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Young Offenders Perceptions of Education

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Young Offenders' Perceptions of Education.

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Science (Psychology)

Dublin Institute of Technology

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January, 1999.

DECLARATION

I certify that the following thesis which I now submit for examination for examination for the award of Master of Science, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Signature Aine Fitzpatrick Date Jan. 1999
Candidate

Table of Contents:

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	Page 1-7
Chapter 1:Literature Review	Page 8-22
Chapter 2: Education	Page 23-36
Chapter 3: Methodology	Page 37-66
Chapter 4: Results	Page 67-113
Chapter 5: Discussion	Page 114-144
Conclusion	Page 145-149
References	Page 150-159
Appendix A	Page 160-164
Appendix B	Page 165-175
Appendix C	Page 176-233

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to study the background of boys referred to an assessment centre by the juvenile courts, and to look in particular at the area of educational history. More specifically the study sought to ascertain young offenders own perceptions of education. The research was carried out in a number of phases:

Phase one consisted of the accumulation of baseline data on the backgrounds of young offenders in Ireland through the analysis of the files held in a juvenile assessment centre. The data from the files was analysed, categorised and coded using a content analysis procedure. However, it was decided that these data, though useful in itself, could yield richer information if used in a more proactive way. On reviewing the literature on young offenders and education it was found that there was a lack of research carried out from the young offenders perspective. As a consequence the categories from the coding schema were used as elements in a repertory grid for the next phase of the study. The repertory grid was decided upon as a good tool to examine this area, as it would allow the researcher to get an idea of each boy's own perception of their situation and their experience of the school system.

The issues of lack of Power, Control, Respect and Choice emerged as central within the data. The research participants felt that they had no control, autonomy or choice in their school lives and that the school system afforded them no respect. They felt frustrated and demoralised by this. These issues are manifested through the participants relationship with those groups used as elements in the repertory grid (i.e. teachers, parents, gardai, other pupils and teachers in the unit). These issues and others raised by the participants are discussed in relation to literature on education and the criminal justice system with particular reference to the educational theory of Vygotsky, alternative models of justice and organisational theory.

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INTRODUCTION

This project began as an investigation into the backgrounds of boys, sent by the juvenile courts to an assessment centre. The centre in question is St. Micheal's Unit in Finglas Dublin. St. Micheal's is a remand and assessment centre for young offenders which operates on a three week cycle. Boys are sent to the unit through the courts and their overall situation is evaluated over the three week period. All aspects of their life and circumstances are examined and evaluated, this process includes meetings with parents, reports from schools attended, and a psychiatric and psychological evaluation of each boy. There are also reports and recommendations from the staff of the unit itself who work and live with the boys in the unit and map their progress over the three weeks or so. There is a school in the unit which the boys attend, and each boy's behaviour, standard of education and general attitude to school is assessed and reported on, by the teachers in the school. As the end of the three week period of assessment a report, with recommendations, is compiled and sent back to the juvenile court for a ruling.

The area of young offenders and their backgrounds was seen by the management and staff of the unit as being in need of study. The project therefore arose out of the lack of research into the area of young offenders in an Irish context, and more particularly the issue of educational history as it relates to the young offender population. The area of education was seen as a pivotal one in the context of young offenders as it is well documented that educational failure and the tendency for young offenders to leave school early have many negative consequences. Pink (1984) argues that schools are an effective tool in directing youth away from offending and general 'delinquent' involvement into more prosocial and productive pursuits. Pink goes on to assert that school is *the* critical factor in the development of adolescent identity.

Whether or not one agrees with this assertion on Pink's part, the facts regarding the relationship between young offenders and education, or perhaps the consequences of its breakdown, cannot be ignored -- failure to complete some form of secondary education is a predictor of subsequent involvement in criminal activity (Thornberry , Moore & Christian, 1985). On the flip-side of the argument it has been demonstrated that incentives implemented to keep at-risk youth in school until they graduate from second level has a significant positive impact on juvenile crime (Greenwood, Model, Rydell & Chiesa, 1996). Consequently the issue of education was given particular attention within the context of this study.

Due to the fact that a centre for the assessment of young offenders was fully backing the research the issue of access to a young offender population did not arise. Moreover, on reviewing the literature in the area and also on the basis of the ethos of the Centre in which the research was carried out, the study evolved into one which placed the boys own perceptions of education at the heart of the study.

“Within Psychology adult perception still controls both investigation and assessment.

Until recently, researchers seldom asked children about their experiences...”

(Romer, 1993 p.1)

The above remark is pertinent to this study for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it points out that for too long Psychology was a very adult centred discipline, from which the narrative of ‘the child’ was missing. Secondly, it mentions the notion of ‘perception’ within psychological research and the idea that children’s perceptions of the world are valid and valuable. Finally, the above comment refers to ‘experiences’ and children’s interpretation of their own experiences, the idea that psychology should ask children about those experiences is, as Romer points out, a relatively new one. In this present study we have attempted to address these three issues and to place the voice of the child squarely at the core of the research.

Therefore, rather than simply looking at the boys (as students) in isolation, or in relation to just one educational or situational factor such as exams, or teachers, it was decided to do a qualitative study and to examine the student within the education *system* and their perceptions of their situation within that system. It was considered important to examine the system 'through the eyes' of the boys' as it is **their** perception of the reality of school, and 'failure' in the school arena, which is the important factor in the study.

In Carl Rogers words :

“ It is the perception, not the reality, which is crucial in determining behaviour.”

(Rogers 1969, in Hargreaves, 1975 p.33)

To enable the researcher to see the school system, and the boys position within it, from the boy's own perspective the repertory grid method was selected, as it attempts to allow the experimenter to stand in another's shoes and see the world from another's perspective (Kelly, 1955, Bannister & Franssella, 1986).

It is important to remember however that the repertory grid is used to **reveal** how a person construes their world and **not to test** those constructs in any way. As a result this is an qualitative study which examines perceptions or construals of the participants reality re education and all factors they see as relating to it, but does not test them in any way. Repertory grids examine a persons overall construal or 'interpretation of reality' in a given area. Thus, it is a useful tool to examine these boys' perceptions of education, the education system and their own relationship to school and the people in it.

This study, and the philosophy and methodology within it, developed with an awareness of, and in sympathy with, some key developments within the discipline of Psychology and other disciplines over the last 40 or so years. These include psychology's decreasing attachment to positivist epistemology. What Jessor (1993) calls "the openness of the postpositivist climate (p.118)" has allowed Psychology to question the dominance of logical positivist empiricism and this in turn is promoting...

".....a wider recognition of the central role in language and meaning in human action, and a new appreciation for inner experience, interpretative data, and the relevance of hermeneutics." (Jessor, 1993 p. 118)

A second development was the renewed interest in the notions of context, setting and place and the realisation of the need for a language of description for those notions. A notion which can be traced back to the 'Philosophical Investigations' of Wittgenstein (1953) and his writings on the philosophy of language and philosophy of psychology. This need for a language of description that could capture the meaning and importance of context and setting was made more conspicuous through the person-situation debate. The development of a person-in-context approach to psychological theory and research, initially within an interactionist framework and now increasingly within the transactionalist one, allows for problem focused research, which is participant centred and appreciates what is being increasingly seen as the fluid-social-contextual nature of the human mind (Magnusson, 1981; Sternberg & Wagner, 1994).

Finally what Blackler (1991) describes as a possible fourth blow to human narcissism is central to this study. He was referring to a lecture given by Freud in 1917 in which he (Freud) asserted that his theory of the unconscious was the third blow to human narcissism as it purported that "the ego is not master in its own house (Blackler, p.273)" The first blow, Freud argued, was Copernicus' revelation that the earth was

not the centre of the universe and the second was Darwin's assertion that humans are descended from animals.

Blackler maintains that the recognition that social systems are arbitrary and not 'natural' or God-given, was the fourth blow.

"Societies are man-made and social institutions result from the actions of those who participate within them" (Blackler 1991, p. 273).

The identification of human beings own role in the creation and propagation of cultural forms, psychology's recognition of this and it's continuing exploration of alternatives to positivism and scientific objectivity has allowed this study to evolve as it did.

This piece of research is couched in a framework that appreciates that knowledge is not value-free, neutral or objective. Depending on the perspective from which you are looking the world or a given situation in it can look very different. Within this framework knowledge is socially constructed. It can be argued that 'reality' and in particular 'social reality' is a subjective experience, it is not a stable and static reality in the traditional or physical sense but something dynamic, changeable and ultimately malleable. What we call 'reality' then (in the social sense at least), is really based on the agreement or consensus of people to say "yes, this is how things are", but therefore this means that any one 'story of the world' is not necessarily truth but simply a view point on how our world operates and what is going on. Therefore in seeking out the young offenders perception of education his 'reality' is placed squarely at the centre of the study.

In setting a context for a study which attempts to place the 'educational reality' of the young offender at its' core, this thesis will outline various developments which have impacted on the perception of crime and the criminal in recent history. Within this discussion particular attention will be paid to societal perceptions of youth and deviant

youth. Further to this, the psychological and sociological literature on delinquency is reviewed, in an effort to illustrate where this study fits with that literature, and how it adds to it. Issues within educational theory and practice will also be addressed, most especially in terms of the extent to which the education system as it stands meets the needs of its' pupils, particularly the needs of the population from which the participants for this study are drawn. In this way it is hoped to link the areas of crime and education within the framework of the literature on young offenders and so set the stage for the young offenders themselves to be heard.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

The literature on young offenders and the psychology and sociology of their behaviour is a large and varied one. Theories of young offender behaviour and its' causes, range from individualistic to social and from the reductionist to the deterministic. In the next few pages I will give a brief overview of the literature to set a context for this present study.

Historical Background

From 1890 to 1920 social theory underwent a period of unequalled innovation and development of thought. Three of the most influential figures in the field, Freud (1856-1939), Durkheim (1858-1914) and Weber (1864-1922) were at their most productive. All three were in a sense preoccupied with questions relating to the psychological and sociological survival of the post-enlightenment civilisation in which they lived and worked.

As Emler and Reicher (1995) point out what seemed to put this progressive and rationally emancipated society at risk was the spectre of mass urbanisation and the "Loss of Community" which would follow (p.12). The industrial revolution and the fall of Feudalism led to the uprooting of rural communities, consequently the social control which previously had been enforced through the conformity which rural communities demanded was removed.

Thus what Durkheim (1893) conceptualised as a 'mechanical solidarity' in which all similarities were emphasised and all deviance ruthlessly dealt with, was lost in the

anonymity of the new industrial municipalities. These new cities were looked on in varying degrees as dens of sin and inequity;

“sinful places, breeding grounds of vices and wickedness, the natural habitat of confidence tricksters, alcoholics, gamblers and prostitutes” (Emler & Reicher, 1995 p. 14).

A fear began to emerge that if not kept in check the ‘base’ and ‘primal’ instincts of the mob would lead to the destabilisation of this ‘new world order’. This is illustrated for instance, by the writings of Le Bon (1895) and his theory on crowd behaviour.

Thus if the ‘primal urges’ of the underclass could not be controlled by the iron fist of the close knit community on which the preindustrial peasants were dependant, then a new more rational and egalitarian form of social control was necessary in keeping with the post enlightenment zeitgeist. If to be deviant and commit a crime was now seen as a rational choice, then the key to crime prevention was to revise and readjust the law to ensure that people more often made the ‘right’ choice. Thus punishment was prompt, and severity graded according to the offence.

Hence in this new equal and rational society where all individuals are endowed with free will and treated the same, any deviance from the agreed upon norms, such as the decision to commit a crime (when fully aware of the consequences), must be interpreted as a flaw in the reasoning and general character of the individual.

What this in turn led to was the decontextualisation and depoliticisation of the ‘deviant’ act of committing an offence. Thus in this mass society theory people do not break laws because they are reacting to a situation which they find intolerable, or as a means of protesting against standards of legality that they find questionable or galling. Instead their actions can be interpreted as the consequence of some unobservable internal force or conflict. (Emler & Reicher 1995)

Freud's psychoanalytical theories of internal conflict between, id, ego, and superego fed directly into this line of thinking and lend much psychological weight to what was essentially a sociological theory. Hence this unobservable conflict inside the person was 'psychologised' and validated by an emerging individualised theory of human psychology. Behaviours that were 'reactions to social problems' now became psychological - 'deviant' behaviour was not a symptom of how society was evolving but due to some psychological 'abnormality' within the person. What this interpretation leads to, is a situation whereby all behaviour is individualised and taken out of context with no regard for the political ramifications of doing so.

This situation is nowhere more pointed than within the area of young offenders, their treatment and indeed theory and research on young offender behaviour. Negative perceptions of youth behaviour are present throughout history, Hesiod in the eighth century B.C. put forth the following opinion of the youth of his era;

' I see no hope for the future of your people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words..... When I was a boy, we were taught to be discreet and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint.' (Manning 1983 pg. 824)

Thus nearly 3,000 years ago there were the same fears regarding youth as a threat to social order and the status quo as there seems to be today. In fact, Demos (1969) points out that there was so much anxiety in relation to the corruption of youth during the period 1800-1875 that a large number of books and pamphlets concerning the "moral problems" of youth were published during that time.

One example from Burton (1863) typifies the tone of much of the literature on the subject at the time;

'It must be confessed that an irreverent, unruly spirit has come to be a prevalent, an outrageous evil among the young people of our land..... Some of the old people make facetious complaint about this....' (pp 38-39) .

When this issue of 'youth as threat' is looked at in the industrial context the basic premise seems the same, but perhaps the slant is slightly different, as here (in concurrence with the general thinking of the time, as we have discussed earlier)

the idealisation of the countryside and pastoral life is contrasted with the supposed corrupting influence of the city, this time on youth in particular.

Indeed in the 1890's Morrison wrote of the concern which was generally being felt in relation to youth now that '...the restraining eye of the village was no longer upon them...(and they belong to) no social circle in which their conduct is either scrutinised or observed' (Humphries,1981, p.8).

Here again we see that there is a fear that unless new forms of social control are imposed the very fabric of society would be undermined and it is significant that 'the youth' as a group, should be singled out for special attention in this context.

With the publication of G. Stanley Hall's landmark work *Adolescence* in 1904 the period of youth which came to be known as Adolescence came to be seen as a period of 'Storm and Stress'. Much of the theory and research relating to adolescence since Hall's work, has been built on the central tenet of Hall's theory of adolescence, and this has helped to popularise the notion, both within the social sciences and in general in popular culture that adolescence is a time of conflict and rebellion. Thus, the view of youth as contrary, rebellious and threatening got a lot of academic and to an extent scientific weight, through this line of thought. Popular culture fed into, and no doubt helped to perpetuate, this idea of the teenager, something which could be seen to

culminate in the teenager being framed as a “Rebel Without A Cause” in the 1950’s and early 60’s and furthermore a rebel with a very definite, and to many a very threatening cause, within the context of the youth and student rebellions in America and Europe in the 1960’s and early 1970’s.

Within the same time frame and in conjunction with this, there was also a very definite movement toward the medicalisation of deviant behaviour, or at least it was during the 1960’s and 70’s that people such as Foucault (1965), Szasz (1969), and Zola (1972) began to recognise that deviance was being looked at in a medical context. This could be seen as a continuation of the individualisation and internalisation of crime and deviance that we discussed earlier in terms of mass society theory, but here the behaviour is set in a much more rigid framework. For example, alcoholism and drug addiction began to be looked upon as diseases and violence was being explored as a genetic or brain disorder. What this means is that deviance (within this context) is a biological disorder which should be treated at a biological level.

As Peter Conrad (1996) points out such a redefinition is not a new function of the medical institution, as he holds that psychiatry and public health have always been interested in social behaviour and its prediction and control. Conrad goes on to describe how, since the discovery of Hyperkinesis there has been a tendency to categorise all young deviants under this umbrella (a ‘discovery’ which he points out was due just as much to social factors such as the pharmaceutical revolution and government action as it was to clinical factors).

However, what insight being diagnosed as suffering from Hyperkinesis gives either the sufferer, or anybody else, is very debatable as symptom patterns for diagnosis include: Hyperactivity, very short attention span, restlessness, fidgeting, often wildly oscillating mood swings, clumsiness, impulsivity, aggressive behaviour ; in school s/he may be unable to sit still, cannot comply with rules and has a low frustration level (Conrad, 1996).

Thus we are faced with a situation whereby if asked why is that child restless, aggressive, impulsive and moody we can be told that he suffers from Hyperkinesis.

If we then ask what hyperkinesis is we are told it is a condition which leads to restlessness, aggression, impulsivity and moodiness. The description is circular and gives us little insight into the root causes of the behaviour of the child in question.

That said however it must be conceded that in some cases the medicalisation of such behaviour can be beneficial, in that it can be treated and certain medication has been shown to improve behaviour, but it is problematic.

Conrad argues that the medicalisation of deviant and disruptive behaviour in children and adolescents causes us to focus on the symptoms, and allows us to ignore the possibility that such behaviour is not in fact an illness but instead a reaction or adaptation to a social situation.

As Conrad puts it;

'It [medicalisation] diverts our attention from the family or school and from seriously entertaining the idea that the "problem" could be in the structure of the social system.'
(pp. 70, 1996)

A comparable phenomenon is reported by Kitzinger and Perkins (1993) as having occurred in pre-civil war America where 'drapedomania' and 'dysaesthesia aethiopsis' were diagnosed. These were 'conditions' pertaining to the behaviour of slaves, the

former described the tendency of slaves to run away while the later was caused by idleness and cured by hard labour and whipping! Much more recently in 1970's and 80's Britain, the tendency for people to stay on social welfare rather than loosing money by taking up very poorly paid employment was diagnosed as 'State Benefit Neurosis' (Kitzinger & Perkins, 1993).

If we look more specifically at psychology and its power to label people 'sick' or 'mentally healthy' at will, we can see that it therefore potentially has the power to take a persons actions out of context and label them 'abnormal' or 'neurotic'. Thus the medicalisation of deviance can be seen as another form of social control, and all the related tendencies to 'explain away' problem behaviours by taking them out of context become apparent when one looks at the phenomenon from this angle. We can see how the actions of youth (and more specifically the young offender) maybe psychologised, individualised and decontextualised, just as we have seen crime and the criminal can be decontextualised.

When we talk about 'the youth' however, not only do we individualise and take their actions out of context, but we do all of this with a backdrop of what we have come to see as a 'Rebel Without A Cause' mentality. It is within that context that our modern day notion of the teenager is framed and it is through this lens that we view 'youth'.

Of course it must be noted that young people are acutely aware of this context also, and so within such a framework the committal of, or failure to commit, delinquent acts is to firmly lay claim to social identities. Moreover, even if adolescents themselves are not laying claim to such identities, they are thrust upon them from outside.

And who are the key people who thrust such identities on young people?

For the answer to this, and other questions related to youth and deviance (particularly if one is interested in examining the phenomenon 'in context') the areas of education and also psychological and sociological theories of deviance and in particular youth and deviance must be closely looked at. Therefore in an attempt to address this issue we must examine how research in the area has developed and what theories have unfolded to try to come to grips with the existence and behaviour of young offenders?

Where do these theories come from ?

Individual and Family Theory:

One of the first psychologists to address the area of delinquency was Goddard (1915) who held that mental deficiency was a major cause. This view has been variously amended to the degree that Perlmutter in 1987 asserted that young offenders behaviour is a reaction to the frustration they feel due to academic failure brought on by learning disabilities.

Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1987) in an extensive review of predictors of male delinquency concluded that low intelligence and school attainment were predictive factors. In fact, Farrington (1992) points out that longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys have continually shown that a disproportionate number of children with low intelligence fall into young offending behaviour. However they also cited poor parental child-management techniques, parents and siblings having offended in the past and separations from parents as important predictors of offending behaviour.

Albeit consistent, such data does raise questions of cause and effect, specifically;

Is low-intelligence (as measured by I.Q. tests) a predictive factor in delinquent behaviour or is it in fact simply a symptom of a larger issue?

Most young offenders have very poor school attendance records and usually come from an environment where, due to other social pressures school is not given as much weight as it might in more middle-class surroundings. So perhaps rather than low intelligence, per se, being a predictive factor in delinquency, it may be that other factors which put pressure on educational attainment generally, cause young offenders to score badly on standard intelligence tests due to their lack of formal education and fewer school hours.

The family as a formative context for the emergence of offending behaviour during the adolescent years, has also been studied extensively. Rutter and Giller (1984) in a review of the literature found that parental criminality, marital conflict, poor parental supervision, passive or neglectful parenting and erratic, harsh or inconsistent discipline were all familial variables associated with youth offending.

However, why is it that in many cases, these variables could be present and yet no offending behaviour may occur.

Just because there is a correlation, does that necessarily mean there is a causal relationship? This is a problem with individualised and familial theories of young offenders, that because the behaviour is often analysed deductively and out of context, relationships may seem to emerge which taken in a broader context could be attributed to many other factors.

So what are these broader contexts?

Socially Based Theory:

When one looks at the literature on young offenders from a broader perspective the research and theory becomes much more sociological.

Proponents of the Social Strain theory argue, for instance, that delinquency is the result of the powerlessness of individuals to achieve their goals through legitimate means, the disparity between ambitions and opportunities thus producing offending behaviour. (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960).

There is a lack of empirical support for the central tenet of this theory however and many other theorists including Agnew (1985) have argued that it is when aspirations are low that delinquency is at its highest. It must be pointed out however that this particular issue may be more complex than it first appears, in that young offenders may find themselves on a downward spiral; aspirations may begin at a high level but decline in the face of adversity, this in turn may lead to feelings of hopelessness and frustration, which in turn could lead to offending. This is a point I will return to in later chapters in terms of this study, school and the Pygmalion Effect.

In contrast to Social Strain Theory, Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory holds that offending or 'deviant' behaviour is inherent in human nature and it is only social constraints which suppress it. According to this line of thinking it is the absence of these normative constraints which lead young offenders to act on their deviant impulses and the presence of such constraints which impedes those in society who do not offend. Elliot, Ageton & Canter (1979) within the same theoretical context, hold that young offender behaviour could be the product of inadequately internalised conventional norms or indeed the possibility that there may be conflict or inconsistency in social codes or standards in terms of social control. A further element could be added at this juncture, insofar as it should be pointed out that many young offenders due to factors

such as socio-economic status, social class, etc. may have a very different, separate and to some degree conflicting set of norms to that of the 'Society' which is spoken of within social control theory. That is to say that the justice and educational systems, which to a large extent form the context within which young offenders are seen as deviant, are largely based on white middle-class values and run by white middle-class people, values which to a greater or lesser extent may be alien to the average young offender.

Labelling & Interactionist Theories:

Labelling theory starts from the point of differentiation in society, and how different belief systems from group to group within society serve to perpetuate what these theorists see as separations between groups. This refers in particular in this context to differential access to power and more specifically the power to apply labels. Proponents of this theory, such as Becker (1974), see labelling and the power to apply labels as pivotal in society, as it can limit the credibility of certain persons or groups and indeed can also limit their opportunities to become part of 'conventional' society should they choose or wish to.

However this in itself does not explain acts of deviant behaviour. Therefore if we further develop this line of thinking into the Interactionist theories of Goffman (1963) and Lembert (1967) among others, we can begin to deconstruct the processes through which labelling and the power (or lack of it) to apply labels, leads on to, or at least adds to the phenomenon of deviant behaviour. According to interactionist theories those groups or individuals who have the power to apply labels can define how other groups

(such as young offenders) will be perceived and treated. As Sullivan and Wilson (1995) put it ;

“ By controlling what is defined as normal or nondeviant in everyday life, elite groups (generally white middle-class men) maintain their power without always having to resort to brute force. Oppression is thereby normalised, routinised and institutionalised.” (Pg 5)

This point is very well illustrated in a paper by William J. Chambliss (1973) entitled ‘The Saints and the Roughnecks’ wherein he charts the delinquent careers of two groups of boys in one middle-America town. The behaviour of the boys was equally delinquent and they broke the same number and types of laws however, how they were perceived and treated within the town and by the police and other authorities including the school was very different.

One gang ‘The Saints’ were perceived as young men sowing their wild oats and whose offences were seen as ‘pranks’. The other gang ‘The Roughnecks’ however were seen as tough youths who were serious troublemakers and who were headed for a life of crime. Why was there such a gap between the perception of one group and the other? Chambliss holds that this is due to the socio-economic background of the boys and the expectations which lead out from that. Due to the perception that the Saints were good middle-class boys who were just having some fun, everything they did was perceived in that framework and so that ‘reality’ was copper-fastened. The opposite being true for the Roughnecks, with the added possibility that the negative light in which everything they did was perceived reinforced and feed into a developing ‘delinquent self concept’ which served to produce the effect that it presupposed.

Integrated theories

Finally we have what are termed integrated theories which assert that since most human behaviour occurs in a social context, and involves social interaction, then perhaps a useful way of approaching it's study, would be from a model that focuses on interactive processes. (Thornberry 1987). Some integrated theories of deviance and delinquency incorporate environmental and community variables along with familial factors. Also individual and situational difference such as opportunity, perception of risk, current stressors, and predispositions are included (Sullivan and Wilson, 1995)

Elliot, Ageton & Canter (1979) also proposed an integrated theory based on the premise that there are many different causal paths which could lead to offending behaviour in youth. While Rutter and Giller (1984) concentrate on the fact that predisposing or risk factors are not in themselves predictive of offending behaviour in youth. As a consequence, within their integrated theory of delinquency, Rutter and Giller put forward four factors which they see as causative and/or predictive within this context, they are; individual predisposition, ecological predisposition (risk), current circumstances, and situational opportunities (Sullivan & Wilson, 1995).

However with any of the theories outlined in the last few pages there are different emphases and as a consequence certain areas get less attention than others, a flaw that is true of any research theory or practice. However within the young offender literature in the social sciences there seems to be a dearth of studies into male young offender behaviour which **look at the** problem from the boy's own perspective.

What seems to be missing is research which is participant centred, research which asks the boys themselves what their summation of their own situation is, rather than formulating a theory and testing it.

It is this gap in the literature (and in particular the Irish literature) which this present study hopes to begin to address.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATION

On average a child will spend 15,000 hours of his/her life in school so it is obvious that there is huge scope for influence within the educational framework. So what kind of influence are schools having on Irish youth and in particular those who have come to be known as 'deviant' youths?

The 1995 Irish Government, White paper on Education published by the Department of Education and subtitled 'Charting Our Educational Future' professes a number of fundamental aims of education which they wish to provide or at least be working towards, these were listed as follows;

- to foster an understanding and critical appreciation of the values -- moral, spiritual, religious, social and cultural - which have been distinctive in shaping Irish society and which have traditionally accorded respect in society
- to nurture a sense of personal identity, self esteem and awareness of one's particular abilities, aptitudes and limitations, combined with a respect for the rights and beliefs of others
- to promote quality and equality for all, including those who are disadvantaged, through economic, social, physical and mental factors, in the development of their full educational potential
- to develop intellectual skills combined with a spirit of inquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively
- to develop expressive, creative and artistic abilities to the individual's full capacity
- to foster a spirit of self reliance, innovation, initiative and imagination
- to promote physical and emotional health and well being

- to provide students with the necessary education and training to support the countries economic development and to enable them to make their particular contribution to society in an effective way
- to create tolerant, caring and politically aware members of society
- to ensure that Ireland's young people acquire a keen awareness of their national and European heritage and identity, coupled with a global awareness and a respect and care for the environment.

(Irish Government, 1995 p. 10)

Education has long been seen as a tool with which to 'mould minds' and positively influence our youth, and from the very worthwhile and commendable guidelines for practice outlined above, it can be seen that this is definitely an objective of the Irish education system. However, the extent to which the Irish education system actually succeeds in its aims is questionable.

Firstly there is the issue of the weighting that each of the above aims are given within education. Even a cursory glance at our exams driven system would indicate that the modus operandi of education in Ireland is in direct opposition to many of items laid out as central tenets of Irish education. Steiner Kvale (1975) points out that what he calls the 'bureaucratic examination system' is not very conducive to inspiring a love of learning, and so is in conflict with the wish expressed in the white paper to promote 'a spirit of inquiry' in the student population and 'to foster a spirit of self reliance, innovation, initiative and imagination'. Kvale asserts that in modern education

systems the goal of learning is good grades and although he acknowledges that this does lead to students being *extrinsically* motivated to learn, he also points out that any *intrinsic* motivation to learn out of an interest in a subject and its mastery, is lost within this framework. Certainly the Irish education system provides (some) students with the education and training necessary to support the countries economic development but whether in doing so it promotes 'equality for all' , 'nurtures personal identity and self esteem' and creates 'tolerant, caring and politically aware members of society' is very much open to debate. In relation to this last point, the system again seems to hold within it the **seeds** of the very antithesis of the model it is attempting to promote. That is that the exam system cause grades to become currency and Kvale believes that this grading system reflects and indeed serves to recreate a "one dimensional society where all values can be measured in number - and exchanged for money " (Kvale, 1975 p. 194). Moreover, the grade driven system encourages competition for good marks and divides pupils into good and bad pupils.

So what end do these means eventually produce? To quote Kvale;

'It enforces the inevitability of losers, who come short in the competition for gilded grades, and who later accept their positions as losers in the apparently free competitions on the capitalist labour market. It appears as a nature-given, a scientifically legitimate, self-evident thing that only a small elite is suited for higher education and the privileges it entails' (Kvale, 1975 p. 194)

Though, as I already said, all of the **aims outlined in the** white paper are admirable, in practice peoples experiences of education are often very far removed from the high ideals expounded in the most recent white paper. Statistics released as recently as November 1998 tell rather a different story:

Reading scores at age 14 place Ireland at the bottom fifth of 24 OECD countries. More than one in six school leavers cannot carry out even the most basic literacy tasks, and of those with difficulties three in every four live in deprived city areas. In fact children of low income families are at a significant disadvantage at all stages of the system, when compared to the children of higher earners the are:

- 16 times more likely to leave school without sitting the Leaving Certificate
 - Four times less likely to sufficient point to continue on to third level if they do sit the leaving cert.
 - Three times less likely to actually go to third level even if they do obtain enough points.
- (Bruton, 1998)

Basil Bernstein (1996) when writing on notions of democracy, and more specifically on democracy in the classroom, puts forward three rights all members must have if a democracy is to function:-

Enhancement, Inclusion and Participation.

He argues that not all members of society enjoy these rights equally or to the fullest extent and further argues that within the education system it is;

'...highly likely that the students who do not receive these rights in school come from social groups who do not receive these rights in **society**'. (Bernstein, 1996 p. 8).

For the young offender the point Bernstein makes is even more significant. It has been argued in many quarters that class and socio-economic status has an effect on educational attainment and there are a plethora of theories as to why this may be the case. Moreover, it is also the case that people (regardless of age) who find themselves engaged in criminal activity and certainly those who end up in prison, typically have a very basic standard of education. (McCullagh 1996) The relationship between crime and education (or the lack of it) cannot be ignored.

The question must be asked however, is this (educational attainment) simply a symptom of the larger problem of poverty or does one feed into the other?

During the 1992 general election John Major, the then British Prime Minister, asserted that those who attributed rising crime to rising poverty were casting a slur upon the poor (Emler & Reicher, 1995). Certain facts cannot be ignored however, studies done in Ireland show that offenders (young and old) typically come from socially deprived backgrounds, from families where poverty, alcoholism and unemployment were routine and whose (to reiterate) education level were usually very low (McCullagh, 1996).

A 1993 study by O'Mahony on the basis of data from prisoners from Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, concluded that the 'typical Mountjoy male prisoner' came from a large family in an urban area, if from Dublin it was likely to be inner city Dublin or the poorer suburbs. He was likely to have left school early, before the legal age of fifteen and usually had limited experience of the world of work. Any work experience was usually of the unskilled or menial variety and was poorly paid. His father would probably have had a similar experience of the world of work (indicating a deprived background). Finally O'Mahony found that the typical prisoner was likely to have 'serious personal and emotional problems' (O'Mahony, 1993, p.205) on top of his criminal behaviour, such as drug abuse or psychiatric problems.

So does this profile lend weight to the musings of John Major?

On the **contrary**, what it in fact illustrates I would argue, is not that all those who are poor are **criminals**, but instead, that poverty produces a situation whereby the only course of **action** open to some individuals is one which is deemed 'deviant' and criminal **by the law**.

As Sheriff and Sheriff (1964) pointed out on the subject of car theft; 'the fact that working class adolescents are more often responsible than middle-class adolescents is less a testament to the shining character of the middle-class youth than it is a reflection of the fact that they are more likely to possess cars of their own' (Source: Emler & Reicher, 1995, p. 4).

Thus we must not look to the individual to bear the brunt of the blame but to a system which fails such a large section of our society. The Council for Social Welfare (1983) explicates the above by reporting that the prison population contains.... 'a disproportionate number of those who are poor, uneducated and unskilled'.

When we look at the literature on young offenders a similar pattern to that of the adult offender profile emerges.

A typical profile of an Irish young offender would be as follows:

They are likely to come from a large family (4+ children) who reside in a disadvantaged urban area, with parents who are unemployed. They are likely to have experienced alcohol, verbal abuse and /or violence in the home and to have a fairly negative attitude toward the future. The young offender usually has a poor school attendance record and their assessed ability is generally well below average for their age (Bates, 1996).

A number of questions are raised by the facts and issues outlined above. One question within the context of the young offender situation and the broader context of where they fit into the education system (or perhaps more pertinently where the education system places them) is;

Why are so many young offenders failing at school?

It is clear then that the education system as it stands is not providing what it wants to provide (especially in the case of the young offender or 'problem' pupil) and although finance and funding are obviously important factors in the equation could there be other determinants?

A study in 1992 found that low levels of academic behaviours were typical of inner city schools but that this was unrelated to socio-economic status or intelligence but had more to do with instructional methodology (Carta, 1992).

Typically inner city schools had lower levels of active responses and much greater proportions of time were spent in passive behaviours such as listening to the teachers.

In contrast, the suburban schools had a more active and independent learning approach.

This could even perhaps be read as a broadening of the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1966). The Pygmalion Effect is the term given to an effect which

emerged, in a now classic study, of the effects of teacher expectations in the classroom.

Over two years the two researchers Rosenthal and Jacobson tested all the children in an elementary school with a standardised intelligence test. They then told teachers that

they would expect certain children to have an intellectual spurt during the year. In

actuality the researchers had randomly selected 20% of the of the students as academic

'bloomers', thus they had manipulated the teachers expectations of these particular

children's development and academic achievement. Over the following two years the

bogusly predicted intellectual 'spurt' actually occurred. This is said to provide

evidence of the power of teachers positive expectations for children. This process has

also been seen to work in reverse whereby teachers also effect pupils performance due

to their negative expectations of pupil potential (Rosenthal & Jacobson,1966).

In relation to this, teacher images of working-class pupils are interesting to note.

Stein (1971) writes; 'When his classroom has only black children in it, the teacher is ready to believe without question that these poor children are so deprived and their home life so depraved, they will not be able to learn much.'

Sharp and Green (1971); 'Mrs. Lyons sees her pupils as products of largely unstable and uncultured backgrounds of parents who are, in various combinations, irresponsible, incompetent, illiterate, 'clueless', uninterested and unappreciative of education.

Fuchs (1988); '...the slum school gradually instils, in even the best intentioned teacher, the prevailing rationale for it's own failure: the idea that in the slum it is the child and family who fail, but never the school.' (all cited in; O'Sullivan 1993 p.38/9).

Thus, it is important to be aware that the extent to which the teacher restricts his/her explanation of underachievement, by focusing solely on aspects of the pupil's background which s/he sees as 'educationally inhibiting', is bound to affect the students actual performance. Also the idea that some aspects of pupil's backgrounds are regarded by teachers as abnormal, unnatural, or improper, is an indication that the school agenda is to a large extent a middle-class or at least not working-class one.

In fact one study carried out by O'Sullivan (1993) in Ireland examining factors considered by teachers as educationally inhibiting found that;

- a) A father who frequently worked the night-shift was rated equally to a dead father.
- b) A mother with a part-time job was rated by 37.9% as opposed to just 8.6% for a mother who was very involved in charitable and social work.
- c) A father who is often absent due to executive business trips is not seen as damaging as a father working the nightshift.
- d) It is also worth noting that parental radicalism was considered by 40.1% of teachers as educationally inhibiting.

If the 'Pygmalion Effect' is in action here it could be that the *teachers* are inadvertently helping to produce the effects that they presuppose the poverty will cause.

Thus we see that teachers perceptions of the problems caused by poverty can be just as damaging and limiting as the initial problems caused by the poverty itself.

This of course is not to say that the educational failure of certain sectors of the population is the fault of Teachers. Instead what it illustrates is that the system fails to provide a context in which pupils and teachers can work together to achieve aims that are mutually desirable. This I think is a central point in the debate about education and educational failure in particular.

A paper by Donald Marsh (1993) is particularly pertinent the development of this argument, as he brings together the educational theory of Paulo Freire and the cognitive psychology of Lev Vygotsky to critique western educational practices, with particular reference to Special Education. Marsh argues that the rapid propagation of what he calls the 'sub-system' of Special Education which began in the 1960's relies heavily on the medical model and has thus created what could be described as a

dependency on high status medical terminology for Special Education *clients* (his italics). How and why has this situation developed? The answer is related to the work by Conrad and others on medicalisation of deviancy which I examined in the previous chapter. The difference here is that now it is specifically *school difficulties* which are related to pathology and brain dysfunction, but with the same consequences as in the more general deviancy contexts.

Marsh points out that ;

“Exceptionality through the psycho-neurological and psycho-educational models are founded on the belief that school failure is a function of neurological impairment (Bender,1983; Gleitman, 1981), or psycho-perceptual disorder (Kirk, 1982).”

(Marsh 1993 p.120)

He goes on to argue that the umbrella of ‘pupil pathology’ now covers all special education from those children who would once have been called retarded right up to those who would be seen as having a mild learning disability, and that this approach to special education has become inveterate. Moreover, Marsh then points out that due to the extent to which this medicalisation has become ingrained there is now....

“...an endless host of exceptionalities that require an endless list of *high status* positions to diagnose and remediate through an endless variety of prescriptive programs” (Marsh, 1993 p.120)

What Marsh objects to here is not simply the medicalisation in itself, but to the fact that it leads to the disempowerment of both pupils and teachers within the system due to the perceived need for experts to diagnose (to paraphrase Freud) the ‘pathology of everyday school life’.

This is just as if not more true for the young offender population, the vast majority of whom would have contact with the special education services and would have been

labelled accordingly. However it is not the labelling in itself which is objected to but the effect which it produces. That is, that such labels tend to infer that the responsibility or blame for the clients situation and any solutions to them, lie solely with the client themselves. While on the flip side attention is drawn away from the general socio-economic, cultural and (in its broadest sense) *political* factors which came to create the situations which are now being labelled within a medical framework. Within Apple's (1979) analysis of labelling it is argued that such labels work to hide the roots and intricacies of the situations and relations which they describe. In addition educational programs that are instigated and directed by distant bureaucracies can often disregard, or *underregard* local interests, resources and needs. Moreover, educational systems that are founded on a once religious, and now perhaps more positivist attitude that sees knowledge as neutral, objective and value-free, can on many levels kill any hope of dialogue and debate as it is the 'fact', the knowledge itself which reigns supreme. Learning in such an environment is learning which is static, it becomes the digestion of a body of knowledge for the purposes of its later regurgitation. Lev Vygotsky the Russian Psychologist held that traditional western education and assessment ended up measuring the fossilised products of mental functions. (Marsh 1993)

This state of affairs, according to Freire (1970), produces boredom, frustration and apathy within education systems in both teachers and students - 'a mantle of silence and indifference' (Marsh pg.120) - the complete converse of the passion, sensibility, care and curiosity that our education system aims to provide. As well as this affecting students and the 'problem' student in particular, it also affects teachers, how they teach, and indeed the scope which they are allowed, and eventually learn to allow themselves, within education and their influence on how it develops.

Within the philosophy of Freire this relates to his notion of the oppressed within education systems, and the modes of oppression i.e. absence of voice and 'antidialogical practices' (Marsh, 1993, p.120). But how do such practices develop?

Vygotsky saw behaviour as being socially and culturally mediated and viewed mental development as a sociogenetic process.

"The structures of perception; voluntary attention and memory, emotions, thought, language, problem solving and behaviour acquire different forms according to the historical context of the culture, its relationships, and its institutions." (Marsh, 1993, p. 124).

Vygotsky believed that children actively use lower mental processes, to develop higher mental processes through their constant interactions with adults and in doing so radically transform their mental functions. This happens by means of what Vygotsky called the Zone of Proximal Development which he defined as follows;

'Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people (*interpsychological*) and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). This applies equally to all voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher mental functions originate as actual relations between people.' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

Vygotsky thus recognised the participatory nature of learning and, as Lois Holzman points out the social-cultural-historical nature of forms of human action (Holzman 1997).

If we fuse the social theory of Freire and psychological theory of Vygotsky we see that the issue of education and educational failure is not simply a political issue, a social issue, an issue of deprivation or one of intelligence and can not be addressed as such. Instead all of the factors we looked at in this chapter interact to produce a situation whereby the product is educational failure. It is more than society and it is more than individual. The root and source of educational failure is to be found in the relationship of society and culture in learning.

“.....social relationships and culture are the *sources* of the mind, the working brain only its ‘organ’, and the unique social activity of each subject how it *originates* ” (Blanck, 1990 p. 49)

So we can see that the environment in which a student is educated and perhaps more importantly how the student has learned to perceive that environment through the interactions s/he has had with others within it can have a huge impact on what and how they learn. In fact Vygotsky would say that this is the very process by which thought evolves.

This is an issue we wish to address in this piece of research, in that the study looks at education from the student or in this case ‘problem student’ standpoint. In that way we can perhaps begin the dialogue which seems to be lacking in many quarters and get a fresh perspective on the issue of educational failure.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study is divided into three main phases. Each phase is built upon the previous one, thus findings from phase one are used in the design of phase two and so on. This is also true of subsections within phase three. As a consequence of this format, it is necessary that the results of phase one are included in the methodology section as they are essential to understand the progression from one phase of the study to the next and to understand the researcher's reasons for developing the study as they did.

PHASE 1:

The first two weeks

This project was carried out in conjunction with an assessment unit for juvenile delinquent boys and the researcher was to spend a considerable amount of time in the unit. Consequently it was proposed that the researcher should spend a couple of weeks in the unit working with the care staff. One member of staff was appointed to 'shadow' the researcher. What this meant was that the researcher worked all the shifts their 'shadow' worker did for a period of approximately two weeks.

At first the researcher simply observed what went on in the day to day running of the unit, but after a number of days she began to interact more with the boys in residence there and also spend some time helping out in the classrooms in the school.

This initial time spent in the unit proved to be very useful on a number of levels.

Knowledge of the unit

Firstly, spending time observing the unit at work enabled the researcher to get a sense of the 'lie of the land' within unit. On a very practical level, where files were kept, the time-table of the unit etc. quickly became apparent. Also the researcher was invited to sit in on a number of 'case conferences', where decisions as to the unit's recommendations to the court, in relation to a particular boy's case, are made. This meant that the researcher got an overview of the assessment process as a whole right up to and including the final -- report, discussion, recommendation -- phase of the procedure.

Researcher relationship with staff

The fortnight spent by the researcher working with, and learning from the staff of the unit went a long way in gaining staff trust and hence dealing with any suspicions they may have had about the research and/or the researcher. For instance, it is possible that the staff of the unit believed that they themselves were in some way being assessed or monitored by the researcher. However, once it was seen that the researcher was willing to learn and work with the staff in an apprentice type role and not impose themselves as an 'expert' a good working relationship emerged, which was vital to the smooth running of the actual research itself. Moreover, this time and interaction with the staff of the unit gave the researcher an opportunity to ascertain what the 'people on the ground' who work with the boys everyday believed possible areas of interest or avenues of study could or should be. It also gave the researcher time to get a glimpse of what it must be like for the boys themselves to go through the assessment cycle.

Researcher relationship with the boys

A third benefit from this phase was that the researcher's time as a care worker in the unit allowed for a significant amount of interaction with the boys who were moving through the assessment cycle at the unit at that period. Consequently the researcher could spend time talking to the boys getting to know their interests, what their general attitude to the unit was, how they came to be in the unit and what they hoped the outcome of their assessments would be. This proved to be very beneficial throughout the research project but particularly during phase three of the data collection which involved spending a lot of time with individual boys one to one. It meant that the researcher was comfortable with the boys and had some insight into how best to talk to and relate to them which was very important in a population which are often weary of and wary of 'another psychologist' .

PHASE 2:

At the end of the two week period spent by the researcher in the unit it was decided that the next phase of the study should be to look at the files held in a vault in the unit. These files contain information on the background and general situation (including a psychiatric and psychological report) of every boy who had passed through the unit in the previous twenty years. Phase two of this study involved the content analysis (Aylwin,1995) of these files.

This was done in order to build on what was accomplished in phase one and to give the researcher a fuller and deeper understanding of what the situations (familial, social, economic etc.) of an 'average' boy who came through the unit might be. Essentially it was to investigate whether it was possible to develop, to some extent, a profile of a

typical boy passing through the unit in the previous twenty years, and indeed to see to what extent that profile might change over that time-span.

Participants:

In this phase of the study there were no actual 'participants' in the usual sense as all information was taken from files in the children's unit. However all files studied were those of boys who at some time since 1979 had been assessed at the centre. There were twenty subjects in all, they were all male and were aged between 13 years 4 months and 16 years old.

Materials/Apparatus:

Twenty files taken from those kept at the centre were used as the raw data in this phase of the study. Also a large A4 note pad was used to store the transcribed data from the files and also any other notes or comments relevant to this section.

Procedure:

Firstly a sample of 20 files were selected in a quasi-random fashion to be used as the raw data to develop the background information needed from this phase of the study. The files began in 1979 and it was decided to take four files at four year intervals, four from 1979-82, four from 1983-86 and so on with a further four from the 1995-97 period. Files were randomly selected and taken from the vault one at a time. Each file was read and reread a number of times by the researcher so as to familiarise themselves with the data, and any patterns or themes which seemed to run through the data were noted.

Content analysis was then done on the data as follows:

Each file for the purpose of the centre's own records had been separated into the following sections;

1. Family Background,
2. Personal History,
3. Time in the Unit (General),
4. Psychiatric Report,
5. Psychological Report,
6. Educational Background (Primary and Secondary School Reports)
7. Education While In The Unit,

- the same headings were used by the researcher to code the data in this phase.

File by file the data were transcribed into an A4 note pad in the form of 'separate units of meaning'. That is, for each subject the data were broken down into its' smallest possible units of meaning and transcribed so it could be later separated and categorised.

Three basic rules of thumb were adhered to during this phase;

- If in doubt - leave it in
- Use a persons own words where possible
- Break the category further if you can.

After all twenty files had been fully transcribed the researcher then went through each file and section by section (from files 1-20) noted each issue/factor or 'unit of meaning' which was present in that section. Each time that issue reappeared in a later file an asterix was placed by it, to signify the reoccurrence. In this way a picture was built up section by section across all twenty files of the themes and patterns present in the data.

Once all sections across all files had been examined as described , a coding schema was constructed to code and present the data. To facilitate this the seven broad categories already used to organise the data in the files remained the main categories in the coding schema, while several subcategories (within each broad category) were generated in a bottom-up fashion from the transcribed ‘units of meaning’ data. {Please see appendix B for a full list of categories}.

The coding schema consisted of a table with all the categories and subcategories on a left-hand column on the table and all the subject numbers 1 to 20 on the top row. Thus a grid was formed to facilitate the coding process.

An example of this grid is shown in Table 1:

Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	etc	Σ
Large Family	√		√				√			etc	3
Little parental control				√	√			√		etc	3
Parents concerned but lack skills		√		√		√			√	etc	4
Parents concerned & supportive								√	√	etc	2
Little parental control/stability									√	etc	1

Figure 1: Example of coding schema for phase one

At this stage the researcher went back to the transcribed data sheets and going through each subject file put a tick in the grid wherever a category was present in a participant's data. In the right-hand side of the grid there was a ‘total’ column where the total number of files a given category was present in, could be noted. There was no inter-rater reliability phase in this study for a number of reasons. Firstly due to the highly confidential nature of the information contained within them, access to the files was highly restricted. Secondly since only the broad categories and not the more detailed data were eventually used to generate elements in the repertory grid phase, it was agreed that it would be acceptable to preclude an inter-rater facet in this section.

The results (see chapter 5) yielded a profile of the 'average' boy assessed at the unit over the previous twenty years. A large amount of information was collected and coded in this phase of the study and though it is significant and interesting in itself it was decided that this would not form the core of the study. This was decided for a number of reasons.

The profile generated from the analysis is supported by a wealth of previous research into the area. What this in effect means is that the Irish situation is consistent with patterns and themes found elsewhere, in terms of demographics, familial situation, socio-economic status and assessed psychological and psychiatric state and ability. The researcher could have continued to analyse a larger number of files in the same manner to bolster the significance and reliability of the findings in terms of size of population. However, since the data already collected and collated was so consistent with previous findings in studies conducted around the world, (see, Farrington 1992, Farrington, 1995 for review of this literature, and Bates 1996 for Irish research) the researcher, after consultation with staff and management in the unit, decided that another approach might produce richer and ultimately more useful data. This is not to say that the data from phase two was discarded. On the contrary, it is presented and discussed at length in the results and discussion chapters and also forms the basis of the design of phase three of the study.

Issues arising from phase two:

The results from the analysis of the files raised a number of important issues.

Firstly, in terms of methodology it is clear that our understanding of the phenomenon of young offending would be promoted little by simply replicating the findings of already well documented factors in the young offender literature. There is little doubt as to the

background and behaviour of most young offenders. Furthermore, much if not most of the research done to date has been to investigate and document factors such as peer groups, family background, education, social status, and in its broadest sense 'personality', and their role in juvenile delinquent background. If the research were to continue based on studying past files only, it would most probably yield more such information. and judging on results so far would be very similar to previous 'discoveries'. The problem with such a plan however, is that reams of this type of information already exists and to a large extent have been piled high and are rapidly gathering dust. Furthermore, such information tends to reflect what the researcher expects to find, and perhaps most importantly, pertinent questions of relevance may not be asked.

So it was decided to look for information that was less prevalent in the literature and information that could not be extracted from files. A new perspective in the area of young offenders -- and that perspective turned out to be the boys own. The question that was decided upon was this;

What do the boys themselves see as the reasons for their behaviour and situation generally (with specific reference to educational failure) ? What the information in the files was not able to yield was the voice of the boys themselves and so the researcher looked for a methodology that could.

Thus, it was decided that a combination of using the resource of the files at hand, **previous research and a more proactive approach might yield richer and ultimately more useful results.**

Justification of Methodology;

The Repertory Grid Technique - What is it and why use it ?

The Repertory Grid technique was devised by George Kelly in 1955 as a practical application of his theory of personal constructs which was based on the tenet of Constructive Alternativism.

In Kelly's opinion there was no objective reality, only peoples perceptions or 'construals' of it. This does not deny a physical reality, but relates more to some notion of a social reality. Kelly suggested that individuals behave like scientists, forming and testing hypotheses about their worlds. He did not mean that we are all professional scientists, but instead, that each person, on the basis of their own personal theories, philosophies and ideas about the world, like the scientist, develop hypotheses, test them out, revise them and in this way develop theories to make sense of their experiences. Kelly termed this process **construal** - how we construe or make sense of our world - and thus constructs are, to put it another way, interpretations of reality (Kelly 1955).

A construct, basically, is an idea we have about the world, a basic dimension of appraisal of the world . Kelly noted that we find meaning in our lives by identifying things for what they are, and noting what they are not, and thus we form dichotomised constructs. For example; that Jim is intelligent means that he is not stupid. By our observation we are putting Jim on some type of intelligence scale. To say Jim is intelligent does not mean that he is fat, honest or rich. Intelligence, (intelligent/stupid), is an example of a construct.

Thus, if we are all seen as construing our own individual realities, Kelly suggests that we each develop a dynamic framework or system of constructs which we then use to anticipate events. This construct system represents the structure that we place on past events and determines how we anticipate and deal with events in the future. Kelly holds that although events never exactly duplicate themselves, future events can be predicted by noting both the similarities and contrasts (as constructs are dichotomous) of the features of an event over time. We as people interact with our environments and in doing so we develop a mental model of that environment and this model is in turn employed, through the mental manipulations of events, to predict future events. To facilitate this, a construct system is made up of subordinate and superordinate constructs which subsume each other and therefore make the world easier to categorise and organise.

Due to each of us having our own personal system of interrelated constructs we differ in how we perceive and interpret events. As Bannister and Franssella put it, we all see a given situation,

'...through the goggles of our own personal construct systems'. (p.10).

Kelly however, doesn't purport that people never have similar experiences, but instead, that it is the similar interpretation of the event or experience which gives it the dimension of similarity, not the experience itself.

This is an idea that can be readily applied to the context of young offenders and their perceptions of educational failure. What to a large extent is missing in the literature is their own interpretation of the social reality of school and education. A problem with previous research is that it either ignored the voice of the young offender entirely, or instead asked questions of this population that ultimately framed the answers that they

could give. That is to say that much research done in a logical-positivist-empirical context is problematic as it is couched in the researchers perspective or interpretation of the situation. Therefore it is the researcher who decides what questions are asked and so what issues are important. That is not to say that such research is not valuable, but simply that other aspects and perceptions of situations are surely equally valuable - young offenders perceptions of education for instance. If we are serious about wanting to discover what motivates young people to engage in offending then we must allow them to tell their own story of 'why', as Emler and Reicher put it:

'Simply one must listen to and take seriously what adolescents have to say about their lives'. (pp. Xiii, 1995)

If we accept Kelly's idea that all people operate and make sense of the world from the perspective of their own personal construct system there can be no (positivist) objective or absolute truth. Furthermore, it follows that phenomena are only meaningful and relevant in relation to how they are construed or interpreted by the individual.

The fundamental postulate of Constructive Alternativism is that *a person's processes are psychologically channellised by the way's in which they anticipate events* (Kelly, 1955). Kelly therefore saw human beings as being in the business of attempting to understand themselves and their own nature and also the nature of their worlds. Not only that, but also to test that understanding by gauging the extent to which it guides them and enables them to predict the future, both immediate and long-term. (Bannister & Fransella 1986). Thus the eternal question of 'Why do people do the things they do' would be answered, in this context, in terms of Kelly's assumption that all behaviour is a continual experiment with life. It follows then that when we behave, we are using our system of personal constructs, our theory of the world, to examine and attempt to

understand our external reality. In doing so we are constantly expanding and altering our construct systems in an attempt to 'anticipate' or predict future events.

As Kelly puts it;

'Always he [the person] reaches out to the future through the window of the present'.

(Kelly 1955 p.49).

Kelly noted that many psychologists when studying human beings and human behaviour do so in a curious way, the process seems to be as follows;

I, as a psychologist am a scientist, therefore I stand apart from my subjects, I look down on them , observe and examine them systematically, generate hypotheses about their behaviour and then test these in experiments. I go about this business in a rational and intellectual fashion, the beings I study however I consider to be neither rational nor intelligent but rather are driven by some dark and unexplained force.

How can psychologists interpret any behaviour and call such an interpretation 'truth' if it is merely an interpretation of another persons construal of that persons perceived reality?

If this argument is followed through to its logical conclusion, all such research would probably tell one just as much about the researcher and their biases, leanings and the hypotheses they are supposed to be setting out to falsify (if we are to follow the thinking of Popper), as it would about the subject, whose behaviour the psychologist believes s/he is explaining.

This idea is analogised by Bannister in a 1966 paper, to a recurring theme in science fiction related to the master chemist;

'The master-chemist has finally produced a bubbling green slime in his test-tubes, the potential of which is great but the properties of which are mysterious. He sits alone in his laboratory, test tube in hand, brooding about what to do with the bubbling green slime.

Then it slowly dawns on him that the bubbling green slime is sitting alone in the test tube wondering what to do with him. This special nightmare of the chemist is the permanent work-a-day world of the psychologist - the bubbling green slime is always wondering what to do about you.' (pp. 21-2).

So how do we attempt to escape this problem of the bubbling green slime? The answer is not to escape it but to accept and embrace it and work from there. If we are to escape our own perspective we must find some way of seeing a situation through the eyes of another. What this study hoped to discover was the young offenders' 'theory of the world' in relation to educational.

Kelly developed a methodology which endeavours to do just that. It is called the Repertory Grid.

The **Repertory Grid** allows the researcher to 'stand in the shoes' of another, through this technique we can, essentially, see the world from another person's perspective.

Repertory grids examine a person's overall construal or 'interpretation of reality' in a given area. Thus, it would be a useful device in examining young offenders' perceptions of the roots of their behaviour and also what factors combine, and how they combine, to perpetuate their situation. Various types of grids have been shown to be an appropriate method to use with children and adolescents such as Brierly (1967), Appelbee (1976), and Salmon (1976). More specifically a study by Jackson (1990) used the repertory grid in exploring issues of development and deviance with a group of adolescents who were a mix of offenders and non-offenders.

In this present study the repertory grid, once tailored to the specific area of education, would help to discover the young offenders' perception of the complex area of young offending, and how within that, educational failure impacts on and interacts with other factors. In short, this research could help to determine what the causes of juvenile delinquency or any one aspect of it are, as far as the boys themselves are concerned. For instance, the 'missing link' or mismatch between the boys' needs and the education system as it stands would be explored, not by formulating a theory and testing it but instead allowing the young offender's construal of his educational situation to emerge through the grid. To paraphrase George Kelly; If you want to know what a young offender is thinking, why not ask him, he may just tell you. In this way it is hoped to further our understanding of young offenders educational failure, the factors involved in it and its causes.

PHASE 3:

3.0 Repertory Grid Pilot:

This phase of the study was undertaken to explore what kind/s of grid format would work best within the context of the research project. As a result, during this phase different elements and differing numbers of elements were tested using standardised and customised grids with a random population of boys from the assessment unit. This was a very important stage in the research as it was to lay the ground work for the methods used in the main body of the research.

N.B. It was decided after consultation with management at the unit that interviews would not be tape recorded. This was due to legal factors related to the difficulty in getting parental consent for boys who are in a care situation. It is also worth noting at this point that though the unit where the research was carried out is named in this thesis, there is no way in which anybody could trace any of the participants involved in the study. Therefore there are no problems in relation to confidentiality.

Procedure:

Firstly a preliminary grid was constructed using elements elicited from the content analysis done on the files in phase one of the study. From the information collected in that phase it was decided that the grid shown below (Table 1) would be representative of all the relevant factors/players in a given boys situation in relation to education and educational background.

(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							

Figure 2: Sample preliminary trial grid.

In starting phase three of the study the researcher returned to the unit and randomly chose 4 participants to pilot the grid. The grids were administered to the participants using rating, ranking and laddering techniques as described in section 3.1. However the grid itself and some of the preliminary procedure was later changed due to problems which arose at this stage, these are described below.

Problems

From the first trial runs of the above grid (table 2) it was clear that a number of changes would have to be made and that in fact, the actual methods themselves may have to be rethought.

The main problem with the initial sessions was that the ‘Gardai’ element was very dominant and participants spent more time talking about and discussing this group than any other, even when it was not directly used in a triad. As a result the emphasis of the grid moved away from that of school and education and more into the justice system. The boys also spent a lot of time speaking about victimisation by the gardai, and discussing the very negative light in which the gardai are viewed by the boys themselves, and by their communities.

Though this was interesting in itself it was not specific enough to the subject matter of education and educational background to warrant so much weight within the grid. This may appear to be going against the participant centred philosophy of the research but educational failure was the area under research and indeed the area chosen by the staff and management the assessment centre as being in need of research. Consequently, despite the fact that the boys clearly felt strongly about the subject of the gardai we could not reorganise the study to accommodate this. However rather than remove the Gardai element from the grid completely it was decided that it should be used perhaps in just one or two triads at the end of a session so as to ascertain the elements place within the participants construct system. It was to be very much rooted however within the educational framework and the educational context in which constructs were to be elicited, was to be emphasised to a greater extent by the researcher.

As a further aid to this last point it was also thought that more time should be spent 'setting the scene' in the initial informal section of the interview session. To this end the researcher, from now on, was to spend a while talking to the participant generally about school, asking him to describe specific incidents as examples of the kinds of problems he experiences in school etc. Furthermore, the researcher was also to ask the participant whether or not school was important to him and why. The researcher was also to ask whether school was more important to other people than it was to him, who those people were and why he thought school was important to them.

It was only when all this discussion was over that the grid itself was introduced and it was hoped that at this point the 'educational stage' would have been very definitely set. In this preliminary stage it was also found that there would also have to be changes to the grid itself as it was proving too rigid for individual boys needs. As a result a blank grid was to be presented to the participant and the original six elements were to be suggested to them as the main players in the educational setting. It would be clear to each participant however that they were free to add their own new extra elements, replace elements or remove elements from their personal grid if they so wished. As a result each grid was customised by each participant themselves in conjunction with the researcher.

These changes were then incorporated into the next subsection of phase three of the project.

Phase 3.1 Revised grid:

As a result of the problems encountered in phase 3.0 which are described in the last section, the revised grid and procedure were tested in this section. On trials with three participants the new version worked much better and produced more useful data.

Responses were more anchored in the educational area and as a consequence ran deeper than in the previous phase as the subject matter was not as broad and wide-ranging. As a result the data from these three trials were treated as the first three of the twenty grids used in section 3.1.

Participants for phase 3.1

There were twenty participants in this phase. All were boys who had just completed the three week cycle of assessment in the unit. The age range was 13 years 3 months to 15 years 10 months with an average age of 14 years 7 months.

Materials and Apparatus

In phase three of the study, twenty identical repertory grids were used to elicit constructs from each participant (one grid for each). Each repertory grid was presented on an A4 sheet of paper and consisted of a grid containing seven vertical columns and five horizontal columns. Across the top six centre columns of each grid the elements, (teachers, parents, self, gardai, other pupils, teachers in the unit or those suggested by the participant) were written in by the researcher. The first and last vertical columns were labelled at the top with a tick (positive) or cross (negative) respectively and left blank to be filled with each subject's elicited constructs. The five horizontal columns were lettered A to I.

(√)	Element	Element	Element	Element	Element	Element	(x)
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							

Figure 3: Sample Empty Grid for phase 3.1

Six separate elicitation cards were used in the elicitation of constructs. Each card had one of the six elements written on it.

1 Teachers, 2 Parents, 3 Self, 4 Gardai, 5 Other Pupils, 6 Teachers in the Unit.

(see Appendix A for cards).

Each repertory grid was filled in by the researcher with a pencil.

An A4 paper pad and pencil was also used to record each subject's responses during the laddering phase of the study.

Procedure

For phase 3.1 the participant would first be presented with a blank grid, given the six elements as 'possibles' but asked to choose others that he thought more appropriate if he so wished. If the participant was happy with the elements that had been selected by the researcher then the session would continue as described in section 3.0 but incorporating the changes specified in section 3.

Actual procedure for filling out the grid

Participants were taken one at a time by the researcher and were guided through the filling in of the grid. There were a number of key points that the researcher wanted to make sure the participant was clear on and fully understood, these were;

- It was made clear that the researcher herself was a student carrying out a project and not a Psychologist employed by the assessment centre. The participant was also assured that everything talked about during the session was confidential and did not affect in any way the boys report from his time in the centre. This was an important point to make clear as the boys often needed reassurance that what they said about school, and any problems they might have had there, could reflect badly on them when their report was being compiled.
- It was also emphasised that it was education that the researcher was particularly interested in. Not only that but what the boys own experience of education and school was. It was particularly stressed that it was the boys own experiences of and opinions on school that were important and it was this very information that the researcher found interesting .
- Each participant was assured that there were no right or wrong answers that the researcher was looking out for. Simply that she was interested in hearing their story. This was important in the interview context for these boys, as many Psychologists they would have met previously would have been assessing them and the boys would no doubt have been conscious of getting answers 'right' or 'wrong'.

- It was emphasised also that the boy could ask a question at any point if he was unclear about something and that he was free to not answer any question or to terminate the session at any point.
- When it came to filling out the grid itself the researcher tried to ensure that each participant understood how the grid worked. The terms 'element' and 'construct' were mentioned but explained in ordinary language. However, the researcher pointed out that the best way to get an idea of how the grid worked was to actually fill one in and then invited the participant to begin.

A typical session with a boy is described below;

Researcher -- *Hello, How are you? My name is Aine and I'm a research student. I study Psychology and I'm interested in finding out what you think about school and education.*

Participant -- *Are you a Psychologist in the Unit here...Does this have anything to do with my report?*

Researcher -- *No, I just study Psychology in College and I'm interested in education, and everything you say here today is just between you and me, it's not shown to the staff here, and I won't be talking to them about it either...okay?*

Participant -- *Yeah.... s'pose.*

Researcher -- *So, as I said, I am interested in education and in particular pupils' attitudes to education and school in general. I want to find out what problems you might have with school, any ideas you have about how it could be improved, things that*

you like and dislike about school etc. So I would like to talk to you a little bit about that sort of thing for a while, o.k.?

Participant -- *But why do want to know about all that stuff?*

Researcher -- *Well I suppose if we can find out what you think of school, what you like and don't like about it and that then we could maybe try to change school for the better.*

Participant -- *Fair enough so....*

Researcher -- *So would you say that school is important to you?*

Participant -- *Naw, not really.*

Researcher -- *Why not?*

Participant -- *It's borin' like, it's crap.*

Researcher -- *What sort of people is school important to?*

Participant -- *Swots like... people who want to be doctors an' that.*

Researcher -- *And why is school important for them and not to you?*

Participant -- *Well I suppose it is important, you need it for getting jobs and to get on an' that but I just don't like it, it wrecks my head.*

Researcher -- *I'm interested in why it might do that and I have something here that might help us to look at how you find school and how you get on there and outside it too.*

*What I have here (pointing to the grid) is known as a repertory grid and I'd like to use this with you to find out what you think of school and education. It is important to remember that it is what **you** think and **your** opinions and feelings which matter. There are no **right or wrong answers** and there is no special information that I am looking for. Is that all clear so far?*

Participant -- *Yeah.*

Researcher -- *Okay here's the grid and this is how I want us to fill it out. Here on the top of the grid (point to elements) are a number of groups, within the school and education, which I thought were important people in school and I thought that they should be included when we were talking about school. These are the groups which are written here across the top of the grid and are known within this technique as 'elements'. So the elements here are Teachers, Parents, Self, Gardai, Other Pupils and Teachers in the Unit.*

Do you think they are important people in school and education? Are there any other one you'd add in, or any you'd take away?

Participant -- *No, they're fine, yeah, yeah they're all important. I wouldn't add in anything.*

Researcher -- *Okay so they are the 'elements' and they are people that you think are important in education, right? Okay, well also **when** we use these grids we try to find what are known as 'constructs' and we do that by grouping the elements together in **different** ways (I'll show you how we do that in a minute). A construct is something we use to make sense of the world for ourselves, by saying certain things or people are the same and so different to other things. **Intelligence**, for instance, is an example of a construct. When we say someone is **intelligent**, we are saying that they are not stupid and so in this way they are similar to other intelligent people and different to less intelligent people.*

I am interested in discovering what you think about school and education and so will group together three of the above elements at a time and ask you to say one way in which two of the three elements are similar and so different to the third. I will then ask you to tell me what you think is the opposite of the first answer you give me.

Is that all clear?

Participant -- *Mmmmm, Sort of.....It's a bit weird.*

Researcher -- *Okay, will I explain it again? Or do you want us to just try one and see how we get on?*

Participant -- *Sure we'll try it so....*

Researcher -- *Okay, but if we get in trouble with it I can explain it again, no problem.*

Invariably once the participant actually began filling out the grid, the procedure became clear and no participant had any problem with it.

The elements were presented three at a time to the participant in the form of the element cards. Where 1=Teachers, 2=Parents, 3=Self, 4=Gardai, 5=Other Pupils, 6=Teachers in Unit. (Each time an element was used in a triad to elicit a construct an asterix was placed in the grid directly underneath that element's name and on the same row as the construct it referred to. In this way it is clear from each grid which elements were originally used to elicit each construct pair.) The elements were grouped together randomly for each participant, as he himself choose three cards after the researcher shuffled them after each trial. In each case the participant was asked to name one way in which two of the elements were similar and therefore different to the third. The participant was then asked what they considered to be the opposite of their last answer. (Each participant was reminded that these questions were being asked in the context of school and asked to bear this in mind when eliciting constructs).

The participant was then asked which side of the construct they considered to be positive.

The participant's answer was then filled in on the left-hand (✓) 'positive' column. The other side of the construct was recorded in the corresponding right-hand (x) 'negative' column. (This was done in order to 'focus' the grid to aid analysis). Each participant was assured that this did not mean that one side was 'bad' and the other 'good' but was just a way of sorting the responses. For each participant the grid was filled in beginning with column A and working down to column I.

Rating;

Once all the right and left hand columns were filled in, participants were asked to rate each element in terms of each construct.

Starting at the top left hand corner of the grid participants were asked to fill in the matrix on the basis of whether each element was judged by them to fall on the (✓) left-hand or (x) right-hand end of each construct pair. Thus each element was given a tick if it was judged by the participant to fall on the left-hand end of a construct pair and given a cross if it was considered to fall on the right-hand end.

Participants were assured that the cross/tick dichotomy did not reflect any good/bad value judgement of elements and constructs but was merely a convenient way of categorising.

Once the matrix was filled the next part of the procedure was the rating scale.

The Rating Scale;

It was explained to each participant that they were to rate each element in terms of each construct pair on a scale of one to five, where the constructs on the left-hand (✓) column were number 1 on the scale and the part of the construct on the right-hand (x) column was number 5 on the scale. However, any element could fall at any point (1,2,3,4,or 5) along the scale. For instance, if the construct pair was -'put me under

pressure’/ ‘support me’ - then ‘put me under pressure’ in the left-hand column would be at point one on the scale and ‘support me’ in the right-hand column would be at point five on the scale. The participant then could rate any element as falling anywhere along the five point scale.

Thus the element ‘Teachers’ may be rated at one - definitely put me under pressure, while ‘Parents’ may be rated at three somewhere in the middle of the construct pair as they may both support and put pressure on the participant.

Participants were told that they could use any given point on the scale as many times as they liked and that it did not matter whether all points were used or not. For instance, if they considered three of the five elements to be at point one on the scale within the context of a given construct pair that was perfectly acceptable.

Again, starting at the top left-hand corner of the grid the matrix was filled in from left to right and from top to bottom (A to I).

Note

Both rating procedures were used for reasons of clarity for the participants themselves.

The researcher used the simpler form first to make sure that the participant understood that each element was being rated in terms of each construct dichotomously. Once this was done it was generally clearer to the participant how the rating scale worked.

Laddering;

The final part of the study was the laddering phase. Within laddering the researcher takes one construct pair at a time and the participant is asked which end of the construct they see as preferable and **why** this is so. This generates a new and more fundamental construct and the subject continues to be asked why questions until s/he are unable or unwilling to go further. All responses were recorded by the researcher with a pen and paper.

Before the laddering began it was explained to the participant that the object of laddering was to find out, in so far as was possible, exactly what they meant by each construct they had come up with and so to expand the researchers understanding of the construct system of each participant.

Laddering was done for each construct pair and once completed participants were asked What they would do if they were Principal of their school.

Participants were then asked if they had any questions or queries about the study.

Participants were then thanked for their time and co-operation.

Analysis of Grids

Once all the data were collected in the **grids FLEXIGRID** (Tschudi 1993) was used for analysis. Flexigrid is a computer **program** capable of carrying out Principle Components Analysis (FPCA), Focus **Analysis and Grid** Analysis for Beginners (GAB). Though the data was run through all three analyses only the Principle Components Analysis are presented in the results as upon examination neither the GAB nor Focus Analysis lent any **further** understanding to any participants data and so to include them would simply be repetition.

FPCA :

The aim of FPCA is to give a representation of the basic structure of an individuals grid (Tschudi, 1993). In other words, what constructs a person is using to structure their world or structure that part of their world to which the grid is tailored. In FPCA this representation is spatial and takes the form of a graph where Constructs and Elements are located in terms of each other. Constructs that are very similar will cluster together, while constructs with no correlations will appear orthogonally (at right angles to each other). Elements are represented in a similar fashion. Once each grid is processed and the FPCA data is printed off the researcher then makes the relationship between the various constructs and elements more distinct by using colour coded axes to illustrate the spatial relationship between constructs and elements. The axes join both poles of a construct (or group of constructs) and then from that axis, perpendiculars are dropped to indicate each elements position along that axes. It is important to note that the FPCA graph is a two-dimensional representation of a system that is n -dimensional there for it is not a *measure* of a construct system but instead a spatial representation of it. (See results section for examples).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results section consists of results from phases 2 and 3 of the study. Firstly there is a brief description of what was found in the content analysis of files (phase 2) and how it compares with other findings from previous studies. Secondly, there is a lengthy sections in which the results from the repertory grid phase of the study are presented. As was explained in the methodology chapter this developed into the main focus of the research. Within this section there is a description of thematic results and also an in-depth analysis of five representative data sets, each of which includes a processed FPCA graph and laddering data.

Results and Conclusions of phase 2:

Results from the study come in a number of phases.

The content analysis phase of the study consisted of the analysis of 20 files spanning 20 years taken from the archives of an assessment centre for young offenders. From this analysis a coding schema was produced which can be seen in appendix B. From the coding schema a general profile of an 'average' boy who comes through the unit was generated and is as follows;

- Comes from a disadvantaged urban background
- Has a poor school attendance record
- Assessed ability is below average for age
- Tends to be distrustful of authority figures
- Can be aggressive, verbally and/or physically
- Part of a group of other similar youths
- Has low self esteem / poor self image

He would also be likely to ;

- Come from a large family (4+ children)
- To have unemployed parents
- To have experienced violence, alcohol or verbal abuse in the home
- To have poor social skills
- To have a fairly **negative** attitude toward the future

Such a profile would be supported by a wealth of previous research into the area.

From the information gleaned from the content analysis of files it can be seen that circumstances for the young offenders in Ireland are consistent with those found in other countries (see, Farrington 1992, Farrington,1995 for review of this literature, and Bates 1996 for Irish research). The information gathered supports the argument in chapters two and three that young offenders generally come from deprived backgrounds and have an education level which is below average. However as was explained in the methodology section the main body of research was concentrated on the Repertory Grid phase.

Phase 3 - Results of analysis of Repertory Grids:

In this section there is initially an outline of themes arising from the analysis of the 20 grids, arising from both the descriptive **and** the more in-depth computer analysis using **the Flexigrid package.**

Themes arising from analysis of repertory grids for the 20 participants.

The most striking aspect of the boys assessment of the education system is that it relates exclusively to what the education system **FAILS** to give them and the dynamics of how this state of affairs arises. A number of very strong themes emerge within the context of the boys explication of the education system and why from where they are sitting it

fails them, these are their lack of Power, Control, Choice and Respect within the system. The participants generally had a very negative attitude to school, but felt that this primarily came from their relations with teachers in the school.

Interpersonal relationships with teachers, and roles within the school:

In terms of the roles that were attributed to the elements in the data (i.e. Teachers, Parents, Self, Gardai, other Pupils and Teachers in the Unit) some interesting issues have emerged.

As will be seen from the laddering and other data the boys seem to lack trust in teachers in mainstream schools, but have a lot of time and respect for the teachers in the unit. It is worth noting that they seem to have built up a better relationship with the teachers in the Unit in just three weeks, than they did with any teacher in their years in school previous to that. Furthermore the data seems to indicate that the Teachers in the Unit seem to have taken on a kind of 'Parent' role for the boys while they were in the unit and the elements of 'Parent' and 'Teacher in the Unit' are generally highly correlated, the participants see them as being similar.

In contrast the boys tend to perceive teachers in ordinary schools and gardai as being very similar and feel that both groups treat them unfairly. In diametric opposition to the Teacher/Gardai group are the Self/Other pupils group who the participants usually see as being fairly similar. The Teachers in the Unit/Parent group seem in varying degrees to be the bridge between the two other groups which the boys see as having little or nothing in common. In fact the only similarity that most boys saw between themselves and teachers was that both had to attend school.

The negative perception that participants have of teachers and gardai and the more positive attitude that they have of parents and teachers in the unit revolve around the presence or absence of four main factors; they are Power, Control, Respect and Choice. Whether participants perceive an element group as being positive or negative generally depends upon whether or not, as they see it, that group denies Power, Control, Choice and Respect to 'other pupils' and the participants themselves.

POWER:

The boys' lack of power within the educational system and at a more micro level within their own schools and indeed classrooms was an issue for them.

What they saw as a total lack of autonomy within the system at every level was something which caused much frustration and annoyance. Their perception of their total lack of power impacted greatly (and very negatively) on their attitudes to and relationships with their teachers and indeed on their attitude to school and education in general.

A construct closely related to POWER for the boys is that of CONTROL

CONTROL

The issue of control emerged as a central one within the data.

The boys feel that they have no control or autonomy in their lives especially their school lives and are frustrated and demoralised by this. A vicious circle seems to have begun whereby the boys feel they have no control or authority within the school which leads them to perceive a large inequality between the teachers group (whom they see as having all the control and authority) and the students themselves. The boys then feel

that because this inequality exists and because they feel that the teachers et al do not understand their perspective that they cannot relate to them, and vice versa. As a consequence there is no communication between the two groups and so nothing is resolved and the students continue to see themselves as powerless within the system. Therefore it seems that because the boys see themselves as having no control within the school system they cannot improve their situation as there is no route open to them through which to do so. Thus the issue of control and perception of control seems to be the central issue when examining the boys experience of school within the context of this study.

CHOICE

The issue of choice is also a central one in the data. The boys see going to school as something that is forced upon them and that they are coerced into doing. The notion of having 'A Choice' was commonly construed in the data as the *polar opposite* of education, which ironically is traditionally seen as a window of opportunity and so the fountain of choice. The boys also seem to equate Choice with Power and see the absence of choice in their lives, particularly their school lives, as being one major reason for what they perceive as their lack of power. If for these boys Choice equals power and control, and they feel that they have no power or control, then their 'Choosing' not to go to school or to cause trouble when they are there could be interpreted as the only route open to them if they wish to exercise any power or control in their environment.

If the school system does not allow them to be free to choose to some extent within it then they choose to either a) force their will upon it (as they feel teachers do upon them) or b) they choose to opt out entirely and leave school.

RESPECT

Respect or perhaps more pertinently what the boys see as a lack of respect within the school system is a very important topic in the data. The boys feel very badly treated by the system and the players within it. Moreover, their perception of teachers lack of respect for them causes a similar attitude to form on their side. They feel that due to the way the system and teachers within it treats them, there is no chance for friendship, trust or even communication on any real level between these boys and teachers within the ordinary school system. They feel that the players within the system at every level do not care about them, have given up on them and are just too 'strict and old' to ever relate to them on any level.

THE FPCA GRAPHS

The four constructs examined above are closely related to each other and also have many levels and intricacies within them in the overall data but also in particular cases.

To illustrate this the researcher has chosen to select five representative FPCA graphs which will be used to explicate the above themes and other less dominant issues.

The five graphs selected are those of participant's 16, 2, 4, 5 and 19. The reasons for the selection of these five is the wealth of information that is found in each, and also the fact that these five seem to best represent the themes found right throughout the data for all twenty participants. All 20 data sets were put through FLEXIGRID and all FPCA graphs were examined in detail, along with the actual grid and laddering data, and it is from this overall analysis that the thematic results emerge (see Appendix C for complete set of graphs, all grids and complete laddering data). However, it was felt that a

representational selection of just five graphs would explain how these broader findings were arrived at and also give an insight into just how FCPA graphs are interpreted.

A descriptive analysis of the Repertory grid is also included for participant 16 as an example of how it was done in all other cases. However for the other four only the FPCA graph will be included for specific examination in the results section.

Participant 16;

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	1
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Do what you feel	* x 2	* x 1	*√ 5	x 3	√ 3	x 1	Try to put u on right track
B. Know & live with them	x 1	* √ 5	*√ 5	* x 1	√ 4	√ 4	Don't know them
C. In the same group	x 1	√ 5	*√ 5	* x 1	√ 4	√ 4	Outsiders, try to arrest you
D. Can talk to them	x 1	√ 4	√ 5	* x 1	* √ 4	* √ 4	Can't talk to them/ don't want to
E. Don't want to learn / hate school	* x 1	x 1	√ 5	3	* √ 4	* x 1	Try to make you learn
F. Make you learn	* √ 5	* √ 1	3	x 2	3	* √ 3	Get you to go to school
G. Socialise with/ talk to	* x 1	* √ 5	√ 5	x 1	* √ 4	√ 4	Stricter etc.
H. Against the teacher	* x 1	x 3	*√ 5	x 3	* √ 5	x 3	Nag you, make u do homework
I. Try to get away with things	* x 1	x 2	*√ 5	*x 1	√ 5	x 3	Always want to catch you out

Figure 4.0: Grid showing results of phase 2 for participant 16

From participant 16's repertory grid we can see that this boy perceives his parents and teachers in the unit as being closely related. Other pupils were closely identified with the participant himself and these two groups were also seen as having common ground with Parents and Teachers in the Unit. We can also see from the grid that Teachers and the Gardai were closely related to each other from this participants point of view.

These patterns are reflected in the correlation matrix over leaf (Figure 3.1);

Elements	2	3	4	5	6
1 Teachers	5	0	7	0	5
2 Parents		4	3	4	9
3 Self			0	7	4
4 Gardai				0	3
5 Other Pupils					4
6 Teachers in the Unit					

Figure 4.1; Element correlation matrix for participant 1 (Highest possible correlation of 9)

From the grid we can see that Teachers and Gardai are highly correlated at 7 (9 being the highest possible correlation) while Teachers have zero correlation with Other pupils and the participant himself. The same figures are true in relation to the Gardai and Self / Other Pupils, again zero correlation.

Parents and Teacher in the Unit are seen as having a great deal in common by this participant (correlation of 9). Teachers in everyday schools and Teachers in the unit have a correlation of 5 in this grid. Interestingly, although Gardai are highly correlated with the Teachers element this participant sees the Gardai and the Teachers in the Unit as being quite different within the confines of this grid (correlation of 3). Thus there seems to be a definite difference between Teachers in everyday school and Teachers in the Unit as far as this participant is concerned.

When the constructs in participant 16's grid are examined we find the following;

Constructs	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
A Do what you feel	4	4	4	5	1	4	6	6
B Know them & live with them		6	6	3	2	6	4	4
C In the same group			6	3	2	6	4	4
D Can talk to them				3	2	6	4	4
E Don't want to learn / Hate school					1	3	4	5
F Get you to go to school						2	2	2
G Socialise with / Talk to							4	4
H Are against the teacher								6
I Try to get away with things								

Figure 4.2 :Construct correlation matrix for participant 1
(Highest possible correlation is 6)

From the construct matrix we see that a 'Them & Us' in-group / outgroup is emerging in this participants data in terms of Teachers versus Pupils in the school.

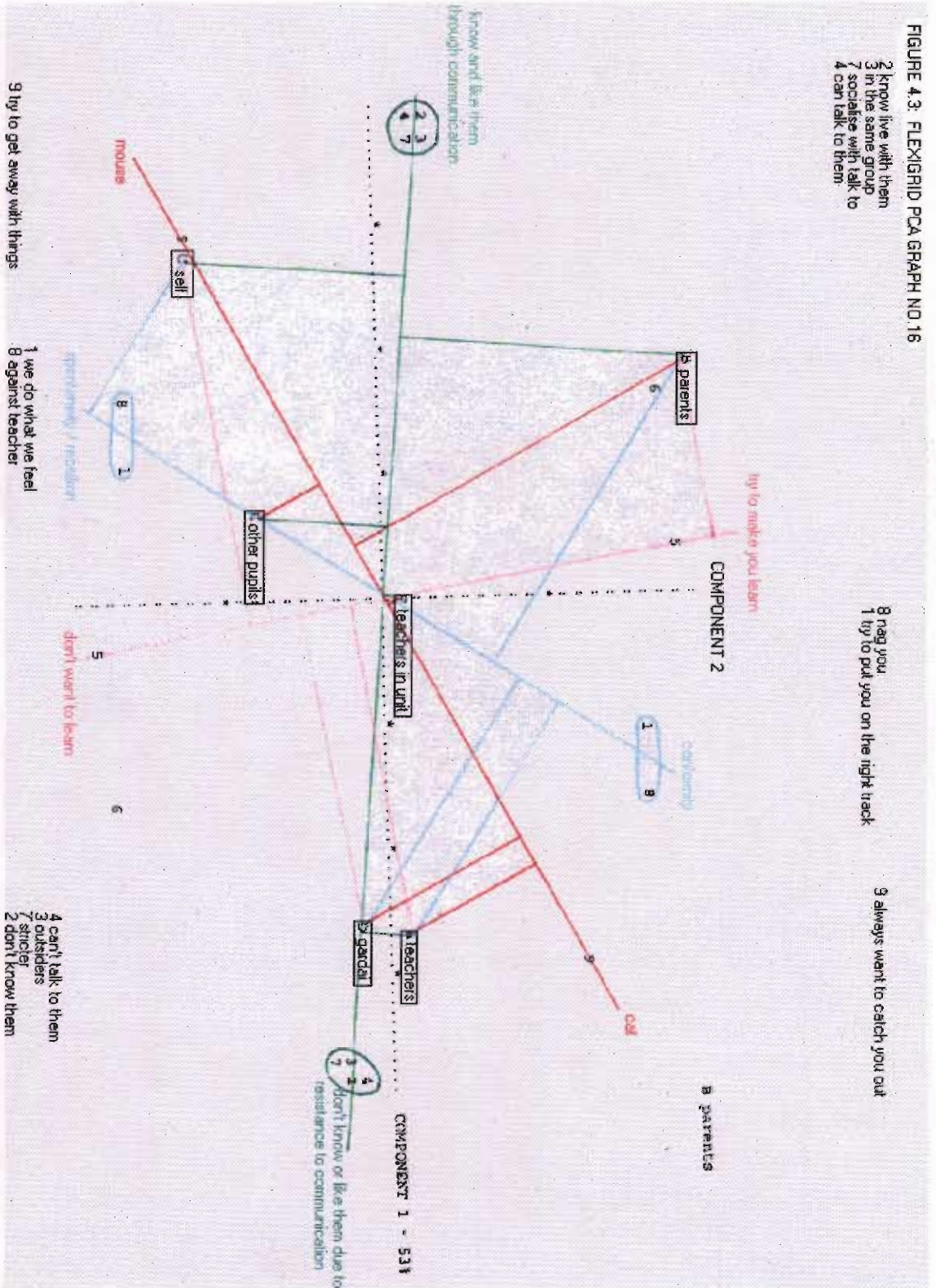
Constructs A, H and I all have a correlation of 6 (highest possible) and all relate to freedom within school and getting the better of a teacher. Constructs B, C, D and G also have a correlation of 6 and relate to the closeness that is perceived between Parents, Self and Teachers in the Unit by this participant. Teachers in ordinary schools and the Gardai are grouped together and are seen to be always wanting to catch you out and forcing you to stay in school and learn. Teachers in the Unit and Parents are seen as having more in common with the self/other pupils group, as one can talk to them and socialise with them.

There seems also to be a difference in attitude generally to teachers within and outside the unit. Teachers in the unit are seen as being more like one's Parents in that one can talk to them and they try to put you on the right track. Teachers outside the unit are seen as being more like the Gardai and connotations of coercion and an 'us and them' mentality permeate the data.

If we examine the Flexigrid Principal Components Analysis the above themes are further developed.

Figure 4.3 over leaf shows the FPCA graph for participant 16 and is comprised of several 'axes' around which the spatial representation of this participants construal of education is constructed. Upon examination of these axes a number of strong themes become clear. We can see the way in which this participant views each element in relation to the others, and in relation to each dichotomous construct or set of construct groupings.

FIGURE 4.3: FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.16



Good relationship through communication - The Green Axis

On the green axis there are four constructs (2,3, 4, & 7) which have clustered together and which relate to knowing and liking people due to communicating well with them. We can see that participant 16 perceives himself as being a good communicator, and that he also sees himself as having a good relationship with both Other Pupils and more especially his Parents, through being able to communicate well with them. On the opposite end we have Teachers and the Gardai who are at almost exactly the same distance from the Self element at the other end of the axis. It seems that this participant neither knows nor likes Teachers or the Gardai and that he feels part of this problem is the lack of communication between him and these groups. Teachers in the Unit are very much in the centre of this axis which would indicate that the boy's relationship and communications with this group are not as strained as with Teachers or the Gardai. However they are not as close to Teachers in the Unit as they would be to Parents or even Other Pupils.

If we look at the blue and red axes some of the reasons for and consequences of this lack of communication become apparent.

The Self versus The Other - The Blue and Red Axes

The Red axis illustrates where this participant places each element along what the researcher has dubbed the 'Cat and Mouse' axis. The participant himself is at one end 'Always trying to get away with things' while Teachers and the Gardai are again at the polar opposite 'Always wanting to catch you out'. This game of cat and mouse leaves Other Pupils, Parents and Teachers in the Unit in the middle, between the boy himself and those that he wishes to dupe.

The constructs on the blue axis are related to this as it illustrates how the boy constructs himself within and outside of education, and how his construction of 'The Other' i.e. Teachers and Gardai but also this time Parents, is again opposite to that.

The boy's self concept is one of spontaneity and rebellion, he 'Does what he feels' and is 'against the teacher'. In contrast to this, this participant perceives Teachers, Gardai and Parents as being a group who 'nag you' and 'try to put you on the right track', which could be interpreted as an attempt to impose some measure of conformity upon the boy's spontaneous and rebellious *Self*.

This sense of coercion that seems to permeate the data is further explicated by looking at the red axis.

Make me versus I don't want to - The pink axis

This axis deals with the issue of parental insistence that the boy attends school and his own resistance to doing so. This in a sense draws together all the other issues, as we have looked at the reasons he gives for not wanting to go to school, in relation to his bad relationship with Teachers. Indeed his negative attitude to the Gardai could be a generalisation of this to other authority figures. Parents make him go to school, teachers try to make him learn while he himself and other pupils hate school and don't want to learn.

Note

The FPC analysis should be looked at holistically and relationally to get a true picture of the boy's construct system. All the axes work together to give us an insight into the boy's perception of education and how the elements within it interact. It appears that the dichotomous constructs which form each axis relate to each other, and each axis relates to each of the others, to form an interactive framework wherein the boys construct

system is reinforced and bolstered by how he perceives the elements within it and how they in turn treat, communicate with and relate to him.

For instance in this participant's data, on the blue axis, the nagging and imposition of conformity on the part of teachers and parents causes the boy to react in an impulsive and rebellious manner. This of course produces further nagging and sanctions from teachers and parents. And so a self-perpetuating cycle begins.

On a broader level each axis within the construct system transacts with each other one too. The nagging of teachers and parents and consistent rebellion on the part of the boy impinge upon opportunities for meaningful communication, thus the game of cat and mouse persists and the boy continues to hate and resent school and all those associated with it, while parents and teachers have no choice but to continue to insist he attend and be educated.

Looking at participant 16's laddering will help to flesh out the themes which emerged from the FPC analysis.

Laddering for participant 16:

This Participant holds that it's better to do '*what you feel*' because being good all the time '*would wreck your head*'. This indicates that doing what you feel like and being 'good' are mutually exclusive. Participant 16 says that he '*hates school*' but feels that the school system in the unit is much better as '*they (the teachers) help you a lot more*' and also because '*you have time to make things*'. He later also says that teachers in the Unit and Parents 'want to see you do well' but doesn't believe the same of Teachers outside.

Teachers (in regular school) according to this participant *are 'always down on you'*. He sees them as '*dopey people, I wouldn't want to get to know them*' but further to that

feels that *'they wouldn't want to get to know me either'*. Whether this last comment is a reflection on himself and his own behaviour or on his perception of teachers lack of interest in him is unclear.

Teachers outside, according to participant 16, only make you learn to keep parents off their backs and so that people will say *'They're a good teacher'*.

In short participant 16 sees school ,as *'boring'* and feels that teachers are *'like robots & they think you should be the same'*. He feels that teachers don't know what it's like in *'the real world'* and that if people followed rules all the time *'you'd go cuckoo'*, Why? -because *'there'd be no room to be yourself.'*

Thus we see that participant 16 has a generally negative attitude which he sees as boring and oppressive. His attitude to school in the unit is more positive and he feels there is more scope for a relationship with teachers in the unit.

SUMMARY

In summary than participant 16 seems to see school as an inconvenience which is irrelevant to his life and is in varying degrees boring, frustrating and annoying.

In terms of his relations with people within the school system he seems to place himself, his parents and other pupils one side of the system and place gardai and teachers on the other, while teachers in the unit seem to be a link between the two.

It can be inferred from the data that participant 16 feel to some extent under attack or at least under pressure at school, in terms of teachers always wanting to catch him out and having to conform to a system that seems to be in conflict with his self concept.

He feels, as he says, that he has to break the rules because if followed them all the time *'there'd be no room to be yourself'*.

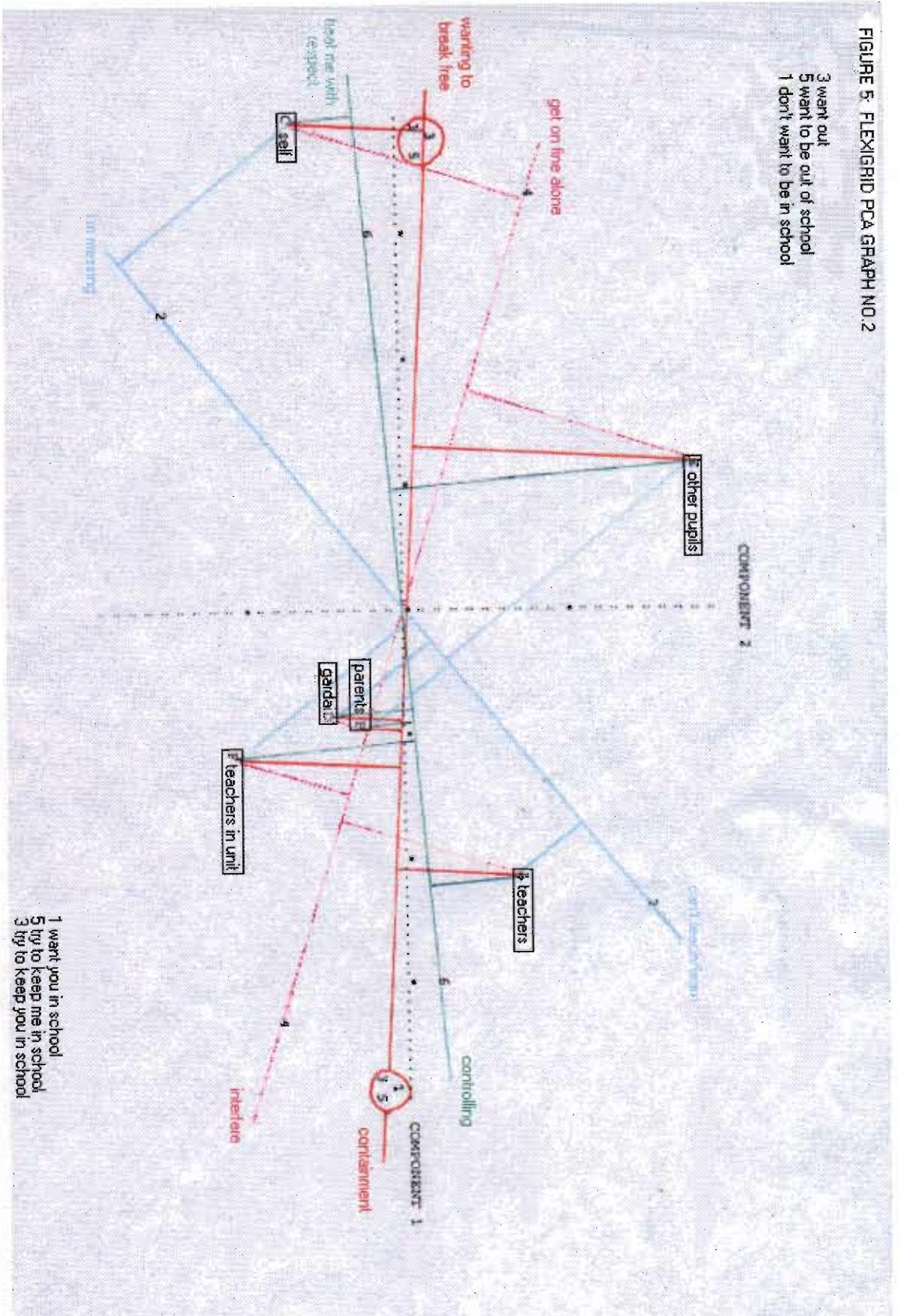
Here we see that as the boy himself sees it within school he has, no power, no respect, no control and no choice *except* to misbehave.

PARTICIPANT 2:

If we look at the FPCA graph for participant number 2 (figure 5 overleaf) we can see that there are four axes on which the constructs are operating and we can also see the spatial relationship which the elements have to those bipolar construct pairings.

FIGURE 5. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.2

- 3 want out
- 5 want to be out of school
- 1 don't want to be in school



- 1 want you in school
- 5 try to keep me in school
- 3 try to keep you in school

Respect -- versus - Control - The Green Axis

The Green axis deals with the participants construction of the issues of respect and control within education. He sees treating somebody with respect and trying to control somebody as being polar opposites. As can be seen from the graph, participant two sees himself and to a lesser extent Other Pupils as having respect for and treating people with respect. He sees Teachers as being the most controlling of all the elements, while Parents, Gardai and Teachers in the Unit cluster together toward the centre of the axis but edging more toward the 'controlling' end of the axes.

Respect and control are central themes in the data and will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

Wanting to break free -- versus -- Containment - The Red Axis

On the red axis there are three constructs (1,3 & 5) which have been clustered together and which relate to wanting to be free and out of school and not contained by it.

Here the Self and Other Pupils elements are on the 'wanting to break free' side of the axis while Parents, Gardai and Teachers in the Unit are clustered more toward the other end of the axis. Teachers are the furthest along the containment side of the axis and so are viewed by the participant as wanting to keep people in school. This axis seems to be related to the Green axis where respect / controlling was the dichotomy and elements were similarly placed. The Pink axis also appears to be similarly constructed.

Get on fine alone -- versus -- Interfere - The Pink Axis

The Pink axis relates to the participants perception that Parents, Teachers in the Unit, Gardai and Teachers in school all interfere in his life and impinge upon his independence. He feels that he and Other Pupils can 'Get on fine alone' while they simply interfere by (if we are to relate this to the previous axes discussed) trying to control and contain him. He, on the other hand, wishes to be treated with respect by being left alone and being allowed to leave school if he so wishes.

I'm messing -- versus -- They can't teach /learn The Blue Axis

The final axis on this graph relates to the boys own (explicit) attitude to his 'problem' behaviour or 'messing' as he puts it himself. He feels that his misbehaviour causes the Other Pupils to be unable to learn and the Teachers to be unable to teach. There are overtones from this (especially when looked at in the laddering) that this participant is inferring a degree of incompetence in the Teachers as his 'messing' has such an impact. Also the fact that Teachers in the Unit do not seem to have this problem to the same degree is interesting in terms of his general attitude towards them.

In relation to issues of control, respect and power within the classroom the information which is gleaned from this axis could have a much deeper interpretation. That is that the boy is quite blatantly saying that his misbehaviour in class gives him power in the classroom as he stops the Teacher from teaching and the Other Pupils from learning.

He brings to a halt the whole business of the classroom. It could be said that he finds in misbehaviour the power, control and respect that is lacking in the normal classroom interaction for him. Therefore the only choice open to him, the only power he has is that misbehaviour. However this does not seem to happen to the same extent with

Teachers in the Unit. For an indication as to why this may be the case we need to look at the laddering for this participant.

Laddering for participant 2

As far as this participant is concerned *'School is just crap'*. He doesn't enjoy school on any level and misbehaves in class, *'I'm always messing in class if I'm bored or if I'm annoyed'*. Thus anger and frustrations seem to lead to his problem behaviour.

However he feels that the teachers reaction to his misbehaviour is not helpful, *'in school outside teachers just throw you out of class'*. Interestingly, participant two's attitude and relationship with the Teachers in the Unit are much more positive, *'Here in the unit the teachers treat you more like an adult so you wouldn't mess as much anyway'*. He also feels that the ways in which the Teachers in the Unit deal with problem behaviour are much more effective and productive, *'and if you do mess they talk to you about it'*.

Participant two sees school as being irrelevant to his life in general, *'It (School) is only important to geeks who want to get a job they're just lick-arses'* and would see himself as being very different to people who see school as being important.

As was seen in the FPCA graph this participant perceives Teachers as interfering, *'Teachersare always interfering, telling you what to do and stuff, it's like you can't think for yourself or something.'* This interference causes resentment on the part of the boy, as he feels they are interfering for their own ends and not for his good, *'Teachers....I hate them. They have all the control and you have none.....they just kick you out, they don't try to help you.'*

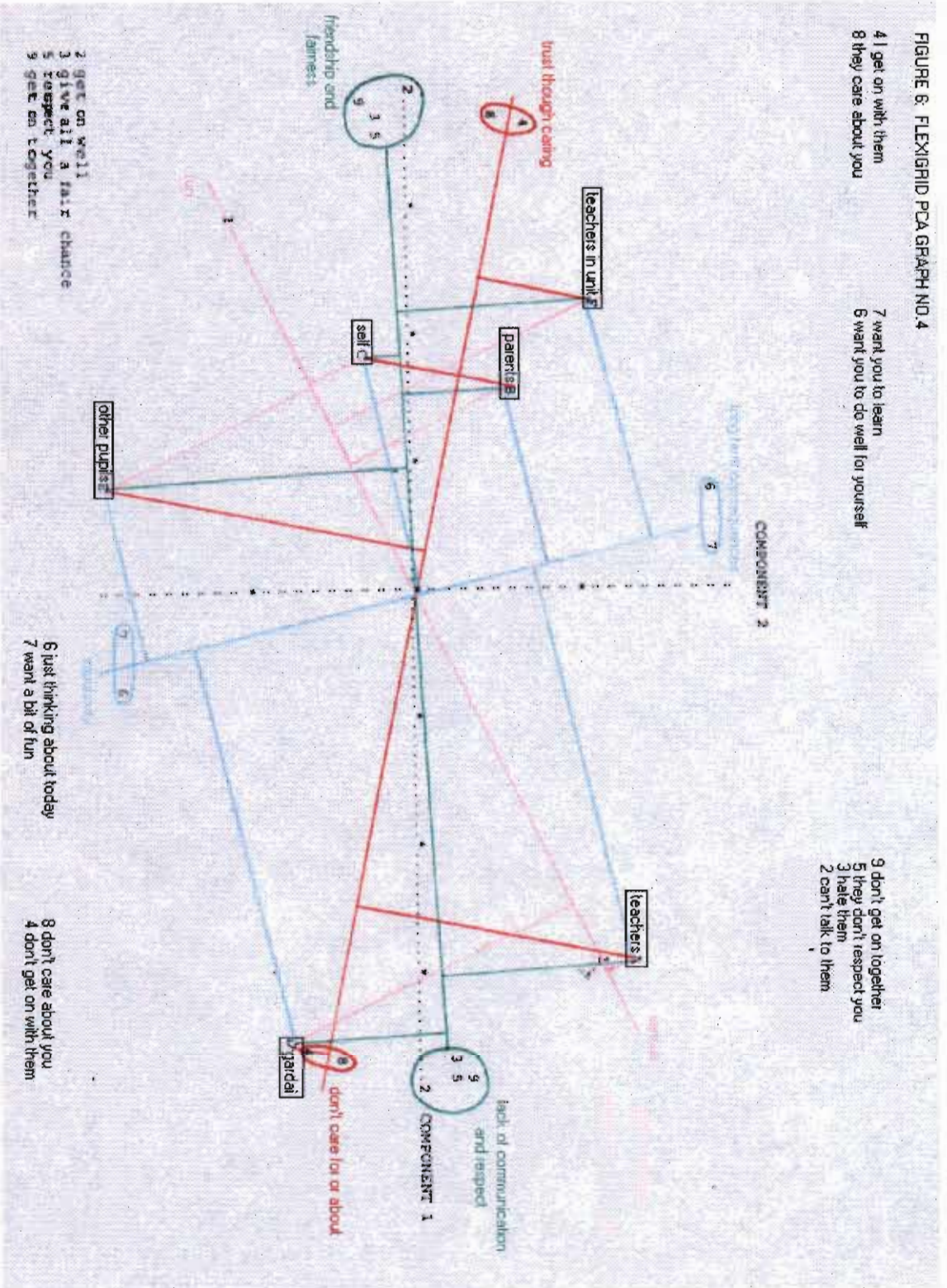
SUMMARY

There is a difference in this participants perception of Teachers and Teachers in the Unit which springs very much from the two groups attitude to and treatment of him. Respect and control are important constructs to this participant and their presence or absence in a life situation colours his view of the 'actors' in it to a large extent. He sees school as confining and containing and wants to break free of this, and get on with his life his own way, without 'interference' from Teachers, Gardai and Parents. His misbehaviour when seen in the light of this is reinforced by peoples reactions to it. It could be deduced that his 'messing' is in fact a way of seizing control in a classroom situation and showing up the teachers as less than powerful as 'they can't teach when I'm messing'. In this situation this boy has the power, control and respect he feels is lacking in 'normal' classroom and school interaction for him.

PARTICIPANT 4:

If we look at the FPCA graph for participant number 4 (figure 6 overleaf) we can see that there are four axes on which the constructs are operating and we can also see the spatial relationship which the elements have to those bipolar construct pairings.

FIGURE 6. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.4



Friendship & Fairness -- versus -- Lack of Communication & Respect

The Green Axis

On the Green axis there are four construct pairs (2,3,5 & 9) which have clustered together and have been examined collectively by the researcher. All four have to do with, friendship, fairness and respect on the one hand and lack of communication and respect on the other. On this axis there seems to be a two distinct groups of elements; Teachers in the Unit, Self, Parents and Other Pupils on the 'Friendship and Fairness' side while Teachers and the Gardai are very much on the opposite, 'Lack of Communication and Respect' end. This participant feels that Teachers in the Unit along with Parents and Other Pupils 'respect' him, 'give people a fair chance' and 'get on together'. While Teachers and Gardai 'don't respect' him and he feels he 'can't talk to them' as they 'don't get on together' in fact, he 'hates them'.

Why should there be such dichotomous grouping of elements in this boy's data?

To explicate this a little further we should examine the red and pink axes which have very similar elemental configuration.

Trust Through Caring -- versus -- Don't Care For or About The Red Axis

This axis is also formed on a cluster of constructs this time two (8 & 4).

Here again we see that Teachers in the Unit, Parents, Self and Other pupils are one end of the axis (Trust through Caring), while Teachers and Gardai are on the other (Don't Care For or About). This is a similar element formation to the green axis and this would indicate that the constructs on these axes are related. It could be that participant 4 feels that you can trust people who care about him and that in turn leads to friendship

with these people. These elements are also in a similar position to people who 'give everyone a fair chance' and 'respect you'. The polar opposite to this is 'not caring for or about' someone. This is the attitude that participant 4 has to Gardai and Teachers, he basically doesn't 'get on with them' and feels that they 'don't care about' him. A further dimension to this element formation can be seen when we examine the Pink Axis.

Fun -- versus -- Serious The Pink Axis

This axis has the same element grouping as on the green and red axes but the order of the elements are slightly different. Here Self, Other Pupils, Teachers in the Unit and Parents are seen as being 'Fun' while Teachers and Gardai are seen as being 'Serious'.

So we can see if we look at the Red, Green and Pink axes together that Teachers in the Unit, Parents, Self and Other Pupils are construed as being in one group by participant 4, a group wherein he finds friendship, trust respect and fun. While at the opposite end of these axes there are Teachers and the Gardai who he feels, don't respect him, are difficult to talk to don't care about him and are too serious. So are there any point at which there is a crossover between the two groups? Yes on the blue axis.

Long Term Consequences -- versus -- Impulsiveness The Blue Axis

On the blue axis we can see that the groupings on the three previous axes for participant 4 are not as applicable here. Other Pupils and the Gardai are this time grouped together at the 'Impulsive' side of the axis as they are 'just thinking about today' and 'want a bit of fun'. While on the other side of the axis that deals with 'Long Term Consequences' we find Teachers in the Unit, Parents, Teachers and a little further away Self. All this group want participant 4 to 'do well for yourself' and 'to Learn'. Participant 4

obviously construes himself as being far less impulsive than Other Pupils though he perhaps doesn't want to learn as much as Teachers in the Unit want him to. Gardai are still seen as having a very short term focus in relation to participant four's welfare as they are 'just thinking about today' while he seems to admit that Teachers at least want you to learn and do well for yourself. However, what he perceives to be the motivation behind such Teacher hopes are further revealed in Participant four's laddering.

Laddering for participant 4

According to participant 4, *'Teachers don't care about you there's no trust or respect on either side. They only want you to learn so people will say they are a good teacher.'*

As regards issues of respect and power he has this to say, *'They (teachers) think they're "Big Fellas" and boss you around. For them, you're just kids, so you have no minds of your own.'* And what we he do to alleviate this state of affairs? *'If we got more*

respect and control - a bit of space you know - things would be much better.' For participant four Teachers in ordinary schools differ greatly from Teachers in the Unit as we can see he clearly construes them to do from our study of the FPCA graph. But how exactly does this difference operate within a school framework? *'As far as (Teachers in schools outside) are concerned if you've messed up, tough. If they know you were in trouble they disrespect you even more. In here (unit) the teachers talk to you and it's not just that it's the way they do - equal to equal.'*

For participant four this last point is central to the problem she experiences with Teachers and other authority figures such as the Gardai,

'You get on with people who respect and treat you as an equal. Teachers don't do that neither do the guards.. If someone cares about you when they make a promise

then they keep it. Parents and teachers in the unit do that, but you can't really trust teachers in the normal school'

So what then if this is the problem does participant 4 see as the solution to this problem?

'What we really want is some control to be able to make decisions for yourself in school. It's better here, there are times in class when you can just do what you want, it's like a bargain there's give and take. I think that a system like that would work in an ordinary school.'

In fact if participant 4 were Principal of his school he would make only the following two changes, but said that if they were instigated he would remain in that school;

'If I were Principal:

Pupils would be allowed to smoke in school (16+ with parental permission)

If we just had a say in rules that effect us everyday then that would really help a lot'.

SUMMARY

Pivotal issues within education for participant four are again those of respect, control, power and choice. Participant four feels that within the ordinary school framework they are unable to exercise any control or power over their lives and general situation and further feel that the Teachers within that situation do not respect them and their rights and feelings. How they are operationalised however is particularly interesting.

The issue of Teacher trust and respect are very important to this participant and he feels strongly that Teachers generally form a bad opinion of someone and then give them no chance to redeem themselves. The knock on affect of this then is that they feel they have no choice but to play upon and live up to that bad reputation.

However, if this does happen then they are removed from that school situation and put into an assessment centre or some other equivalent. What this leads to is the boys being treated by the Teachers in the Unit as they would have liked to have been treated in school outside thus reinforcing their belief that misbehaviour was the *right* or *only* choice. (Two solutions - treat them badly in assessment or, reform school ethos bring into line with assessment and so don't leave democratic schooling as 'last resort' schooling)

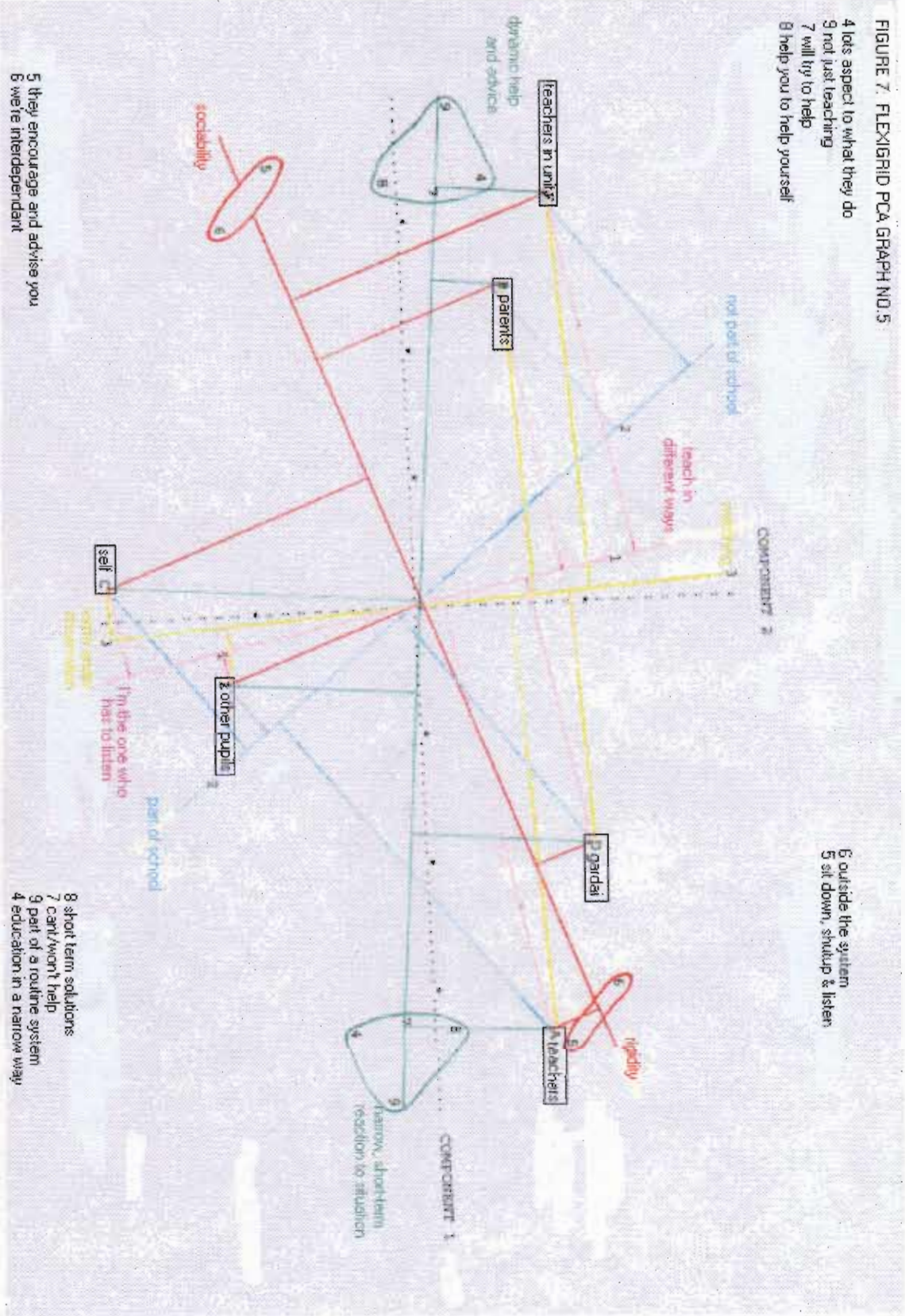
PARTICIPANT 5:

The FPCA graph for participant 5 (figure 7 overleaf) shows that this boy's data is very information rich. There are five axes on which the construct and elements interact. Upon examining those five axes we get a spatial representation of participant five's construction of education and can examine the elements and constructs in terms of each other.

FIGURE 7. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.5

- 4 lets aspect to what they do
- 9 not just teaching
- 7 will try to help
- 8 help you to help yourself

- 6 outside the system
- 5 sit down, snuggle & listen



- 5 they encourage and advise you
- 6 we're interdependent

- 8 short term solutions
- 7 can't/won't help
- 9 part of a routine system
- 4 education in a narrow way

Dynamic Help & Advice -- versus -- Narrow, Short-term Reaction to Situation

The Green Axis

The Green axis incorporates four bipolar constructs (4,7,8, & 9) which have clustered together. These relate to the relative dynamism of the elements and their willingness to help, advise and formulate a plan of action with participant 5. This boy sees Teachers in the Unit and Parents as being willing to help him and interested in helping him to help himself. Both of these elements are also seen by participant five as having lots of aspects to what they do and not just being teachers in one area or one aspect of life.

In contrast Teachers on the opposite end of this axis are seen as being 'part of a routine system' and of being part of 'education in a narrow way'. He also feels that Teachers and Gardai are only interested in 'short term solutions' and that they either 'can't or won't help'. The narrow short term reactions to situations which this participant see Teachers and the Gardai as being part of are perceived as something negative by him. While he himself and Other Pupils seem to be trapped in the middle of these two element groups and their respective responses to problem situations within education.

Fellowship -- versus -- Rigidity

The Red Axis

The Red axis comprises of a cluster of two bipolar construct (5 & 6). Here again, as with the green axis we see that Teachers in the Unit and Parents are at one end of the axis where as Gardai and Teachers fall at the other end. This time however the Self element is nearer the Teachers in the Unit and Parents end of the construct pole while Other Pupils is very much at the centre of the axis. What this indicates is that Teachers in the Unit, Parents and Self seem to be 'interdependent' from this participants perspective. He also perceived Teachers in the Unit and Parents as being willing and able to 'encourage and advise you'. On the opposite pole of this axis Teachers and

Gardai are seen by participant 5 as being 'outside the system' of interdependence which he construes Teachers in the Unit, Parents and Himself as enjoying. For Teachers and Gardai the main construct in relation to education seems to be 'Sit Down, Shut Up, and Listen'. The rigidity of this attitude as construed by participant 5, can be seen as another level to the narrow and short-term focus he described on the green axis.

The next three axes are aligned more with component two on the graph and so are essentially orthogonal to the Red and Green axes. Consequently the elemental configuration of the Blue, Pink and Yellow axes differ considerably from that of the Red and Green axes.

Not Part of School -- versus -- Part of School The Blue Axis

From the Blue axis we can see that Self, Other Pupils and Teachers are seen as being 'part of school' by participant 5. Teachers in the Unit and Parents are seen as being 'not part of school'.

So what does it mean then to be 'part' of a school? To get an indication of the deeper connotations of this we must look to related axes.

Teach in Different Ways -- versus -- I'm the one who has to listen

The Pink Axis

For participant 5 to be part of a school means that he and Other Pupils are 'the one's who have to listen'. However, he does admit that others have to teach but points out that the remaining four element groups, Teachers, Parents, Gardai and Teachers in the Unit all 'teach in different ways'. In relation to this last point we should return to the Red and Green axes if we wish to remind ourselves exactly how these different groups

It is interesting to note that a boy who belongs to a group who are variously labelled as 'impulsive', 'short sighted' and as having 'below average intelligence' should have such an insightful and long term view of the education system and its evolution.

He also has a very positive attitude to the educational regime within the assessment centre and has very clear notions as to how and why it works for him, *'In here teachers better trained, calmer, they know what they're doing, they can get you to sit down, do work and concentrate - it's incredible. They're a teacher a counsellor and a friend all in one. Teachers just cop out in normal school, they'll just expel or suspend you.'*

When participant 5 was asked what he would change about his school if he were Principal he had the following to suggest,

"I'd give pupils more say...but not too much either, a balance.

Then when pupils take the attitude of 'What did you ever give me?' You can say..

'What you wanted' - then there's no excuse for misbehaviour, it's your own fault...

This I think would build up respect on both sides...It would be like,

'I better not mess I'd only be making a fool of myself'."

This is a point which will be returned to in more detail in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

This participant's data is particularly rich in information and from his laddering we can see that he has quite a complex construction of the education system and has thought about possible improvements to the system. He sees the rigidity, narrow educational base and generally constrictive nature of mainstream schooling as being very negative. He views the system within the assessment unit and the teachers who work there in a

much more positive light however. He constructs them as being close to parental and he values their advice and encouragement as much as he does that of his parents. The multi-faceted role which this participant construes Teachers in the Unit as having include constructions of teachers as friend, as counsellor, as parent and of course as teacher. However, even the way in which and what they teach is seen by participant five as being dynamic.

In contrast the Teachers in mainstream school are construed by participant five as being part of a 'routine system' and as working from a very narrow educational base. In the ladder they are seen by this participant as being unable to understand teenagers and moreover as not having any wish to. He feels they do not try to help pupils, especially the 'problem pupils' and simply take what he sees as the easy option of kicking them out of class, suspending them or expelling them.

Overall participant five has a negative attitude to mainstream school and to the Teachers and Gardai that he sees as being the main constituents of this negatively skewed aspect of the system. His attitude to Parents and Teachers in the Unit is much more positive and he feels that if mainstream school were more like school in the unit it would be much more productive and pleasant. This is not related to curriculum and content of work however, but refers much to classroom management techniques, level of control and authority within the classroom, and general issues of respect and responsibility in an educational setting.

PARTICIPANT 19:

The FPCA graph for participant 19 (figure 8 overleaf) consists of five axes which together give a spatial representation how the elements and bi-polar constructs interact to reveal this participant's construal of education.

Togetherness -- versus -- Otherness The Navy-Blue Axis

This axis consists of a cluster of three bi-polar constructs (3,6, & 8) which when grouped make up a single axis which the researcher labelled as relating to 'Togetherness' versus 'Otherness'. When we then plot perpendiculars along this axis to situate elements in terms of this construct grouping, we find the following;

This participant perceives Himself and Parents as being on the 'Togetherness' end of the axis and thus as being 'in the same boat', 'in contact' and 'there' for each other. Teachers in the Unit and Other Pupils are also seen as veering towards this end of the axis but to a lesser extent than the other two elements. Teachers, and more markedly Gardai, are seen to be on the opposite side of this bi-polar construct at the 'Otherness' end. This means that participant 19 views Teachers and the Gardai as 'always picking on us', 'not always there for you' and as being 'outside' that close contact that he enjoys with his Parents and to a lesser extent with Other Pupils and Teachers in the Unit.

Where then does this closeness and 'togetherness' or the lack of it come from?

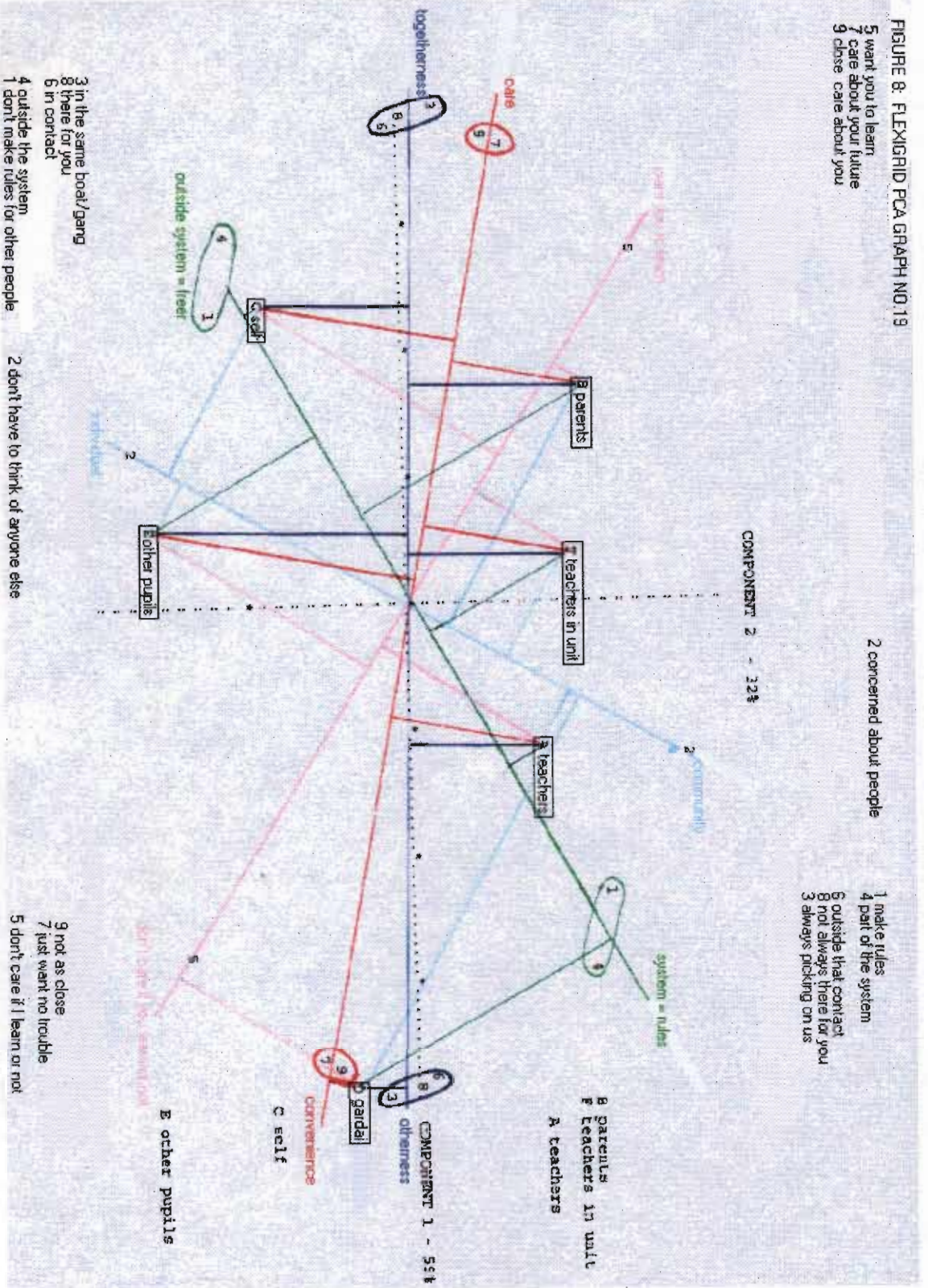
To examine this we must look at the related Red Axis.

FIGURE 8. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.19

- 5 want you to learn
- 7 care about your future
- 9 close care about you

2 concerned about people

- 1 make rules
- 4 part of the system
- 6 outside that contact
- 8 not always there for you
- 3 always picking on us



Care -- versus -- Convenience**The Red Axis**

This axis is made up of a cluster of two constructs (7 & 9) which relate to the level of interest this participant feels the various elements groups have taken and continue to take in his welfare. Here again participant 19 feels that his Parents are 'close' to him, and 'care about him' and his 'future'. He also places Teachers in the Unit and Other Pupils on this side of the axis but not as near the 'Care' pole. On the other side of the axis we find constructs relating to Gardai and to a lesser extent Teachers who this participant sees as 'not as close' to him and as groups who just 'want no trouble'. Thus he feels that these groups are not genuinely concerned for his welfare but simply want him to 'behave' and not cause trouble.

Want you to Learn -- versus -- Don't Care if you Learn or Not**The Pink Axis**

This axis relates to whether or not the various element groups care one way or the other if this participant learns anything in school. Participant 19 feels that Parents, he Himself and Teachers in the Unit definitely 'Want you to Learn' while on the opposite pole Gardai and to a much lesser extent Teachers and Other Pupils 'Don't Care if I Learn or Not'.

These element groupings are similar to those of the Red and Navy-Blue Axes except for the slight change in position of the Other Pupils element. The following two axes, the Blue and Green axes, again have slightly different elemental positioning but the main element groupings remain basically the same.

Outside the System = Freer -- versus -- System = Rules The Green Axis

This axis deals directly with the education system and participant nineteen's perception of it. He sees the system as being constrictive and rule based and he sees this as a negative thing. He perceives the Gardai and Teachers and to a lesser extent Teachers in the Unit as being part of this system and sees them as a group who 'make rules for other people'. There is a strong impression in this data that the participant feels that this group force their will on others. On the other side of the axes are the Self, Other Pupils and Parents elements. Participant nineteen sees this group as being 'outside' the school system and feels that they 'do not make rules for other people'. It seems then that as far as this participant is concerned the 'system' means rules imposed by one group on another. While to be outside that system is to be in a freer and less coercive environment.

However participant 19 does concede that certain elements he perceives as generally negative in an educational context do have redeeming features.

Individual -- versus -- Community The Blue axis

The Blue axis relates to ideas of community and individual freedom within this participant's construct system. He sees Gardai, Teachers, Teachers in the Unit and Parents as being interested in the community and generally 'concerned about people'. He admits then that on the other hand that he himself and Other Pupils have more of an individual focus as they 'don't have to think of anyone else'. So though members of the 'community' group of elements had previously been construed in a negative light this participant concedes that perhaps all the rules, and systematic regulation can be entered into by these individuals with the best of intentions.

If we look at the laddering for participant 19 the points outlined in the FPCA graph are further illustrated.

Firstly participant 19 feels that within the school system and his life generally there are *'too many rules'* and feels that this restricts a persons ability to *'take responsibility for yourself'*.

He feels that it is *'important to be concerned about people'* although admits he has not always taken his own advice on this issue but also feels that teachers in schools don't care about pupils particularly. Parents and Teachers in the Unit however he sees as being there for him as *'They talk to you and talk you out of doing stupid things'*.

In terms of the system to which he is presently subject, both educational and judicial, he feels *'outside'* it as opposed to Teachers and the Gardai who are part of the system yet, he feels, not subject to it *'they can do what they like, they're free'*. A general tone of frustration seems to permeate the laddering section in terms of what this participant sees as his powerlessness within the system which is pointed to when he finishes with *'It is annoying that they (teachers & the Gardai) always presume the worst'*.

SUMMARY

This participant's data is multi-levelled and complex and could indeed be viewed at first glance as contradictory. He seems to have a very negative attitude to rules and more particularly those that he sees as forcing rules on others i.e. Teachers and Gardai.

He feels that they do this not for your own good but out of convenience , to avoid 'trouble' and believes that this group 'don't care if you learn or not'. He also feels that having to live in what he sees as a constrictive rule-ridden system suppresses peoples ability to take responsibility for their own lives. An interesting point when one

considers that these young boys, as a group, are often accused of refusing to take responsibility for their own lives.

On the other side he sees Teachers in the Unit, Parents , Other Pupils and Self as being more on his side. He sees them as closer, more caring and more flexible than Teachers or the Gardai. Nevertheless participant 19 does concede that Teachers and the Gardai along with Teachers in the Unit and Parents are 'concerned about people' and care about and are involved in the community. He admits also that he himself and Other Pupils 'don't have to think of anyone else' and are much more focused on their own individual lives.

Conclusion of Results:

As can be seen from the information gleaned from the analysis of these five FPCA graphs the initial themes of lack of Power, Control, Respect and Choice are very dominant in the data. However the detailed descriptions of how this lack of autonomy operates in a school and general educational situation is vividly illustrated in the data of the five representative FPCA graphs. Moreover, the participants very positive reactions to alternatives found by the boys in the educational philosophy and practice of the assessment centres is also worth noting.

The participants seem to equate having power with having a choice, and indeed they see people who have power over their own lives and over others as people who who command respect and who are in control. They feel that they themselves have little choice about whether or not to go to school and no choice at all when they are in school. Consequently they feel that they have no power or control within the school system and that they are not respected by the system or the people in it. On the other hand the participants see Teachers and Gardai as having alot of power and control and see them both as being groups which attempt to control and have power over them. They also feel that neither the Gardai nor Teachers have any respect for them as pupils or people and so they afford them no respect in return. Parents and Teachers in the Unit are seen as somewhat powerful and controlling also but not to the same extent as Teachers and the Gardai. Most participants felt that Teachers in the Unit and Parents cared about and respected them and and would listen to them and spend time with them. This was something that was very lacking in their relationship with Teachers and the Gardai. As a consequence of this different perception of Teachers in the Unit and Parents participants generally felt that they could talk to them and that there was a mutual respect between the groups. Participants therefore did not have difficulty in going to

either Parents or Teachers in the Unit for advice and guidance. There were a number of participants who did not have a good relationship with their parents and this again was due to a perceived lack of respect and excessive control on the part of the parents. The participants see themselves and Other Pupils as having no control, power or choice within the education system at any level and they feel that they are disrespected at every level of mainstream education.

Most interestingly perhaps is the fact that the key to what is causing these boys to misbehave in class and to leave school, as far as they themselves are concerned, seems to be inherent in the classroom dynamic. Something which, as can be seen from their positive reactions to the assessment centre classes, is not very difficult to undo and has considerable knock-on effects. The relationship between participants perceptions of power, control, choice and respect in education is pivotal in understanding the phenomenon of educational failure from the boys perspective.

A model of what the boys seem to be saying about education and the reasons why it failed them can be found over leaf (diagram 1).

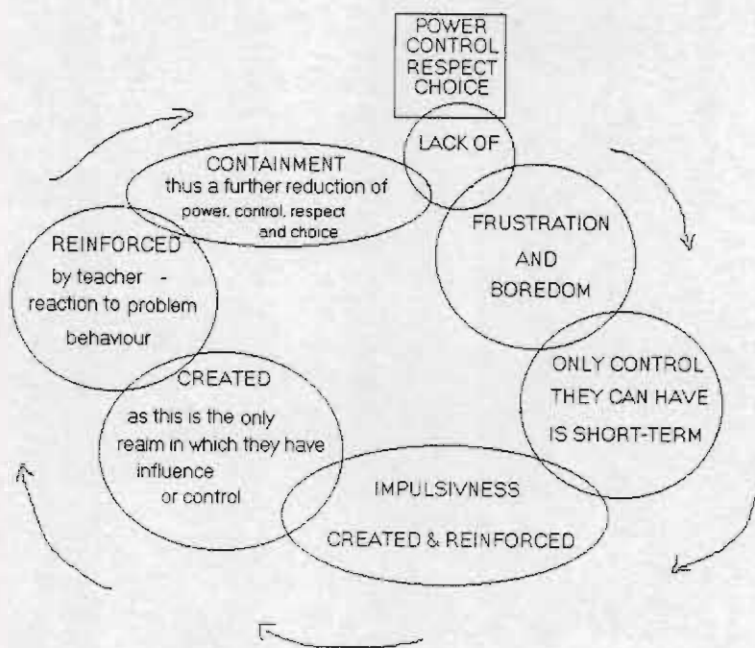


Diagram 1 Model of self-perpetuating nature of 'impulsivity'

From this model we can see that the relationship between the various factors which produce and perpetuate what comes to be seen as impulsive and deviant behaviour are interactive and feed into one another. The system seems to develop as follows;

The boys see themselves as having no Power, Control, Respect or Choice within their educational lives and in particular in the classroom. As a result of this they begin to feel frustrated and bored. They then, due to their frustration and boredom, look around for what control, respect and power they can have, --- which is short term --- to take control in the classroom by misbehaving. This as they see it is the only way they can exercise power in the situation and since for them power equals choice they choose to be powerful and exercise control, -- they misbehave. Thus what is later deemed impulsiveness is created and reinforced.

It is **created** as misbehaviour and conflict in the classroom is their only way of seizing control. Then it is **reinforced** by the teacher reaction to problem behaviour. As the boys themselves testify, teachers in general school deal with them, by not dealing with them, they simply remove the problem behaviour by removing the boy himself or punishing him through, detention, line giving, punishment essays etc. What this does, from the boys perspective however, is to reinforce the impulsiveness as this is seen as a further reduction of power, control, respect and choice and so more frustration is produced thus continuing the cycle.

Alternatively if the boy **sees** himself as being in a powerful role when misbehaving as he is momentarily in control then removing him from the classroom or more pertinently removing him from society by placing him in an **assessment** centre could also be

feeding his problem behaviour. If we look at it from his perspective what we as a society could well be saying to these boys is that ' you are so powerful and we are so unable to deal with you that we must remove you from (i) the classroom and (ii) the wider world '. I will return to this point in the discussion.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

From the results a number of very interesting and multi-levelled themes have arisen which lead the discussion into various areas. I will begin by dealing with the four main thematic results themselves, first individually and then in terms of how they interact. I will then examine some alternative classroom and educational situations and some of the problems which arise when attempting to alter existing systems. Finally, I will put forward a number of recommendations in relation to education, dealing with problem behaviour and the issue of 'discipline' in schools and education generally.

Thematic Results

From the data we saw that the four main issues for the boys participating in this study were lack of Power, Control, Respect and Choice. I would argue that what is happening in this situation is that the boys means of coping with this perceived lack of autonomy and esteem are being interpreted by others as acts of deviance. If we return to the model in the results section we can see that teacher reaction, and on a broader scale societal reaction, to these boys behaviour is serving to perpetuate the very behaviour it wishes to curb. What in fact we are doing is trying to deal with these boys' struggle to gain some control, by controlling them further and thus are fanning the flames of what we perceive as their deviant behaviour.

If we consider for a moment the literature on control and control theory this may be further illustrated.

CONTROL

Lack of perceived control has been shown to have many negative consequences.

At first the reaction is usually manifested in an upsurge of anger and protest. Then, if the person's effort to regain control fails s/he is likely to become demoralised. In fact, in some cases, if this continues it can lead to profound feelings of helplessness and depression. (Langer 1983) This profile could readily be applied to the cycle that many young offenders find themselves part of when they begin to have problems in school.

They react first with anger and protest by acting out in class and getting in trouble with teachers. If we look at some of the accounts of participants in the laddering phase we see that the above reactions are mirrored - participants are very angry and frustrated at their lack of control within school. Then, due to having no outlet for their frustration they become demoralised, and this in no small way leads them to leave school altogether. As participant 4 says *"If we just had a say in rules that effect us everyday then that would really help a lot"* in fact participant 4 said he would have remained in school if this was the case. It seems then that some level of empowerment of pupils would at the very least boost student morale within the school and this idea is supported by research.

Studies which have considered the positive aspects of the presence of the perception of control such as Revesman and Perlmutter (1981), have found that perceived control enhanced motivation and performance. Such a finding is bound to be beneficial to all those concerned with education, particularly those that deal with the young offender population and complain that they are myopic and unmotivated, however there is a qualification:

A study by Monty, Geller, Savage and Perlmutter (1979) found that it is very important that the control offered be real. In that study, one condition was offered a meaningful choice in a given situation whereas the second condition were offered an unattractive choice which they perceived as equivalent to no choice at all, and thus they perceived that they had no control in this situation. The group who had been given the meaningful choice perceived themselves as having control in the situation and so performed significantly better than the unattractive choice group. These findings indicate that within a school a token gesture (such as perhaps a student council which has no 'real' power) will in no way enhance students perception of control.

A 1984 study on teachers and principals is worth considering in relation to this issue. Data collected in 55 schools in New Jersey found that principals who shared decision making with subordinates had teachers who were more loyal, more satisfied and who described the authority structure as less rigid than the teachers whose principals did not share decision making (Hoy and Sousa, 1984). If the decision making structure in school also involved pupils in some real way, perhaps they too would be more satisfied and see the authority structure as less rigid. Since in the 1979 study the choice given to subjects was only effective if it was an attractive and thus meaningful choice, then in the same way within school any attempt to give more control to the students must be meaningful from the students' perspective. It is imperative to realise that no notion of 'student control' can be 'imposed' on the students as it is they themselves who decide whether or not they feel empowered.

Another issue which is raised by the study by Monty et al (1979) is the issue of choice and how that is related to perceived control. In fact in the context of this study questions of control and choice are inextricably linked, both to each other and also to

notions of respect and power. It would be most useful to consider the issues of Choice and Power in tandem as the participants seemed to equate one with the other --- If you have Power you have Choices and if you can Choose you are Powerful.

CHOICE AND POWER

For the participants in this study Power and Choice are pivotal issues. To be powerful is to be in control, to command respect and to be able to choose. This population however feel that within education they have no choices and no power, they simply must do what the teacher wants, when the teacher wants it done. The "sit down, shut up and listen" mentality as participant 5 put it. Is this type of discipline necessary and/or desirable?

All the later philosophers interested in education -- Locke, Rousseau, Dewey, Whitehead and Russell agreed that.....

'...the purpose of education should be to empower individuals to create and control knowledge, rather than to gain power over the pupil. If we take this view, the greatest threat to intellectual and moral growth is seen to be authoritarian impulses in education.'

(Cooper, 1993 pp. 28)

.....it appears that Locke et al would deem it neither necessary nor desirable. Why then and how, according to the accounts in this study, do authoritarian impulses continue to exist in our education system? If we return to the study by Monty et al (1979) and examine the issue of meaningful choice and how it relates to perceived control it points the discussion in an interesting direction. The boys in this study feel that they have no

choice and no power within the education system at any level. Education has long been celebrated as a means of giving people choices and options, a means of 'empowering' people. So why do these boys feel that it is not doing that for them, and is in fact doing the opposite.

First we must look at the notions of choice and power as they are imagined in our society. The word 'Empowerment' must be examined as it is a much more commonly used word than Power or Choice, and seems to be inextricably linked to the two. Empowerment can be defined as "acting as agents or advocates to the process of redefining, experiencing and realising one's own power" (Kitzinger and Perkins 1993 pp. 44). From this definition Kitzinger and Perkins point out that use of the term 'empowerment' allows for the redefinition of the word 'power' in such a way that we get to feel that we've got some. It attempts to create in people "...a certain state of mind (feeling powerful, competent, worthy of esteem, able to make free choices and influence their world), *while leaving structural conditions unchanged.*" (pp. 44). When society and perhaps more pertinently psychology focus on the empowerment of the individual and conceptualises power as an individual 'possession' then we leave the way open to blaming those who do not 'take their power'. For the young offender this means that it is his own fault that he feels powerless and that he feels he has little choice -- he is obviously unable to see the bigger picture. He is unable to see that what is being done *to* him is being done for his own good. However, all of this is done while 'leaving structural conditions unchanged' and so **we** are not comparing like with like, we are not on a level playing field. In a classroom situation it is the teacher and the weight of the system that **s/he has behind** him/her that has the power, these boys feel that they have none and have little chance of acquiring some.

If we continue this argument into the area of choice there is a parallel. In the liberal capitalist society in which we operate the notion of choice is promoted. 'Choice' is at the essence of the capitalist ideal, as the antithesis of communist uniformity. This of course can be related to the argument in chapter two which refers to the onset of the 'rational' society in which people either chose to conform or somehow made the faulty choice of being deviant. As was argued in chapter two what this idea propagates is the illusion of free choice. Blame is then securely attached to those who make the 'wrong' choice -- those people who do not 'sit down, shut up and listen'. However the young offenders in this study do not feel that they are choosing not to do as teachers wish them to, they feel that they have no choice when in school but to follow the rules or leaveand so they leave. Margaret Orr in a review of the literature on early school leavers came to the following conclusion;

" Although the implication of the term DROPOUT is that the student has left school willfully and without good reason, there is overwhelming evidence that many so-called dropouts leave because of the treatment they receive at school or the failure of school programs to meet their learning needs. In effect, these students are forced out". (Orr, 1987, pp. 5)

RESPECT

The final major theme in the data was that of respect or indeed, yet again, the lack of it. The participants in the study define someone who respects them as someone who listens to them, spends time with them and cares about them, neither Teachers nor the Gardai are seen by these boys as doing any of those things. The participants in the study feel that the education system and the people within it have no respect for them. They feel that they are not listened to and that they have no recourse to anybody if they have a problem personally or with a teacher. They also feel that teachers want them to learn and to behave, not out of any concern for pupils welfare, but so that people will think that they are good teachers. What this amounts to is that, as these participants see it, even when teachers make an effort to help them to learn something it is done to bolster their own standing and respect in the community and not out of concern for the pupils. (The question of whether or not this is the 'reality' of the situation for the purposes of this study is inapplicable as it is the participants perception of the reality of school which is at issue.) It would seem from the boy's accounts that all the teachers want the pupils to do is to obey the rules so that they can cover the curriculum. This in itself is not an adverse pursuit, but it is the means employed by the teachers and how they are interpreted by the participants in the study which seem to be creating the conflict. To question these methods however is to question the basis of how society relates to youth, a relationship which seems to be encapsulated by a question asked by the protagonist and addressed to his mother in the novel 'Portnoy's Complaint' by Philip Roth, 'Where did you get the idea that the most wonderful thing I could be in life was *obedient*?' (Roth 1967 pp. 125)

If as the participants see it the education system expects an unreasonable level of obedience from young people then it is disrespecting their capacity as thinking individuals. It seems that as a society we need youth to obey, to conform, and to do as has always been done, if this does not happen then all that has been built up so far is under threat. However, as we have discussed in earlier chapters this has long been a fear in society and will no doubt continue to be. What this fear produces is manifested in how our schools are organised and indeed how the classroom dynamic has evolved. In turn this very system and how it operates is what the participants in this study claim is causing them to feel alienated and disrespected and therefore, if we are to follow the model developed in chapter 5, is perpetuating what is seen by teachers and others as deviant, problem behaviour.

CONTROL, POWER, RESPECT & CHOICE

It is at this point that all four main themes of Control, Power, Choice and Respect, and their absence from the participants' educational experience, fuse together. It is the absence of these which causes the boys to behave as they do, and not, as might be argued, the boys behaviour which cause them to be eroded. To fully understand the dynamics of how this situation emerges we need to examine the teachers point of view. This was not something which was done directly in this study as no teachers were interviewed, however, there are various related studies which give the teacher perspective on this issue and I wish to draw on one such relevant Irish study in particular.

The outcomes of a very significant study carried out by Bolt (1994) on the experiences of early school leavers in inner city Dublin has many parallels with the results of this present study. Results from the Bolt study were obtained through open ended interviews and focus groups and so also employed qualitative methods and participants included teachers, parents, community workers and early school leavers among others. For the purposes of this discussion it is the section of the study which deals with teacher perceptions of early school leavers to which I will pay particular attention.

From the data collected in the study it was found that in general school personnel believed that it was parents and familial factors which were primarily the cause when a pupil dropped out of school. Teachers felt that parents placed little value on schooling and failed to prepare and encourage their children sufficiently in relation to education. They also felt that problems at home both caused and exacerbated misbehaviour in school. According to school personnel, as reported by Bolt;

".....difficulties in the home are often 'played out' by pupils in school through their misbehaviour and indiscipline. Seeking attention or 'relief from their troubles at home', pupils often ignore their school work, 'hassle' their teachers and fellow pupils and/or mitch from school which lead to further problems and frustration in school. In such circumstances school and education lose their value and meaning and the decision to leave school becomes more attractive." (Bolt 1994 pp. 22).

Further accounts from teachers spoke of families as 'dysfunctional' or 'notorious in the area' and Bolt reports that the word 'deprivation' appears frequently . In fact two teachers are reported as saying ;

"...pupils are deprived emotionally, educationally, in their diet, in their experiences in life, in their relationships and in the opportunities available to them, and this deprivation is the cause of their leaving school." (Bolt 1994 pg23)

These accounts have echoes of the teacher attitudes reported in chapter 3 in relation to the Pygmalion Effect and how it may operate in terms of socio-economic discrimination. Nonetheless it is very possible that the pressures of socio-economic and other deprivation are impacting on the pupils to such an extent that it does culminate in their leaving school. To test this hypothesis however we can look to another narrative in the Bolt study, the story of the early school leavers themselves.

The word used most frequently by the early school leavers to express their opinion of school was 'hate', the same or similar words were used by almost every young offender in this study.

For early school leavers it was the nature of the pupil teacher relationship which was the most significant factor in prompting them to leave school, just as with the population in the present study. Moreover, the two groups are readily comparable in terms of socio-economic background and more importantly in the fact that young offenders are very typically also early school leavers. As has been pointed out previously it is the very fact that young offenders typically leave school earlier that prompted this research into their perceptions of educational failure. One can presume therefore, that if the Teacher attitudes in the Bolt study ~~are representative~~ of teacher attitudes to early school leavers generally, then there is likely to be a similar teacher attitude to the participants in this

study as they are young offenders and early school leavers. Teachers blame familial and 'home' factors in general for pupils dropping out, while the pupils both in the Bolt and this present study see their relationship with teachers as being the most educationally inhibiting factor. This divergence of perceptions and moreover the ability of one perception to have dominance over the other is at the core of educational failure and warrants further examination.

If we look again at school itself and various interpretations of peoples roles within it, it adds a further layer to the conflicting perceptions of school life. A study by Inbar (1996) which used imagery techniques in exploring both students and teachers perceptions of school and their respective roles within it, found that the school was most often metaphorically compared to a prison by students. The students saw themselves as 'sentenced' to school, and 'imprisoned' within the grading system by teachers who are seen as 'jailers', 'guards' and 'monitors' among other things. Just as in the present study where Teachers and Gardai were construed as being very similar. Inbar argues that such metaphors are indications of the student's image of the system as an authoritative and controlling one, which would seem to support the findings of the present study. However, the metaphors used by teachers are that of student as receptacle, receptacles which are presumed to be '....relatively empty, passive, indifferent to what is happening and capable of storing and preserving' (p. 82). Inbar points out that the implication of that group of metaphors could be summarised as 'Sit quiet! Listen and remember' (p.82) almost the very words used by participant 5 when he described the teacher attitude in class to be 'Sit down, Shut up and Listen'. Inbar argues that these images are milestones on the road to the 'prison' and 'prisoner' metaphors. Furthermore, a significant number of educators perceived pupils as 'clay in

the potter's hands' - Inbar points out that one needs a very high opinion of teacher's ability and power and simultaneously a very low opinion of student's personality to see them as so ultimately malleable, mouldable and powerless. It is in this powerful/powerless dichotomy that the rub lies. Within the present education system the teacher has a specific number of 'vessels' to fill with the curriculum (to borrow a metaphor) and in doing so conflict is created, how does this occur? This scenario creates a conflict as the teacher has the dual role of standard setter and dispenser of grades. From this situation ensues what Waller (1932) called a "battle of requirements" as the teacher is given the role of setter of requirements and grader which directly conflict with their role as 'coach'. This diminishes trust between students and teachers. Furthermore when students feel that teachers are asking too much of them they respond to teachers as taskmasters and judges rather than guides, helpers or coaches. Students consequently spend much time and effort trying to renegotiate the tasks they are assigned and trying to figure out a method of bribing or threatening the judge into lowering standards and lessening demands (MacIver, Rueman and Main 1995) .

For the participants in this study however the conflicting roles endured by the teacher lead to them having no choice but to misbehave or leave school altogether This may be due to the impulsiveness of which they are consistently accused, but which has been shown from their perspective to be inherent in the classroom and general school dynamic. They do not see, or perhaps do not accept, that education and discipline as defined by educators will 'do them good' in the long run. However, on what basis is it argued that it will?

Is it all 'for your own good'?

Since mass schooling was introduced in the nineteenth century it is understandable that the philosophical and methodological development of education would reflect the ideas, developments and needs of that time. As Handy and Aitken (1990) points out, ideas of mass production were copied, particularly because teachers were in short supply. Also due to the fact that language and books were the only means available for the transfer of ideas the system came to rely heavily upon them. This coupled with the Cartesian world view that so valued the intellect and deductive scientific mind, and Burt and Binet's influence in terms of a fixed hierarchical view of human ability and the onset of intelligence quotients, meant that education developed into a system with the following characteristics:

- The method of instruction was didactic with pupils instructed in groups by an expert.
- The content was highly knowledge based with an emphasis on cognition most notably, initially at least, the three R's.
- The classroom dynamic was based on competition where pupils were rated against the average for the class or age group.
- The values in education were adult, that is to say that it was adults who decided what children should do and know. (Handy & Aitken, 1990).

The above could be coarsely encapsulated by the expression 'the-mug-and-jug-approach' to education. A system whereby the pupil is the passive receiver of knowledge (the mug) from the possessor of that knowledge and skill, the teacher (the jug).

Handy and Aitken see this traditional method of education as having far reaching consequences;

“...the product of the education process has come to be equated with how much knowledge a student can regurgitate.”
(Handy & Aitken 1990, p. 113)

Handy and Aitken go on to argue that some of the most powerful consequences of our inherited educational tradition are in those related to the classroom dynamic and roles within education;

- *Role and status.* The teacher rules by authority: choosing, directing, controlling and judging the learner's activities. The student is inferior, expected to be passive, obedient, without choice.
 - *Classroom climate.* Enshrines a pecking order (by marks or remarks, 'good', 'fair', 'weak'); favours the conformist and denies sharing or any real development of group skills.
 - *Content.* Concerned overwhelmingly with cognitive development and not also with affective, intuitive intelligence: concentrates on left-brain functions; is not concerned with the education of the whole person.
- (Handy & Aitken, 1990 p.113)

Handy and Aitken concede that schools have moved away from many of the traditional footholds of educational theory and method which are described in the last few paragraphs. A more child-centred approach which appreciates pupils as thinking, feeling beings is evolving, especially so in primary and special schools. However, it must be pointed out that education is still very cognitive/knowledge based and that the emphasis is on teaching as opposed to learning. This is especially so in secondary school according to Handy and Aitken, where the education system is still 'filling pitchers rather than lighting fires'. This a very pertinent point in the context of participants' perception of school in this study. According to participants own accounts and from the data gleaned from the file analysis in phase two, participants' 'problem

behaviour' began when they entered secondary school. Is it possible that the more traditional methods which Handy and Aitken argue are ingrained in the secondary cycle have a significant impact on the participants' perception of and behaviour in school? The answer becomes clearer when we look at that tradition which lives on most continuously -- that is the relationship between teacher and pupil. That very issue which is at the core of the grievance participants have in this study. Any amount of curricular, methodological or theoretical change will not impact on these pupils perception of education as long as the status quo in this area persists. A status quo which Handy and Aitken describe as follows;

The teacher dominates; pupils are subordinates. The teacher is the professional dealing all the cards, deciding and controlling what is to be learnt and done, how and when. This denies or sets aside the strengths, interests and experience of the students and the group - including their ability to make decisions and to evaluate their own learning. It is this aspect of the product of education that is so inadequate and led David Hargreaves to declare so strongly that 'school damages dignity'.
(Handy & Aitken, 1990, pp. 113-115)

The argument made by Handy and Aitken and the research presented by Inbar and Bolt all point to one conclusion, that what the participants of this present study are saying is not simply an isolated complaint. The perception of the population who took part in this study is supported by a significant number of other accounts, regardless of whether they are young offenders, early school leavers, 'ordinary pupils' or theorists.

They and the participants in this study are clearly not content with school as it stands, so what alternatives can we offer?

An alternative view of what happens in a classroom:

In chapter 3 the theory of Lev Vygotsky was referred to in terms of how it related to the process of learning and what he saw as the socio/cultural/historical nature of the learning process. The tool through which this learning happens is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). However if we look at the ZPD in the broadest context possible, a context Holzman (1997) calls 'the totality individual-and-society' (p.60) then what does it become? From this vantage point the ZPD is not an instrumental tool but instead is a developmental activity in itself, it is no longer simply a zone, it is now a 'life-space' where all the higher processes emerge and develop. Holzman is quick to note though that;

'The critical feature of the ZPD as life space is that it is *inseparable from the we who produce it*. It is and is produced through....- the relational activity of human beings creating their lives' (p. 60, 1997).

This is a critical point when discussing Vygotskian theory in the context of this study. The total environment of school involves both students and teachers, not as parts that make up a whole or 'players' that exist within the confines of an environment - 'but as inseparable from and creators of it' (p. 61 Holzman 1997). All the people involved in education are active agents, with their own, socially, culturally and historically mediated perceptions of education. This point is pivotal when examining problems within the education system as it stands.

'We all live simultaneously in society and in history, more precisely in the dialectical unity society/history. We develop our lives by adapting societally (i.e. to society -the name we give to specific temporal and spatial "locations") and at the same time adapting historically (engaging in the revolutionary activity of transforming these societal circumstances). If we stop adapting to history, we not only stop developing, we eventually stop adapting to society' (p. 62 Holzman 1997)

The continuous shaping and reshaping of our historical and societal realities thus simultaneously *is* and *creates* the environment in which we exist. What does this have to say about the education system as it stands?

If we accept Holzman's interpretation of Vygotsky then we must recognise all participants in the educational process as just that - *participants*. People who are active agents in and creators of the educational process. If this is the case then any idea of apportioning blame or looking for cause/effect solutions to problems within education is defunct. That is not to suggest that any notion of responsibility is also removed, on the contrary, what this in fact means is that *every* person within the system is responsible.

The participants in this study want to participate more, they want to have an input into what, when and how they learn and how they spend their school day. They really want "*...more control in the day to day running of the school (participant1)*" almost every participant refers to school as "*boring*" and generally relate this to the fact that they are allowed to do anything *but* participate. As they see it to "*sit down, shut up and listen*" is not to really be an active participant. One participant also pointed out that this is not an ideal situation for for the teacher either "*It must be boring for the teachers in schools outside (the unit) , I mean they know what they're in for everyday too*" (participant 5).

If we look at the system from the perspective of Holzman's reading of Vygotsky however, what that allows is a situation whereby the education system (or any system) is changeable as it is constantly being 'created' by those who are 'in' it and in turn shaping those very people who are creating it. It is not so much that people work or learn within the education system, they *are*, *create* and are inseparable from, the education system in which they work and learn.

One of the problems however is that we are not 'adapting historically' to the extent that we might, as was shown to be the case in Handy and Aitken's analysis of the education system as it stands. There are ways that we could set about doing just that however, as what has been described in the **last** few pages in the context of education has been discussed in a broader organisational framework under the headings of 'activity setting' **and** 'activity system' (Wertsch, 1985, **Engestrom**, 1989). However, both are also useful and practical notions within an educational framework..

An 'activity setting' as described by Wertsch is not defined in terms of physical contexts but functions in the social realm. Activity settings are brought to situations by the participants in that situation. To illustrate we can use an example of a typical classroom scenario where a teacher attempts to give extra attention to a student s/he sees as a 'problem student'. The teacher may perceive this interaction as an opportunity to give the pupil some extra help, some personal attention and may be a vehicle for relationship building with the pupil. **However**, the pupil may interpret the same encounter as the teacher 'picking on' him/her and keeping a closer eye on him/her because they expect trouble. Wertsch (1985) maintains that activity settings are not always consciously identifiable or accessible by those participating and thus creating them. Nevertheless, 'people are extremely skilful in acting in accord with their, often **tacit**, definitions of their situation.' (Blackler, 1991, p. 290).

The second notion, that of 'activity systems', is used by Engestrom to expose a number of prevalent misconceptions in relation to the nature of 'the expert'. Engestrom within a Vygotskian framework examines expertise within its cultural and historical framework. He used the his work with the medical profession to illustrate this style of analysis but

again it can readily be applied to teachers as experts. As Engstrom sees it, it is unrealistic to suppose that experts in any area all practice the same skills.

“...Expertise should not be understood as the property of individuals who, after long periods of apprenticeship, have absorbed a standard repertoire of explicit knowledge and tacit skills. Rather, analysis of expertise in its historical and cultural context points to significant changes in priority and style. Moreover, the behaviour of specific experts has to be understood as participant of the broader social, technical and organisational system within which they operate.” (Blackler 1991, pp. 290)

This is the essence of ‘activity systems’, that expertise is exercised as a collective relational process -- individual experts instigating their prerogatives through the activity system of which they are part. In the case of ‘teacher as expert’ this includes (as has been shown through discussion of Holzman’s reading of Vygotsky) co-workers, principals and pupils among others. Engstrom in his analysis of the medical profession using the activity system model identifies five distinct ways in which medical expertise was being practised. He deduced that these five models correspond broadly to five historically distinct ways of conceptualising disease. From there Engstrom concluded that a disequilibrium between a patient’s needs and a doctor’s approach, or the organisational reality of the service led to the following;

“...a doctor working with a biomedical perspective might send a patient with ambiguous symptoms for more tests to rule out all possible somatic causes, thus postponing consideration of possible psychic issues, while a doctor working with a psychosomatic orientation might prescribe sick leave while trying to make it possible for the patient gradually to begin to discuss underlying stress factors.” (Blackler 1991, p. 291).

In his efforts to change doctors activity systems Engstrom notes that a key task is to help participants to learn what is not there.

If we apply the same logic to an educational model then the key task in changing educational activity systems, which include teachers, pupils and all other educational personnel is; to help all those within the education system to learn what is not there. As far as the participants in this study are concerned what is 'not there' is control, power, choice and respect for pupils, these are 'owned' by the teachers and not shared with the students. Put candidly by participant 7;

"Teachers and principals have too much power. Everyone should have a say in what happens to them, they should be able to run their own life. People don't want to be told what to do all the time."

However activity systems are generally not well recognised by their participants, and Engestrom believes that the first task in tackling this is to provide those within the activity system with a 'collective mirror' (Blackler, 1991 p. 291). This is more than simply about 'raising awareness' in any information driven way, but just like the activity system and activity settings themselves, is a much more interactive, relational and cyclical rather than a linear process. In Engestroms analysis of the medical professions activity system he found that historical analysis, interviews and most importantly, the identification of tensions and contradictions which were features of the daily workings of an activity system, provided the elements with which to develop that 'collective mirror'. The reflection showed up tensions within the existing activity system and thus helping those within it to discuss and deliberate over possible alternative ways of functioning. This is a model which could be applied to an educational context, at a **macro** level or simply within the classroom.

It is worth noting that within the assessment unit there is already to an extent a 'collective mirror' in that the unit functions as a very self reflective entity. In the unit the teachers, care-staff and management, together with the boys who are resident there, work to develop the best possible care-plan for each individual boy and also to ensure that the unit is running to its upmost potential. Each boy's care plan is developed continually and reviewed at intervals, but always with the involvement of the boy himself and in accordance with his wishes to the extent which that is possible. There are regular meetings of the care staff and teaching staff to discuss how individual boys are doing, but also how the unit as a whole is functioning and how the assessment cycle could be added to - i.e. *what is not there*. Interestingly, it is often when the unit is running most smoothly that staff and mangement feel that change is most needed. They feel that if there is not some level of conflict or tension then they may not be challenging the boys to the extent that they could be and so the anti-social behaviour that they demonstrate 'outside' is somhow being suppressed or contained within the unit. Through the identification of such paradoxes the unit functions better and there is an awareness of what they are trying to do with the system as it stands and where any shortcomings may be. In this way a 'collective mirror' works to reflect the stengths and weaknesses of the system and the people who are active within it.

In conjunction with this and possibly as a consequence of it, the school within the assessment unit functions quite differently to mainstream schools. From the descriptions given by the participants in this study we can see that classes in the unit are much more democratic, teachers are perceived as being more understanding and problems that arise are talked out by the parties involved on an equal footing.

A possible model of how this might work in a mainstream school has many parallels with restorative approaches to justice.

Restorative justice in the classroom :

The participants in this study feel that they have no power, control or choice within the present system and are afforded no respect by it. Many of them do not engage in classroom activities and some leave altogether, however in doing so they are still influencing and shaping the system and the system is still shaping them. Even in rejecting or rallying against education as it stands they are being active agents and continue what one could call 'the creation of an education system by proxy'. By opting out they are making a very clear statement;

The more the school and the wider society succeed in making certain acts grounds for excluding young people and attributing bad character to them, the more young people can utilise such acts to signal their rejection of school or the social order which stands behind....

(Emler & Reicher 1995 p.7)

By maintaining the status quo in education as described by Handy and Aitken we are giving young people no choice but the very one that society claims it does not want them to make. They opt out. Whether they do this by not participating, by causing trouble in class or by leaving education altogether is immaterial. Whatever way it happens, it is often the first step on the road to involvement with the criminal justice system. Why ? Because if one rejects school, rules, teachers, laws and /or police, one can no longer depend upon them for protection. However, if they are part of making those rules, and have some control over how they effect them and their lives, are they then less likely to reject them?

Through their own accounts they argued that if they had a say in events, rules and decisions that affected them everyday of their school lives they would be much more inclined to stay in school. If teachers treated them with respect and as equals, this they said would make school a pleasant place to be. *"We don't really have a say - you're nothing special, there's no time for the individual person. That's why we mess,- to get attention, teachers don't give it, they don't help (participant 5)"* Even something as simple as being allowed to call teachers by their first names would make a huge difference to many of them.

From the results of this study we can see that participants clearly have a much more positive view of the school system in the assessment unit and have a much better relationship with the teachers who teach within this system than with those they encountered in other schools. Why is this the case? How does school in the unit differ from mainstream school? Participants say that they prefer the school in the unit because they are treated as equals there, even the fact that they address teachers by their first names is something they see as pivotal. *" In here (the unit) teachers talk to you, and it's not just that it's the way they do - equal to equal (participant 4)"* Participant 15 explains what difference addressing teachers in mainstream school by their first names would make to him *" If you could call teachers by their first names you'd feel like they have respect for you. If you respect someone you treat them equally and evenly. If they respected us they'd treat us the same as them"*.

As a result of the more equal teacher -pupil relationship within the unit pupils are less inclined to cause trouble or misbehave. However, if an incident does occur in the classroom the boys appreciate how it is dealt with, the teacher will discuss the incident with the boy and 'talk it out'.

Participant 16 asserts that teachers in mainstream school *"...are always just shouting at you.. 'What's the answer?' and they don't give you a chance to answer and don't explain it, they just say 'Read over it' "*. In a similar vein participant 13 compares the way in which both each system deals with problem incidents.. *"In schools outside teachers just throw you out of class or suspend you, but in here (the unit) the teacher stays calm, they talk to you, we talk about why it happened and get to the root of the problem."*

In this way the root cause of the incident is discovered and resolved as best as possible. Participants see this as infinitely preferable to the 'just throw us out' reaction which they claim is the norm in mainstream school. They also feel that in the unit they have some input into and control over what they learn and when they learn it. Participant 5 puts it succinctly...

"If teachers outside were more like the ones in here school would be much better. They are calmer, they're better trained and better able to cope. Teachers outside just can't talk to young people. School is teenagers, and there's no point them learning about education if they don't learn about teenagers".

All of these elements seem to combine to produce a much more positive attitude to school in the unit compared to mainstream schools.

It is worth noting that this holds true despite the fact that the boys have absolutely no choice about attending class. In mainstream school they can 'mitch' but in the unit that is simply not an option. Choice has been seen to be a major stumbling block for these participants in relation to education, but it would appear that choice and control within the classroom are more important to them than choice about whether or not to even enter the classroom.

It must be acknowledged however that average class sizes are much smaller in the unit (often only three pupils per teacher) and this is bound to have an effect in terms of the amount of time that the teacher has with each pupil. This was recognised by participants as a factor in terms of the differences between the schools, participant 2 says of mainstream schools " *there are too many people in class , there should be half that*" while participant 9 feels that one very positive aspect of school in the unit is that " *Here the teachers have time for you, but then here the classes are smaller*". Participants were insistent however that extra personal attention from the teacher was not as big an influence on their positive attitude to school in the unit as the other factors discussed. Nevertheless it must be accepted that smaller class sizes are surely an advantage to teachers who are attempting to relate with pupils in a more democratic and egalitarian manner.

When we contrast accounts of school in the unit to the participants experiences in other schools the flashpoints become clear. In mainstream school, as the participants see it there is no choice, and if due to frustration they misbehave in class they are removed from class. This has a number of consequences:

Gorman and White (1995) describe a possible knock-on effect on peer group make-up for this population;

'[Some one] who displayed poor impulse control and extreme excitability and aggressiveness,may find himself or herself in the company of similarly impulsive, excitable, and aggressive peers, not so much because he or she has actively sought them out but rather because he or she has been excluded from other social groupings.' (Gorman and White, in Barlow (ed) 1995 p.146)

By removing pupils from classroom and grouping them together with other 'deviants' we categorise them and they no doubt learn to categorise themselves both literally and metaphorically as 'outsiders'. *"If you can't do something or if you mess they (teachers in mainstream school) just kick you out. They don't try to help."* (Participant2).

If we examine this mode of discipline in terms of the restorative justice model we can see other effects. Restorative justice is a community based model of justice and stands as a radical alternative to the present retributive system. Restorative justice has been shown to work very effectively in New Zealand where it is generally used with young offenders (Morris & Maxwell 1997). New Zealand's method is broadly based on traditional Moari models which believe that systems of justice should bind wrongdoers more tightly with their kin.

The criminal justice system as it stands here is concerned with establishing guilt so that the appropriate grade of pain and punishment can be imparted on the offender. The present model sees crime as a violation of the state and its laws. There are obvious parallels here in relation to participants perceptions of traditional classroom discipline. In contrast restorative models of justice see crime as a violation of people and relationships between them. It seeks to make right the harm done and both victims and offenders are key players in the negotiation of such a covenant. The Japanese system of justice has long been restorative in nature and their crime rate has decreased dramatically over the last 50 years, in sharp contrast to other developed nations. Professor John Haley of the University of Washington, has examined the Japanese system and concludes that

"...restorative approaches are successful in correcting offenders, empowering and healing victims, and restoring the community..... The lesson learned is that restorative justice works. (Haley ,1996 p. 367)"

The present justice system seen through this lens is flawed in many respects.

If we examine an account of what happens to offenders and communities within the present system the connections between the educational and justice systems in terms of discipline become apparent. The terms 'offenders and 'communities' in the following account could, with some adjustment, be replaced by 'problem student' and 'wider school community' in an educational context:

Offenders are neither challenged nor made to account for their actions to the person they have harmed. Their punishment bears no relation to the victim's needs. They play a passive role and are not given the opportunity to make amends. It is easy for them to rationalise their offending and even to feel victimised themselves. They are stigmatised and excluded and their re-integration into society presents major problems.

Communities are not allowed to take responsibility for their own problems. They are disempowered by professionals and the forum for dealing with local conflicts becomes the police station or the courtroom. Those convicted of crime are placed at a distance from their community, and the route back into mainstream society is difficult and uncharted.

(O'Donnell, 1998 p. 60)

The restorative justice model is about strengthening ties between offender and their communities, proponents of the model feel that traditional systems of justice weaken those bonds. There is a similar phenomenon in the classroom where discipline excludes offenders from the school community, causes resentment and thus weakens bonds between problem students and the broader school community. *"If you're put outside or given 100 lines or whatever it leads to further resentment. You don't learn from it"* (participant 5).

A restorative justice model when applied to an educational model would encompass solutions to the very grievances that participants in this study aired and could work as follows:

Due to the fact that within the restorative justice model the notion of community and community empowerment is central the first step in a restorative justice model of education would be to have a communal 'harmony' to restore if and when broken. This could be achieved by the development of a contract or code of conduct which would be agreed upon by all members of the classroom, teachers and pupils. The rules of the classroom and consequences of breaking them, once hammered out through a democratic process, are thereby 'owned' by all members of the class. This gives pupils a measure of the control which the participants in this study felt was so lacking. The rules are 'theirs', they have ownership of them as opposed to having them imposed by a teacher, principal or school board. Therefore to break the rules would be to break a social contract which they themselves had an active part in forming.

As participant 5 put it;

"I'd give pupils more say... but not too much either, a balance. Then when pupils take the attitude of "What did you ever give me?" You can say.. "What you wanted" - then there's no excuse for misbehaviour, it's your own fault... This I think would build up respect on both sides...It would be like, 'I better not mess I'd only be making a fool of myself'."

Consequently pupils would firstly be less likely to break a rule, and secondly would be responsible not just to a teacher or some other authority figure, but also to their own classmates with whom they have a contract of behaviour. Pupils would thus learn to be responsible for their own actions as they are aware of, had a part in formulating and agreed to the consequences of not doing so.

If and when a pupil did break a rule then it would be up to the community of the classroom (including the teacher) to deal with that issue. All parties would be allowed to have their say, and explain their actions and reactions. Any outcome is based on the

consent of all parties. As participant 13 says when asked what he would do if he were principal: *"I'd get the teachers to listen, then pupils could explain things to them and they could hear their side of the story"*

Thus real power, control and choice is given to pupils in terms of how the classroom is run on a day to day level. Also the pupils are afforded enough respect to be trusted to formulate and implement their own code of conduct. Furthermore, working with teachers to develop such a model would help both pupils and teachers to build trust and respect on both sides. The most important aspect to this model however is that it is inclusive, and that it allows disputes to be resolved without recourse to exclusionary tactics which weaken ties in the educational community.

If we pay attention to what the participants in this study say about education, what they feel is lacking in it and how they would change it, then a restorative model of justice in education could mean that the participants in this study and others who may be taking the first steps on a similar road remain in school.

The participants in this study feel that school has failed them... *"I've given up on school. Why? Well 'cause it's given up on me"* (participant 8). They feel that they have no choice, control or power within the education system and that the system affords them no respect. This is their central grievance and it is manifested through their relationships with those involved in education.

We have seen from the discussion of Handy and Aitken some of the possible historical reasons why teacher authority in the classroom has developed. From the examination of Holzmann's reading of Vygotsky and the explication of classroom dynamics and how they are channelled through activity settings and activity systems, a description of the creation, recreation and continuation of that very dynamic has been presented. Furthermore a model of how discipline in the classroom could be changed in terms of the restorative model of justice has been explored. The aim of this project was to discover young offenders' perceptions of education and through their accounts of their educational experiences this has been done. The challenge now is whether or not we are going to listen to them.

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion which can be drawn from this study is that the young offenders who participated in it have a very negative attitude towards mainstream school. The participants feel that they have no power, control, or choice within the education system and that they are not respected by any of those who have authority within mainstream education. The participants used strong language to express their opinions on education and the education system and how they felt that they had been treated by it. Words such as 'hate' were frequently used in relation to school itself and more specifically in relation to teachers. The participants' perceived lack of autonomy within the system seems to be manifested through their relationships with teachers. Participants felt that if school had been more democratic and if they had had more input into the everyday rules that effected them then they would have enjoyed school more, and would have remained in school for longer.

One surprising finding was the degree to which the participants attitudes to school and teachers in the unit were positive. However, once the differences between mainstream school and school in the unit, as perceived by the participants, were illustrated the reasons for this divergence in attitude became clear. Classes conducted by teachers in the unit were perceived as being more democratic and participants felt that teachers respected them and that they had a degree of autonomy within the classroom.

However these findings are not without qualification;

It must be pointed out that the participants in this study were only resident in the unit for approximately three weeks. It may be therefore, that when this time-scale is weighed against the length of time that they would have spent in mainstream education we are not comparing like with like. There is a possibility that the participants may have been going through an initial 'honeymoon' period with the new system. Nonetheless, the participants attitudes to school in the unit were extremely positive and it could equally be argued that given the short amount of time that the participants had been there, the turn around in their attitudes to school and teachers is even more remarkable. Equally whether or not their attitudes to school in the unit would have changed over time has no impact on their attitude to mainstream school and what they see as the problems with it. One limitation of the results is that it only gives one side of the educational story, albeit the least frequently aired side. A fuller picture of the classroom dynamic in schools could only be achieved through exploring teachers perceptions of education and perhaps more specifically their perception of problem pupils. Such a project could well build on the results of this one and could be carried out using very similar techniques. Perhaps substituting the element 'teacher' for 'problem pupil' and leaving the other five elements as they are could allow the data from this and any future study to be directly comparable. The perceptions of other 'active agents' in education such as principals, parents, schools inspectors and teachers in residential or special schools could also be explored in this way.

The repertory grid method proved to be a very effective tool within the context of this study and could well be applied to similar research, such as the suggested study with teachers. However it seemed to be particularly suited to the participants in this project

because as a population they are very much 'over-assessed'. All the participants would have been very used to being interviewed and filling out questionnaires, but when presented with the **grid** found it "*a bit weird*" and so had to work at it. Therefore due to the fact that the grid and the laddering does not follow the question and answer format of some assessments the boys could not simply give rote answers. The use of FLEXIGRID was also very advantageous in terms of getting a spatial representation of each participants construal of education. The PCA graphs, together with the grids and the laddering allowed the **researcher** to get an insight into the participants perception of education.

A number of other possibilities for research also became apparent through the course of the study, one in particular was the possibility of using the information in the file stage of the this study in other research . The information gleaned from the content analysis of files in phase two of the study is substantial (see appendix) and these data could well **be** used in the future as a baseline for studies in area's such as, parental separation, alcoholism, domestic violence, unemployment and how these relate to young offenders in an Irish context.

Another very obvious possibility for research which was raised directly by the participants in this study was the examination of young offenders **perception** of the gardai. In the methodology section it was explained that the original repertory grid had to be slightly changed to shift away emphasis from element four, the 'Gardai'. Participants would readily have talked at length about their attitudes to this group and it would be an interesting area to explore in term of the criminal justice system, possible developments in community policing, and the role and effectiveness of juvenile liaison officers etc.

The results of this study have been clearly stated by the participants themselves and have been interpreted and put into context through comparison with the existing literature on young offenders and education as it stands. The findings of this research have serious implications for the education system in this country and the extent to which it is effective in the aims it outlines in the most recent white paper. The results challenge those involved with, and interested in, education to think again about how we choose to educate our children considering how at least one section of those children perceive the present system.

The last word on the implications of the results I will leave to one of the participants themselves, a comment which is as insightful as it is challenging;

"When they (teachers) were young school was really strict and that's all they learned. They think that things have 'improved' because there is no corporal punishment. Today teachers won't break your arm but they'll give you twenty pages. That's what they wanted themselves when they were kids so maybe in 20 years we'll have the sort of schools that we want."

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APPENDICES

APPENNDIX A:

Materials & Apparatus

(N)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							

Empty Grid for pilot of phase 3

	{5}	1	2	3	4	5	6	{1}
(N)								(x)
A								
B								
C								
D								
E								
F								
G								
H								
I								

Empty Grid as presented to each participant

1. TEACHERS	4. GARDAI
2. PARENTS	5. OTHER PUPILS
3. SELF	6. TEACHERS IN THE UNIT

Approximate size of element cards presented to participants

APPENDIX B:

Coding Schema -- Complete Data Set from Phase 1

FAMILY BACKGROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
Parents separated	✓	✓				✓				✓				✓				✓			40%
Parents relations harmonious			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓		✓		45%
Parents concerned but lack skills			✓		✓			✓		✓							✓		✓		35%
Parents concerned & supportive							✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		35%
Large Family	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		70%
Live in corporation housing	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		65%
Little parental control/stability	✓	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		10%
Other members of family in trouble before	✓	✓				✓				✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		45%
MOTHER																					
Alcohol problem		✓										✓						✓			20%
Homemaker		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		75%
Boy closer to mother than Dad		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		30%
Mother especially concerned re boy				✓						✓						✓				✓	20%
FATHER																					
Alcohol problem				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓					35%
Violent	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓					45%
Verbal Abuse						✓				✓					✓						20%
Unemployed	✓					✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		55%
Bad relationship with boy	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		25%
Closer to Dad (Mum Gone)										✓								✓			5%

Grid showing the coded data from the **Family Background** section of the files

PERSONAL HISTORY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
Little/no conscience	✓		✓												✓						25 %
Twisted sense right/wrong	✓										✓									✓	20 %
Knows right from wrong		✓				✓	✓														15 %
Only remorse is at getting caught		✓									✓			✓	✓						20 %
Hates/Fears his father		✓						✓	✓	✓						✓					25 %
Member of/very loyal to a gang	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	45 %
Little school/formal education	✓	✓				✓		✓				✓							✓		35 %
Unsettled home life	✓	✓			✓					✓		✓			✓	✓				✓	40 %
Drinks				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				✓	✓				✓	45 %
Aggressive	✓			✓	✓										✓	✓					20 %
Has insight into his situation				✓					✓												10 %
Lacks insight into his situ.			✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓					✓	40 %
Has been in trouble before	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓	65 %
Is loud and boisterous		✓				✓	✓													✓	10 %
Is pleasant					✓	✓	✓					✓		✓					✓	✓	35 %
Feels parents have lost interest in / given up on him								✓													5 %
Sees no future - life 'boring'								✓													5 %
Behaves anti-socially due to:																					
A. Peer pressure	✓			✓																	10 %
B. Boredom	✓			✓										✓						✓	15 %
Blames other for his situation										✓										✓	15 %
Drugs										✓	✓				✓						20 %
Distant											✓		✓		✓						15 %
Steals for money											✓			✓	✓					✓	35 %
Was bullied at school																				✓	5 %

Grid showing the coded data from the **Personal History** section of the files

TIME IN UNIT - GENERAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
Distrustful initially	✓		✓			✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	5%
Poor self image	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓				✓		✓	✓				✓	40%
Acts the 'hard man'	✓							✓		✓			✓		✓					✓	20%
Impulsive	✓	✓											✓		✓					✓	25%
Insecure	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	60%
Antagonistic towards authority	✓					✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	45%
Can be friendly / cooperative		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	80%
Moody	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓					✓	✓					35%
Made special effort for report			✓		✓	✓	✓								✓			✓	✓		25%
Got on well with peers					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	45%
Demanding of staff		✓				✓		✓		✓	✓				✓					✓	35%
Undemanding of staff			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓				35%
Not disruptive in contrast to outside reports				✓	✓				✓					✓							20%
Verbally aggressive			✓			✓		✓							✓						20%
Changed alot over the three weeks		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓				✓	✓					40%
Good sense of fair play		✓			✓	✓			✓											✓	15%
No management problem			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓										✓	✓	50%
Lacked acceptance from peers		✓	✓			✓				✓											30%
Very bad loser										✓											10%
Quick to anger / Temper											✓				✓						10%

Grid showing the coded data from the **Time in Unit-General** section of the files

PSYCHIATRIC REPORT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
PARENTS																					
Concerned and caring				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		60%
Blame group for bad influence				✓									✓							✓	15%
Feel they have tried everything to no avail			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓		40%
Unable to understand reasons for his behaviour			✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								25%
Feel powerless to control him	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓				45%
Blame agencies for not doing enough								✓													5%
Mother is more realistic								✓	✓	✓						✓				✓	20%
Mother has more insight								✓	✓	✓						✓				✓	25%
BOY HIMSELF																					
Poor relationship with one or both parents	✓	✓						✓	✓				✓			✓					35%
Anti-social behaviour due to boredom and/or peer pressure	✓			✓						✓	✓		✓	✓						✓	30%
Lacks insight into his situation	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						55%
Low self esteem (abrasive exterior)	✓	✓				✓					✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	45%
Insecure	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			✓				✓					40%
Immature	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓		✓								✓	40%
No plans re future								✓			✓		✓								25%
Confident					✓		✓	✓		✓	✓									✓	35%
Friendly				✓		✓	✓				✓	✓								✓	50%

Grid showing the coded data from the Psychiatric Report section of the files

PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORT																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
Defiant	✓			✓				✓		✓				✓							25%
Impulsive	✓		✓		✓				✓	✓										✓	30%
Overdependant on group of peers	✓			✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓						40%
Needs support of group for own self esteem	✓			✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	50%
Immature	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						65%
Little ability to learn from mistakes			✓					✓					✓	✓		✓					25%
Poor self-image			✓		✓						✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	45%
Has known alot of rejection and failure	✓		✓					✓		✓									✓	✓	45%
Defensive										✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						35%
Gives up easily											✓				✓						10%
ASSESSED ABILITY																					
Dull Normal	✓		✓					✓		✓			✓				✓				50%
Average					✓																5%
Below average for agc	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓						85%
Borderline											✓								✓		10%
Mild mental handicap												✓							✓		30%

Grid showing the coded data from the **Psychological Report** section of the files

<u>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ	
PRIMARY SCHOOL																						
Irregular attendance	✓	✓				✓							✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	45%
Troublesome / Disruptive	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	45%
Attention Seeking	✓			✓					✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	30%
Defiant	✓				✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	35%
Defensive	✓								✓	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	25%
Moody	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	30%
Impulsive	✓								✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	20%
Antagonistic to staff	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	35%
Poor achievement	✓	✓				✓					✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	45%
Lies	✓	✓			✓																	15%
Indifferent to class		✓			✓	✓				✓			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	35%
Temper		✓	✓	✓	✓																	15%
No real friends			✓	✓													✓					10%
Poor self esteem				✓															✓			10%
Poor response to discipline or correction		✓			✓					✓												15%
Popular with a few other disruptive kids	✓			✓	✓																	15%
Fine up to recently											✓											5%
Poor attention															✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	20%

Grid showing the coded data from the Educational Background (Primary School) section of the files

<u>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND 2</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
SECONDARY SCHOOL																					23%
Attendance very irregular	√														√						3%
Poor application to work	√													√	√						8%
Very few friends (older if)	√																				8%
Occasionally deceitful	√													√	√						46%
Defiant	√			√		√							√	√	√						62%
(Very) Disruptive	√			√	√	√							√	√	√						38%
Lethargic / Apathetic	√						√						√		√						31%
Poor performance	√			√									√		√						31%
Poor attention span/ concentration			√	√																	31%
Not particularly liked/disliked			√	√		√	√														23%
Average performance				√		√	√						√	√							15%
Has potential but is indifferent					√												√				8%

Grid showing the coded data from the Educational Background (Secondary School) section of the files

<i>EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND 3</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
EDUCATION IN UNIT (Gen)																					
Defensive at first	√							√						√	√	√			√	√	30%
Took time to settle in	√	√						√						√	√	√			√	√	35%
Needs alot of attention	√	√				√				√			√		√	√			√	√	50%
Pleasant	√	√				√			√		√	√		√					√	√	45%
Co-operative	√					√			√		√	√		√					√	√	50%
Capacity for independent work							√		√		√	√									15%
Important to him he does well	√					√			√			√		√		√		√			30%
Interested												√									20%
Occasional verbal 'exchanges'	√		√			√									√	√				√	30%
Below average performance for age	√	√					√	√	√		√				√	√			√	√	60%
Fair concentration		√			√	√					√					√			√	√	25%
Seeks little assistance					√																10%
Instigator of disturbances		√	√							√					√					√	25%
Distant			√																		5%
Positive attitude to small class				√			√			√						√					25%
Shys away from challenge - lacks confidence in ability				√				√							√				√	√	35%
Diligent				√			√						√								15%
Ignores peers in class	√		√	√													√				20%
Easily motivated by praise etc.				√	√	√	√		√												25%
Can concentrate on a task to its completion				√		√	√	√	√					√					√		45%
Doesn't need alot teacher attention							√														5%
Indifferent														√					√		10%
Very poor concentration															√				√		45%

Grid showing the coded data from the **Educational Background - Education In the Unit (General)** section of the files

EDUCATION IN UNIT #2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ
Literacy/ English																					
Understands what he reads	√	√							√	√	√		√	√	√			√	√		50%
Is neat	√				√				√									√	√		30%
Enthusiastic / willing to learn						√	√	√													15%
Basic grammar		√	√							√	√		√	√	√						40%
Enjoys personal reading		√							√		√		√								20%
Reluctant to read of own accord			√												√						10%
Has basic reading / writing	√	√	√		√		√	√	√	√			√	√							50%
Below literacy level						√						√							√		25%
Poor word attack skills								√				√								√	20%
Improved considerably while in unit						√															5%
Numeracy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Adding - o.k.	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					√	95%
Subtraction - o.k.	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					√	85%
Multiplication - o.k.	√	√			√	√	√		√	√	√		√	√						√	60%
Division - short only	√	√					√		√												20%
Multiplication - relies on tables			√																		5%
No fractions or decimals	√	√	√			√	√	√													30%
Long division - o.k.					√	√				√			√	√						√	30%
Time and money - o.k.	√				√	√			√	√	√		√	√					√	√	50%

Grid showing the coded data from the Education in the Unit - Literacy, Numeracy section of the files

Art / Craft / Practical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Σ	
Co-operated well		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	65%
Enjoyed subjects					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	70%
Took pride in work					✓	✓	✓							✓	✓		✓				✓	20%
Interested					✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					50%
Worked independently								✓		✓	✓				✓							20%
Careful and neat					✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓					35%
Disliked this area			✓										✓									10%
Disruptive in this class																		✓				5%
Had ability if he worked																		✓		✓		10%

Grid showing the coded data from the Education in the Unit - Practical section of the files

APPENDIX C:

**Complete data set for each participant from phase 3
Repertory grid, Laddering, FPCA Graph.**

Participant 1:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(v)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Illegal if don't go to school.	*x1	x2	*√5	x1	*√5	x1	Have choice.
B. Don't want to go.	x1	x1	*√5	*x3	√5	x1	Try to make me go.
C. Don't care if educated.	*x1	x2	√4	*√5	√3	*x1	Trying to give you an education.
D. Have to go to school.	x3	*x1	*√5	x1	*√5	x3	Don't have to.
E. Want me to/have to go.	√5	*√5	*√5	*x1	√5	√5	Don't have to.
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 1

Laddering 1:

I don't like school, I suppose it's important but I don't like it.

A: Illegal if I don't go to school / They have a choice

I don't like when people tell me what to do, especially in school. It's all sit down, do work, write all day. I prefer practical stuff, woodwork and that.

B: Don't want to go / Try to make me go

As above.

C: Don't care if I'm educated / Try to give me an education

I don't like school. Primary was okay but not secondary. I suppose school is important, well to people who want to be lawyers and that. But it's not that important to me I want to be a mechanic.

D: Have to go to school / Don't have to go

Teachers and parents and them don't have to go to school but we do. Teachers can do what they want but they still get really annoyed with us if we're messing or anything. Teachers in the unit are a lot more tolerant and they can deal with us like if we're messing. Why do we mess? If we're bored.. I hate being in school. What do I do if I'm not? Just hang around. Get into trouble, yeah I do, Why? Ah just 'cause I'm bored and I need money so I rob stuff. If you're hanging around the guards hassle you & move you on so you have to go to other area's to rob.

Want me to go to school / Have to go v Don't have to go have choice

It wouldn't be so bad if there was no homework, I hate homework ,it wrecks me head.

If I were Principal.....

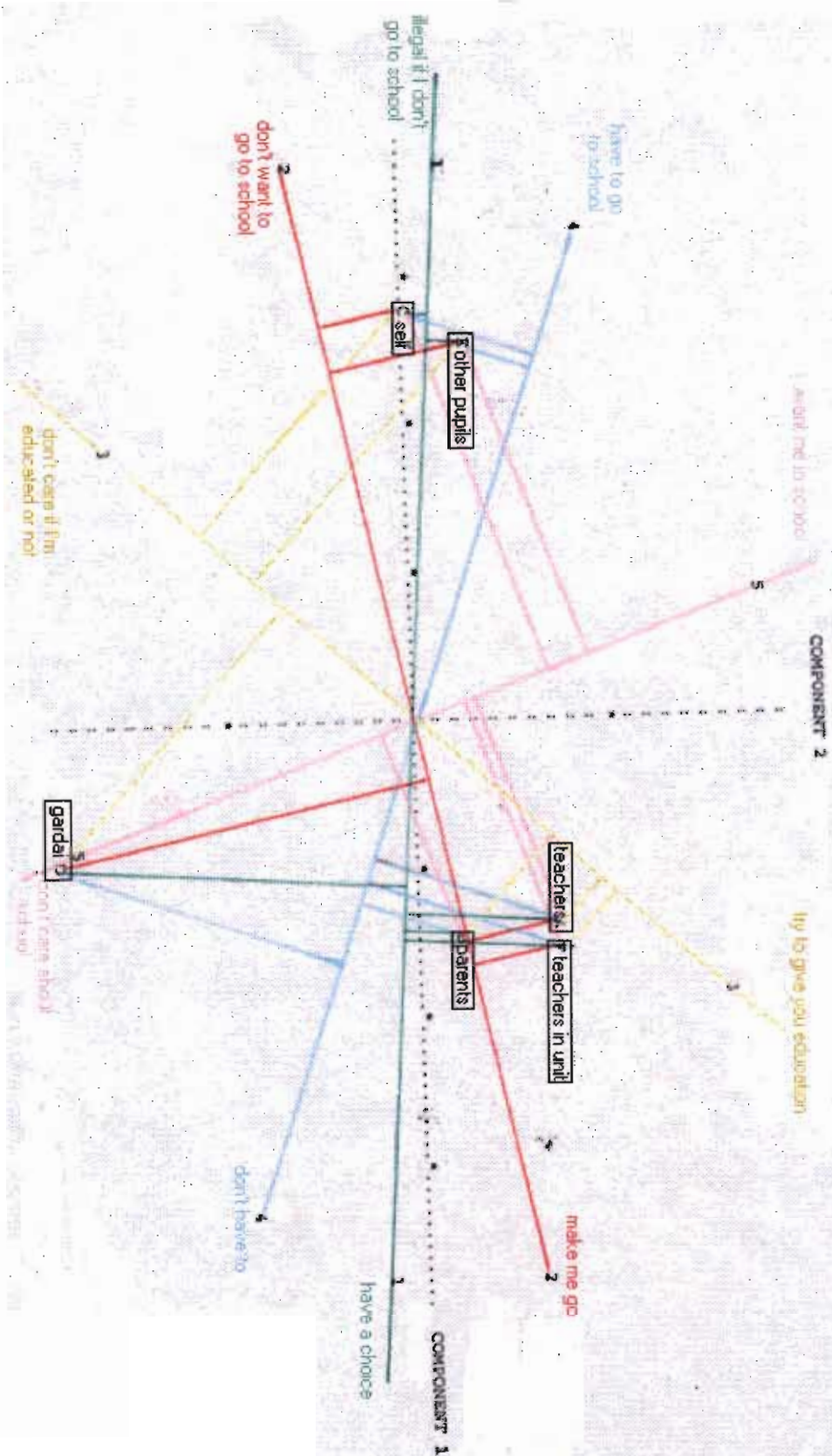
I'd take students out of the classroom more often and take them on field-trips, like to forests and that so then we wouldn't be just stuck in a classroom reading all the time.

As well I'd teach kids how to drive. There should be a place where teenagers could go and drive and learn about cars and that, once they were over about 13 - that's stop them going out and robbing cars. And if when you were driving it you did any damage you should have to fix it, and there should be people there to teach you how.

Car maintenance should be part of the curriculum.

As well as that we should have more control over what happens to us in school just the everyday stuff you know. That's it really....

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO. 1



Participant 2:

[5] (v)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Don't want to be in school.	*x1	*x1	*√5	x2	√3	x1	Want to be in school.
B. Can't learn. I'm messing.	*x1	3	*√5	3	*x1	x3	Trying to teach/learn.
C. Want out.	*x1	x1	*√5	*2	√3	x1	All trying to keep you in school.
D. We can get on fine on our own.	x1	x3	*√5	x1	*√5	*x1	Interfere.
E. Want to be out.	x1	*x1	√5	*x2	*√3	x1	Trying to keep me in school.
F. Treat me with respect.	*x1	x3	√5	*x1	√4	*√4	In the same gang.- Control.
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 2

Laddering 2:

A. Don't want to be in school 'v' Want you to be in school

School is just crap. I'm in Junior Cert and it's just boring crap. I hate it all the teachers, the work. The only things that are OK is Science and Art.

B.

Can't learn 'cause I'm messing 'v' Trying to teach / learn.

I'm always messing in class, if I'm bored or if I'm annoyed. In school outside the teachers would just throw you out of the class. Here in the unit the teachers treat you more like an adult so you wouldn't mess as much anyway. And if you do mess they talk to you about it.

C.

Want out

'v'

All try to keep you in school

I want out of school, it's not important to me. It's only important to geeks who want to get a job their just lick-arses. I mean there isn't even cooking or P.E. in my school!

D.

We can get on fine on our own 'v' Interfere

Teachers and everyone are always interfering, telling what to do and stuff, it's like you can't think for yourself or something.

E. Want to be out 'v' Try to keep me in school

Laddering as in C.

F.

Treat me with respect 'v' In the same gang - control

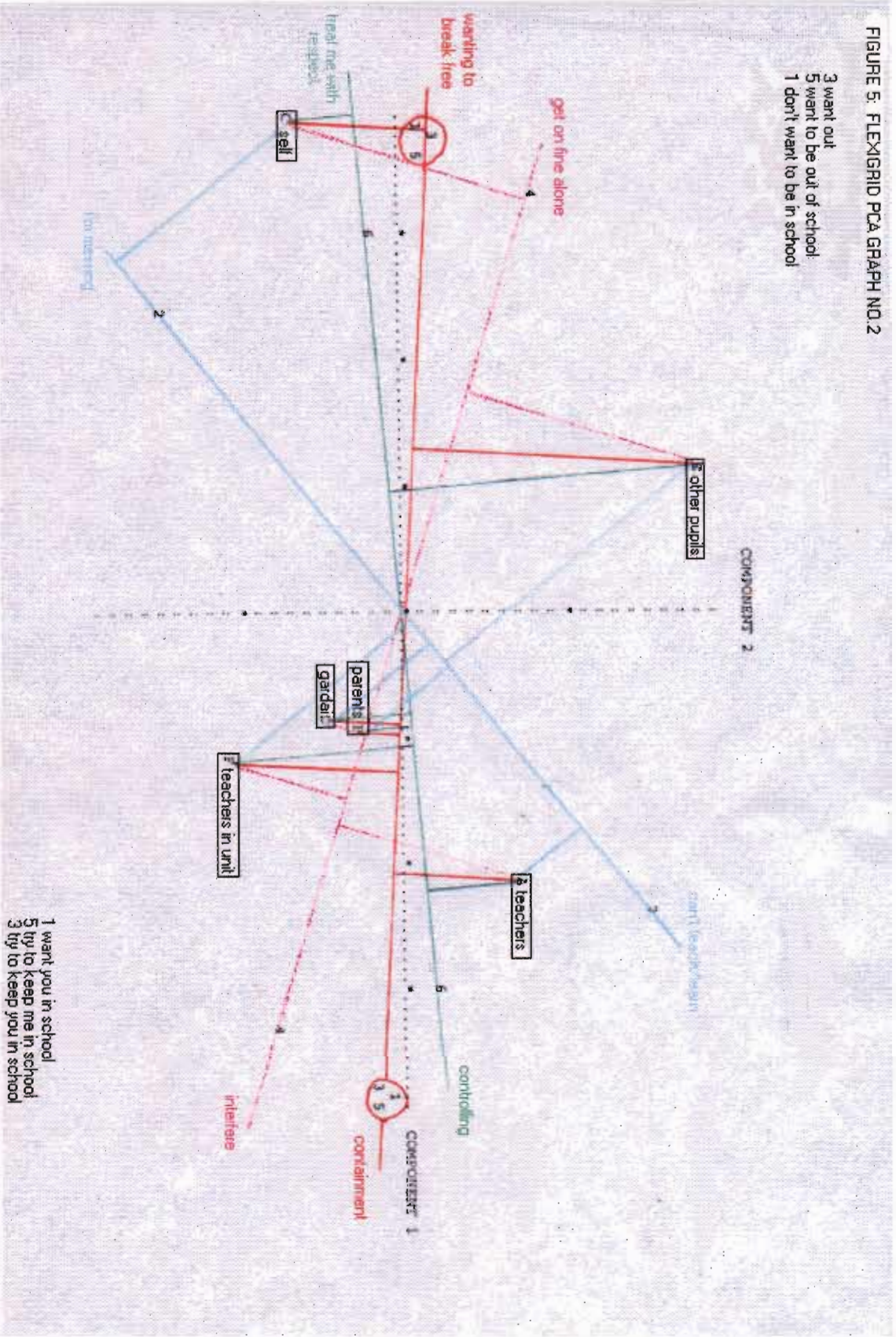
Teachers are always moanin' at you, I hate them. They have all the control, and you have none. You just want to do what you want but the teachers just say you can't do it and they kick you out, they don't try to help you.

If I were Principal....

You should be able to wear your own clothes in school and be allowed to have a laugh. Plus the classes should be smaller there 's too many people in classes it should be half that. I'd like to end up being a mechanic or maybe work in a chipper.

Even if school was different though I don't think it would have stopped me ending up here.

FIGURE 5. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.2



3 want out
5 want to be out of school
1 don't want to be in school

1 want you in school
5 try to keep me in school
3 try to keep you in school

Participant 3

[5] (√)	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1] (x)
	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	
A. Hang around together/friends.	*x1	√3	*√5	x1	*√3	√3	Not in the same group/gang.
B. Family/love them.	x1	*√3	*√5	x1	*x1	x1	Not family.
C. Get on with them.	x1	√3	*√1	x3	*x3	*√4	Don't get on.
D. Like your friends.	*x1	√4	*√5	x1	√3	*√4	Don't respect me as much/tell me what to do.
E. Get into trouble.	*x1	x1	*√4	*x2	√3	x1	Try to keep me out of trouble.
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 3

Laddering 3:

School is important to me. I want a good job, so I have to stay in school.

A: Hang around together are friends / Not in the same group

The other pupils are in the same boat as you, you hang around together your friends with them. I used to mitch with my friends when they went mitching. I suppose it was peer pressure really cause we were friends and we were against the teachers.

B: Family, love them / Not family

Well I get on well with my Dad I live with him, he cares about me. But not my Mam, I don't like her. My Da does a lot for me and he want s me to get on. Teachers don't care really except the teachers in the unit here, they want to see you do well.

C: Get on with them / Don't get on with them

Like I already said I get on with my Da but not my Mam. I get on with the teachers here too (in the unit). They explain things better and they explain why something is wrong or right. In schools outside teachers just send pupils to the Principal if they do something wrong, but that doesn't help they just get worse.

D: Are friends / Don't respect me as much they tell me what to do

Teachers outside don't really talk to you, they're not interested in you. I hate the teachers outside.

E: Get into trouble / Try to keep you out of trouble

It's because we're bored that we get in trouble, we're bored so we mess. But since I came here I see that you don't need to mess but you need to be educated. Coming here has changed my life. I've decided myself, the old me is finished - no more drink and drugs.

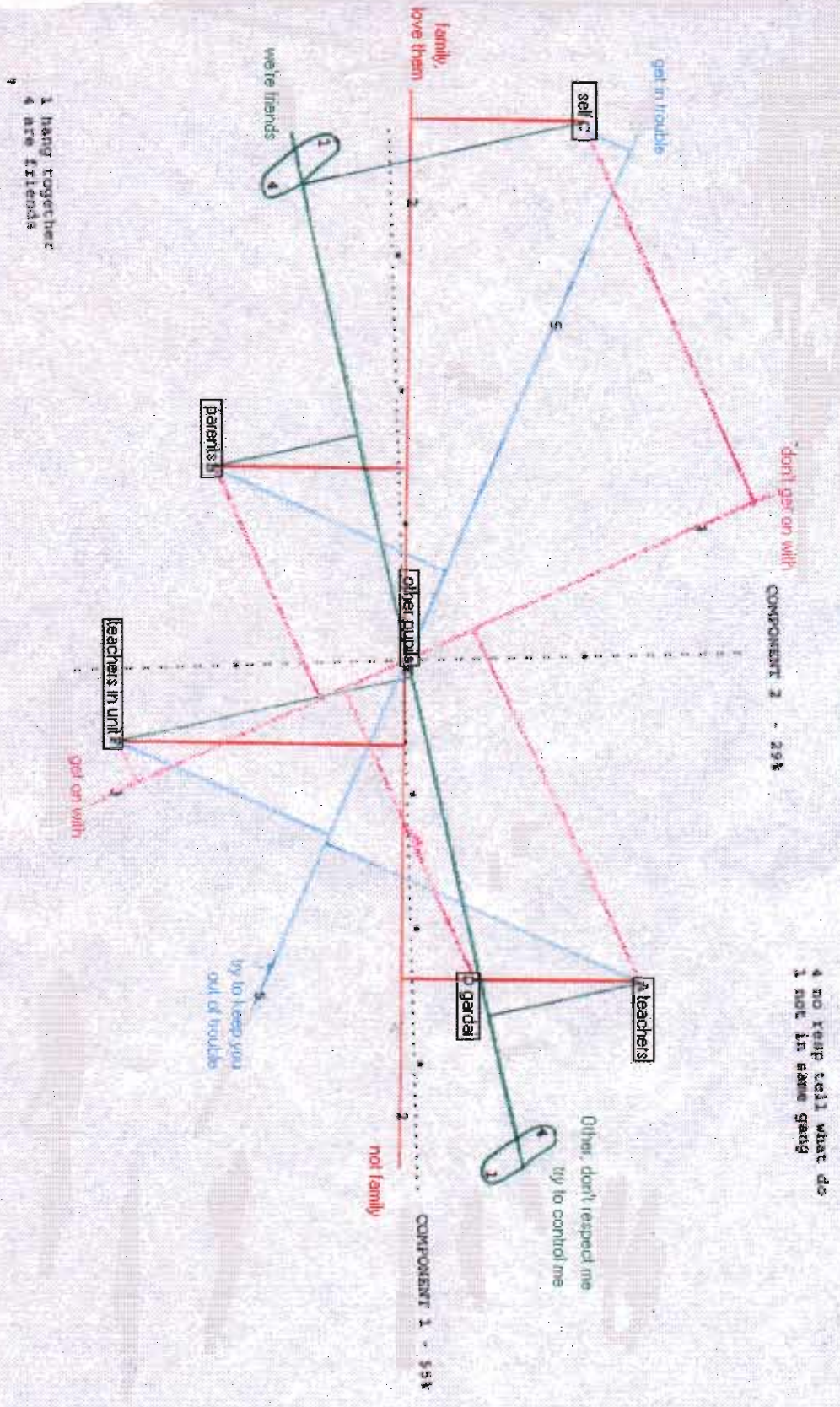
Really I just want to get out of here and go home

If I were Principal.....

I'd make school less strict it's too strict too many stupid rules, teachers should be more reasonable, the rules should be more reasonable. Like the uniform rule, if you don't wear your uniform or even if you don't have it just right you get suspended in my old school. I mean that 's just stupid.

There should be more sports too, swimming maybe, and more practical subjects, metalwork and woodwork. Oh, and art ,I love art, I really want to go to art college. That's why I have to work in school from now on, if I want to go to art college.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO. 3



1 hang together
4 are friends

COMPONENT 2 - 29%

COMPONENT 1 - 55%

Participant 4:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(v)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Want a bit of crack.	*x1	x3	*√3	x1	*√4	x2	Serious/want serious atmosphere.
B. Get on well/can chat.	*x1	√5	*√5	x1	√4	*√5	Can't talk to them.
C. Give every one a fair chance.	*x1	√3	*√4	*x1	√4	√5	Hate them/ in cahoots.
D. Get on with.	x2	*√5	*√4	*x1	√3	√5	Don't get on with.
E. Get on with, respect you.	x1	√3	*√5	*x1	√4	*√5	Don't respect you.
F. Just thinking about today.	x1	*x1	*√4	√5	√5	*x1	Want you to do well for yourself.
G. Have a bit of crack.	*x1	x2	√2	x3	*√4	*x1	Want you to learn.
H. Care about you.	*x2	*√5	√5	x1	√3	*√5	Don't care.
I. Get on together.	*x1	*√5	*√5	x1	√5	√5	Don't get on.

Repertory Grid of Participant 4

Laddering 4:

A. Want a bit of craic 'v' Serious / Want a serious atmosphere

I guess it's better to be serious, get a decent job, and to try to stay in school. If I didn't come in here (unit) I'd still be out robbing.

I rob for money for drugs. I need £100 a day for hash - ½ an ounce between 3 of us.

I'm trying to stay off it from now on though, but I'll still probably take E at weekends.

B. Get on well / can chat 'v' Can't talk to them

Teachers don't care about you there's no trust and no respect on either side. In my old school they thought they were 'big fellas' they bossed you around. For them you're just kids, so you have no minds of your own.

If we got more respect and more control - a bit of space you know, things would be much better.

C.

Give everyone a fair chance 'v' Hate them / in cahoots

If the teachers in my school know you were in trouble they disrespect you more, they're real lawdeedaw and up their arse. As far as they're concerned if you've messed up, tough.

In here though the teachers talk to you and it's not just that it's the way they do - equal to equal.

D. Get on with 'v' Don't get on with them

You get on with people who respect you and treat you as an equal. Teachers don't do that neither do the guards. But the teachers in here do and parents do.

E. Get on with them they respect you 'v' Don't respect you

Laddering as in D.

F.

Just thinking about today 'v' Want you to do well for yourself

Teachers and Parents want you to well for yourself to get a job and stuff. Me and my friends are just thinking about today when you're in school and you're so bored. What we really want is some control to be able to make decisions for yourself in school. It's better here there are times in class when you can just do what you want, it's like a bargain there's give and take. I think that that system would work in ordinary school.

G.

Want to have a bit of craic 'v' Want you to learn

Laddering as in F.

H. Care about you 'v' Don't care about you

If someone cares about you and respects you then when they make a promise then they keep it. Parents and the teachers in the unit do that but you can't really trust teachers in normal school.

I. Get on well together 'v' Don't get on well

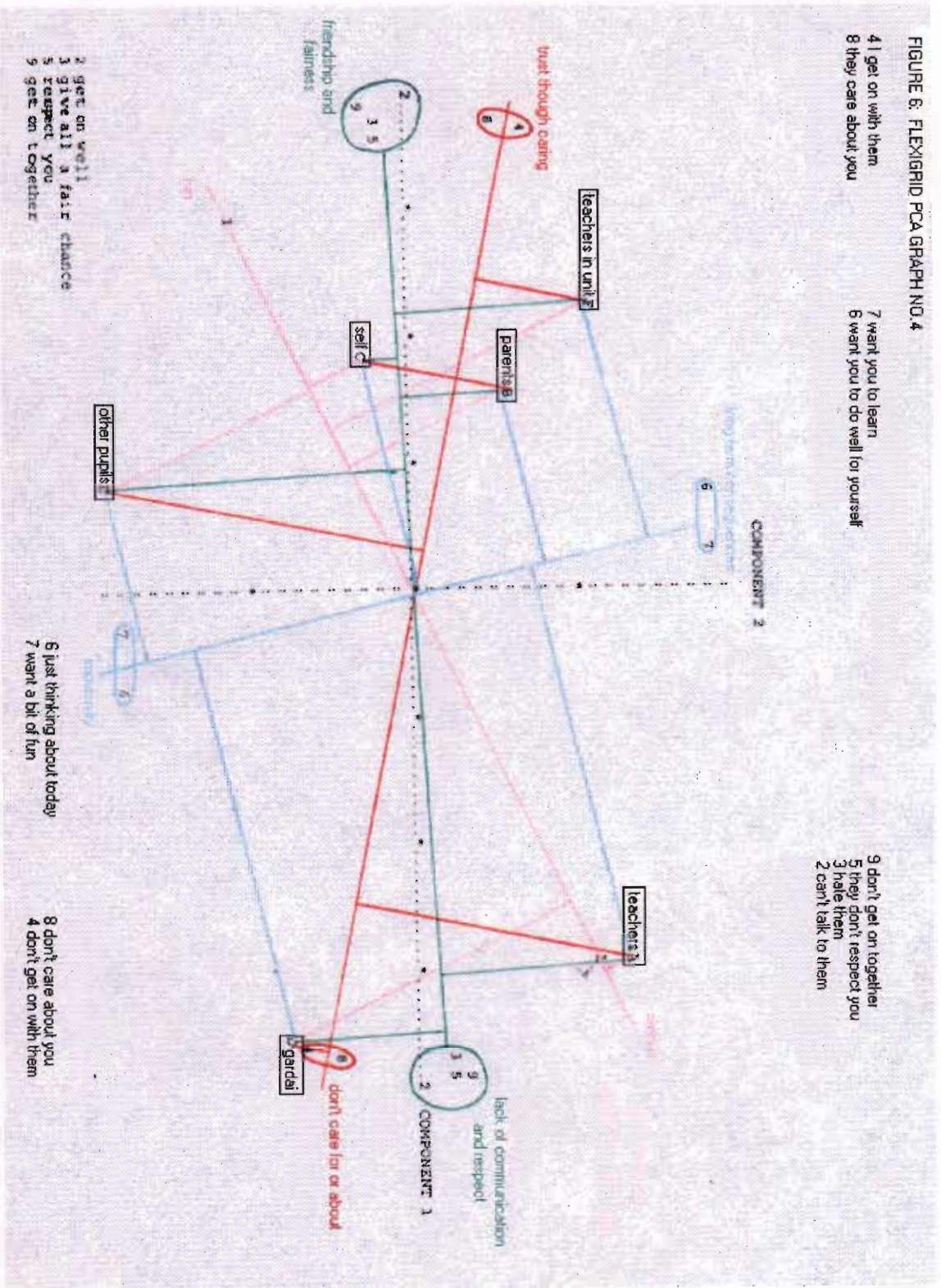
Already covered above.

If you were Principal.....

Well for students who were over 16 and with their parents permission they should be allowed to smoke in school. If we just had a say in rules like that , that just effect you everyday then that would really help a lot.

There should be more sports as well.

FIGURE 6. FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO. 4



Participant 5:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(v)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. I'm the one who has to listen	*x1	*x2	*√4	x3	√2	x1	Similar jobs in different way- teach
B. Part of the school.	√5	*x4	*√5	x2	*√5	√2	Not part of the school.
C. We're under observation.	x1	x1	*√4	x1	*√4	*x1	They're watching us.
D. Just 'education' in a narrow sense.	*√5	x1	*√3	x2	√3	*x1	Lots of aspects to their job - teaching, behaviour assessing
E. Encourage you, advise you, spend time.	*x1	*√4	√4	x1	√4	*√5	Sit down, shut-up and listen.
F. Interdependent (within the unit)	x1	*x3	*√5	x2	√4	*√5	Outside the unit/system.
G. If in trouble will try to help u	*√3	√5	*√3	*x2	x4	√5	Can't/Won't help.
H. Part of trying to help u/help yourself.	x2	√5	*√4	*x2	x2	*√4	Short term - transport/drop in- forget you.
I. Not just teaching - doing lots else.	*x1	√5	x3	x2	*x2	*√5	Part of the routine system.

Repertory Grid of Partipant 5

Laddering 5:

A. I'm the one who has to listen v Similar jobs in different ways

We don't really have a say. You're nothing special and they don't have time for one individual person. That's why there's messing, you're looking for attention because teachers don't give it they don't help.

There should be more training for teachers in temper control. They say that young fella's can't control themselves but neither can teachers. You know throwing you outta class "get out of here before I do something I regret".

Here in the unit teachers remain calm - "It's all right to be angry, we'll talk about why the incident occurred."

Outside you just get 100 lines and that leads to more resentment, you don't learn from it. They are always looking at the mistakes pupils make - not at the possibility that they could be making even a small mistake - there's two sides.

B. Part of the school v Not part of the school

School is part of your life, it's like a quarter of your life I the same everyday it's boring, same routine.

Here in the unit it's not boring - they take of situations as they arise. It's boring for teachers outside too they know what they're in for everyday.

It would help if there were other subjects and if we weren't reading out of a book all the time. Once I had a teacher that never read out of a book and just made up the story himself (history) he was funny and we really listened, I learned more from him than anyone. They should have a survey and ask pupils, What are you interested in?

Imagine if there was a sports class - people would look forward to going to see that. And in drama if they asked did you see the film last night etc.

C. We're under observation v They're watching us

Teachers don't understand kids or teenagers, they expect you to mess and they are just thinking about what punishment to give you..

"I have to watch this fella" there's no benefit of the doubt. They never admit that they might have done the same.

When they were young it was really strict that was all they learned. They think things have 'improved' because there's no corporal punishment. They won't break your arm but they'll give you 20 pages which is probably what they wanted themselves when they were in school. So maybe in 20 years we'll have the sort of schools we want now.

D. 'Education' in a narrow way v Lots of bits to their job

They wouldn't have a school without teenagers- so they must understand us if they want to teach us. (Rest as above.)

E. Encourage you, advise, spend time v Sit down, shut-up and listen

In my school there are over 1,000 pupils so teachers can't work with just one person, they don't have time and even if they did they don't have the experience or training to deal with it. They should be trained in counselling or something.

It's just all so boring. If you don't make a class interesting then forget it, some teacher can do it the other should learn from them.

F. Interdependent within the unit v Outside the unit / system

You have a better relationship with the teachers in the he unit, they're better trained and more experienced. They are a teachers a counsellor and a friend all in one. They can just stay calm, they know what they're doing and why. They can get you to sit down, do work and stuff, concentrate, its incredible.

They just cop out in normal school they just suspend you or expel you. If you mess the teacher reacts then you have to act the hard man "Touch me and I'll..."

and then you're suspended. If you did that to the teachers I'm sure they'd react the same way. Once they made me write out the school rules 100 times..it just made me worse cause you resent it.

G. If in trouble will try to help you v Can't / won't help

Teachers have good intentions but they get to the stage where they say "they are all the same" - we can be mean and get at them but so are they.

We mess to get popular. Teachers should just ignore it and not show that we're getting the better of them.

H. Trying to help you / help yourself v Short term - transport forget you

Already covered

I. Not just teaching doing lots else v Part of routine system

Already covered

If I were principal

I'd give out a form to ask pupils what could be done to improve school and I'd take the answers seriously. Questions like.....

What could make subjects more interesting?

Teacher attitude?

Class make-up?

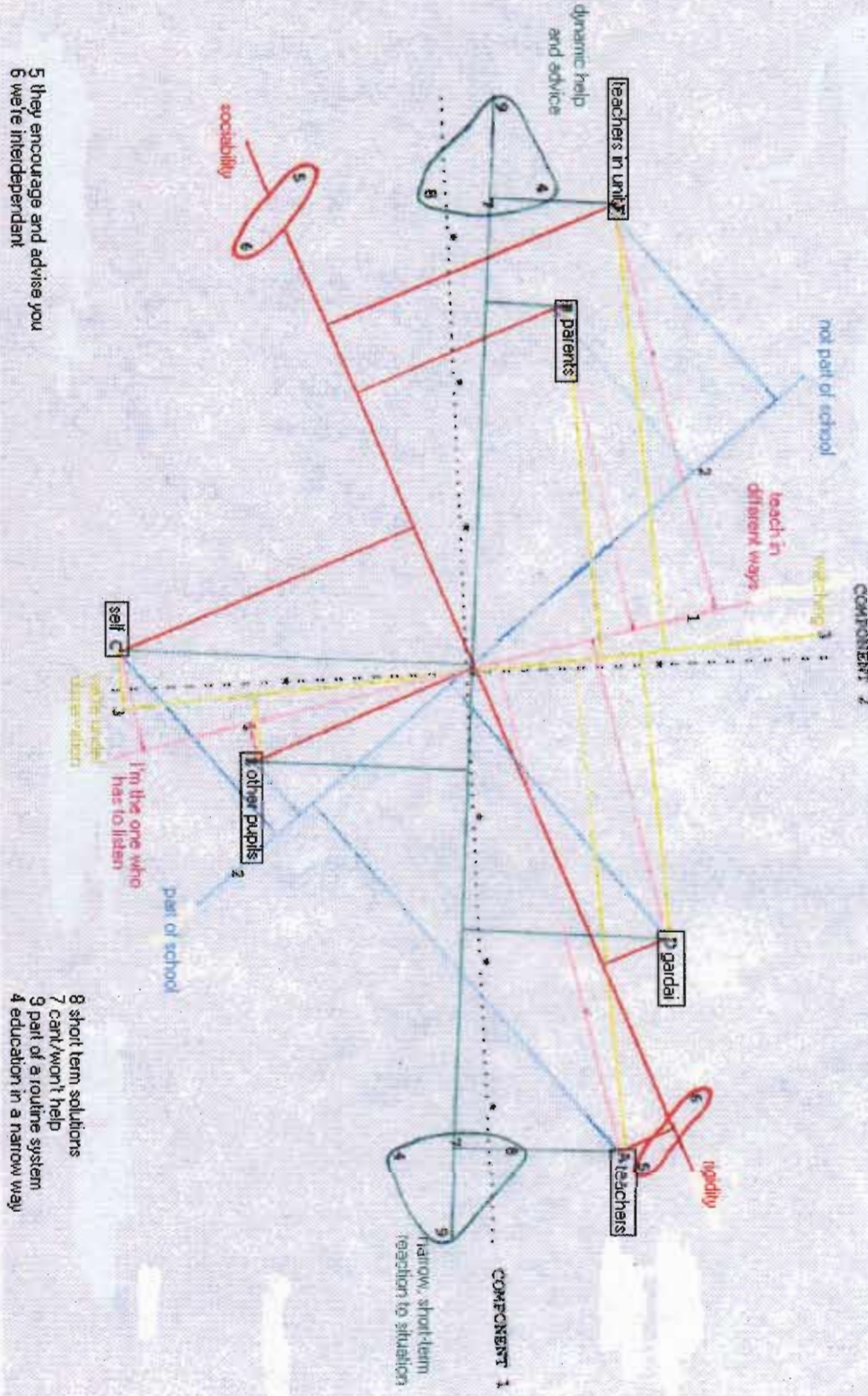
I'd give pupils more say..but not too much either, a balance.

Then when pupils take the attitude of "what did you ever give me?" You can say.. what you wanted - then there's no excuse for misbehaviour, it's your own fault... This I think would build up respect on both sides...

It would be like I better not mess I'd only be making a fool of myself!

FIGURE 7: FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.5

- 4 lots aspect to what they do
- 9 not just teaching
- 7 will try to help
- 8 help you to help yourself



- 6 outside the system
- 5 sit down, shut up & listen

- 8 short term solutions
- 7 can't/won't help
- 9 part of a routine system
- 4 education in a narrow way

- 5 they encourage and advise you
- 6 we're interdependent

Participant 6:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(v)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. You have to learn.	*x1	*x1	*√5	x3	√2	x1	Try to educate you in different ways.
B. Have to learn.	*x1	x1	*√5	x3	√2	*x1	Both teach you.
C. All in class together.	*x1	x2	*√5	x3	*√5	x1	Has to teach you.
D. Have to go to school.	x1	*x1	*√5	x1	*√5	x1	Don't have to go to school.
E. Have to learn.	*x1	x1	*√5	*x1	√4	x1	Teach you in different ways.
F. Have more time for you.	*x1	*√4	√3	x1	√3	*√4	Have bigger classes etc.
G. Have more time for you.	x1	*√5	√3	*x1	√4	*√4	No interest, don't like them.
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 6

Laddering 6:

I left school when I was 11 years old (is now 15 yrs 10 months), I didn't like it. I think I'd like to back now, I wouldn't mess. School's important to swots, I wouldn't be a swot if I went back but I would work. I want to get an education and get a job, I'd like to be a mechanic. Being here has changed my mind about school.

A: You have to learn / Try to educate you in different ways

We have to learn in school, but at home as well! A parent is like a teacher, they teach you about the streets, but parents are even stricter! And teachers in the unit teach differently too, but they have more time and smaller classes and that.

B: Have to learn / Both teach you

It's like I said before they teach you indifferent ways. But it's up to you how teachers treat you. If you mess then they'll be strict on you. There are rules and if you don't follow them you get kicked out. It's up to you to make school interesting, teachers have lots more pupils to think about besides you.

C: All in class together / Have to teach you

As in A & B. And then there's the gardai to deal with if you're not in school much. They just charge you for anything just to get their numbers up. (Number of arrests). Some are okay they just get you to move on, but some kick you around and charge you. One garda I know all right, he's a messer and you can have the craic with him, but a lot of them really mess you around - just for being there.

D: Have to go to school / Don't have to go to school

It's better to go to school. I used to hang around with older lads, none of them went. School was boring I never wanted to learn and I never tried. They (the teachers) knew they weren't going to get me to learn so they didn't try either.

E: Have to learn / teach in different ways

As A & B.

F: Have more time for you / Have bigger classes etc.

Teachers in the Unit and teachers outside are the same but they the teachers in the unit can do better 'cause there are smaller numbers. They have more time for each person. Then Parents teach you to be streetwise not to rob and not to do drugs and that. But all the rules in school. I hated that when I was there, being told what to do.

If I were Principal...

Classes would be smaller. Also I wouldn't let anyone be kicked out. When I was in school the older lads I was hanging around with would slag me about going to school, they said it was a waste of time. There was a lot of peer pressure. I wasn't allowed to leave so I'd mess so that I could get kicked out, expelled like.

There shouldn't be any uniforms either, they are so stupid. There should be a time out room in school like there is here, let you think about stuff. And there should be more practical stuff like woodwork or stuff about cars. I'd like to be a mechanic, or to work in a car factory actually making the parts that would be even better.

There should be a voting system in school, or even if they just asked the pupils about stuff, the uniform thing for instance.

If school was like thi I would have stayed. I would just have accepted it but instead I just got thrown out.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.6

- 1 have to learn
- 2 must learn

COMPONENT 2 - 31%

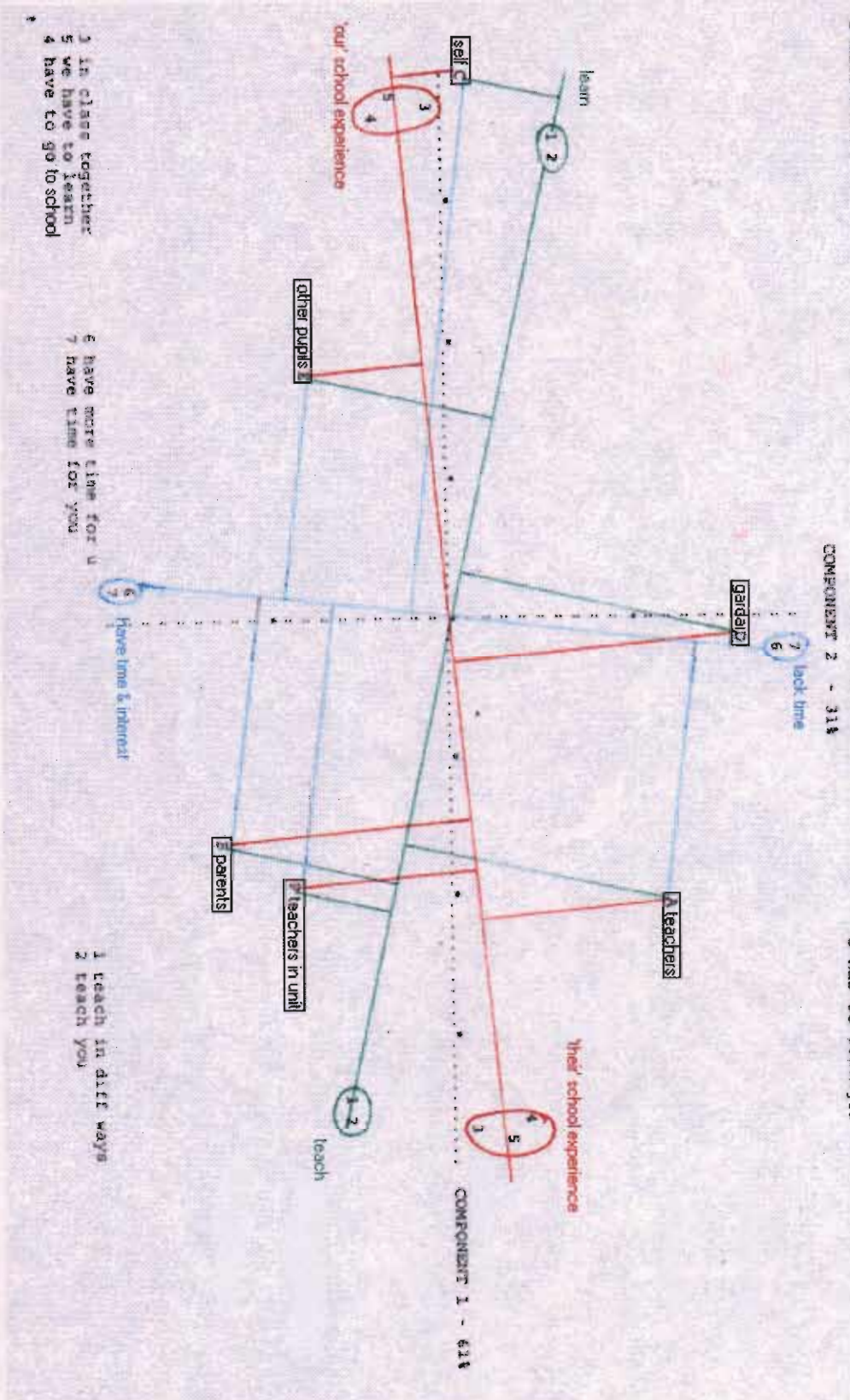
- 7 no interest don't like them
- 6 bigger classes etc

- 4 dont have to go to school
- 5 teach differently
- 3 has to teach you

- 3 in class together
- 5 we have to learn
- 4 have to go to school

- 6 have more time for u
- 7 have time for you

- 1 teach in diff ways
- 2 teach you



Participant 7:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Care about most	*x1	*√5	*√5	√2	√4	x1	Just want to get paid
B. Friends more important to me	*x1	√5	*√5	√2	*√4	x1	Not important to me
C. Care about most	x1	*√5	*√5	√2	√4	*x1	Don't mean much to me
D. See them a lot more	*√3	√5	*√5	√3	√4	*x2	Don't see them as much
E. Mean a lot to me	x1	*√5	*√5	x2	*x4	x1	Don't mean as much to me
F. Teach people	*√3	√5	3	*x1	3	*√3	Try to stop trouble
G. More friends	x1	√5	*√5	x2	*√4	*x1	Don't care about them / they don't care about me
H. Two most important groups to me	*x1	*√5	√5	x2	*√4	x1	Don't care about them particularly
I. Both try to help me	*x1	*√5	√5	*√2	√4	x1	Don't try to help

Repertory Grid of Participant 7

Laddering 7:

I left school about a year ago (is now 15) I was bullied a lot there I didn't like it. Schools not important to me. It's important to people they need it to get a job. I'm going to be a carpenter on a an apprenticeship.

A: Care about most / Just want to get paid

Teachers don't care about any of the pupils, it's not a vocation. If they really loved doing it they wouldn't be hitting pupils and that when they got something wrong. One or two are okay and they would care a bit, but it's like your parents, I trust them a lot more.

B: Are friends , are more important to me / Not important to me

Other pupils and me are into the same stuff. We have nothing in common with teachers they're just those kind of people.

C: Care about most / Don't mean much to me

As A & B.

D: See them a lot more / Don't see them as much

I see other pupils and my parents a lot more I know them and I trust them. But I don't trust teachers or the gardai. But at least the gardai give you a chance, they could have sent me somewhere a lot worse then here (the unit). Teachers though, teachers never give you a chance, they're just down on you all the time.

E: Mean a lot to me / Don't mean as much to me

Covered above

F: Teach people / Try to stop trouble

Covered above

G: Are more friends / Don't care about them and they don't care about me

Covered above

H: Two most important groups to me / Don't care about them particularly

Covered above.

I: Both try to help me / Don't try to help

I care about the people who try to help me, my parents and other pupils. They help me by...it's hard to explain, I suppose they just try to keep me out of trouble.

If I were Principal.....

First of all the work should be a bit easier and there should be more trips out. It's better not being inside all the time, it's so boring doing the same thing everyday of the week. There should be no uniform and pupils should have a say in what subjects and classes they want. Teachers and the Principal have too much power. Everyone should have a say in what happens to them - they should be able to run their own life. People don't want to be told what to do all the time. If school was more like this I'd have stayed for longer.

- 3 care about most
- 5 mean alot to me
- 2 friends
- 9 try to help me
- 7 more like friends
- 8 most imp group to me
- 1 who i care about most
- 4 see them alot more

6 try to stop trouble

COMPONENT 2

care about &
help me



self c

other pupils

6 teach people
teach people

not genuinely interested
in my welfare



COMPONENT 1

teachers in unit
teachers in unit

- 4 dont see them as much
- 1 just want to be paid
- 8 dont care about them
- 7 dont care about them not they about me
- 9 dont try to help
- 2 not important to me
- 5 dont mean as much
- 3 dont mean much to me

Participant 8:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. I learn	*x1	*x1	*√5	x1	√5	x1	They all teach
B. We Learn	x1	*x1	*√5	x1	*√5	x1	They teach
C. We learn	x1	*x1	*√5	x1	√5	*x1	They teach
D. Teach you to be good	*x1	*√5	√1	√5	√1	*x5	Teach you maths etc.
E. We get taught	*x1	x1	*√5	x1	*√5	x1	They teach
F. Both in school	*√5	x1	*√5	*x1	√5	√5	Stop crime
G. Learn	*x1	*x1	√5	x1	*√5	x1	Teach
H. Keep them in job / keep me out of trouble	√5	√5	*√5	*√5	*x1	√5	Don't get into trouble
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 8

Laddering 8:

Primary school was all right but I was expelled from secondary and hen I went to Ferryhouse (residential centre) but I didn't like it much. I've given up on school. Why? Well 'cause it's given up on me. It's important a bit I s'pose to get a job. It 's important the same amount to everybody. But then I have a friend who got a good leaving and he just sits around all day, he's lazy.

A: I learn / They all teach

The gardai teach you to be good and stop you getting into trouble. Teachers make you learn in school. You're Ma teaches you how to learn to be good and how to live. I learn what's good and bad from all of them.

B: We learn/ they teach

Covered above

C: Teach you to be good / Teach you maths and stuff

Covered above

D: We get taught / They teach

Covered above

E: Both in school / Stop crime

Teachers outside and in the unit are the same they both teach the same stuff. Gardai stop crime and teach you to be good 'cause they catch you and they charge you.

F: Learn /Teach

Covered above

G: Keep them in a job and they keep me outta trouble / Don't get in to trouble

I wouldn't get in so much trouble if there was something fun to do that was cheap. But you have to have money for everything so I rob stuff. I rob sometimes too when I'm just bored. The gardai hate me but teacher just treat me the same as the rest of the pupils.

If I were Principal.....

I wouldn't change anything, there's no point. Well... there should be more bus trips, you'd learn more about animals in the zoo than you would in books and it's more interesting. There should be no uniforms either - they are rotten.

Lots of stuff really when you think about it, the hours are too long too, and there should be less homework. It's just so boring and we want to have more fun, but really I think it's silly to even try to make school more fun.

6 both in school

- 3 teach
- 2 they teach
- 1 they all teach
- 5 they teach us
- 7 all teach

COMPONENT 2 - 21%

teach you math etc

teachers

try not to get in trouble

6

other pupils

learn

COMPONENT 1 - 66%

teachers (MINT)

learn

keep them in a job/mis out of trouble

parents/garda

self

teach you to be good

6 stop crime

- 1 I learn
- 2 we learn
- 5 we get taught
- 7 all learn
- 3 learn

4

Participant 9:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Family	*x1	*√5	*√5	x1	x1	x	Not Family
B. Teach you	*√5	*x3	x1	x2	x1	*√5	Don't
C. Family	x1	*√5	*√5	x1	*x1	x1	Outside family
D. Outside that class	*x1	√5	*√1	√1	*x5	x5	Belong to a class
E. Not so strict	*x1	√3	√5	*x1	√5	*√2	Very strict
F. Get into trouble	x1	3	*√5	*x1	*√4	x1	Keep them in a job
G. Have time for you	*x1	*√5	√5	x1	*√3	√3	Don't have time
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 9

Laddering 9:

I don't like school the Master picks on me. I want to learn, to read and write like I'm too good at that. I want to fly planes, maybe in the Air Corps.

In school teachers just take you outta of class and you spend time working on your own on stuff. But here (in the unit) it's much better, the teachers spend time with you in class. I've learned here in just three weeks.

A: Family / Not family

Family are the most important thing, they care about you.

B: Teach you / Don't teach you

Parents teach you right and wrong, but teachers just teach you maths and English they don't really care about you.

C: Family / Outside family

Your family care about you and they give you advice and that. Teachers and people aren't as close to you so they're not so important.

D: Belong to a class / Outside that

In school they're (teachers etc.) are on one side and you're on the other. Parents don't really get what it's like they just say 'stick with it for a while'.

E: Not too strict / Very strict.

Teachers and Gardai are really strict, teachers in the unit and parents are as strict. Teachers and the Gardai don't let you fight if you're rowing with someone they should just let you at 'em - but you don't want to see someone dead on the road I suppose..... But they don't care if I'm in trouble or not that's not why they don't let me fight. Why then? I dunno, they just don't, ...they're annoyin'.

F: Get in to trouble / Keep them in a job

I can't help getting in trouble - even if I didn't do whatever it is they still blame me. Always. It's the same with a lot of my friends. But me getting in trouble gives them (teachers and gardai) something to do I suppose.

G: Have time for you / Don't have time

You're Parents and friends have time for you, they care about you. And in here (in unit) the teachers care about you, and they have time for, but then there are smaller classes. A few teachers outside do too but the rest don't care.

If I were Principal.....

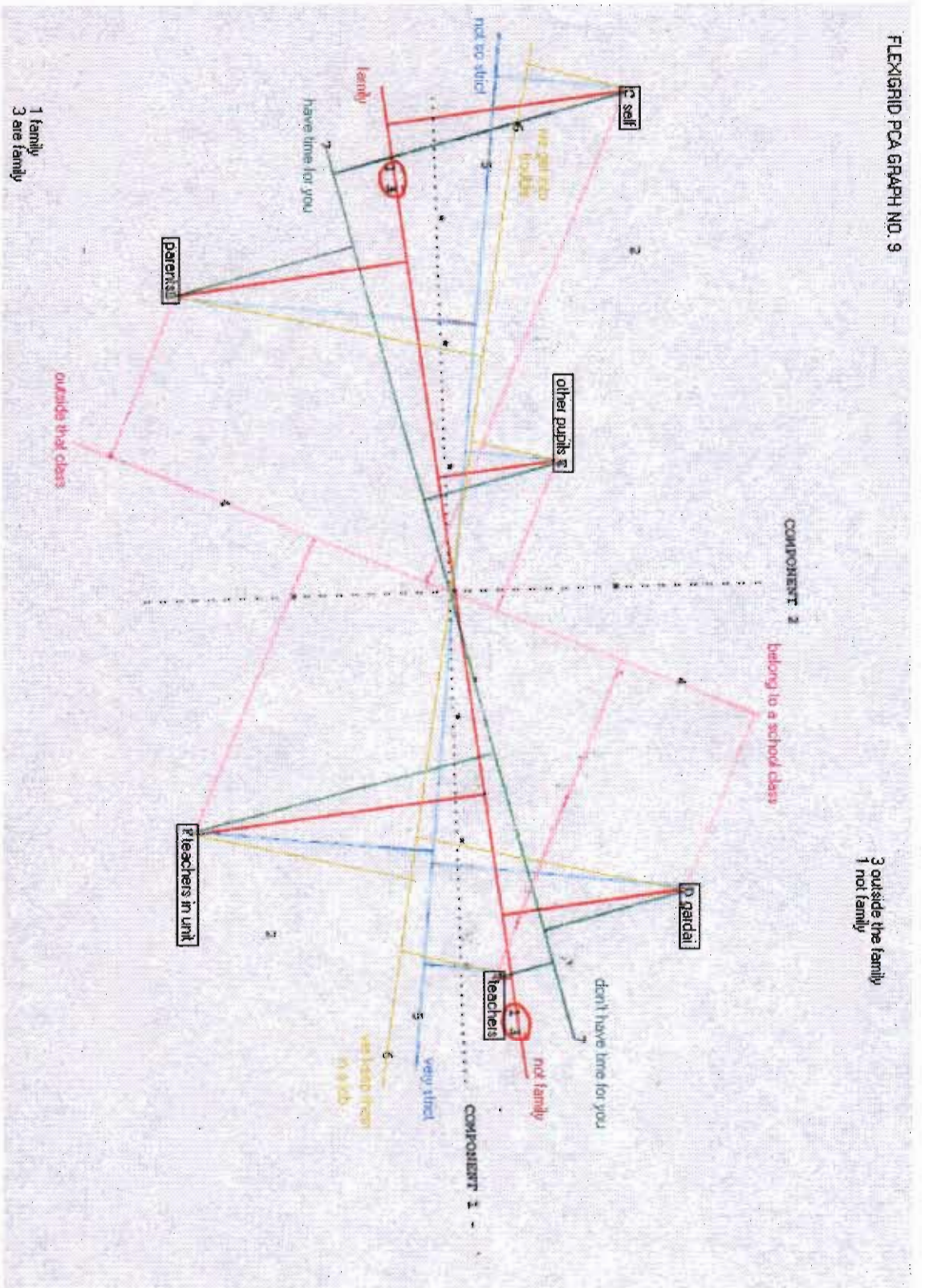
I wouldn't change too much...the lunches should be longer and I wouldn't put anyone in the corner 'cause it hurts your nose. There should be no uniforms either and you should be allowed to wear earrings and rings and that.

We should be able to have a say in school..Adults always get to have their say - we never do. It's important to let people know how you feel.

If we could get rid of the Master everything would be okay. Me and my friends don't get on with him, there's a personality clash. I remember once the toilet was blocked, there were lots of people in and out of there all day but he blamed me for doing it on purpose.

I didn't do it but that doesn't matter to him. He told me before like - he said 'I'm going to pick on you'.

Oh and there should be more heaters - it's a really cold school.



Participant 10:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Want to stay out	*x1	*x1	*√5	x3	x3	x1	Try to get you to go to school
B. Want to stay out	x1	*x1	*√5	x3	x3	*x1	Try to get you to go to school
C. Not in school	*x1	√5	*√5	√3	*x1	x1	In school
D. We are alright	*√3	√4	*√5	*x1	√3	√4	Scumbags
E. In school	*√5	*x1	x1	x3	√5	*√5	Out of school
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 10

Laddering 10:

School is just crap. Having to get up in the mornings, I hate that and it's so boring. I don't know how people stay in school, I'd have just flipped.

A: Want to stay out / Try to get you to go to school

People, parents and teachers like, want you to stay in school to get an education, so you can get a job. I want to stay out though, I mean it's just crap, getting up in the morning...and the work wrecks your head. It's so boring. So I go mitching. I go down to 'The Square' (local shopping mall) and I go to the amusements.

B: Don't want to be in school/ Want me to go

Cover above.

C: Not in school / In school

I just can't do school. In here (the unit) it's the same. The teachers are nicer to you and they don't give you loads of work.

D: We're all right / They're just scumbags

The guards are scum. There's no one as bad as them. I got nicked by them for selling hash and that's how I ended up in here.. I was selling hash cause I had no money. What are supposed to do?

E: In school / Out of school

I'm out of school for good now, they wouldn't have me back. I got expelled. I whacked a teacher. I hit him over the head with a bottle he sent home a letter saying I was missing from school when I wasn't, so I whacked him.

If I were Principal....

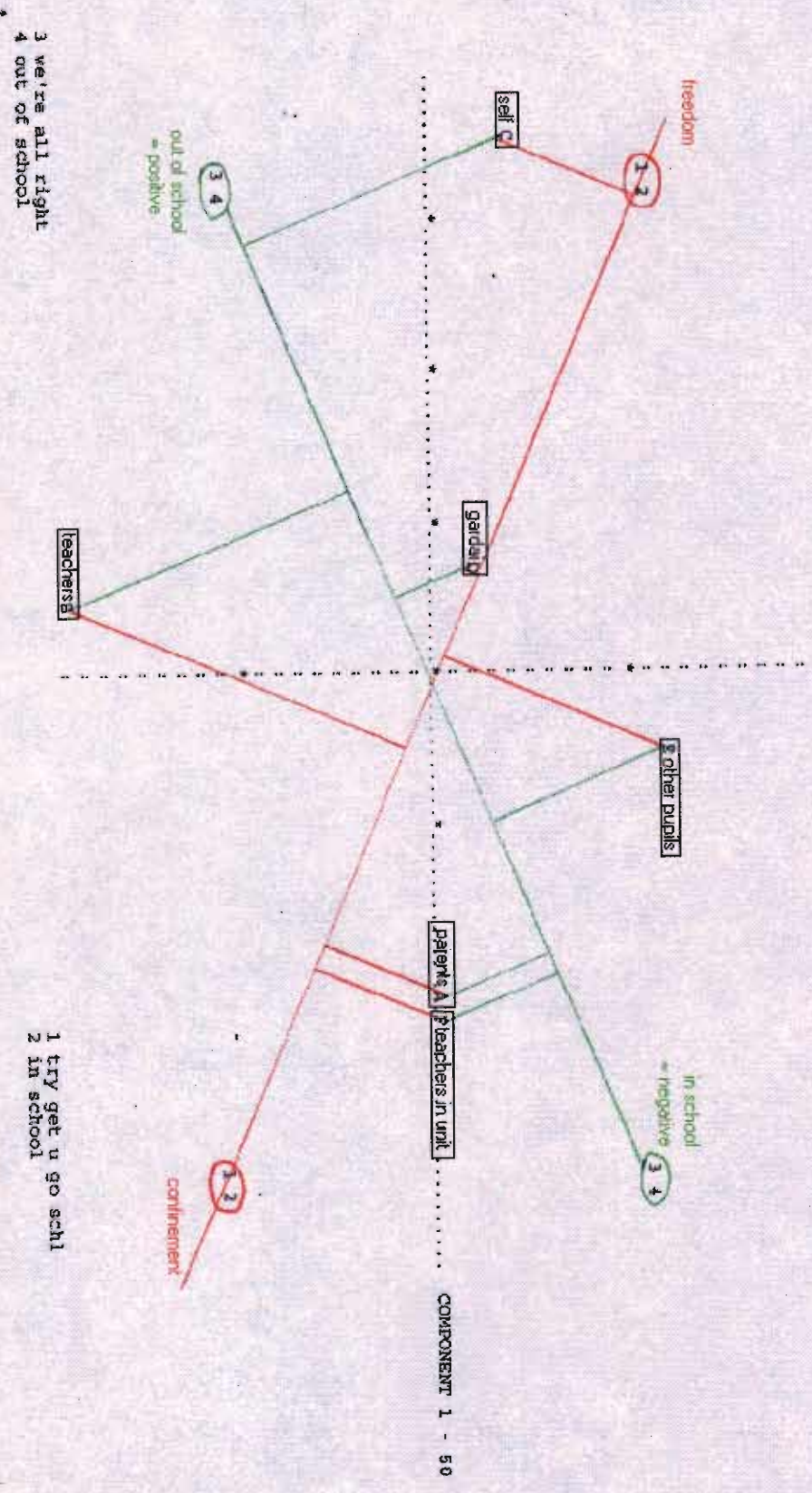
There's nothing I'd change about school 'cause I'm finished with it, there's no point even trying.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO. 10

1 want stay out
2 not in school

COMPONENT 2 - 50%

3 scumbags
4 are in schi



3 we're all right
4 out of school

1 try get u go schi
2 in school

COMPONENT 1 - 50%

Participant 11:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Not parents	*x2	*x1	*√5	√3	√5	x2	Both are parents
B. Not teachers	*x1	*√5	√5	√3	√5	*x1	Both are teachers
C. All in school	√5	*x1	*√5	x1	*√5	√5	Not in school
D. Are okay	*√2	*√5	√5	*x1	√4	√5	Hate them
E. Not parents	*x2	*x1	√5	√3	*√5	x1	Both are parents
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 11

Laddering 11:

School is important I suppose to get a job and that. I don't really like it though, but I was in a special school once and I liked that. But I didn't like ordinary school I didn't go much, I just hung around the amusements. I'll go back to school after I leave here if they want me to, but I might be getting a job like on a FAS course...

A. Not parents v Both are parents

Your parents look after you they give you money and buy you clothes. Teachers look after their kids the same way.

B. Not Teachers v Both are teachers

Teachers teach, but the teachers in here are different. In here it's good I'm getting my head down and learning. I'm doing it!

C. All in school v not in school

We're all in school together, the other pupils, me and teachers. Parents aren't they're outside but they want you to go so I suppose they have something to do with it.

D. Are okay v Hate them

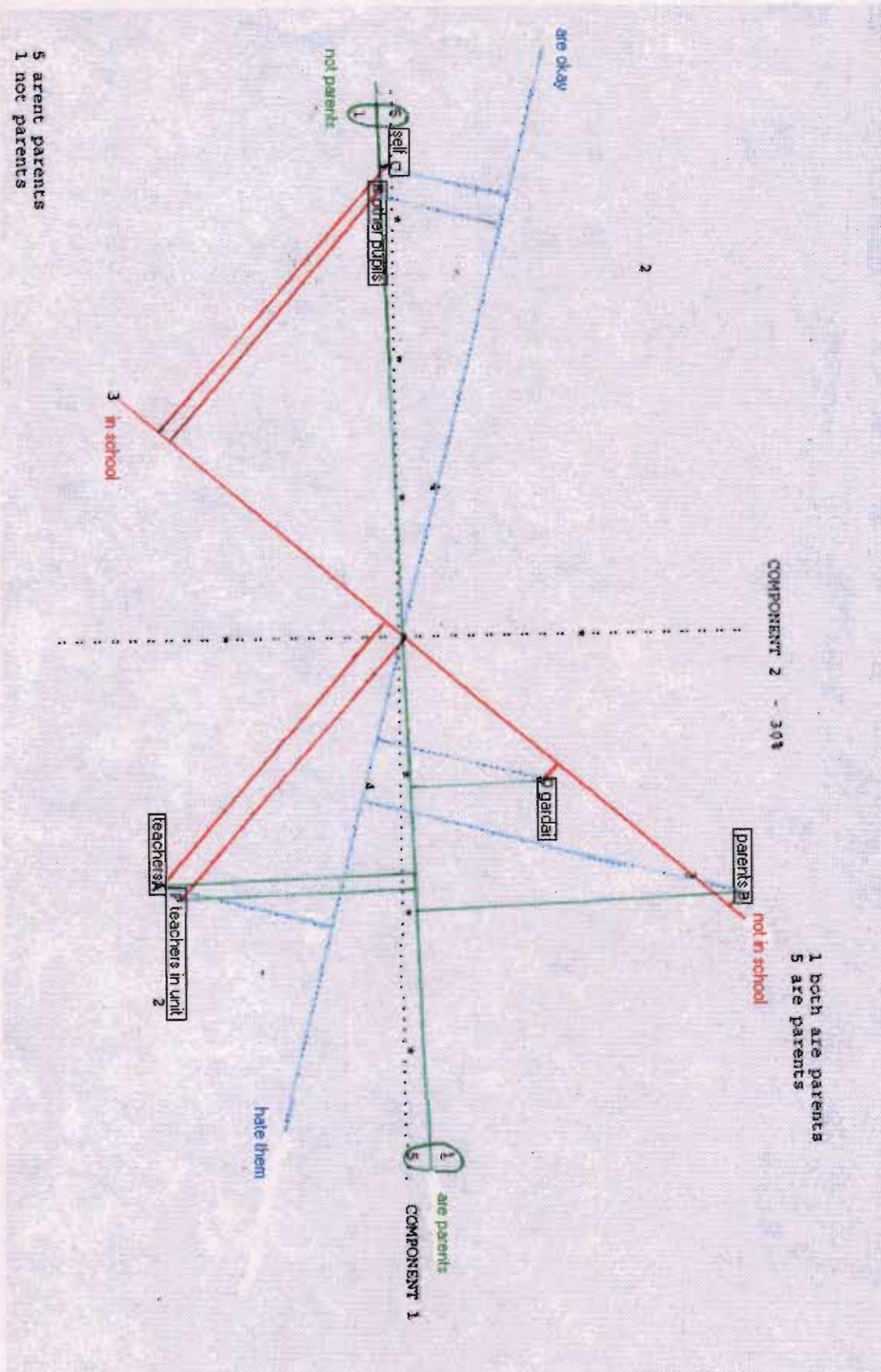
Teachers in the unit are okay, they treat me well, and even teachers outside are okay -- some of them, but the gardai..., They'd arrest you just to get in out of the cold.

E. Not parents v Both are parents

As in A

If I were Principal....

I'd start the day later, have it 10-4 instead of 9-4. It's just too hard to get up in the mornings.



Participant 12:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Are family	*x1	*√5	*√5	1	3	x2	Just teach you
B. Not teachers	*x1	*√5	√5	√3	√5	*x1	Both teachers
C. We learn	*x1	x2	*√5	3	*√5	x1	They teach
D. Are family	x1	*√5	*√5	x1	x1	*x1	Not family
E. Talk to each other and you	*√3	*√5	√5	*x1	√5	√5	Just kick you around
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 12

Laddering 12:

I go to school if I have to, my Ma makes me go. If I don't go I just stay in bed or something.

A. Are family v Just teach you

Teachers are all right I suppose. Parents care more about what happens to you though.

B. Not teachers v Both are teachers

They're both teachers but teachers in the unit are a bit different to other teachers cause they talk to you.

C. We learn v They teach

We have to sit and learn and they teach us. That's all there's to say about that.

D. Are family v Not family

As in A.

E. Talk to each other and to you v Just kick you around

Teachers and teachers in the unit and parents talk to you and to each other about you. They give a shit I suppose. They want you to get a job and get sorted. But the gardai are just scumbags.

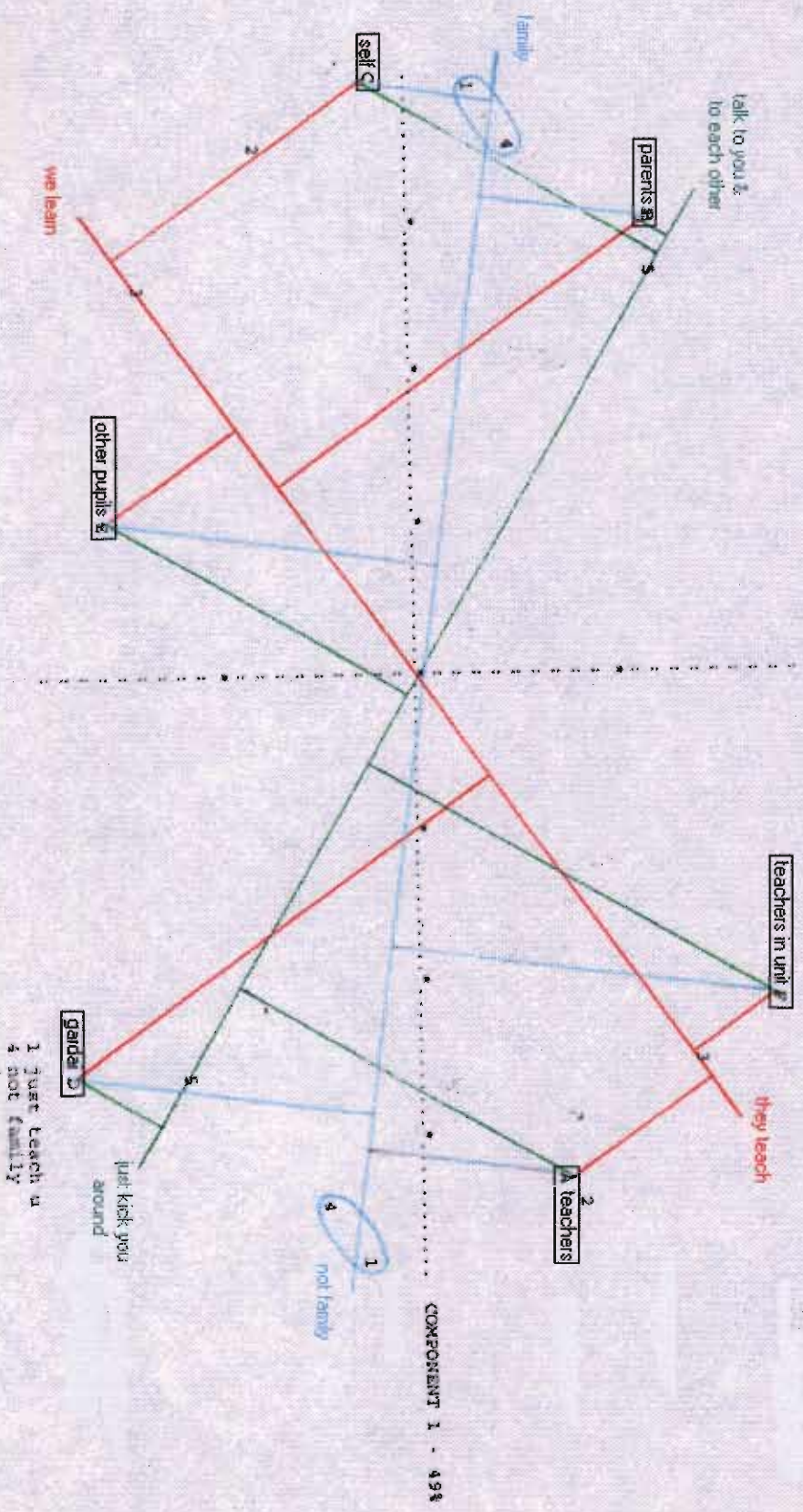
If I were Principal...

I'd get loads of playstations for the school !!!!

I'd make the work a bit easier and I'd put more music in the school. But not just learning about who wrote it an' that learning how to play, how to play the guitar or something.

4 family
1 are family

COMPONENT 2 - 41%



COMPONENT 1 - 49%

Participant 13:

[5] (√)	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1] (x)
	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	
A. Treat you with respect	*x1	*√5	√5	x1	√3	*√4	No respect for me
B. Respect each other	*x1	√5	*√5	x1	*√3	√4	No respect
C. Respect each other	*x1	*√5	*√5	x1	√3	√4	No respect for people
D. Have respect for people	*x1	√5	*√5	*x1	√3	√4	No respect for people
E. Care a lot about me	x1	*√5	*√5	x1	x3	*x4	Don't care as much
F. Respect	*x1	√5	*√5	x1	√3	*√4	No respect
G. Care about me	x1	*√5	√5	x1	*x3	*√4	Don't care as much
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 13

Laddering 13:

I hated school. It is sooo boring. Hours were too long..everything about it, I just hate it. It is important to most people. I have to have it even for a job on a building site.

A. Treat you with respect v No respect for me

If people treat you with respect it's better for you and it's good to treat people with respect. You make more friends that way. Teachers pay no attention to you, they don't listen to you. They treat you like scum. The teachers in the Unit are much better though, they listen to you. If you have a problem you can ask their opinion, not just with class work with everything. They just seem better trained and then there's smaller classes here too.

B. Respect each other v No respect

Same as before.

C. Respect each other v No respect for people

As before

D. Have respect for people v No respect for people

As before

E. Care a lot about me v Don't care as much

Your parents listen to you too and they care about you. Teachers outside just don't care. And the gardai, they are just fools. They think they are it, the way they talk to you and pick you...

F. Respect v No respect

As before

E. Care about me v Don't care as much

Teachers in the unit care, cause they get to know you better. In schools outside teachers just throw you out of class or suspend you, but in here (the unit) the teacher stays calm, they talk to you, we talk about why it happened and get to the root of the problem.

If I were Principal.....

If I were principal, I'd have smaller classes. I'd get the teachers to listen, then pupils could explain things to them and they could hear their side of the story.

Also there should be more sports, more art and more woodwork. You should start at 10 and finish at three and they should let people smoke.

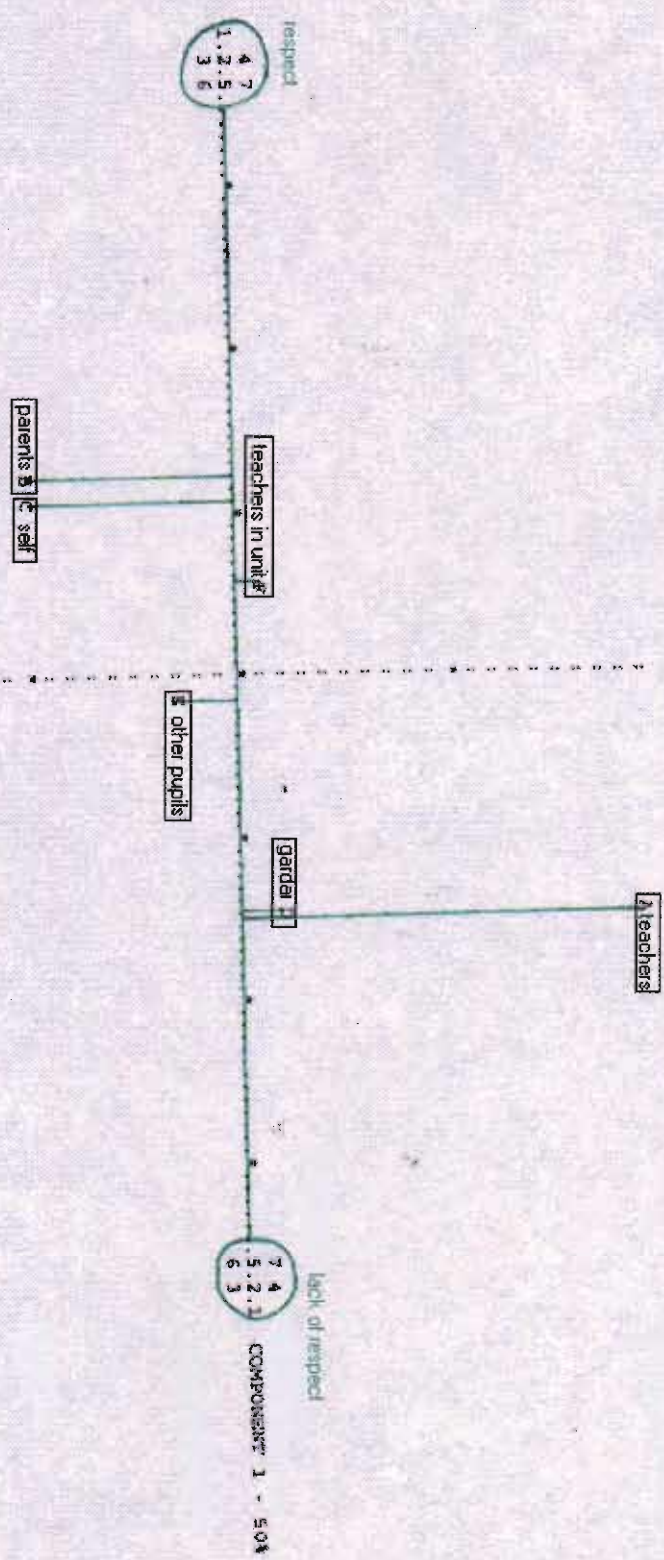
- 1 create u w respect
- 7 care about me
- 4 have respect4 people

COMPONENT 2 - 50%

- 2 no respect
- 6 lack of respect
- 3 no resp for people
- 5 dont care as much

- 5 care alot abt me
- 3 respect ech oth
- 6 respect
- 2 respect each other

- 4 no respect for anyone
- 7 dont care
- 1 no resp for me



Participant14:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Not interested in community	*x1	x1	*√5	*x2	√2	x1	Interested in community
B. I'm out robbing cars etc.	√2	*x1	*√5	*x2	√4	x1	Trying to keep me on the right track
C. I'm taught	*x1	x3	*√5	x3	x5	*x1	They teach
D. All in here for robbing	x1	x3	*√5	x2	*√5	*x1	Teach us
E. Teach you discipline	*x1	*√5	√3	x2	√3	*x2	Teach you other stuff
F.							
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 14

Laddering 14:

I left school at the end of third year. It was all right it was the teachers really who were the problem. I had a fight with a teacher so I left. I rowed with a teacher about my homework not being done.

School is important I suppose, to people who want to get office jobs, but I'm just not into it.

A. Not interested in community v Interested in community

I guess it's a good thing to be interested in the community and try to make things better. Cause that way it's pleasant, you can walk around without getting mugged.

B. I'm out robbing cars v Trying to keep me on the right track

The gardai aren't really trying to keep you on the right track they are making their money out of me. I keep them in a job. Like criminals keep the gardai going.

C. I'm taught v They teach

Teachers teach you English and maths and stuff. In here they teach you like outside. I suppose they can't really trust us though in case we abscond.

D. All in here for robbing v they teach us

As above

E. Teach you discipline v Teach you other stuff

Teachers teach you maths and English but parents teach you discipline.

If I were principal...

I would have a smoking shelter **outside** or a smoking room in the school.

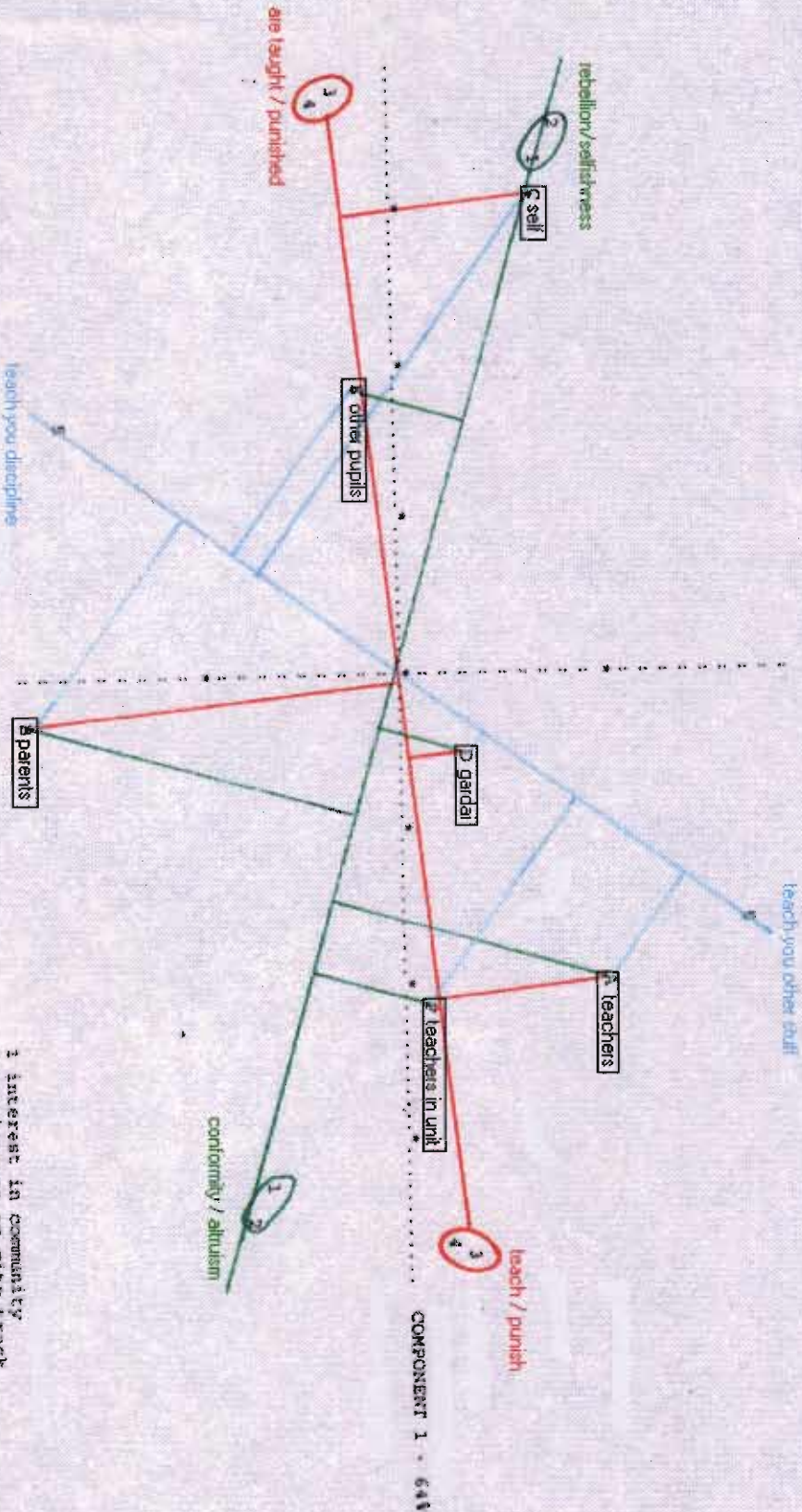
There should be vending **machines**, for coke and sweets and that. I would wipe out drugs in the school. I'd have **searches** and if you were caught with drugs you'd be charged. There should be a nurse in the school too. And kids should have more rights, there should be a students union or something.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO 14

2 is out robbing cars etc
1 not intrested in Commun

COMPONENT 2 - 30%

4 teach us
3 they teach



3 im taught
4 all in here for robbing

1 interest in community
2 try keep me on the track

Participant 15:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. I learn	*x1	*x1	*√5	3	√5	x1	They teach me
B. I learn	*x1	x1	*√5	3	√5	*x1	They teach
C. Teach by being with them	*x1	*√5	√5	3	√5	*x4	Teach in a class
D. Learn / teach by example	*x1	*√5	√5	3	*√5	x2	Classroom
E. Young easy going	*x1	x1	*√5	x1	*√5	x3	Older and stricter
F. Don't deal with or punish your self	x1	*x1	*√5	*x1	x4	x1	Deal with you if you get in trouble
G. Have more power	*x2	√4	3	*√5	3	x2	Teach you
H. Younger	x1	*x1	*√5	x1	√5	*x2	Older / teach you
I. Have to do what they say	x3	*√5	√5	*√5	x1	*x1	Less power

Repertory Grid of Participant 15

Laddering 15:

I'm not really into school I was kicked out of primaries and secondaries.

A. I learn v They teach

You learn by example from your parents, that's the best way to learn. It's easier - you don't know you're learning, you don't notice it. You watch them and end up copying them, you learn how to behave that way and have manners. In school you just learn school work from teachers. You could learn school work that way too it would be better. Like learning a job, by being an apprentice.

B. I learn v They teach

As above

C. Teach by being with them v teach in a class

As above

D. Learn/teach by example v teach in a classroom

As above

E. Young easy-going v Older and stricter

I suppose I'll be stricter when I get older, but I hope I'll be wiser too. Teachers are all the same they just give you more and more work and never give you a break. The teachers here are more easy going. They know you have enough problems without giving you more. In school outside they just treat everyone the same they just give you work to do and don't care about your problems.

F. Don't deal with or punish yourself v Deal with you if you get in trouble

Covered already

G. Have more power v Teach you

Covered already

H. Younger v Older, teach you

Covered already

I. Have to do what they say v Less Power

Teachers have the power to suspend you but Gardai have a lot of power but they don't use it wisely.

If I were principal...

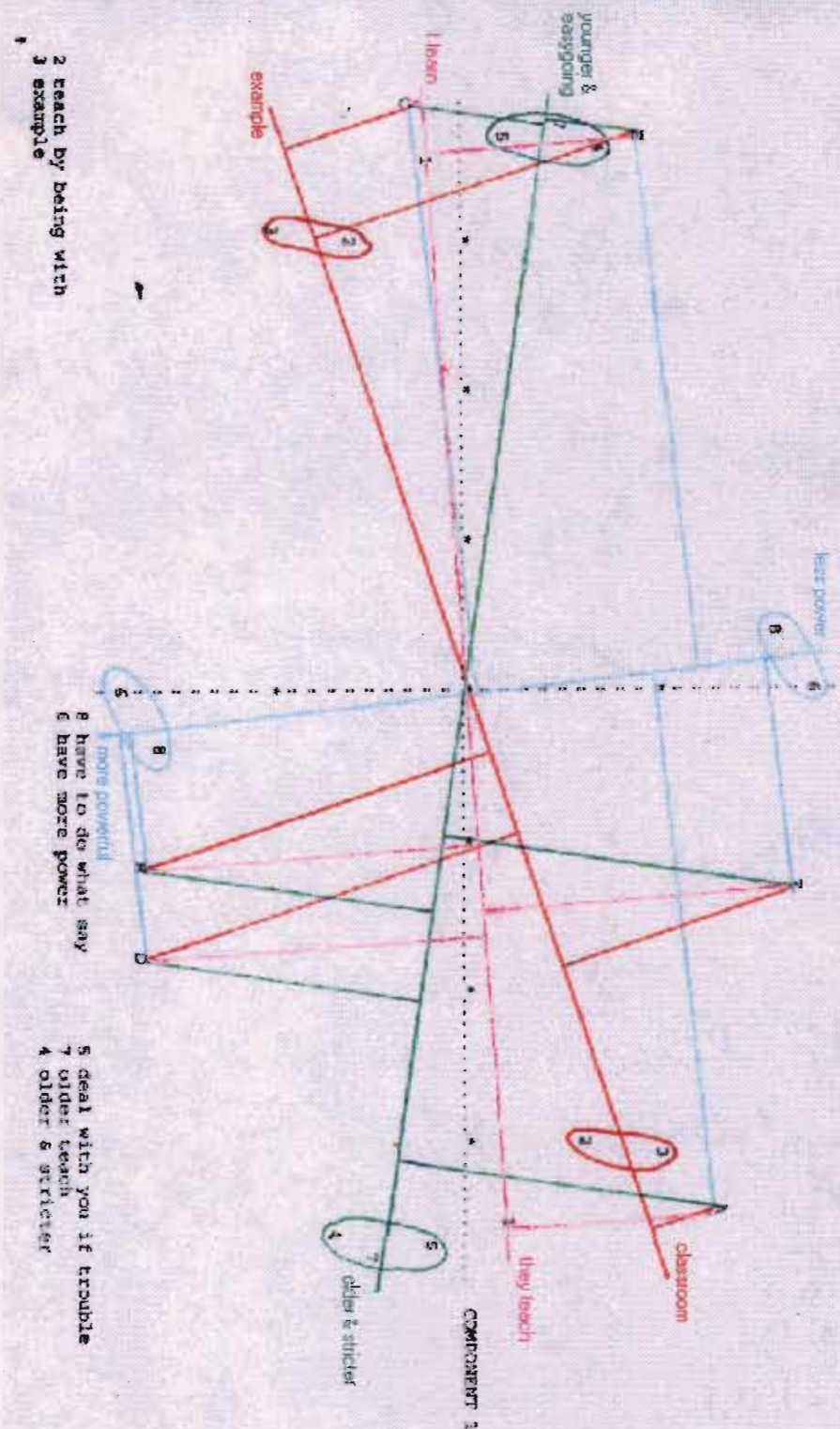
First there should be no uniform because they are poxy. You should be allowed to smoke, and the teachers should be more easy-going and understanding. Teachers that you could talk to, who were sound. If you could call teachers by their first names you'd feel like they have respect for you. If you respect someone you treat them equally and evenly. If they respected us they'd treat us the same as them.

- 4 young everything
- 7 younger
- 5 dont finish self

- 6 learn you
- 8 less power

COMPONENT 2 - 278

- 3 classroom
- 2 teach in class



- 2 teach by being with
- 3 example

- 8 have to do what say
- 6 have more power

- 5 deal with you if trouble
- 7 older teach
- 4 older & stricter

Participant 16:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Do what you feel	* x 2	* x 1	*√ 5	x 3	√ 3	x 1	Try to put u on right track
B. Know & live with them	x 1	* √ 5	*√ 5	* x 1	√ 4	√ 4	Don't know them
C. In the same group	x 1	√ 5	*√ 5	* x 1	√ 4	√ 4	Outsiders, try to arrest you
D. Can talk to them	x 1	√ 4	√ 5	* x 1	* √ 4	* √ 4	Can't talk to them/ don't want to
E. Don't want to learn / hate school	* x 1	x 1	√ 5	3	* √ 4	* x 1	Try to make you learn
F. Make you learn	* √ 5	* √ 1	3	x 2	3	* √ 3	Get you to go to school
G. Socialise with/ talk to	* x 1	* √ 5	√ 5	x 1	* √ 4	√ 4	Stricter etc.
H. Against the teacher	* x 1	x 3	*√ 5	x 3	* √ 5	x 3	Nag you, make u do homework
I. Try to get away with things	* x 1	x 2	*√ 5	*x 1	√ 5	x 3	Always want to catch you out

Repertory Grid of Participant 16

Laddering 16:

A. Try to put you on the right track / Do what you feel

It's better to do what you feel. Being 'good' all the time would wreck your head
Goin' to school I hate it..especially the work. I prefer school here (Unit) you get time to make things they help you a lot more here too it's better. Don't have time outside - what's the point. They tell u 'don't rob' they're wasting their time saying it...it just annoys you more, cause it makes you feel guilty.

Getting a job is a good thing though & you do need some schooling for that.

B.

Know them & live with them / Don't know them

Don't know them & don't want to..the gardai?..... everyone hates them - they give people a hard time. They arrest people in the wrong, batter people, that's not doing their job right. They should get more evidence.

Teacher are like the gardai, they try to catch u out, they're always down on you.

Teaching 30 kids is too much. I was suspended 9 times mostly for chewing gum! That's stupid like....There should be less homework too 3 hrs is too much.

More time to play soccer.

C. In the same group v Outside try to arrest you

As above

D. Can talk to them 'v' Can't talk to them / Don't want to

You have a better relationship with people you can talk to. You get on better with them. You'd go mad otherwise, you have to have people u can talk to.
(Teachers & Gardai) They're dopey people -I wouldn't want to get to know them. They wouldn't want to get to know me either.

E. Try to make you learn 'v' Don't want to learn - hate school

I hate school. It's boring, nothing exciting ever happens. They just shout at you 'What's the answer?' If you don't know they just tell u to read over it.
They don't explain stuff to you.

F. Make you learn 'v' Get you to got to school

They (teachers) make you learn to keep the parents off their backs. So they'll say 'They're a good teacher'.
In the unit it's different they try to put you on the right track and they do a good job.

G. Socialise with / Talk to 'v' Stricter etc.

Teachers are strict they're like robots & they think u should be the same.
They don't know what it's like in the real world.
If everyone followed rules all the time you'd go cuckoo,
there'd be no room to be yourself.

H. Are against the teacher 'v' Nag you make you do homework

We're against the Teachers 'cause they're just annoying

I.

Always want to catch you out 'v' Try to get away with things

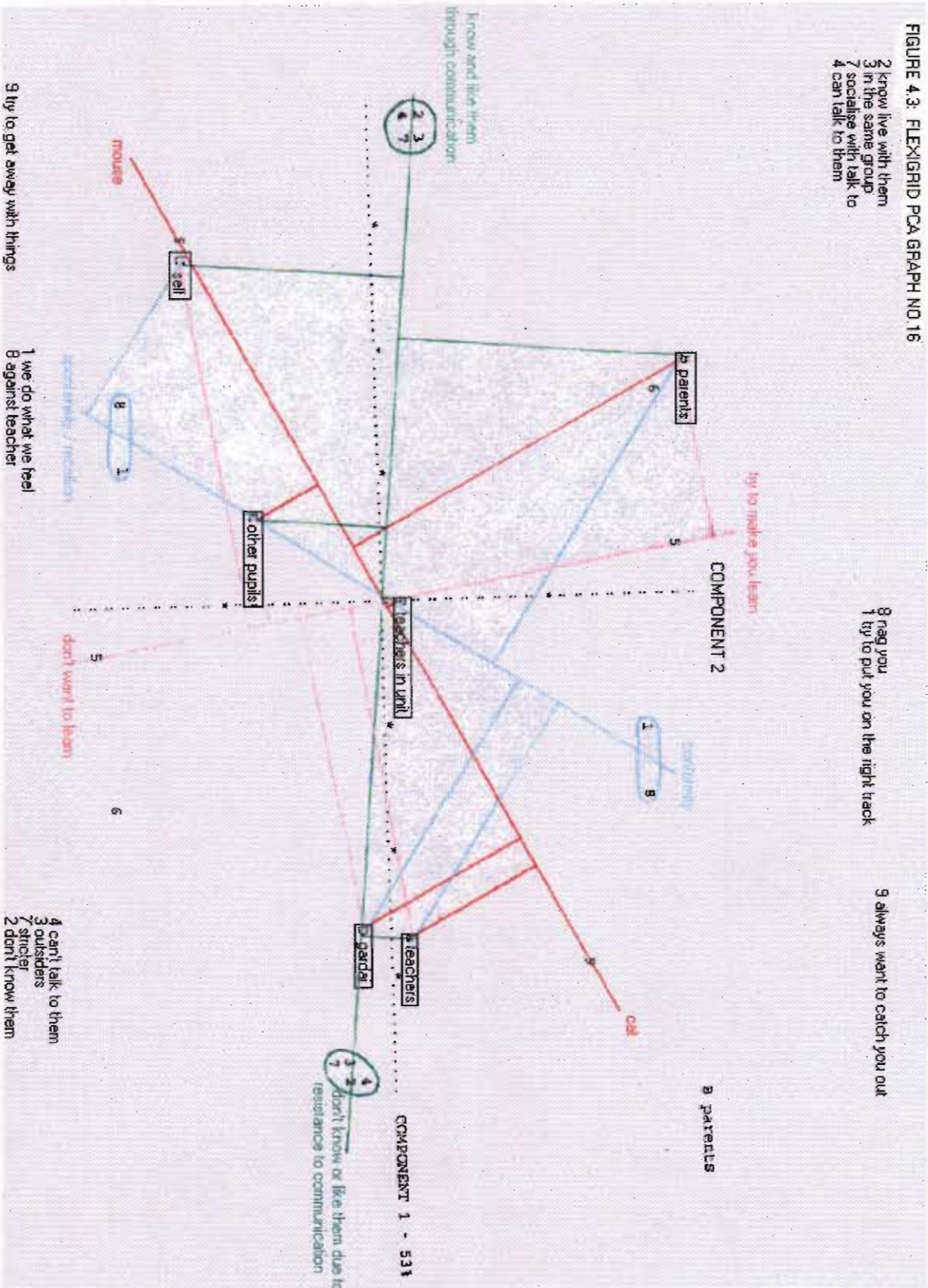
I'm always trying to get away with things , You don't want to get caught like or you end up in a place like this (unit).
They (teacher & gardai) always want to catch you make their lives easier. When they go home they're not thinking of you.
But the teachers in the unit and your parents want to see you do well.

FIGURE 4.3: FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.16

2 know live with them
3 in the same group
7 socialise with talk to
4 can talk to them

8 nag you
1 try to put you on the right track

9 always want to catch you out



Participant 17:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 Self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Closer to eachother	*x2	*√5	*√5	x1	√3	*√4	Don't like them
B. Close	x2	*√5	*√5	*x1	√3	√4	Don't like them
C. Same age / like them	x2	√5	*√5	*x1	*√3	√4	Don't like them
D. Good in unit	x2	√5	√5	*x1	*√3	*√4	Don't like outside unit
E. Are understanding	*x2	√5	√5	x1	*√3	*√4	Don't like not understanding
F. Care about you	*x2	*√5	√5	x1	√3	*√4	Don't care
G. Like	*x2	*√5	√5	x1	*√3	√4	Don't like
H. Treat me with respect	*x2	√5	√5	*x1	√3	*√4	Don't respect you
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 17

Laddering 17:

I hate school. It's just crap.

A. Closer to each other v Don't like them

I'm closer to my parents, they are in my family and are important to me. I don't like teachers and I especially don't like the guards.

B. Close v Don't like them

Cover already

C. Same age as me I like them v Don't like them

Other pupils are okay they are the same age as me and are into the same things as me. Teachers don't understand us I just don't like them.

D. Good in Unit v don't like outside school

It's better in here the teachers treat you with more respect. In ordinary school they don't respect you at all. They don't care at all.

E. Are understanding v don't like them, they're not understanding

Teachers in the unit and your parents are understanding and they listen to you. The Guards don't care and teachers don't so I don't care about them.

F. Care about you v don't care

Covered above.

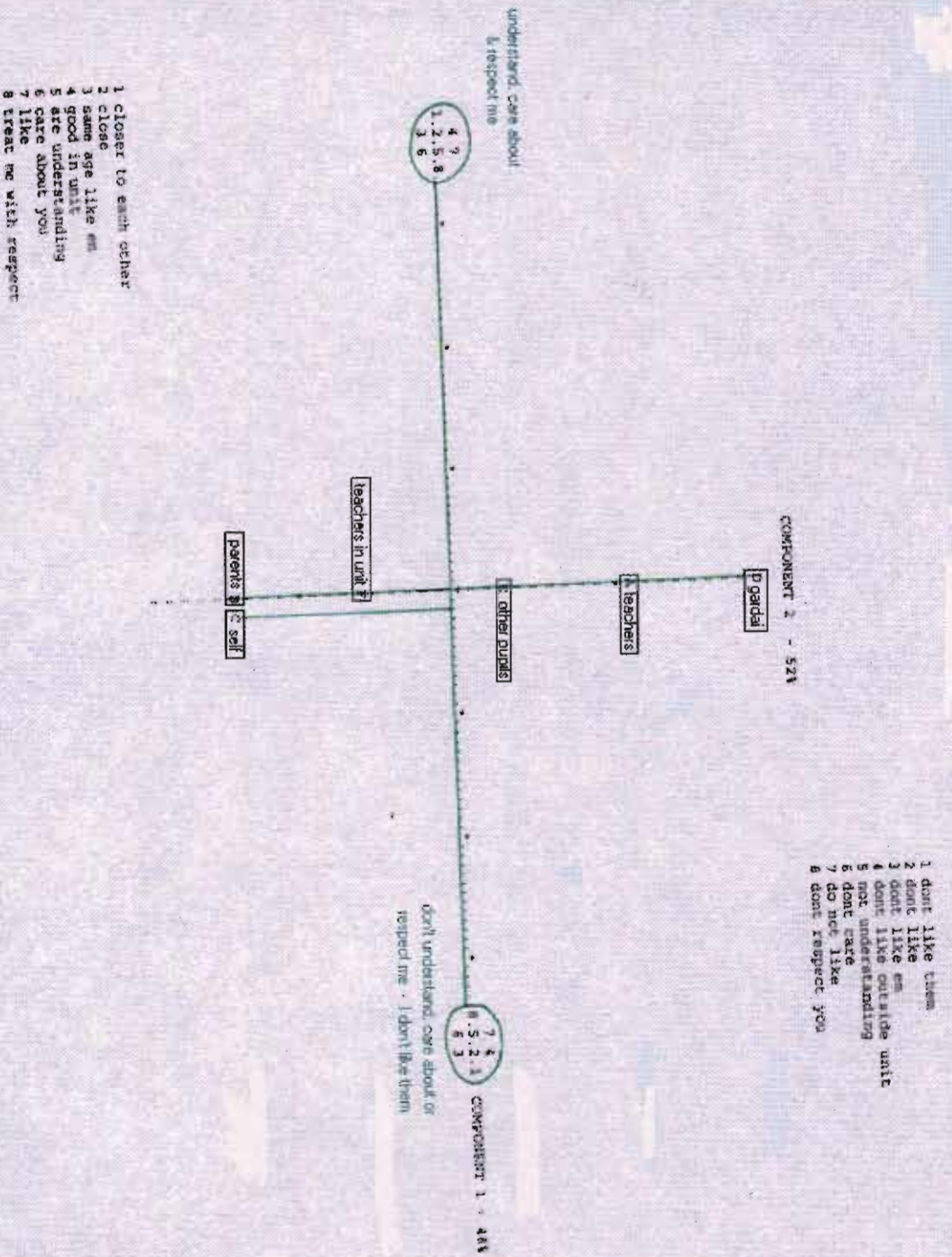
G. Like v Don't like

I just don't like them like.

H. Treat me with respect v Don't respect you

Teachers in here treat you better. They let you have a say. In school outside they don't think they have to listen to you, or treat you right. That's all, I prefer it in here, but I still want to go home.

Interview terminated by participant.



Participant 18:

[5] (√)	1 teachers	2 parents	3 self	4 gardai	5 other pupils	6 teachers in unit	[1] (x)
A. Let you have control	x1	*√3	*√5	x1	√3	*√4	Give you no control Take over your life
B. Mates - hop in for you	*x1	√5	*√5	x1	*√4	√4	Hop in on you
C. Don't want me in school	*x1	*√5	*√5	x3	3	x4	Want me in school
D. Like me	*x1	√5	*√5	*x1	√4	√5	Hate me - don't want me around
E. Like them	x1	*√5	*√5	*x1	√4	√4	Scum
F. Let me have control	*x1	*√4	√5	x1	√4	*√4	Tell me what to do
G.							
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 18

Laddering 18:

A. Let you have control v Give you no control, take over your life

Your parents and the teachers in here let you have control and listen to what you say about stuff. In school the teachers there and God the gardai they just want to take you over and make you do what they want to do. They don't think that you can think for yourself.

B. They are your mates they hop in for you v They'd be hopin' on you!

Other pupils are your mates like so if you're in trouble they hop in for you, they'll help you out like. Like if you got in a fight or someone was giving you a hard time they'd stick up for you. It's the same in class if a teacher accused you of somethin' and you didn't do it like your mates would back you up. But the gardai, they'd be hopin' on ya. For every little thing like. If your just hangin around. It gives 'em somethin to do I suppose.

C. Don't want me in school v Want me in school

Teachers don't really want me in school they want me out, want me expelled. I'm a messer like, but it's only 'cause it's so boring, and the teachers drive me mad.

D. Like me v Hate me don't want me around

Covered above.

E. Like them v Scum

The gardai are scum and teachers are nearly as bad. I don't like them and they don't like me and there is no respect on either side. In here the teachers give you a chance, just to be yourself. Outside they try to take over your life.

F. Let me have control v Tell me what to do

Cover already.

If I were principal....I'd make school more like it is in here. Give pupils a say and listen to them, and not just tell them what to do all the time.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.18

1 let you have control
5 let me have control

4 dont like me
2 keep on you
5 scum

COMPONENT 2 = 23%

don't want me in school

let you have control

I like

2.5

self

Other pupils

Teachers in unit

parents

want me in school

2 makes hop in ear you
5 like them
4 like me

teachers

I hate

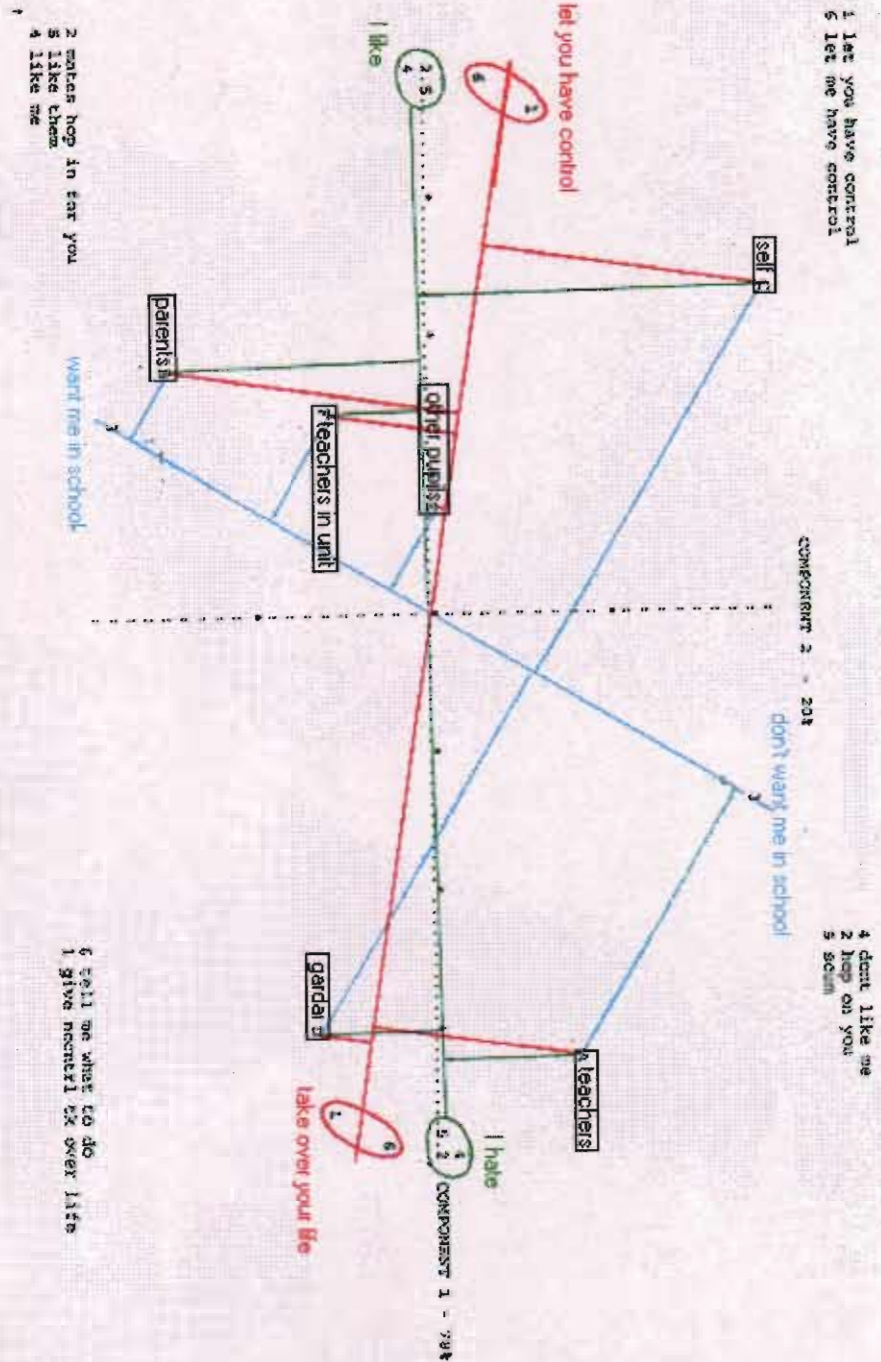
5.2

COMPONENT 1 = 79%

take over your life

gardai

6 tell me what to do
1 give me control over life



Participant 19:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Don't make rules for other people	*x1	*x1	*√5	x1	√5	√4	Make rules
B. Don't have to think of anyone else	x2	*x1	*√5	*x2	√5	x1	Concerned about people
C. In the same boat / gang	x3	√5	*√5	*x1	*√4	√4	Always picking us up /
D. Outside the system	x1	√4	√5	*x1	*√5	*x1	Part of the system
E. Want you to learn	*√4	√5	√4	x1	*x2	√5	Don't care if you learn or not
F. In contact	*√3	*√5	√5	x1	√4	*x3	Outside that "contact"
G. Care about future	√4	√5	*√5	*x1	√4	*√5	Don't care / just want no trouble
H. There for you	*x2	√5	*√5	x1	*√4	√4	Not always there for you
I. Closer / care about you	√3	*√5	*√5	x1	*x3	√4	Not as close

Repertory Grid of Participant 19

Laddering 19:

A. Make rules 'v' I don't make rules for other people

Sometimes there's a need for rules but really I think it's not good to make rules for other people. Like the gardai, they pick you up for doing nothing, question you.. 'where are you going etc.' There are too many rules from parents, court, the guards. You should be allowed to take responsibility for yourself.

B. Are concerned about people 'v' Don't have to think about anyone else

It's important to be concerned about people and to try to care of them. If you lose someone you care about it is like losing a part of you. If you don't care about anyone then you don't have to worry but then what if one day someone close to you is killed?

C. In the same boat/gang 'v' Always picking us up /picking on us

I'd put us in the same group, just so as not to be in the same group as gardai. I mean you can't talk to them. They just lock you up.

D. Part of the system 'v' Outside the system

We are all the same age and we're all inside in places like this , we're all locked up. Teachers and the guards are on the outside they can do what they like, they're free.

E. Want you to learn 'v' Don't care if you learn or not

I suppose it is important to learn if you want to get a job and stuff.

Sport is definitely the best part of school. Detention is the worst, it's stupid. All in all it's o.k.

F. In contact 'v' Outside that contact

When you're in school it's important that teachers, parents and you are in contact so that your parents know how you are doing. Otherwise, they'd let you away with things.

G. Care about your future 'v' Don't care / just want no trouble

Teachers and parents care about your future, how you get on, if you get a job etc.

Guards don't care though, they just want no trouble, they want a quiet life. Guards will have an effect on my future though.

H. Are there for you 'v' Are not always there for you

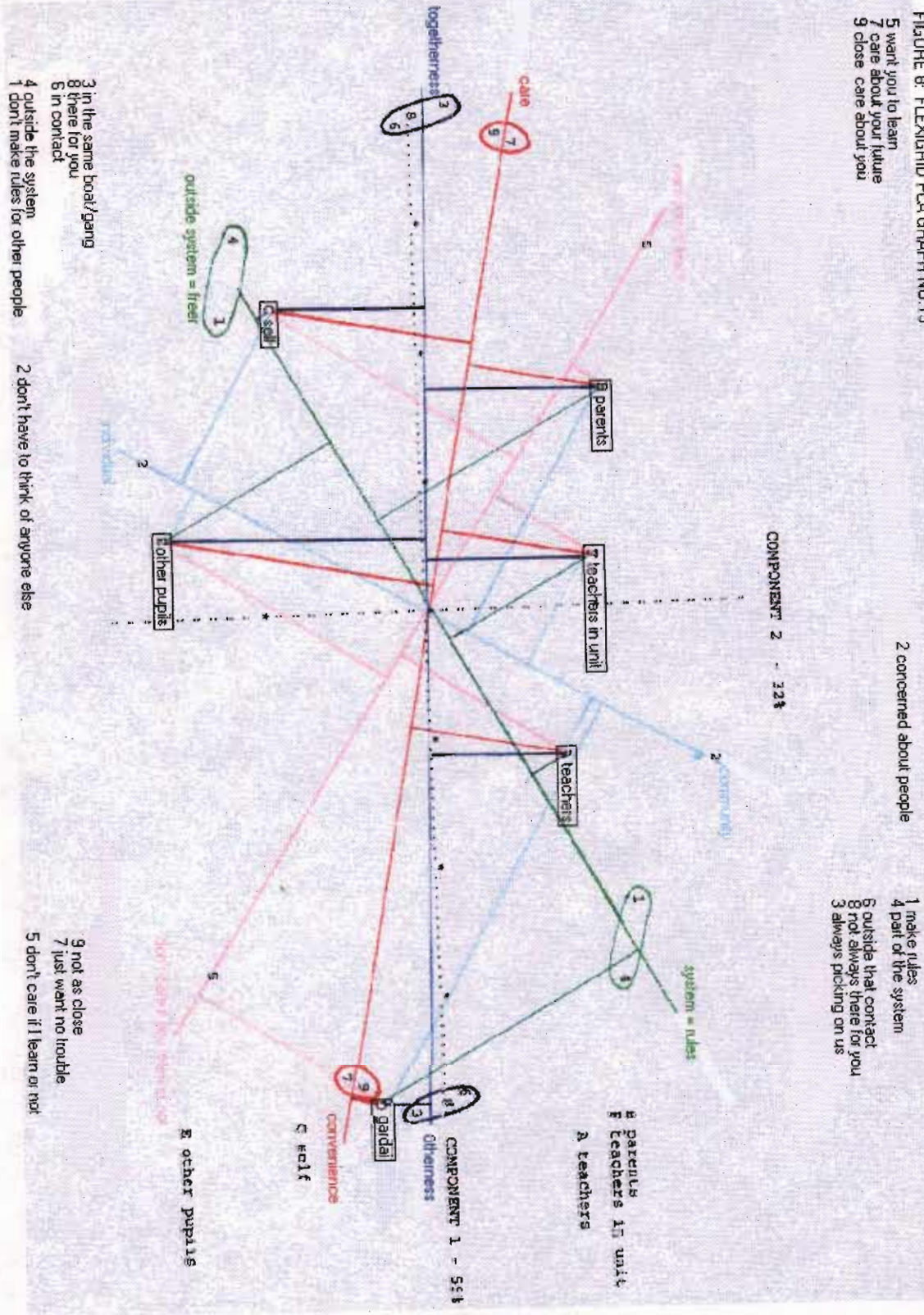
Parents and teachers in the unit are there for you. They talk to you and talk you of doing stupid things. It means you're not as lonely. Loneliness is the worst, it causes all sorts of problems...alcoholism and all that. Teachers outside aren't there for you as much, they don't care as much.

I. Closer / care about you 'v' Not as close

Gardai are close to you 'cause they're always there!! picking on you and annoying you.

Like the people who make their living cleaning windows of cars at traffic lights they're always at them. Like one me and my friends were walking down the road with a lawnmower and they (gardai) wanted to see a receipt for it, they were sure we nicked it like! It's annoying that they always presume the worst

FIGURE 8: FLEXIGRID PCA GRAPH NO.19



Participant 20:

[5]	1	2	3	4	5	6	[1]
(√)	teachers	parents	self	gardai	other pupils	teachers in unit	(x)
A. Not able to make any choice	*x4	x3	*√1	*x4	√1	x3	Have hold over you
B. Under their command	*x5	*√3	√2	*x5	2	√3	Look down on you
C. Understand each other	*x5	*√2	*√2	x5	√3	√2	Don't relate well to me
D. Can express themselves	*x5	*√2	√2	x5	√3	√2	Don't understand
E. Treat you like a human being	x4	*√1	√1	*x5	√2	*√1	Don't treat like a human
F. Not allowed to do what you want	x5	√3	*x1	*√5	*x1	√3	They think they have lots of authority
G. Don't have any control	*x5	--3	*√1	x5	*√1	--3	Order us around
H.							
I.							

Repertory Grid of Participant 20

Laddering 20:

I hate school. It's boring and you have to do what other people tell you all the time.

A. Not able to make your own choices v Have a hold over you

We have to do what teachers and people say. They have all the power. We can't what we want when we want.

B. Under their command v Look down on you

Already covered

C. Understand each other v Don't relate well to me

I get on with people who talk to me and listen to me, other pupils and my parents like. But teachers don't relate well to me. Teachers in here do though, they're different, they listen if you have a problem with something.

D. Can express true feelings v Don't understand

Already covered

E. Treat you like a human being v Don't treat you like a human

You relate better to these people, you feel the same as them and have a better relationship with them

F. Not allowed to do what you want v Think they have lots of authority

Already covered

G. Don't have any control v Order us around.

Already covered

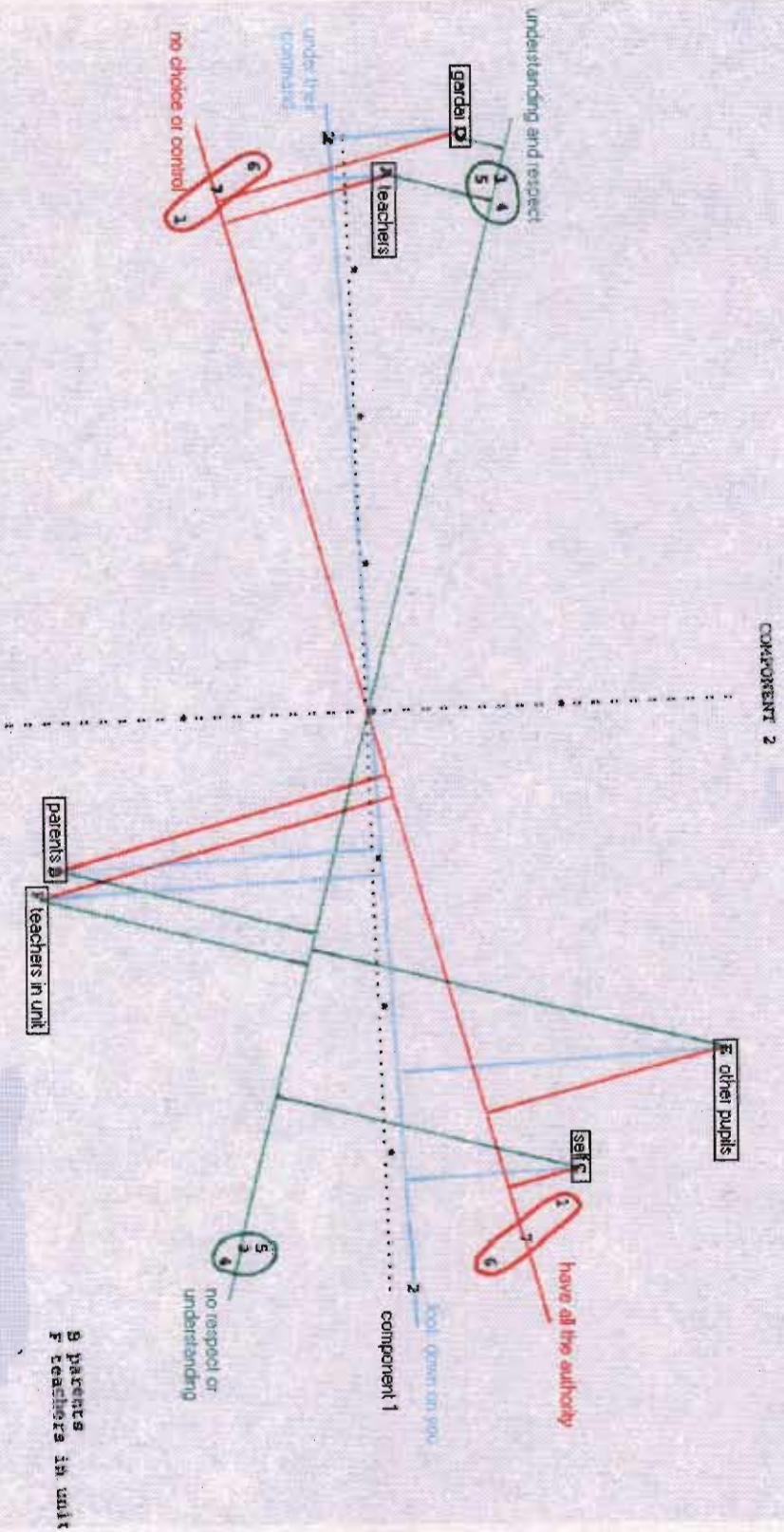
If I were Principal....

I'd get rid of uniforms anyway, cause they are just a cod. There should be more sports and more other fun stuff. It's just too boring.

FLEXIGRID PCA GRID NO. 20

- 4 can express true feelings
- 3 understand each other
- 5 treat you like a human being

- 1 have a hold over you
- 7 order us around
- 6 think they have lots of authority



- 6 not allowed to do what we want
- 7 don't have any control
- 1 not able to make our own choices

- 5 don't treat me like a human being
- 3 don't relate well to me
- 4 don't understand

9 parents
F teachers in unit

