxy sense that cure was the right of the children in their care and that, in a better ordered world, high quality curative services would be available for any child with an impairment.

Foucault (1973) suggests that the nineteenth century establishment of clinical medicine was a condition for the development of the human sciences, such as psychology, which treat people as objects open to the scientific gaze. A further nineteenth century development which Foucault traces is the emergence of medical and associated scientific knowledge to form administrative and regulatory bodies of knowledge. They excercise regulation over those who "transgress" accepted limits, for example, those deemed 'mad' (cf O'Farrell, 1989). Those who fall outwith normal limits physically, sensorily or in learning are an obvious group to receive such attention and many nineteenth century pioneers of special education were indeed doctors, such as Montessori and Seguin. The twentieth century has been marked by a struggle for control of the same 'scientific' ground between the medical profession and psychologists.

DISCOURSE 2: As a result of their impairments, children with disabilities impose extra demands and so extra resources are needed.

Content and comparisons

This discourse is invariably linked to the preceding one, although no necessary connection exists. The criterion by which special status is assigned to some children is functional one, reflecting additional work, rather than remedy. This discourse emphasises the significance of activities carried out with children with disabilities which are different from, or additional to, those carried out with the majority. These may be purely practical, but may be seen as remedial.

Disability is the site for arguments over resources in both mainstream and special services in education (cf Dessent, 1986). The main legitimation for specialised services is that they allow resources to be concentrated. The corresponding argument in mainstream services is that, in order to make such provision special, comparable resources have to be allocated.

The staff in specialised provision at Burnhead and special integrated provision at Lochside felt that their additional resources were fully stretched so that it would be impossible to replicate them in mainstream settings. (However, it is worth noting that congregating children who would be judged to make above average demands on staff time itself exaggerated the extent of these demands.)

While the mainstream staff did have a sense that seeing some children as exceptional meant that more help was needed, they also argued for quite specific resources. The Hillcrest staff identified a need for specialised training. They also saw more time as important as did the Carsefoot, Burnhead and Lochside staff: in effect this was an argument for more generous staffing. The need for a small addition to the staff was argued for in the one mainstream nursery where it was present, Glenbrae, although dangers were seen in having too many extra staff. Both the Hillcrest and the Kirkbank staff saw specialised equipment as a need.

One sub-discourse emphasised at Carsefoot was that "normal" children have to be protected from the loss of resources when they face competition from children with disabilities. The other side of this sub-discourse is that children with disabilities may be harmed by mainstream provision where these resources are not available. This was expressed in Hillcrest but was explicitly denied in Glenbrae, where there were extra resources.

An alternative to the provision of specialised and extra resources in mainstream pre-five services was suggested in Kirkbank, that is, that additional services such as physiotherapy can be provided elsewhere, for example in hospital, while nursery provides a 'normal' experience.

An alternative resolution was offered in Lochside, namely that all provision is a matter of compromises, there are always gains and losses. This perhaps reflected the experience of a staff who provided separate and 'integrated' services side by side. The 'compromise' point of view was not put forward as a denial of the validity of resource arguments, although it can be seen as denying that that they can ever be settled.

Traces

In practice, the psychological discourse which has been inserted into resource arguments is that of expert opinion. Psychologists are responsible for much of the resource-centred bureaucracy of special education on which they offer professional, expert opinion. The theoretical basis for this expertise is frequently vague.

It can be argued that resource questions have always been at the centre of educational discourses about disability. The Warnock Report and subsequent legislation are substantially concerned with how to allocate extra resources, such as special or additional teaching, technological or physical adaptation or separate buildings. The burden of both the report and the legislation is that allocating resources on individualised basis is both more sensitive to 'need' and more equitable.

The centrality of these questions reflects the position of education as a social good to be actively pursued in industrial societies. This is particularly the case in competitive economies where educational success offers one advantage in the wider competition for resources. Perhaps more importantly for children with disabilities, failure in the educational competition can severely affect an individual's future ability to compete.

Under liberal and laissez-faire social philosophies in Western, capitalist societies all children have rights. The right recognised in educational legislation and in 'equal opportunities' policies is the right to enter various competitions under fair conditions.

In education, central research questions have been framed in terms of these ideals. Much effort has been expended on asking how fairly education systems treat different social groups in their distribution of opportunities. These questions have also had a strong but diffuse effect through the prominence given to this literature in teacher education.

A consequent recognition that children enter the education system with different resources provided a major impetus for the development of 'compensatory' preschool services. A similar idea has been applied to children with disabilities where a professional consensus favours 'early identification and intervention'. Both approaches share an underlying idea of compensation for the handicaps meted out to some children by society or nature.

An alternative approach to the compensatory one is that of safety netting. This involves recognising that any competition has losers and attempting to mitigate the inevitable adverse effects. Welfare states generally operate on a combination of both approaches. This entails a degree of contradiction in many institutions, including nurseries.

A contrasting form of argument over resources for people with disabilities is premised on a view of human rights whose origins can be traced into egalitarian, proto-socialist and socialist discourses. A fundamental socialist proposition is that the right to the fruits of the labour of all members of society is shared equally and that conditions of competition do not operate.

DISCOURSE 3: Children with disabilities can be assessed according to degree of handicap which can be used to set eligibility criteria for the kind of service that should be provided.

Content and comparisons

This discourse is linked to the previous one because it is concerned with resources. However, it is quite distinct in distinguishing between the 'severely handicapped' and everyone else. Whether they are in mainstream services or not, the 'handicapped' are seen as entitled to resources which are quite separate from the resources to which the 'normal' population is entitled. These different resources may be, or appear to be, relatively generous. To get access to them it is necessary to pass, or more accurately fail, certain tests.

This view of the resources struggle, substantially erodes the principles of integration and comprehensive education. It entails a system for categorisation and ascertainment. This system is, nevertheless, open to reform by shifting the boundaries of the categories. The Warnock Report can interpreted as a category shift of this kind, deeming more children to need special services while arguing for very special services for a small minority. The legislation is ambiguous on the point, but the overwhelming majority of education authorities continue to provide for children in terms of distinct categories.

This discourse was evident in the interviews carried out in four establishments - Hillcrest, Carsefoot, Burnhead and Lochside. In Carsefoot, subsidiary themes were those of potential to benefit from integration and of preparation for integration through attendance at special provision. In Lochside, where the children with the most marked impairments were part of the nursery but catered for in a separate room, there was a perception that different forms of integration were possible. In Kirkbank, the idea was put forward that it was possible to overcome a disability and so become a full member of the group.

Traces

The psychological approach which is part of this discourse is a psychometric one. The psychometric approach has been widely employed with children with disabilities. Both academic and 'applied' educational psychologists have been considerably occupied with questions of the accurate measurement of potential, of current skill level and with the extent of impairment to learning.

The insertion of psychometric discourses into this area was partly a matter of scientific curiosity; the possibility of measuring human differences was of interest for its own sake to biologists like Galton. Nevertheless, from the earliest days of the application of psychometric techniques to education they have been tools for the allocation of resources, particularly at the margins, where IQ tests are used to assign children to special provision. The significance attached to accurate psychometric measurement is quite apparent in the effort and ingenuity expended on producing psychometric tests for particular groups of children such as the visually impaired.

The scientific discourses which have always surrounded 'mental measurement' and the painstaking statistical procedures associated with the construction of tests (although not always with their use in practice) provide a context of apparently value-free neutrality. This conceals the connection with the arbitration of resource arguments which are unavoidably political.

The origins of the idea of measurement of individual capability as a method for categorisation lie in the nineteenth century application of models from the physical sciences to the study of human beings. Those who deviated from the norm constituted one of the 'natural experimental' groups and provided practical legitmation for developing the technology of human measurement. Learning difficulties were of interest to pioneering doctor/psychologists like Seguin whose formboard became incorporated into later intelligence tests (cf Anastasi, 1968, p6). The first recognisably constituted intelligence test was devised by Binet and Simon in 1904 specifically to assist in the work of a "commission to study procedures for the education of subnormal children" (Anastasi, ibid, p10).

DISCOURSE 4: Children with disabilities are helped to become more like ordinary children through contact with them.

Content and comparisons

The criterion for identifying children as disabled in this discourse is one of difference. Some children deviate from the norm to such an extent that they can be seen to fall short of the desired state of normality.

In this discourse an activity is valuable for children with disabilities if it is the same as one engaged in by the majority of children. The fact of having the same experiences is more important than how the experience may differ for some children. Wrapped up in this proposition are two distinct ideas: a social and political one, asserting that all children have a core of common needs and a psychological one asserting the beneficial effect of normal peer 'models' for abnormal children.

This discourse was expressed in the interviews in all the mainstream nurseries. It was also apparent in the practices of each where efforts were made to include children in activities which they did not participate with the same facility as the others. This was most striking where a child's exceptionality was most obvious: helping Malcolm, whose only independent movement was rolling, to 'climb' on the climbing frame, or including Michelle in story telling when her grasp of anything beyond single words was uncertain. However, it was a constant feature of each child's experience in less dramatic ways.

Traces

The first key psychological notion inserted into this discourse is one which is shared with biological and medical approaches; the idea of the norm. In practice, both medical and psychological assessment of children with disabilities refers to the concept of the norm and most of the commonly used techniques contain this form of reference, either explicitly or implicitly. A development of the use of the statistical norm is to treat it as an ideal. Consequently, if a child is assessed as failing to achieve normal development, a closer approximation to the norm becomes the aim of parents and educators.

A second psychological notion inserted into his discourse is that of social learning theory. Children are viewed as learning not only from direct instruction but also from the effects of modelling.

The norm as a political ideal is one which has obvious relevance to New World politics with the imperative to integrate waves of immigrants into a homogeneous society. It is also relevant to communist politics emphasising citizenship. Psychologies emerged in the USA and the USSR which adopted an optimistic (from this perspective) view of human plasticity. Environmental and behavioural approaches to psychology explicitly offer the possibility of shaping behaviour in the direction of the norm. These have been directly translated into educational methods based on the idea of learning to become normal, such as conductive education or the Doman Delacato method.

The notion that the statistical phenomenon of the norm has been (unreasonably) elevated to an ideal is at the heart of the political perspective of disability activists. The effect of recognising the implicit politics of the norm is to relocate the 'problem' that disability presents. The implication of a normative view is that people who deviate from the norm constitute a 'problem'. The alternative is to see the problem as lying within the normative assumptions.

The idea of the norm is central to the development of statistical study of animal species, including human beings. The development of biological science in the eighteenth and nineteeenth centuries was strongly influenced by statistical approaches.

There are difficulties which people who have impairments face which quite clearly are not a consequence of the statistical concept of the norm. What that concept introduces is the possibilty of measuring deviance scientifically and so bringing it under scientific control. The conception also allows a scientific relativism into thinking about disability so that impairment can be seen as something other than an immutable act of God. Pioneers like Seguin and Montessori were able to use the ideas of medical science to develop the idea of education for people with learning difficulties.

By the end of the nineteenth century the idea and the ideal of the norm were of considerable importance in conjunction with those of genetics in creating a perspective on those who were 'feeble of mind or body'. The eugenic ideal was seen as a worthy one, espoused by respected scientists and doctors (cf Tomlinson, 1982, Ch 2).

DISCOURSE 5: All children are individual and have individual needs; children with disabilities are not exceptional in this respect.

Content and comparisons

This discourse is one which has been strongly sponsored by the educational establishment; both the Warnock report and the subsequent legislation endorse the ideal of individual needs. The language of individual needs is one which has a consensual status and can generally be presented without defence. Conversely, to express opposition to the ideal of providing what individual children need has the ring of the denial of a self-evident truth.

Within this discourse, activities are valued by considering how far they reflect individual characteristics of particular children; for example, their individual interests and their current developmental stage. Practices reflecting this discourse were apparent at times when a free choice of activity was offered. Offered free choices, it was always expected that some children would behave differently from the majority.

This discourse can be seen as a different perspective on the general idea of child-centredness. By taking children with disabilities as its starting point, it denies the relevance of difference to making provision for young children. This was the central discourse in the interviews in Glenbrae and was consistent with its generally child-centred and individualistic approach. Echoes of this individualism were apparent in all the other establishments, each responded in a differentiated way to the individual characteristics of individual children.

One way in which individualistic approaches can be implemented is through the individualisation of planning, recording and assessment. The establishment which was most fully in tune with the special needs approach, Burnhead attached the greatest significance to this approach to individualisation.

Traces

This discourse is not distinct from other child centred discourses and shares with them traces of psychological and political individualism detected in the previous section, including those of particular relevance to children with disabilities.

This discourse falls clearly within a neutral interpretation of the implications of developmental difference. It recognises differences in development as inevitable and natural rather than as deviations from a norm. Developmental theory makes the different rates at which children progress through stages or tasks into a scientific fact. It is a natural extension of this idea to one notion of readiness - the view that each child learns at his or her own pace with which interference is futile or counter-productive.

The genealogy of child centred discourses has already been discussed. The idea of individualism, particularly in the Romantic form embodied in early education, is one which contains contradictions which have particular relevance to how disability is conceived.

In the Romantic view, the summit of human development is the creative artist of the highest originality, as opposed to one who articulates common values and ideas. This is an idealist discourse: a society where deviation is the aim of all its citizens can hardly function. In practice, Romanticism tends towards elitism in which the gifted are offered special licence. Such a discourse can lead to a converse form of licence for those who are apparently least gifted. This may mean that people with disabilities are tolerated rather than included. (Tolerance should not be despised, it is preferable to outright abuse and neglect, but it does not necessarily offer a route to full participation.)

5. Interactional practices

The form and the content of interaction between educators and learners are obviously central to the nature of any educational experience. Each case study looked in some detail at the interactions in which the selected child was involved. Pedagogical perspectives were derived from what was observed. These perspectives acted as a reference point for the curricular discourses which have been discussed.

However, there are aspects of interaction which do not lend themselves to analysis in terms of discrete discourses, primarily the verbal and non-verbal interaction which forms a background to other activities. At different times, this interactional background can be in harmony with the overt curriculum, dissonant with it or act as a counterpoint to it.

It should be borne in mind that the only interactions which were observed closely were those in which the particular child was involved. This gives a partial picture and it is not possible to say whether the observed interactions were typical or specific to the individual child. Naturally, they do reflect the individual characteristics of the individuals to a very considerable degree. Further, the reported observer effect was to increase awareness of that child and the self-consciousness of adults in interacting with him or her.

By its nature, interaction is fluid and ephemeral; it is always carried out in the context of specific events which determine some of its content. However, attempts to subtract specific references and meaning from interaction through categorisation systems always under-represent its richness and may distort its content. Conversely, too much significance can be attached to particular instances and their content by building theories around them.

Three aspects of interaction emerged from the comparison of the pedagogical perspectives as particularly significant. They are most usefully considered as forming groups of practices. The first consists of practices of inclusion of the child observed. The second, closely related, group consists of practices which differentiated that child from others. The third and fourth groups are concerned with control.

The discussion concentrates on the interactions that the adults had with the children in question because, in every case, these were both the most numerous and those which most clearly set the tone of the child's experience. Interactions with peers are also discussed and here it is essential to remember that what was observed was a product of the circumstances obtaining in each nursery at the time. The character of child-child interaction is not somehow natural and unconstrained by its context. Most of the children who were observed were to some degree on the fringes of their peer group. In part, this reflected their impairments and learning difficulties, but if the adults had given different messages to all the children it is possible (no more) that the other children may have reacted differently to the child.

PRACTICES OF INCLUSION

Content and comparisons

The practices which come into this category are those in which the specific child was treated as part of a group of his or her peers. The basis of this inclusion was either that the child was seen as essentially the same as other children or that he or she was seen to differ from other children but was treated in the same way.

Two forms of inclusion were observed universally. One took place when the child was included with everyone else in a free choice of activity. The second took place when he or she was included in a group participating in an adult-led activity.

The most direct method for effecting inclusion was observed in Hillcrest, that was inclusion by restraint; this occurred when Michelle was verbally or physically kept within the group against her wishes. The other side of this was the approach to including Malcolm in Kirkbank when he was physically assisted to carry out the same activity as everyone else, such as painting or climbing on the climbing frame. To a lesser degree, a similar approach was used with Anna in Glenbrae.

A parallel, verbal form of inclusion was one in which adults talked conversationally to a child who did not appear to understand what was being said. This was a striking feature of interaction with Michelle in Hillcrest and with Malcolm in Kirkbank.

Every child, apart from one, was included in interaction in some way by his or her peers. The exception was Scott who lacked interest in his peers and all of whose peers lacked skills in interacting with other people. There were few instances where this peer inclusion was very extended and its content was often limited.

The interviews suggested that inclusion was valued in Carsefoot, Glenbrae and Lochside, in part, because children who might be seen as different were not being offered undue and abnormal allowances. Like other children, they were seen to be learning to be one amongst many by, for example, learning to wait for a turn in a game.

Traces

All the practices in this group contain traces of a psychology of social contact as a primary mode of learning. In its written form this can be described as 'social learning theory'. Such theories acquire particular significance for children who are seen as 'abnormal' because by being included with those who are 'normal' it is hoped that they may model their behaviour on what they observe and so become more 'normal'.

Politically, practices of inclusion of those who have been identified as different to the majority are part of a wider conception of social solidarity - all people are of equal worth and so the same treatment is applicable to everyone. Childhood acts as a special case in this instance. People who welcome selection and hierarchy in adult life may see it as undesirable for children, for example, authoritarian head teachers can strongly support mixed ability teaching.

PRACTICES OF DIFFERENTIATION

Content and comparisons

Two forms of differentiating practice were detected. In the first, the child was differentiated simply because he or she was an individual. In the second, interaction differed in accord with his or her impairments.

The response to Anna at Glenbrae falls into the first category. As part of an overall philosophy of individualism she was responded to in a way which reflected her individual interests, personality and choices. Also in this category was the high level of responsiveness which was shown to Malcolm's communications in Kirkbank and to Scott's highly individual communication pattern at Burnhead.

In the second category are the bathing in a positive atmosphere which occurred with Anna at Glenbrae, which clearly differentiated her from the other children, almost certainly because of her small stature, developmental stage and vulnerability. Part of the language directed at Malcolm was highly positive, more so than for other children.

Often, it was impossible from the evidence to distinguish between the two types of individualisation. For example, Peter was verbally more indulged than other children at Carsefoot, this may have been a result of his impairments and history of ill-health or it may have been a result of responding to his highly verbal personal style. Similarly, in Lochview, John was responded to in a way which probably reflected both his history of language difficulties and the extent to which he was a child who sought interaction with adults.

Like any other six children, the children who were the focus in the case studies acted in a way which differentiated them from their peers and their relationships differed accordingly. Michelle and Scott both sought out few interactions and betrayed little interest in their peers. John was more aware of his peers but did not make many attempts to involve himself in their games, nor did they seek to involve him. Anna and Malcolm both took an interest in other children but were restricted by lack of movement and language; other children responded to both. Peter alone, was a full participant in his peer group.

Both forms of differentiation are more congruent with individualistic discourses than with those which are group orientated. They share in the general psychological and political characteristics of such discourses.

Although inclusion and differentiation are opposed concepts, they can co-exist in practice. Each case study contained instances of both types of practice. They represent processes which are in tension in all educational settings for all children.

The origins of this tension lie in conflicting aims of schooling. Schooling is very obviously a means of social differentiation. At the same time, it is a means of producing social coherence, for example, citizenship is overtly promoted in schools. It is also a means of individual liberation, freeing individuals from the intellectual and social limitations of their personal circumstances. It is, therefore, simultaneously the arena in which children learn their position in life and where they are offered opportunities to change it.

The tension between inclusion and differentiation is at its most dranatic and, at times poignant, where children with disabilities are concerned. The tension is usually re-framed as a question - is X really integrated? That is to say, is she part of the group, both in her own view and that of others, <u>and</u> is what she is learning meaningfully related to what everyone else is learning? The case studies illustrate that this is a question to which the answer will very rarely be 'yes' or 'no'. This does not mean that it is a question which can be avoided.

PRACTICES OF EXPLICIT CONTROL

Content and comparisons

In any group setting involving adults and children, the behaviour of the children is always under some degree of control. The practices which embody this fact are highly complex and raise difficult questions about childhood and its definition. The case studies did not explore this area in any serious way but the comparison of pedagogical perspectives did highlight a group of practices which were of some significance. This section considers situations in which control was very explicitly a matter of telling children what to do.

Michelle experienced some very explicit control in Hillcrest where, at the time of day when the observations took place, control appeared to be either explicit or largely absent. The group times in Carsefoot were times of very explicit control over Peter and the other children. In Burnhead and Lochside the periods of 'care', over lunch especially, were marked by high levels of explicit control. The special teaching and therapeutic work which was observed in Burnhead and Carsefoot was marked off very clearly by the explicitness of the control.

Explicit control appears then to be associated with times or situations when nursery staff are employing curricular discourses which emphasise conformity and/or the agency of adults in learning. .

Traces

Explicit control is an aspect of what Bernstein (ibid) describes as a "visible" pedagogy and so is part of a symbolic order which emphasises position and authority. Authority applies to all children because of their subordinate position. The significance of this for children with disabilities is that, in a way to be discussed later, disability may also be seen as a legitimation of authority and more explicit control may be exercised over children with disabilities than other children.

PRACTICES OF IMPLICIT CONTROL

Content and comparisons

Implicit control was most clearly exercised over all the children in Glenbrae where the children were expected to behave in certain ways so that overt child management was a rare event. Misdeeds were not handled by an appeal to authority but by a combination of reason and reasonableness.

There was a widespread form of implicit control verbally in the use of questions which were really instructions; an example was when Peter was questioned about whether he had looked inside his mixing bowl, this was not an enquiry but an instruction to look carefully. More generally, the form of words used in Burnhead, "would you all like to like to line up?" is a typical nursery instruction masked as a question.

Traces

Implicit control is part of an "invisible" or less visible pedagogy. Bernstein argues that the roots of invisible pedagogies lie within the new middle class. Implicit control does not necessarily mean that children have greater freedom, it may be more effective in limiting their behaviour. This reveals the reality of such control which is that adults set the limits of the freedom and choices that children can make. Children are allowed to choose up to a point. In general, such limits are the obverse side of child-centred pedagogies.

Psychologically and politically implicit control aims to encourage the internalisation of rules of behaviour and ultimately a conscience. It is a verbal approach which is sometimes felt to be inapplicable to children with learning difficulties, further justifying the use of explicit forms of control with children with disabilities.

6. Organisational practices

Each establishment had a set of, more or less, codified practices which constituted its 'organisation'. They were the visible and conscious structures which kept the nursery operating coherently

The organisation of the establishment was intrinsically important in shaping each child's experience because it intersected with day-to-day practices and the pedagogies of the nursery. However, although the organisation set limits on how the nursery operated, it could be subverted. In both Carsefoot and Burnhead, for instance, the organisation promoted discourses which were contradicted at times in practice.

For reasons of keeping the inferences to a minimum, only obvious organisational practices were noted in the case studies. Consequently, the analysis here is concerned with three major features, not with the intricacies that undoubtedly existed.

The analysis of the pedagogies suggested that comparisons could be made between quite specific aspects of the organisation of the nurseries. These comparisons indicated that practices differed along a dimension of boundedness. Some organisational practices reinforced boundaries, such as those between different members of staff, between elements of the curriculum, between the curriculum and the world outside, between children with disabilities and other children and so on. Other practices blurred, or even denied the existence of, these boundaries. Such a mode of comparison naturally results in a continuum between practices which strengthen boundaries to those which do not.

The concept of boundedness is broadly related to the ideas of "insulation", "classification" and "framing" as employed by Bernstein (ibid). The organisation of the nursery can be seen as framing the pedagogies used by the staff. These frames are themselves framed (cf Eco, 1984, p70-73). The nurseries were not organised according to whim, but reflected ideas about how nurseries should be organised.

Rather than detecting traces within each separate aspect of organisation, the traces associated with either end of the continuum of boundedness are discussed at the end of the section.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

All the establishments had a limited management hierarchy - a head and one other member of staff who was in effect a deputy head - only Lochside had a further tier of management.

All interpreted this management hierarchy as involving a degree of stratification of roles, but the strength of the boundaries varied widely. Carsefoot represented one end of the spectrum; Mrs Cameron's written role descriptions saw policy as her remit and implementation as that of the other staff. The division between teacher and nursery nurse was a factor in Mrs Cameron's approach, but a quite different style operated in the other nursery school, Glenbrae. Here, decisions traditonally seen as the province of the head, such as the question of admitting Anna, were considered open to debate by all members of staff.

Sandra, the head teacher of Glenbrae, exercised her leadership in a charismatic way, through persuasion and the example of her own work with the children. Charismatic leadership was also a feature of Lochside, where it was complemented by a 'democratic' strategy of involving representatives from each room in all planning.

The delegate system was partly a method for overcoming another boundary, the physical one between the head's office and the rest of the nursery. In Glenbrae, the barrier had been broken down by the head abandonning her office. Physical facts, like the stairs and the availability of an internal telephone system in Burnhead, could magnify this boundary.

The adoption of democratic management styles with reduced boundaries appears to be congruent with child centred discourses with blurrred boundaries within the curriculum, for example, between work and play. The management of democracy in Lochside is almost mirrored by the need to manage integration in the only centre set up with the aim of integration.

Strong management boundaries, whether they are hierarchical or physical, appear to be congruent with a theory-practice divide between an 'official' discourse on aims and the discourses that are part of everyday work.

PRACTICES IN THE ORGANISATION OF TIME

Every establishment had a timetable in the sense that events followed a predictable order carried out at roughly the same time each day. Carsefoot and Burnhead were the only places where a written timetable was visible. It was significant that these were the nurseries where management boundaries were judged strongest, in the former on hierarchical grounds and in the latter on physical grounds.

The establishments which provided full day places had a fixed rhythm over lunchtimes. The nursery schools had fixed times for entry and departure of children, although these were marked very clearly in Carsefoot by the fact that the doors were not opened until an appointed moment. In both Burnhead and Lochside there were fixed times of arrival and departure for the children with disabilities because they were transported.

Within these boundaries all six staffs were flexible about time which meant that, again, there was some division between official theory and actual practice in Carsefoot and Burnhead. Flexibility over when the structured period of work began was most apparent and deliberate in Glenbrae.

A flexible approach to time is congruent with curricular discourses which stress children as active directors of their own learning who have to follow through whatever they have chosen to embark upon. A structured, bounded approach is congruent with curricular discourses which emphasise the role of adults in providing the content of children's learning.

PRACTICES IN THE ORGANISATION OF SPACE

The nurseries were more remarkable for the similarities in their organisation of space than for any differences between them. Broadly similar kinds of activities were laid out in their own discrete but not impermeable spaces. For significant periods in each day, children were free to move between activities.

Even at these times, limits were placed on numbers who could be involved at any one activity. In Carsefoot there was a more systematic approach, with a token system being used to limit the numbers of children at popular activities. The same sort of system operated elsewhere *de facto* either by virtue of the limited number of seats available or the number of aprons available for painting.

Relative freedom of movement is part of the general ethos of pre-five services and distinguishes it from later schooling. It is seen as developmentally appropriate. Equally, all the nurseries allowed less freedom of movement at group times when children were expected to sit down and work in small or large groups. Although minor re-arrangements were often made to the furniture, these times were usually conducted without much sub-division of the space.

The only real exceptions to this homogeneous informality were the times at which remedial or therapeutic work was carried out with children with disabilities. This work was judged to require a quiet situation without distractions, that is, to be physically separate from the main activities of the establishment. This was carried to its conclusion in Burnhead where a small separate cubicle in a separate room was the official venue for work of this kind. In Carsefoot, the specialist visiting teacher similarly worked with Peter in a separate room, used mainly as a store and a cleaning area. In Lochside, part of the integrated approach was taken to be an avoidance of such clinical experiences and therapists and specialists were encouraged to work in the everyday working environment and any special work for John was incorporated into the regular programme.

Physical separation of children with disabilities was therefore a rare occurence but where it did happen it was congruent with the therapeutic or remedial approach.

Traces

In some respects the selection of more or less bounded practices is a matter of conscious and rational choice by those who have a degree of control over the operation of the nursery. However, the fact that a choice is rational does not make it free. The heads and staff of a nursery may choose to adopt certain practices because they fit in with frames which they perceive to surround the nursery. These frames may be seen as those of necessity, the obligation to follow the policy of the local authority in respect of admissions, for example. Alternatively, they may be seen in terms of desirability, chiefly the judgement that some practices are congruent with 'good practice' while others are not.

Bounded practices fit in with traditional conceptions of schooling or institutional child care. At the heart of such conceptions is the notion of authority, particularly the unchallengeable authority of adults over small children. In this context, disability constitutes an additional source of authority. The able-bodied perceive their relationship to people with disabilities as one of physical, intellectual and, in the last analysis, moral superiority and consequent authority.

The widespread perception in special education is that good practice is highly bounded, 'structured' practice. Such practice is based on the greater moral authority which disability gives to adults in choosing what children with disabilities will learn.

The notion of authority is at the heart of a conservative world-view in both industrialised and non-industrialised societies.

Practices which are relatively less bounded are conversely associated with social progressivism, with liberal and sceptical social philosophies. In capitalist societies their associations are with the democratic tradition which opposes the authority positions. The tradition out of which nursery education at least can be seen to have emerged is a progressive, liberal one. This is in constant tension with the adherence of nursery schools to the overtly authority-based school system.

CHAPTER EIGHT THEMES AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Introduction

Most of the discourses and practices discussed in the previous chapter were common to several nurseries, but the range and balance differed in each case. The discourses and practices which were identified were explored in an incomplete and fragmentary way. They were also a small selection amongst those used every day by the participants.

One aim of examining provision in nurseries in this way was to develop an understanding of its complex, contradictory and plural character. This is an important aim in its own right. It would have been defeated if this intentionally partial analysis had then been used to derive well-defined models of how pre-five provision worked for children with disabilities. It would have been further defeated if these models had, in turn, been articulated with a grand social and political theory.

Nevertheless, it is quite clear from the comparisons which were made that some discourses and practices 'fitted' with one another, while others did not. It is, therefore, possible to detect themes common to several discourses. It is also clear that when these themes are examined they are related to political processes and forces of some generality.

It would equally defeat the aim of avoiding reductionism and positivism if the thesis were rounded off with a tidy set of conclusions about how Strathclyde's policy of integration in its pre-five services should be 'implemented'. This does not mean that conclusions cannot be drawn from the case studies. The chapter also discusses the implications of the research for the policy itself, both in what can be expected of it and how it might be 'developed'.

2. Themes

Individualism

An idea which was expressed in many interviews and which could be inferred from observed practices was a view of the needs of the individual as paramount. The implication of this idea is that children ought to be encouraged to become autonomous, independent actors and learners. Enacting this discourse means that both time and space have to be sufficiently flexible to allow them to be used differently by individuals. Management styles which offer individual members of staff considerable autonomy are congruent with this idea.

The ideal of individualism encompasses a characteristic set of discourses in early education. These discourses collectively make up what is generally called a child-centred approach. Their individualism and psychologism are based on two related premises. The first is that young children are in a state of natural 'goodness' which is eroded by the imperfections of society. The second is that in a natural and supportive environment young children will actively choose what meets their needs as individuals.

So far as children with disabilities are concerned, the child centred discourse is congruent, at least in part, with the rhetoric of written discourses like the Warnock Report and the legislation. These treat questions about the education of children with disabilities as resolvable by reference to the diversity of individual need.

Collectivism

There were a number of discourses which expressed the idea that either solidarity, or conformity, with the group was of over-riding importance. These discourses imply that young children have to be introduced to an external social order in the interests of social cohesion. They do not assume a natural goodness or an inbuilt developmental programme which children will follow.

These discourses can be associated with relatively distant forms of interaction between adults and children. The external social order to which children are expected to conform may co-incide with perceived efficiency in the running of the nursery. There is thus a clear association with bounded organisational practices such as timetables and strongly maintained groupings.

Collectivist practices and discourses have a particular history in what might be called the daycare tradition in pre-five services, but they are also a feature of schools and were clearly visible in nurseries which did not have these origins.

These discourses are congruent with two perpectives on children with disabilities. The first is that of normalisation; here the aim for children with disabilities, as with other children, is to become adults who are able meet the normative demands of participation in society. The second is one of social solidarity where everyone has a responsibilty for everyone else; all children, whether they have a disability or not, can learn to participate together.

It is not surprising that these conflicting themes occupy such a central place in pre-five services. The tension between individualism and collectivism is one faced by all societies and is a central theme in political philosophy. Differing perspectives on the question have defined the central macro-political divide in industrialised society between capitalism and socialism. The tension between these poles pervades education, where what is in the interests of an individual pupil has to be balanced against the interests of the majority; this extends from the provision of an accelerated curriculum for the gifted mathematician to the exclusion 'disruptive' pupils.

Informal learning

Several discourses involve the idea that certain kinds of learning are natural to young children. These consist of basic elements of 'becoming human'; forming relationships and communicating with other people, acting upon the material world and choosing one's own course of action. Discourses for which the idea of a normal sequence of child development is a reference point emphasise the naturalness of learning.

The nurseries where such discourses were most evident were those where relationships amongst people were most informal. Likewise, where learning is seen as natural it may be encouraged by providing an environment with the minimum of limits on time and space.

These discourses are congruent with discourses which stress the importance, or ideal nature, of the primary informal site of learning for young children in contemporary society, the nuclear family. Continuity with home experiences was an aim which was given widespread assent.

An emphasis on informal learning may be a discourse which favours the status quo. In any society, informal or natural learning will be seen as that learning which occurs in common non-institutional situations. In UK society, a family home with a full-time mother is widely perceived as natural, and this may support a view that mothers ought to stay at home. A less conservative effect of such discourses in industrialised society is that they may counterbalance 'official' discourses which value what is learned in an institutional setting above what is learned in the course of daily life.

Ideas of developmental sequences and normal learning are often used as guides for 'compensatory learning' for children with disabilities. The importance of the (nuclear) home environment is part of the current orthodoxy about young children with disabilities. A range of practices exists to provide 'support' for the mothers of children with disabilities; educational home visiting schemes, Portage projects, special needs mother and toddler groups and bureaucratic, multidisciplinary 'assessment and development' systems. The rationale for such practices is usually couched in terms of parents as 'the first and most important educators'.

Formal, or specific, learning

In many respects, the idea that young children should learn specific content, whether developmentally derived or 'subject' based, was present as a negative point of reference for other discourses. However, the idea of a 'structured approach', which was viewed with strong approbation in some quarters, implied definite content. It was associated with relatively strong boundaries in the organisation of people, time and space.

Pre-school provision is a site of overt political activity over this question. An example can be found in the resistance which has been organised by the teaching unions to Strathclyde Region's pre-five policies.

The structured approach is one which has been strongly sponsored in the literature on working with pre-fives with 'special needs', in in-service training and in the advice offered by specialist teachers and psychologists. It is often used to distinguish children with 'handicaps' from 'normal' children, for whom informal forms of learning are assumed to be appropriate.

The definition of some content as 'educational' is one of the central political processes in all spheres of education. The whole legitmacy of education in industrialised society depends upon acceptance of such distinctions. Pre-school provision brings the nature of the distinction into clear focus.

Specialisation and remediation

Discourses which differentiate educational knowledge from ordinary knowledge intersect with those discourses and practices which effect the division of labour in industrial society. A defining characteristic of industrialisation is a strengthening of specialisation in the production of all goods and services, including those of knowledge and childcare. One extension of this is the emergence of technocrats and bureaucrats who act as the engineers of social life.

The influence of these discourses and practices can be seen in one of the most potent discourses about education. This treats educational questions as technical and separate from moral and political ones. It serves to remove educational questions from the public domain and to put them into the domain of the technically intiated.

Technical discourses in education take a particular form in relation to children with disabilities. Physical and sensory impairments fall within the area of life which has been ascribed to medicine. Historically, learning difficulties have also been part of its sphere of influence. By association, discourses which are central to medicine come to be applied to the whole experience of people with disabilities. These discourses put a premium on remediation and, at best, cure. This aim over-rides other aims such as the educational one of equipping a child with the skills and knowledge for a useful and satisfying life. The defining rhetoric of much special education, from 'individual programmes' through 'diagnostic testing' to 'hydrotherapy' is redolent of the hoped-for cure.

The case studies revealed a contradictory situation over this theme. They contained a set of practices and discourses which emphasised the specialness of some children and their needs. Some of these had to do with a need for special and extra resources, while others had to do with measurement and categorisation. Part of this was a view that a remedial aim was an ideal of which existing services fell short. However this idealisation tended to break down when individuals were considered, examples of this were:

- in Hillcrest the special nursery which Michelle attended was not felt to be very helpful to her;
- in Burnhead what had made the difference to Scott was not special programmes but the quality of a specific human relationship;
- in Kirkbank physiotherapy was seen as a less important aspect of nursery for Malcolm than being part of the group.

The contradictions within this theme reflect a major conflict within the politics of 'post-industrial' or 'post modern' society. This conflict is one between the technological, technocratic society and a human scale society. Major political developments in the West can be seen in this light, from 'green' politics to the emerging nationalism of small countries. Likewise, many individuals have little faith in conventional science and medicine have and seek 'alternative' ways of living and healing. Such resistance to modernisation, which has a long tradition in the West, is also a key factor in anti-modern international forces such as Moslem fundamentalism.

3. Conclusions

Policies of integration

The case studies were designed to illuminate a specific policy of integration, not to evaluate it. They set out to learn from existing provision, not to estimate its effectiveness. Nonetheless, they do have a bearing on the most general questions about the policy.

It is easy to succumb to an "unwarranted optimism" (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984) about policies of integration. Whether the setting is integrated or segregated, deciding that some children are the 'least able' or 'least adjusted' and treating them as 'special' is just part of a pattern of stratification which plays a central role in the whole system of education.

This overall context suggests that policies which aim to include children with disabilities in mainstream services may create unrealistic expectations. Breaking down specific institutional barriers in education will not sweep away the inequities in the relationship between those who are described as disabled and the rest of society. This does not mean that removing these barriers is an unecessary or unworthy objective.

Scepticism about the effects of policies of integration may be translated into a more general proposition. One interpretation of the above synthesis of themes is that the conflicts they reveal reflect the inevitable entanglement of workers in pre-five services in large scale societal contradictions and unresolveable educational oppositions. Such contradictions may be seen as endemic in industrial or capitalist society and as, therefore, impossible to change so long as that form of society persists.

The analysis of the case studies started from a different view. It was proposed in chapter two that, while educators very rarely develop wholly original pedagogies, they do have, to a greater or lesser extent, freedom to select and combine elements to compose their own pedagogies. The case studies serve to confirm that such freedom does exist. The complexity and range of the discourses upon which early educators draw is itself an indication that educators can align themselves with a variety of macro-social perspectives. Their contradictory nature shows that these perspectives are rarely fixed.

The case studies amply illustrate how the selection of the elements that composed the pedagogies shaped the experiences that the children had in their nurseries. A consequence is that the micro-political choices which are made every day by educators are significant in determining the effects of weakening the institutional barriers.

The substantive theoretical analysis used traces of other discourses to 'deconstruct' the ideal typical discourses abstracted from the case studies. The overall effect of this method was to indicate that the discourses at the heart of pre-five services are all historically situated and contingent. In each discourse, traces were detected of visions of children and society whose foundation was not one of 'objective' evidence.

Recognising that pedagogies are all contingent and provisional does not mean that the discourses and practices which educators use daily are arbitrary or without value. Examples of highly contingent but reasonable ideas which can be drawn from the case studies are:

- self-initiated, informal learning is an especially effective form of learning for young children;
- adults have to make judgements about what is worth learning;
- in an open society children have to learn to be individuals;
- medical science can be effective in helping some children;
- there are degrees of impairment and the extent of a child's impairments have a bearing on his or her education.

However, the case studies suggest that in operation in nurseries these ideas have always to be qualified and their limitations are constantly exposed. Recognising that pedagogies are contingent, rather than natural, self-evident or true, is one step towards understanding these limits and adopting a critical stance.

Where their limits are not understood, pedagogies become ossified repositories for stock notions. This is clear at very practical levels. As a result of stock notions, the staff of many nurseries believe that they cannot cater for children with physical impairments because they cannot provide therapy. Similarly, they feel that they cannot cater for children with learning difficulties because they cannot give individual teaching. Those who are able to adopt a critical stance towards their own pedagogies will be prepared to suspend judgement and find out what can be achieved.

The critical stance taken here was outlined in chapter two where it was indicated that the pedagogies were not analysed in order to demonstrate how far short they fell of an ideal. Pointing out that the discourses which were derived from the case studies are contingent does not imply that they can be replaced by others which reflect objective reality. The idea of an objectively-based society whose practices and discourses are free of all oppression and unfairness is a mirage.

It is not a mirage to suppose that more children with disabilities can be included positively in mainstream pre-five services. This supposition can become a reality if those who work in pre-five services examine their own pedagogies critically and identify discourses and practices which are likely to enable children with disabilities to participate more fully in those services.

Written policies

Recognising this power leads to a somewhat obvious conclusion, that the enactment of any written policy of integration in pre-five services will depend on choices made in nurseries. Here, the conclusion is also circular, since an 'implementation' model of the policy process was rejected from the outset. Nevertheless, the case studies not only confirmed that policy related choices were made in the nurseries, they also illustrated their significance.

It can also be concluded that the range of discourses identified in these six establishments and the plurality of the discourses with which they are connected mean that, for all practical purposes, the enactment of a policy of integration is likely to be characterised by diversity. Written policy is only one of the discourses to which reference is made in the enactment of the policy in nurseries. The case studies suggest that its influence on how people think and act is both limited and relatively weak.

An obvious example of this limited and weak influence is the effect of the set of discourses which surround the medical and special education view of disability. These interconnect with many other powerful and widespread discourses in industrialised societies. The effect is seriously to limit the impact of written statements of policy which challenge the notion of specialisation.

Conversely, the most potent sources of resistance to medical and special discourses on disability are less derived from policy than from the indigenous traditions of pre-five work. Child centrism, individualisation and an emphasis on the emotional context for learning, all make the idea of remediating deficits less relevant.

The importance of the policy choices made in establishments can scarcely be overstated. The outcome of a policy of integration, whether it is seen to be 'working' or not, will depend upon how 'working' is defined. It was clear from chapter one that there are no 'objective' or authoritative criteria upon which such a definition could be based. Consequently, the views of the staff of establishments, individually and collectively, constitute a main source of evidence for those

bureaucratic and political arenas where the policy is evaluated. This may occur in a formal way through the local authority's monitoring procedures. It will also occur in a host of other ways, including direct contact with parents or advisory staff and through trade unions, professional organisations and societies.

The case studies in Hillcrest and Glenbrae illustrate how the judgements of success or failure in this field depend upon the discourses chosen by the staff to define their work. The collectivist discourses employed in Hillcrest, juxtaposed with a view which emphasised the 'special' needs of children with disabilities, resulted in a feeling of frustration in their work with Michelle. In Glenbrae, individualist, child-centred discourses which encompassed all children, including those with disabilities, resulted in a high degree of satisfaction with what was being provided for Anna.

All of this suggests that Strathclyde, or any other education authority, cannot promote positive and successful experiences for children with disabilities in its nurseries through a written policy. An education authority *may* use written policy to ensure that more of its nurseries provide places for children with disabilities, but this will not ensure that the experience that is offered is satisfactory.

The absence of an authoritative position on how best to provide for children with disabilities reinforces this contention. It was suggested in chapter one that an authoritative position is not absent because positivist social science has produced equivocal results. It is absent because the nature of the enterprise is such that it involves questions of aims which can only be answered in terms of moral and political choices.

These are arguments for recognising that there is a necessary level of democracy in the development of educational policy[1]. The vast majority of written policies in education, although framed in overt and relatively large scale political contexts, refer to actions to be taken in micro-political contexts. Micro politics can be viewed dismissively, as the stuff of gradualism, but in this context it is difficult to see an alternative.

It is at least plausible to see the influence of 'special' views of children with disabilities being eroded by the cumulative effect of a number of contrary discourses in settings like nurseries. Such an effect is at least as likely to be general as the publication of a national report, or even a large scale transfer of funding from 'therapeutic' or 'remedial' services to straightforward 'educational' ones.

At a practical level, this suggests that the framing of written policy in this sphere might take a rather different shape. Rather than making statements of "policy principles" which have, in any case, to be qualified, it may be better for local authority 'policy makers' to outline directions of development for services. Within these guidelines, nurseries might be helped and encouraged to devise their own policy on provision for children with disabilities.

The evidence of the research and the review of the literature suggests that the drafting of these policies should refer to general principles which guide the work of the establishment. It cannot be a technical exercise drawing on a fund of established scientific evidence.

This suggestion raises an immediate objection; since education authorities have a responsibility for resources, only they can make policies which involve questions of resources. This is unarguable, but it is only part of the issue. If an education authority favours the development of integration it can make specific resources available to support it. This is quite different from proposing that, as a matter of departmental policy, every nursery will make satisfactory provision for children with disabilities.

Arguments over resources are a necessary fact of all social life. The review of the literature and the case studies both suggest that the arguments which have to be put forward under this heading are more limited than is sometimes suggested. These limited arguments are of the highest importance and they ought to be engaged in as vigorously as possible. A few examples of specific arguments that ought to be pursued are:

- deaf children ought to have access to fluent signers;
- children who have difficulty with independent movement should be helped to get around;
- children who learn very slowly ought to have a curriculum which reflects this fact; planning this takes additional staff time.

However, specific arguments like this are different from stock, utopian sentiments that education ought to 'meet the needs of every child' and from a general perception that any child who differs from the majority needs 'special treatment'.

The reality is that support for children with disabilities in mainstream pre-five settings is in competition not only with the existing special education system but also with, for instance, the teaching of modern languages in primary schools. No self-evident set of values exists against which these competing demands upon resources can be measured, political choices have to be made.

The choices about resources which are made by an education authority do impose constraints on the extent to which provision in mainstream services is possible for some children, but they are only one part of the picture. By their nature, questions over resources are never answered to everyone's satisfaction; waiting for this to happen is a counsel of despair.

Three other objections can be raised to this approach to developing policy. They have differing validity and each will be considered separately.

One is that there is a risk of sponsoring reactionary policies. Apart from its paternalistic assumptions, the premise of this argument is false. There is no reason to believe that a variety of educators are less likely to produce 'progressive' ideas than those who are involved in writing policies at present.

Secondly, it can be objected that this is not real democratisation because it does not involve the wider community. This objection is well-founded but it conflates two separate questions. Recognising educators' responsibilities for policy development does not affect the desirability of other forms of democracy. In a nursery with a

management committee, policy on 'integration' would naturally be discussed in that forum. In nurseries without such a committee, the interests of democracy are not better served by policy being decided for the staff from a distance.

Thirdly, it may be objected that local authorities are democratically elected to make such policy choices. The nature of the mandate given by local elections is generally questionable but it is unlikley to include support for the notion that committees and bureaucrats ought to write policies of this kind rather than those who work in and use the services concerned.

Developing practice

These conclusions may be read as a suggestion that education authorities can only play a passive role; sorting out the resources to allow integration to happen and then leaving it all to their employees. An alternative is to see them as highlighting the staff development and training roles of education authorities. Local authorities can help their employees to develop their policies and practices.

When people were interviewed in the case studies training was an idea that was much emphasised. Usually, this meant one of two things: training in special techniques of working or training about particular conditions or difficulties. Much 'special needs' training in Strathclyde's pre-five services has consisted of 'experts' in various guises providing information on such topics. However, training of this kind is unlikely to address the wider policy questions because it begs exactly the questions that are begged by positivist approaches to evaluating services[2].

In any case, it is a commonplace of discussions of integrated provision that it depends as much upon 'attitude' as upon particular skills or resources (cf Williams et al, 1989). Even cursory contact with more than one mainstream establishment providing for children with disabilities will reveal the truth which this contains. However, the term 'attitude' is misleading because it suggests an impermeable mental disposition. What matters is what people think.

Early education is characterised by relative spontaneity, flexibility and curricular openness. In these circumstances, efforts to induce change by telling educators what to think are doomed to failure. Practice is more likely to develop through critical reflection on practice by practitioners.

One analogy which was drawn between pedagogies and language was that both were used every day 'without thinking', or unconsciously. This may be especially likely in the fluid context of most pre-five establishments. It does not justify an assumption that they are not amenable to conscious change and development.

The case studies do not suggest that there is one right way of thinking. They do suggest:

- that some ways of thinking do not sit easily with one another;

- that the nature of the inclusion that a child is likely to experience in a mainstream nursery depends as much upon an overall pedagogy as it does upon particular responses to disability;

- that medical and special educational discourses about remediation and cure do not readily marry up with most mainstream discourses in pre-five services;

- that the choice of curricula and pedagogies for all children, including those with disabilities, cannot be divorced from wider social questions.

These suggestions lead clearly to a conclusion that the development of policy in nurseries and staff development and training are not separate exercises but are intimately linked. This suggests that Strathclyde and other education authorities can promote positive practice in integration by providing structures and opportunities for its pre-five staff to examine the ideas and principles which they use in their everyday work. Integral to this would be an examination of the implications of these ideas and principles for children with disabilities.

The encouragement of critical self-examination is only likely to be effective if it is carried out systematically and with specific end points. Advisory and inspectorial staff can advise on structuring self examination; services can be so organised that opportunities exist for different staff groups to share experiences; access can be offered to challenging ideas through in-service training.[3]

The influence of the idea that educational questions are technical and separate from moral and political ones has already been noted. If policies of integration in nurseries and schools continue to be located substantially within this discourse their further development will be a slow and frustrating one hindered by unaddressed questions.

However, when this is turned round and viewed from a positive angle it can be concluded that provision for children with disabilities should be an integrated part of educational development in nurseries, not an afterthought. Thinking about 'integration' in these terms clarifies the need for curriculum development to focus on two large questions of purpose:

- what is the aim of the service for all children?;

- are these aims appropriate for every child?

A constant struggle with these basic questions is unlikely to transform provision, it will rather produce a host of subsidiary questions. Nevertheless, the struggle is part of a constant obligation on those who provide services to the community to re-evaluate what they provide. The more that practitioners and researchers make the bases of practice explicit the more informed such re-evaluation can be. The outcome of this process is always uncertain and the prospect of providing an increasing number of children with disabilities with positive experiences in mainstream pre-five services hangs in several balances. It faces daunting opposition, particularly from the discourses of specialisation and remediation in conjunction with arguments over resources.

However, the only long-term prospect of fulfilling the best of the intentions of written policies of integration in pre-five services lies with those who work in those services. If they assert that the best elements in their own traditions apply to all children, then discourses which see physical and intellectual diversity as normal may become part of the everyday pedagogy of every nursery. If this happens, the rest of the education system, and the society beyond it, will not be left unchanged.

FOOTNOTES

1. Education in Scotland is currently experiencing several contradictory pressures concerned with democracy. On one hand, there are the trends towards empowerment of parents through school boards and the freeing of schools from the shackles of detailed local authority control. On the other hand there is an increasing proletarianisation of the educational workforce with tightly defined hours of work established for teachers, national testing, curricular guidelines and so on.

2. The argument that 'remedial', 'special' and 'medical' discourses are likely to have a negative effect on the policy is not an argument for suppressing them. Where particular kinds of information are wanted by people it ought to be made available to them so that they can then assess its usefulness. Further, there is information about visual impairment,for example, which is useful to sighted adults working with a child with a visual impairment.

3. This sort of approach to pre-five curriculum development is to be found in a training pack developed by the National Children's Bureau (NCB, 1989). The merits of the pack itself are not relevant to the the present discussion but the general principles on which it is based are. As one of its authors says:

> there may be confusion and incoherence in in the minds of practitioners as to what those principles (of early education) are, what values they are based on, and how they can most effectively be expressed. ... in early years education we have not learned a language in which we can debate our most pressing concerns ... a language in which we can move easily between the abstract and the concrete ... (Drummond, 1989, p13)

The argument of this chapter has been that the development of this language is a task for practitioners as much as it is for researchers, theoreticians and policy makers.

APPENDIX A **STAFF INTERVIEW SCHEDULES AND PILOTING**

SCHEDULE 1

Introduce self - give a brief background of working experience and current post.

As you know I am interviewing a number of the staff about children with special needs. It is obviously not possible to do so without considering wider issues and therefore I will ask some questions of a general nature.

All the information you give me will be treated as confidential and at no point will you be identified individually in research reports nor will individuals be identified to the Pre-Five Unit or your Head Teacher/Officer in Charge.

At the end of this fortnight I will try to arrange for a general feedback session with the whole staff. I will certaily summarise the views which have been expressed to me but individuals will not be identified.

A. <u>To start with I would like to ask you some general questions about children with special needs and your views about provision for them.</u>

(1) There is an obvious problem in defining who has a "special need" and no-one has a clear answer to this I certainly don't. What kinds of children do you think of as having special needs ?

(2) What are your views on children with special needs in Nursery Schools/ Day Nurseries/ Children's Centres (as appropriate) ?

(3) Do you support more integration of children with special needs in mainstream pre-five provision, <u>in general</u> ?

(Probe answer if necessary. Why ?)

(4) (a) If <u>yes</u> to (3) are there any kinds of children you feel would not benefit ?

(b) If <u>no</u> to (3) what do you think should be done ?

(5) How do you feel about children with special needs or disabilities ? It is important to be honest about this.

Piloting evaluation

(1) It proved difficult to answer this but it is important to clear up this issue and the question allows this to be done. In summarising the focus on children with disabilities could be made clear while acknowledging the more familiar context and terminology of "special needs".

(3) The only children who are provided for outwith mainstream at present are children with disabilities.

(4) It is unreasonable to expect staff to have comprhensive knowledge of the different forms of impairment or difficulty. It is simpler to think in negative terms whether there are types of children or particular children that they do not feel could benefit from mainstream provision.

(5) The point being made was not clear, therefore the question needed amplification and encouragement given to people to respond in what they might see as a socially unacceptable way.

B. Training and experience are important to the approach we take to children in general and to how well equipped we feel to provide for their needs whether they are special or not. For these reasons I would like to ask you some questions about your background.

(1) Where did you train ? When ?

(2) Where have you worked ?

(3) Have you had further training of any kind ? Anything related to special needs ?

(4) Have you had in-service training of any kind ? Anything related to special needs ?

(5) What has been your experience of working with children with disabilities. Have there been any particular problems that you could tell me about in this ?

Piloting evaluation

(3) Further training was seen as referring to award bearing courses only by some people; a response was "No, I've only been on courses. Separate questions were needed for further and in-service training.

(5) There was no reason to focus on the negative aspects only. It tended to provoke a one word response. A question about success should be included as a balance.

C. How you work with children with special needs is obviously influenced by the way you work with all your children so I would like to get a broader picture of your work.

(1) What do you see as the most important functions you establishment serves for all its children ?

(2) What do you see as your job with the average child you have to provide for ?

(3) What are the most important ways you have learnt about this job ?

(4) Who has been the biggest influence on the way that you work ?

Piloting evaluation

(1) The function of meeting parents' needs had to be acknowledged, particularly in Day Nurseries. It was important to emphasise that it was the most important functions that were being asked about because as framed the question was daunting.

(2) It was important ask for some articulation of the theory which guided practice. Adding an enquiry about aims to the question would achieve this.

(3) Was unclear, the sort of information sought had to be specified.

(4) This was too baldly stated and mystified people, amplification was needed.

SCHEDULE 2

Offer assurances about confidentiality again.

A. I would like to gather some basic information about S and your contact with her/him.

(1) How long have you worked with S ?

(2) What do you see as her/his most important special needs ?

(3) Why was S placed with you and how was it arranged (if you know) ?

(4) At which times of the day do you have contact with S ?

(5) How do you get your information about S and her/his special needs ?

(6) Do you feel you have enough information about S ?

Piloting evaluation

(2) It was easy to give the impression that technical/medical information was sought. It should be indicated that an opinion based on first hand knowledge was all that was wanted

(3) "How" proved unclear and it was asked if the question was really "Why".

(4) It was unclear what the time scale of this question was.

B. <u>I would like to focus now on how you think S is doing in your nursery.</u>

(1) What is S gaining from coming here ?

(2) Are there any drawbacks for S in coming here ?

(3) Does the fact that S attends have any effect on the other children ?

(4) What effect does S's attendance have on the staff ?

(5) Do you feel that this is the best place for S to attend ? If not explore alternatives that would be preferred

(6) Does S in fact attend anywhere else ? How does this joint placement work ? What is the role of the other establishment in meeting S's needs

C. <u>I would like to ask how you see your job with S and whether there are things that should be done to help you in this.</u>

(1) What are your aims in working with S ?

(2) What kind of progress do you feel that S is likely to make ?

(3) If you had more time what sorts of things would that allow you to do with S ?

(4) In the real world what do you see as your job with S ?

(4) What would help you to carry out your job better ?

Piloting evaluation

B (1) and (2) and C (2) The question of the child's progress belongs in section B. It needs to be clear whether it is progress to date or future progress that is being asked about. This should be asked separately.

B (7) It is only legitimate to ask staff to comment on parents' reaction to the service they provide, speculation about the parents' wider response to their child's situation was not germane to the enquiry. It was important to accept that some staff may not have much contact with parents.

C (1) and (4) proved in practice to be the same question they should therefore be collapsed.

C (5) This prompted very generalised responses unless the specific types of assistance were detailed. It would be clearer to ask questions directly about the most likely forms of additional help and allow for an open response at the end.

STAFF INTERVIEW SCHEDULES **REVISED VERSION**

SCHEDULE 1

Introduction as before, carried out as informally as possible, with considerable emphasis on the idea of research taking place in a context of confidentiality.

A. To start with I would like to ask you some general questions about children with special needs and your views about provision for them.

(1) There is an obvious problem in defining who has a "special need" and no-one has a clear answer to this I certainly don't. What kinds of children do you think of as having special needs ?

(After answer has been given introduce the term "disabilities" and give a brief explanation that the research is concerned with children with a marked physical or sensory impairments or learning difficulties. Indicate that it is appreciated that other kinds of children may, in fact, create more of a demand on staff.)

(2) What are your views on children with disabilities in Nursery Schools/ Day Nurseries/ Children's Centres (as appropriate) ?

(3) Do you support more integration of children with disabilities in mainstream pre-five provision, <u>in general</u> ?

(Probe answer if necessary. Why ?)

(4) (a) If yes to (3) are there any kinds of children you feel would not benefit ?

(b) If no to (3) what do you think is the best alternative for these children ?

(5) How do you feel about children with disabilities ? Some people feel uncomfortable or even repelled by disabled children, there is nothing wrong or uncaring about 'admitting' this and it is important to be honest about it.

B. <u>Training and experience are important to the approach we take to children in general and to how well equipped we feel to provide for their needs whether they are special or not. For these reasons I would like to ask you some questions about your background.</u>

(1) Where did you train ? When ?

(2) Where have you worked ?

(3) Have you had further training of any kind ? Anything related to special needs ?

(4) Have you had in-service training of any kind ? Anything related to special needs ?

(5) How have you learned about children with special needs/ disabilities ?
(Ask for details if appropriate.)

(6) What has been your experience of working with children with disabilities. Have there been any particular problems that you could tell me about in this ? How successful has it been ?

C. <u>How you work with children with special needs is obviously influenced by the way you work with all your children so I would like to get a broader picture of your work.</u>

(1) Any nursery serves a number of functions for children and their families. What do ypou see as the most important functions (name of nursery) serves for children and parents ?

(2) Following on from this, what do you see as your job with the average child you have to provide for ?

(3) What are the most important ways you have learnt about this job ? (If necessary expand to suggest training, work experience, outside experience.)

(4) We all learn about our jobs in several ways but one important way, is from other people. Is there one person or group of people who have had a particular influence on your work ?

STAFF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2

Offer assurances about confidentiality again.

A. I would like to gather some basic information about S and your contact with her/him.

(1) How long have you worked with S ?

(2) What do you see as her/his most important special needs ?

(3) Why was S placed with you and how was it arranged (if you know) ?

(4) At which times of the day do you have contact with S ?

(5) How do you get your information about S and her/his special needs ?

(6) Do you feel you have enough information about S ?

B. I would like to focus now on how you think S is doing in your nursery.

(1) What is S gaining from coming here ?

(2) What progress has she/he made ?

(3) What progress do you see her/him making in the future ?

(4) Are there any drawbacks for S in coming here ?

(5) Does the fact that S attends have any effect on the other children ?

(6) What effect does S's attendance have on the staff ?

(7) Does S attend any where else ? How does this split placement work ?

(8) What do you think S's parents feel about her/him coming here ?

C. <u>I would like to ask how you see your job with S and whether there are things that should be done to help you in this.</u>

(1) What are your aims and what do you see as your job in working with S ?

(2) If the staff had more time what kinds of things would that allow you to do with S ?

(3) What kind of training or in-service would be relevant to working with S ?

(4) What kind of back-up from other professionals would be helpful ?

(5) What additional equipment would be helpful ?

(6) Is there anything else you can think of that would help you provide better for S ?

10.50	As a whole group /touch your head, nose J enjoys watching the girls beside him they continue after song finishes	Group time all children involved in same activity
10.55	All children pleased at prospect [seen as a treat?] Instruments handed round, choices guided. Sing through song 2ce and then change John joins in apathetically	Percussion band is being organised
11.05	Alexander comes in from another room to show off his new wheeelchair	Band stops everyone spectates
11.12	John is persuaded to join the ring is very reluctant to do so. Children choose someone to be baby John is never chosen	Ring game Baby Sandy
11.20	John extricates himself from the circle goes to play in a quiet corner	Game degenerates /temperamental girls/
	Jean spots John on his own in house area organises materials for playing at cooking John stirs 'eggs' and then eats them Jean talks to John about what he is doing but is interrupted by Dorothy discussing breakdown of Baby Sandy and tears. Pamela moves into house area and takes John's play materials [How far is John a victim? Other children do not appear to make any allowances. Is John being taught his place in life?]	Free activity
11.30	John wanders off goes to door of the baby room tries to make his way in but is intercepted. ['Special needs' children all show more interest in baby room than others. Have all been in there at some time] Julie - not a special needs child goes over to look into the baby room [- ? over idea above]	

Speaker	Speech	Notes
		Student is helping Joyce
Stu	You wash your hands, wash them both Hands, wash your hands That's a clever girl Going to dry them Anna Turn them round and dry them - there you are Going to play? Where you wanting to go?	demonstrates helps holds Anna's hand
Joyce	Let her go over there and play with her pals	student helps Anna over to climbing frame - she crawls inside
Stu	Did you go in? Where's Anna You wanting to go up here? Wait a minute. Where you going? Where you going? Do you want to go down the chute? Where are you going, eh? Just watch Anna	Gives Anna help to climb > peer
Peer	Right, I'll watch, cos she can fall	Anna totters on platform at top of frame
Stu	Where are you going Anna? (laughing)	
Peer	Cos she can easily fall	
Stu	You coming over, crawl back through wait, watch to let her head Watch!	> Anna > peer who is 'helping'
Peer	Cos you don't want her to get hurt	
Stu	Nup, cos she's stuck Right down you go Where you going now, up the chute? Watch Anna you nearly kicked her in the face	between bars helps to slide tries to climb back up > peer

AI ENDIX D

APPENDIX IV

Manual of Observation Schedule for use in

Pre-school Units

A. INTERACTION CATEGORIES

	+	+	+	-	-	-	0
	V	M	NV	V	M	NV	
INI							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
RES							

Insert 'C' 'P' or 'T'

+V Positive Verbal : A remark from one person to another which is friendly and non-threatening.

+NV Positive Non-verbal : (a) Physical contact which is friendly and non-hostile. Includes cuddling, taking hands, patting, stroking, touching an object which another is holding. (b) Carrying out an instruction, obeying a request.

-V Negative Verbal : A remark from one person to another which is hostile, threatening, aggressive.

-NV Negative Non-verbal : (a) Physical contact which is hostile, threatening, aggressive. Includes pushing, hitting, snatching toy from another against his wishes, destroying something another is building. (b) Refusing to carry out an instruction or obey a request, e.g. shaking head, running away, turning away.

M Mixed Verbal/non-verbal : Physical contact plus simultaneous verbalisation.

0 No Interaction has occurred.

INI Initiation : Record of the person who made the first move in the interaction.(see C, P and T below).

RES Response : Record of the person who responded or made the second move in the interaction.

C : Child being observed

P : Peer, any other child

T : Teacher, nurse, any other adult.

B. CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITY

Fc	Fs	GA	GM	IP	B	SG	LW		NS
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		14

1 Fc Fine perceptual-motor (creative) : unstructured fine perceptual-motor activity; no rigid rules; no right/wrong distinction. Includes modelling, painting, drawing, lego, small construction, stringing beads, some sand and water play, craft activities, some cutting, gluing, carpentry.

2 Fs Fine perceptual-motor (structured) : fine perceptual-motor activity with rigid rules and goals; clear right/wrong distinction since there are limited number of acceptable outcomes. Includes jigsaws, table games (picture bingo, snakes and ladders, ludo, etc), cutting shapes, putting on/taking off clothes.

3 GA Gross physical activity : movement over the ground without use of toys or other equipment. Includes running, jumping, hopping and walking. Location will always be solitary or parallel or group or teacher - if children are involved in GA in association, then SG is recorded (see below).

4 GM Gross perceptual-motor : Gross movement involving equipment or toys. Includes climbing frame, swings, vehicles, chute. Location recorded as with GA.

5 IP Imaginative Play : Child is involved in fantasy; has adopted role of particular person and is acting the part e.g. Superman, policeman, nurse or is pretending that an object represents something else e.g. child uses cutlery to "shoot" as if it were a gun.

6 B Book/story activity : Child is (a) listening to a story being read (b) "reading" by himself - includes books, comics, wall posters (c) listening to a story on record, tape or television (d) listening to an adult talk on a topic of interest (without using a book) e.g. adult discusses recent visit to the circus, explains why we have fireworks on November 5th, tells the children about a fire drill taking place next day, etc.

7 SG Small group activity : Two or more children involved in association without the controlling presence of an adult. Includes rough and tumble play, peek-a-boo, hide and seek, gross physical and perceptual-motor play in association. If an adult has set up the activity and is absent for a few minutes, this is not recorded as SG since adult control is present - the group must be a spontaneous one set up by the children.

8 LW Looking, Listening, Waiting : The child is inactive and is looking or listening to others, waiting for equipment to arrive, or an activity to begin. Location cannot be association.

Blank box for one of five activities to be recorded by initial:

9 M Music/dancing : (a) listening to music on tape, record, television, piano (b participating in songs, dancing, movement to music, singing games.

10 H Helping an adult : To organise, fetch and tidy away equipment, at the request of the adult.

11 T Toilet/washing activities : Includes going to the toilet area, using toilet, sink or mirror, queueing to leave toilet area.

12 S Snacks : Includes waiting for the snack to be served, and eating and drinking.

13 C Conversing : Child is talking to adult or peer and doing nothing else. If he is involved in another activity at the same time, record the other activity only. Location for 'C' is always association or teacher.

14 NS Non-specific activity : Child is wandering aimlessly, not involved in any activity which could be included in the above categories.

NOTE: Category 5 (Imaginative Play) takes precedence over the first four categories. e.g. the child playing at superman may be running around the room but IP is recorded rather than GA. Similarly, if a child is riding his bicycle pretending to be a policeman, IP is recorded rather than GM.

C. LOCATION CATEGORIES

S	P	A	G	T
1	2	3	4	5

S Solitary Play : Child is engaged in activity alone. No child within conversation distance is engaged in the same activity.

P Parallel Play : Child is engaged in activity alongside other child/children. The other(s) must be engaged in the same activity. They work independently and without roles.

A Associative Play : Child is engaged in activity with other child/children. Roles are taken, the boundary of the group is clearly defined, the presence of the other(s) is necessary for the activity to continue.

G Group Activity : Child is involved in formal group activity organised and controlled by an adult. The child's participation can be voluntary or compulsory.

T Teacher/Adult : Child is engaged in activity in parallel or association with an adult. No peers are present. If one or more peer is present and engaged in the same activity, 'G' is recorded.

OBSERVATION PROCEDURE

1. Complete information on the front observation sheet - unit, child's name, date and your initials.

2. Locate child and start stopwatch. Observe for one minute without recording in order to tune into the child's activity.

3. Begin 20 minute observation session. You will complete one observation of interaction, activity and location every 30 seconds as follows :-

   Observe for 20 seconds. Mentally note activity and location in the first second then wait for the first interaction involving the target child to occur. When it occurs, observe who initiated, who responded and whether it was verbal/non-verbal and positive/negative. Immediately complete the first block on the schedule :

   a. Interaction - 'C', 'P' or 'T' in the appropriate box on the top line for initiation and 'C','P' or 'T' on the bottom line for response.

   b. Activity - Circle the number below the appropriate category or place the appropriate initial in the blank box.

   c. Location - Circle the number of the appropriate category.

If no interaction occurs during the 20 seconds observation, record activity and location only. If an interaction is clearly initiated but there is no response, record the initiation in the usual way and put 'C','P' or 'T' in response box 7 to indicate who did not respond.

You have 10 seconds to record before the next observation period begins.

Observe and record continuously for 20 minutes, completing 40 blocks on the observation sheets. Work down the columns of the observation sheets, not across the rows.

APPENDIX E

The list developed by Lofland (p14-15) for checking the comprehensiveness of a description of a social phenomenon can be applied to the data that was gathered in the case studies. (Lofland's categories are italicised.)

1. Acts. Action in a situation that is temporally brief, consuming only a few seconds, minutes or hours.
2. Activities. Action in a setting of major duration - days, weeks, months - constituting significant elements of persons' involvements.

The timescale of the case studies meant that all the forms of observation employed could only record *acts*. However, seeking information about the regular functioning of the establishment meant that *acts* were only seen as significant if it was reasonable to suppose that these were representative of *activities*. In some cases clear support for such an assumption existed, for example, in the form of a timetable which indicated that similar categories of act were performed regularly. In other cases corroborative information from participants confirmed that the pattern of acts observed was a representative one.

Nevertheless, the fact that it is only assumed that a set of activities is described in each case is a highly significant limitation on both the reliability and the validity of the case study material one which only replication, preferably in a longer time mode could overcome.

3. Meanings. The verbal productions of participants that define and direct action.

There were three ways in which meanings in this sense were gathered, firstly through interview, secondly through notes made during observations and thirdly through audio-recording.

4. Participation. Persons' holistic involvement in, or adaptation to, a situation or setting under study.

It is assumed that the behaviour which was observed can only be understood with reference to meaning. This represents the most basic assumption on which the case studies rest, it affects validity at a meta-theoretical level but it also affects validity and reliabilty at lower levels because the imputation of meaning to behaviour involves a high level of inference from the data

5. Relationships. Interrelationships among several persons considered simultaneously.
6. Settings. The entire setting under study conceived as the unit of study.

Information on both these aspects was gained through unstructured observation and the interview data. This information was necessary both to understand the activities and meanings that were recorded but also the reflexive role of the researcher. Such explicit reference to social and physical settings also offers the possibility of replication and so enhances potential external reliability (LeCompte and Goetz, ibid., p38-9)

APPENDIX F **DETAILED CASE STUDY DATA**

Introduction

The purpose of this appendix is twofold. Firstly, it provides an evaluation of the significance of the perspectives which have been derived from the interview data. The evaluation of each perspective is carried out according to the criteria suggested by Becker and Geer (1960), as discussed in chapter three. This evaluation takes into account the frequency with which the ideas contained in the perspective were expressed, the extent to which the perspective was a collective one amongst the interviewees, the range that the perspective appears to have and the presence of any negative cases.

Secondly, the appendix gives in tabular form detailed data from the structured observations which would have interrupted the flow of the main text. The data are presented in percentages which have been rounded up or down so that totals may not always be 100 %.

In both cases there is some repetition of information which is provided in the main text. The data is arranged by case study so that cross-referencing with the main text is as straightforward as possible.

1. Hillcrest

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

The main perspective is a view of daycare as substitute, and therefore inferior, parenting. The view that daycare is second best was expressed **frequently** by Jackie: there were 25 references to its inadequacy or that of parents who use it in her interviews and her longest answers were on this topic. Susan mentioned it less frequently and the others not at all. Its **collective character** is, therefore, in doubt.

There is serious difficulty in estimating what the **range** of these ideas was. Jackie's view was not negative towards the children in daycare but towards their parents. Jackie's response in practice to parents was difficult to estimate from the limited contacts observed. In any case, relations with parents are governed by professional codes of conduct which expressly forbid the expression of negative views.

Negative cases, where the perspective is contradicted, can be found in Jackie's own interviews when she says that "nursery gives children a chance to mix...to become self-sufficient". Jackie, however, qualified this statement by saying that these opportunities are needed because "some children can become cossetted".

Despite these qualifications, it is contended that because of Jackie's position of influence in setting the tone of work and because of the centrality of these ideas to her outlook the perspective had considerable significance in Hillcrest, particularly so far as Michelle was concerned.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

The main view of the kind of work that was valued can be summarised as work carried out on an individual basis, by people with specialised training using specialised equipment. This specialist perspective was expressed on more than one occasion in all the interviews carried out; it thus had a high **frequency** and was **collective**. This may reflect the structure of the interviews which drew attention to questions of staffing and training. However, in three cases the theme was introduced before such questions had been raised.

The **range** of the perspective was also reflected in the number of the questions to which answers were given which relected its assumptions. The competing perspectives which were mentioned can be seen as **negative cases**. However, these did not seriously erode the specialist perspective.

(c) Provision for Michelle

All the interviewees referred to their own lack of specialist skills and knowledge and the limited opportunities that existed for special remedial work with Michelle. This perspective was therefore **frequently** mentioned and **collective** in character. The **range** of the perspective is shown by the fact that it occured in contexts other than the direct question in the interview.

The actual experience of specialist work constituted a **negative case** but this was not apparently translated into a general question.

(d) Structured observations

Michelle was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Activity	%
Fine Creative	0%
Fine Structured	0.4%
Gross Activity	1%
Gross Motor	5%
Imaginative Play	15%
Books	14%
Listening/waiting	7%
Music	0%
Helping Adult	0%
Toilet	0%
Snack (meal)	15%
Conversation	1%
Non-specific	14%
Observing	2%
Exploratory play	13%
Dressing	3%
Transition	2%
T.V.	6%

Social context	%
Solitary	30%
Parallel	2%
Associative	3%
Group	50%
Adult	16%

Michelle's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
		Child Initiated (Total = 47)					
A	+V	-	-	4	-	-	-
D	+M	-	-	6	-	-	-
U	+NV	-	-	5	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
T	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	12	-	1	-
P	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+NV	-	-	5	-	-	-
R	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-M	-	-	1	-	-	1
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	1
	0	-	-	9	0	0	2
		Adult Initiated (Total = 127)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	27	21	12	15	2	3
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	2	-	-	-	-
	0	22	-	11	8	1	3
		Peer Initiated (Total = 43)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	-	-	6	-	1	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	2	1	1	3
	0	-	1	9	1	2	16

2. Carsefoot

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

The notion of "pre-school education" had high **frequency** in discussions with Mrs Cameron. This view was a conscious philosophy which covered the whole **range** of nursery activities. However the force with which it was expressed reflected her view that Regional pre-five policy and the altered management of pre-five services put this philosophy at risk.

The other members of staff all referred more **frequently** to social learning and in different contexts. Two people, including the teacher, also strongly supported a structured educational programme but saw no conflict between it and a social emphasis. No perspective was, therefore, **collective**. Naturally, people varied in the degree to which they volunteered information about this conflict of perspectives, but three people made quite explicit reference to its existence.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

The ideas of treating children with disabilities 'normally' and of providing social opportunities for all children were expressed more than once by most interviewees. They, therefore, had high **frequency** and were **collectively** agreed. However, these ideas had a specific **range** which was limited to those whose 'handicap' did not fall below a certain level of severity. This was also consensual.

For children who fell outwith this range there was also a **frequently** expressed, **collective** view that more special provision than was available in Carsefoot was needed.

To some degree, these perspectives constitute **negative cases** for one another although their perceived ranges offered a resolution.

(c) Provision for Peter

The social and emotional advantages that Carsefoot had provided for Peter were mentioned by all the interviewees and so represent a **frequent, collective** perspective. Three of the six interviewees questioned whether Peter was given enough special attention, which can be seen as a **negative case**.

In fact, for some people at least, Peter posed the question of where the boundaries of the **range** of the idea of integration were: although the specialist provision that they knew of locally was not seen as suitable, somewhere else may have been.

(d) Structured observations

Peter was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Activity	%
Fine creative	25 %
Fine structured	12 %
Gross activity	0 %
Gross motor	0 %
Imaginative play	11 %
Books	0.5 %
Listening/waiting	5 %
Music	10 %
Helping adult	2 %
Toilet	2 %
Snack	12 %
Conversation	2.5 %
Non-specific	2 %
Observing	0.5 %
Exploratory play	0.5 %
Dressing	0 %
Transition	5 %
Cognitive	12 %

Social context	%
Solitary	14 %
Parallel	14 %
Associative	7 %
Small group	60 %
Adult	6 %

Peter's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
		Child Initiated	(Total = 106)				
A	+V	22	-	-	-	-	-
D	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
U	+NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	-V	13	-	-	-	-	-
T	-M	1	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	O	20	-	-	-	-	-
P	+V	11	-	1	1	-	-
E	+M	2	3	-	-	-	-
E	+NV	3	-	1	3	-	-
R	-V	3	-	-	1	1	-
	-M	2	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	1	-	-	-
	O	14	-	-	3	-	-
		Adult Initiated	(Total =122)				
C	+V	63	2	1	5	-	1
H	+M	2	1	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	9	6	1	6	-	-
L	-V	4	-	-	1	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	1	-
	-NV	1	-	-	-	-	-
	O	11	1	1	5	1	-
		Peer Initiated	(Total = 32)				
C	+V	15	-	-	1	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	2	1	2	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	3	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	1
	O	3	2	-	3	-	-

3. Glenbrae

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

The main text has indicated that the child-centred approach of Glenbrae was mentioned with high **frequency** by all interviewees **collectively**. Its **range** appeared to cover every context in the nursery. No **negative cases** were expressed.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

The idea which had the highest **frequency** amongst the interviewees **collectively** was that of treating children as individuals, whatever their disability. Its **range** was seen as almost universal and there were no **negative cases**.

(c) Provision for Anna

Exactly parallel ideas were expressed to those above with the same **frequency, collective character, range** and lack of **negative cases**.

(d) Structured observations

Anna was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Fine creative	6 %	Solitary	5 %
Fine structured	20 %	Parallel	3 %
Gross activity	0 %	Associative	2 %
Gross motor	0.5 %	Small group	71 %
Imaginative play	14 %	Adult	18 %
Books	2 %		
Listening/waiting	14 %		
Music	0.5 %		
Helping adult	2 %		
Toilet	0 %		
Snack	12 %		
Conversation	1 %		
Non-specific	0 %		
Observing	7 %		
Exploratory play	9 %		
Dressing	0.5 %		
Transition	8 %		
Being comforted	1.5 %		
Register	0.5 %		

Anna's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
		Child Initiated (Total = 32)					
A	+V	-	-	1	-	-	-
D	+M	-	1	11	-	-	1
U	+NV	3	7	2	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
T	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	O	-	-	1	-	-	-
P	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
R	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	2
	O	-	-	1	-	-	2
		Adult Initiated (Total = 184)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	2	-	1	-	-	-
I	+NV	62	61	13	2	1	1
L	-V	1	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	1	1	-	-	-	-
	O	31	5	1	1	-	-
		Peer Initiated (Total = 38)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	4	7	2	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	O	-	14	10	1	-	-

4. Burnhead

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

The immediate response to questions on this topic from all three interviewees was to emphasise the advantages of provision for families. It was a **collective** view which had some prominence but it could not be descibed as having high **frequency** as the number of interviewees was small and it was not referred to in other contexts. Similar factors make it difficult to estimate the **range** of the perspective.

The idea of specialist provision was not mentioned in this context by the interviewees, only by the officer in charge. This did not constitute a clear **negative** case but it did mark a difference of emphasis.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

Again, there was a **collective** view but not one which was mentioned **frequently** or at length. This was that Burnhead offered small scale, responsive provision. The **range** of this idea is apparent from the applicability that the idea had to Scott - see (c) below. The officer in charge also offered a different emphasis in this context.

(c) Provision for Scott

The collective and frequently expressed view throughout all the second interviews was that Scott benefitted from the responsive environment. This confirms the **range** of the perspective in (b).

(d) Structured observations

Scott was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Fine creative	0.4 %	Solitary	14 %
Fine structured	5 %	Parallel	3 %
Gross activity	0 %	Associative	0 %
Gross motor	7 %	Group	74 %
Imaginative play	5 %	Adult	8 %
Books	4 %		
Listening/waiting	14 %		
Music	9 %		
Helping adult	0.3 %		
Toilet	6 %		
Snack	18 %		
Conversation	2 %		
Non-specific	8 %		
Observing	2 %		
Exploratory play	4 %		
Dressing	1.5 %		
Transition	3 %		
Television	9 %		
Cognitive	2 %		

Scott's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
		Child Initiated (Total = 87)					
A	+V	38	1	2	-	-	-
D	+M	2	4	2	-	-	-
U	+NV	2	-	3	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	2	-	-	-
T	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	O	10	-	-	-	-	-
P	+V	1	-	-	-	-	-
E	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+NV	-	-	2	-	-	1
R	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	1
	O	2	1	9	1	2	1
		Adult Initiated (Total = 144)					
C	+V	16	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	1	-	-	-	1	-
I	+NV	31	15	6	7	2	-
L	-V	3	-	1	1	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	O	38	4	4	10	-	4
		Peer Initiated (Total = 5)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	-	-	1	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	1
	O	-	-	2	-	1	-

5. Kirkbank

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

Although the interviewees **collectively** indicated benefits to children from nursery attendance they were not mentioned **frequently** or with much emphasis. This low frequency makes it difficult to estimate the **range** of the perspective.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

The normalisation perspective was a **collective** one amongst the interviewees. It was expressed with low **frequency** in this general context but its **range** is confirmed in (c) below. No **negative cases** were present.

(c) Provision for Malcolm

The normalisation perspective was **collectively** seen to apply to Malcolm and, perhaps reflecting the way in which the interviews were structured, it was mentioned with greater **frequency** in that context. The **range** of the perspective is sufficiently wide that it did not break down when the questions it raised became specific and concrete. The **negative cases** which were present are discussed in the main text.

(d) Structured observations

Malcolm was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Fine creative	7 %	Solitary	6 %
Fine structured	0.2 %	Parallel	0.3 %
Gross activity	0 %	Associative	0.2 %
Gross motor	1.5 %	Small group	80 %
Imaginative play	0 %	Adult	14 %
Books	7 %		
Listening/waiting	1.5 %		
Music	5 %		
Helping adult	0 %		
Toilet	0 %		
Snack	17 %		
Conversation	1.5 %		
Non-specific	30 %		
Observing	21 %		
Exploratory play	1.5 %		
Dressing	0.2 %		
Transition	6 %		

Malcolm's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		Child Initiated (Total = 11)					
		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
A	+V	-	-	-	2	-	2
D	+M	-	-	1	1	-	-
U	+NV	-	-	1	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
T	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	2	1	-	1
P	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	+NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
R	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Adult Initiated (Total = 180)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	18	12	1	-	-	-
L	-V	-	1	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	2	1	-	-	-	-
	0	67	57	21	-	-	-
		Peer Initiated (Total = 20)					
C	+V	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	1	1	-	-	-	-
L	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0	3	6	9	-	-	-

6. Lochside

(a) Interview perspectives on provision in general

The two distinct perspectives had different proponents as discussed in the main text. Neither was therefore **collective** in character while each had relatively high **frequency** within the interviews conducted with the specific individuals. Each constituted a limitation on the **range** of the other and was something of a **negative case** for the other.

(b) Provision for children with disabilities

Slightly qualified support for integrated provision in the Lochside form was a **collective** view expressed with moderate **frequency**. A medical view of impairment was also collectively expressed with higher frequency. The **range** of each perspective is difficult to estimate but there is a **negative case** for the medical view in (c) below.

(c) Provision for John

The view that the important progress that John had made was substantially social in nature was a collective one expressed with some frequency. The range of this perspective may be quite specific to John who was seen as having particular social difficulties. The inaccuracy of the medical information about John can be seen as a negative case for the medical view noted in (b) above, however, the limits of this are discussed in the main text.

(d) Structured observations

John was observed in the following categories of activity and social contexts:

Activity	%
Fine creative	13 %
Fine structured	10 %
Gross activity	0 %
Gross motor	1 %
Imaginative play	3 %
Books	4 %
Listening/waiting	10 %
Music	9 %
Helping adult	3 %
Toilet	2 %
Snack	17 %
Conversation	1 %
Non-specific	9 %
Observing	1 %
Exploratory play	8 %
Dressing	0 %
Transition	4 %
Computer	1 %
Register	1 %
Cognitive	3 %

Social context	%
Solitary	16 %
Parallel	2 %
Associative	1 %
Small group	48 %
Large group	16 %
Adult	16 %

John's observed interactions fell into these categories:

Response		Child Initiated (Total = 288)					
		+V	+M	+NV	-V	-M	-NV
A	+V	92	2	2	5	2	1
D	+M	7	2	-	-	-	-
U	+NV	6	3	61	-	1	-
L	-V	23	-	-	2	-	1
T	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	-	1	-	1
	0	39	-	1	-	-	-
P	+V	2	1	-	-	-	-
E	+M	-	-	2	-	-	-
E	+NV	3	1	11	-	-	1
R	-V	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	-	-	1	-	-	-
	0	8	-	3	-	1	2
		Adult Initiated (Total = 395)					
C	+V	91	7	1	7	-	-
H	+M	3	3	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	63	36	18	27	4	1
L	-V	16	3	-	7	1	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-NV	2	2	-	2	-	2
	0	50	9	7	24	4	5
		Peer Initiated (Total = 17)					
C	+V	2	1	1	-	-	-
H	+M	-	-	-	-	-	-
I	+NV	-	-	3	-	1	-
L	-V	1	-	-	-	-	-
D	-M	-	-	-	-	-	1
	-NV	-	-	-	-	-	-
	0	2	-	1	1	1	2

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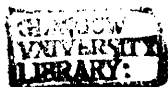
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